

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Worcester

Course approval: MA Social Work

Inspection dates: 25th – 27th June 2024

Report date:	12.08.24
Inspector recommendation:	Approved
Regulator decision:	Approved
Date of Regulator decision:	21.08.24

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Introduction

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

What we do

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

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

officer if they have any queries that may be able to be addressed in advance of the inspection.

9. During this time a draft plan for the inspection is developed and shared with the education provider, to make sure it is achievable at the point of inspection.

10. Once the inspectors and officer are satisfied that an inspection can take place, this is usually undertaken over a three to four day visit to the education provider. We then draft a report setting out what we found during the inspection and if and how our findings demonstrate that the course meets our standards.

11. The inspectors may recommend in this report that the course is approved with conditions, approved without conditions or that it does not meet the criteria for approval. Where the course has been previously approved we may also decide to withdraw approval.

12. A draft of this report is shared with the education provider, and once we have considered any comments or observations they may wish to provide, we make a final regulatory decision about the approval of the course.

13. The final decisions that we can make are as follows, that the course is approved without conditions, the course is approved with conditions or that the course does not meet the criteria for approval. The decision, and the report, are then published.

14. If the course is approved with conditions, we will write to the education provider setting out how they can demonstrate they have met the conditions, the action we will take once we decide that the conditions are met, and the action we will take if we decide the conditions are not met.

Summary of Inspection

15. The University of Worcester's MA Social Work course was inspected as part of the Social Work England reapproval cycle; whereby all course providers with qualifying social work courses will be inspected against the new Education and Training Standards 2021.

16. The course team had proposed changes to the course due to be taught out from September 2024 for which internal validation had been completed. These changes were considered as part of this inspection.

Inspection ID	UWORR2
Course provider	University of Worcester
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course inspected	MA Social Work
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	20
Date of inspection	25 th – 27 th June 2024
Inspection team	Daisy Bragadini (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Sophie Kane (Lay Inspector) Michael Isles (Registrant Inspector)

Language

17. In this document we describe the University of Worcester as 'the education provider' or 'the university' and we describe the MA Social Work course as 'the course'.

Inspection

18. An onsite inspection took place from 25th – 27th June at the Elizabeth Garrett Building at the University of Worcester where the education provider is based. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employers and people with lived experience of social work.

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

Conflict of interest

20. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

21. The inspection team met with 5 students from both years of the course, including the student representatives from years 1 and 2 of the course. Discussions included the feedback they received, assessments, practice placements, feedback they were able to provide on the course and student support.

Meetings with course staff

22. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the course team, senior managers, staff involved in admissions, staff responsible for practice learning and staff involved in the delivery of support services.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

23. The inspection team met with the IMPACT group, consisting of people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in various aspects of the course. Discussions included their involvement in admissions processes, assessment of students, providing feedback and informing change on the course.

Meetings with external stakeholders

24. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including placement providers from Worcestershire County Council, Herefordshire Social Care Academy and Caring for Communities and People, a voluntary organisation providing

practice placements for the course. The inspection team also met with a group of 7 onsite and offsite practice educators. External stakeholders discussed how they worked with the university to provide practice learning and practice placements for students on the course.

Findings

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

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

26. Prior to the inspection, the course provider submitted evidence which illustrated the holistic assessment processes for applicants to the course. Applicants submitted their application through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS), which was reviewed before applicants were invited to an interview. A group exercise along with a written task was then conducted, and ICT skills were assessed. The inspection team reviewed the Selection Process Guide which outlined each stage of the process and detailed the purpose of each step of the recruitment pathway. During the inspection and discussion held with staff responsible for overseeing the processes in place, the inspection team were able to triangulate the evidence. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

27. Preceding the inspection the inspection team reviewed evidence which illustrated how prior relevant experience was considered as part of the admissions processes. The webpage for the course along with the course specification document outlined the entry requirements for the course, which included the requirement of a minimum of 3 months' contemporary, relevant practice experience verified by a reference. An applicant's experience was assessed within the application form and at interview. In situations where candidates lacked sufficient relevant experience, advice was provided for them to gain further experience before applying again to the course. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

28. As part of the evidence submission the inspection team reviewed the Programme Specification and the Selection Process Guide. These documents outlined the involvement of employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work within the admission and selection stages. The course's admissions processes had been developed in line with the Best Practice in Admissions to Prequalifying Social Work Programmes, a document developed by the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership, which outlined stakeholder involvement. During the meetings held with the IMPACT group and employer partners, the inspection team heard how they were involved in both the creation of the scenarios used in the group activity and observing the activity. In addition, they were part of the decision-making panel in individual interviews, where they referred to an assessment matrix to mark and feedback on applicants' performances. Members of the IMPACT group were provided with recruitment and selection training along with equality, diversity and inclusion and data governance training. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

29. In relation to this standard the inspection team were provided with the University's Taught Courses Regulatory Framework which outlined the criteria for designing and administering their admissions processes, and specifically requirements connected to suitability. Additionally, the Admissions Policy was provided which further outlined the requirements for criminal conviction and occupational health checks at admissions. The inspection team reviewed the Selection Process Guide which indicated where in the process these checks were completed, including the enhanced DBS check once an offer on the course had been made. As part of the additional evidence submission prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the Self-Declaration of Offences Form and the Pre-Placement Questionnaire for applicants, delivered through Spire Occupational Health services. During the meeting held with the admissions team, the inspection team heard how these processes were managed and that decisions involved consultation with employer partners, where appropriate. Applications from international students required an Overseas Police Check to be completed. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

30. The inspection team reviewed the university's Equality and Inclusion Policy Statement, which was reflected within the Programme Specification and relevant policies. Both the Admissions Guide and the Selection Process Guide indicated how

the equality and diversity policy was implemented within the admissions processes. The inspection team explored how applicants could request reasonable adjustments as part of the admissions processes and heard how student support services were able to assist with arrangements for applicants. During the presentation from the programme lead, the inspection team were shown how data collected at the admissions stage was evaluated and monitored and shared appropriately with the admissions team. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

31. In relation to this standard, applicants were provided with information on the webpage including for practice placements, staff profiles, the requirement for professional registration, and the structure of the course. Open days and Offer Holder days were held for applicants where information was shared about the professional regulator and the professional standards. Additionally, presentations from the course team prior to interviews offered applicants further opportunity to receive information about their course, enabling an informed choice to be made on whether they accepted a place on the course. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

32. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the Programme Specification, which outlined the requirement for the assessment of professional practice and the Course Handbook, which included the timetable for completion of placement days. Students on the course recorded their portfolio work on PebblePad, an online learning portal, and also registered their attendance at placement totalling 170 days. 30 skills days were delivered as part of the Skills and Approaches to Practice module, which also included an attendance diary within the module page on PebblePad.

33. Both documentary evidence and meetings with relevant staff confirmed the robust process the course team followed to ensure students completed at least one contrasting statutory placement. The inspection team reviewed the Agency Profile and placement lists and heard from employer partners and practice placement staff how placements were planned for each individual student and their learning needs. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 2.2

34. The inspection team were provided with the Programme Specification which illustrated how the course was designed to ensure students gained knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards. Additionally, the inspection team were referred to 3 assessment points throughout the course, prior to the first placement, the end of the first placement and the end of the final placement, where students were able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The practice learning agreement enabled planning for learning opportunities, which would support students to develop relevant knowledge and skills. The Agency Profile was used to identify the types of learning opportunities placement providers were able to provide and how they were aligned to the professional standards. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

35. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team identified that the Agency Profile form stipulated that appropriate inductions were incorporated into students' placements. The practice learning agreement within PebblePad provided for the agreement between the placement provider and practice educators to deliver induction, appropriate resources, supervision and workload. Prior to placements starting, onsite supervisors and practice educators attended a joint briefing session which covered expectations for students' induction and support on placement.

36. During the inspection, the inspection team heard how recall days and midpoint reviews gave students the opportunity to discuss any related issues on their placement, gain peer support and raise concerns with their practice educator and personal academic tutor. Training Team meetings were able to be requested by students or practice educators, and practice educators confirmed that documented processes to solve concerns were clear and understood. The inspection team heard that during Practice Assessment Panels (PAP) all portfolios were reviewed, which included checking the occurrence of supervision received by students on their placements. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

37. During the meeting held with practice educators, the inspection team heard that each student attended a planning meeting for their placement which, combined with supervision and their midpoint meeting, helped to ensure students' responsibilities were appropriate. Students completed a profile form and attended an interview prior to starting their placement, which supported them in being matched to a placement which met their needs and took account of prior experience. Staff involved in practice

learning confirmed that the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) was utilised to align appropriate student responsibilities to their stage of training. Students described placement preparation days, which were attended by practice educators and on site supervisors, the Practice Learning Agreement and their induction as supportive in ensuring their responsibilities matched their stage of training. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

38. The inspection team were provided with the module guide and the associated e-portfolio section for the Skills and Approaches to Practice module, where students completed an assessed preparation for direct practice. During the inspection, the inspection team heard from members of the IMPACT group and from the course team about the assessed role play, social worker shadowing opportunities, portfolio completion and a 2000-word report. The university used a simulated learning environment called Ability House where students were observed and assessed by practitioners and academics as they completed a role play alongside the IMPACT group members. The inspection team heard from employer partners that students from the course were well prepared for their placements. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

39. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the Agency Profile form which required the placement provider to identify the practice educator, the professional registration number and level of practice educator qualification held. Offsite practice educators were required to submit their CV which included detail of professional registration and currency. The inspectors were also provided with the register template and the Practice Educator Register Process flow chart, which detailed each stage of the quality assurance process and the teams responsible for managing it. An online register was maintained, and information contained within it updated and reviewed annually and generated in July for the practice facilitator to use. During the meeting held with practice educators, the inspection team heard that they felt supported in their role and provided examples of training and guidance they had received from the university. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 2.7

40. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the Course Handbook, which contained the whistleblowing policy and a clear flowchart outlining appropriate steps to be followed when concerns needed to be addressed. Students were able to use their MyDay webpage within Blackboard, the online learning platform, to report concerns and students confirmed they were aware of this reporting mechanism. Within PebblePad, students were provided with a clear flowchart of steps to be taken in relation to whistleblowing, and inspectors were assured that appropriate support was available when required. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

41. In relation to this standard, the inspection team reviewed a wide range of documentary evidence, which included information about the Board of Governors, associated roles and responsibilities, executive management of the university, the structure of the Academic Colleges and Schools and the management teams which were responsible for each of the Schools. The inspection team were also provided with the School of Allied Health and Community staff team structure chart and the University of Worcester's Strategic Plan. During the inspection, the inspection team met numerous times with the Head of Department and the Programme Lead, as well as the senior management team. During these meetings, the inspection team explored roles and responsibilities and lines of accountability. The Social Work Steering Group and the Staff Student Liaison Committee represented the main mechanisms for managing the course, which benefitted from input from the external examiner, students, IMPACT group members and employer partners. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

42. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the Agency Profile which was used to assess the willingness and ability of placement providers to provide education and training which met the professional standards. As part of an additional evidence request, the inspection team were also provided with the Social Work Template Placement Agreement which formed the basis of the agreement between placement providers and the university, managed by the university's placement team. The Practice Learning Agreement, along with the concerns process outlined in the Course Handbook, provided for contingency planning in the case of placement breakdown. Additionally, the inspection team were provided with the terms of reference for the Practice Placement Panel, where placement breakdowns and associated

documentation were reviewed independently. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

43. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the annual health and safety questionnaire and the student placement risk assessment form which was completed for each student prior to each placement. The Agency Profile form required placement providers to list the policies in operation and indicate how they were implemented during the placement. The Placement Agreement meeting required the personal academic tutor, practice educator and student to identify and plan for wellbeing and support needs and review associated roles and sources of support. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

44. As part of the evidence submission for this standard, the inspection team received the terms of reference for the Social Work Steering Group, along with minutes from the group's meetings. The group's remit included supporting the course in its strategic management and maintenance of currency. The group's membership included representatives from regional local authorities, independent placement provider organisations, course leaders, the practice facilitator and members of the IMPACT group.

45. The university is also a member of the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership (WMSWTP) which provided a forum for regional universities and local authorities to collaborate on areas such as workforce development and placement planning. The inspection team were informed that the Head of Department attended monthly meetings with the Head of the Social Work Academy at Worcestershire Children First and heard how the curriculum review and allocation of practice education were overseen within this forum. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

46. During the initial documentary evidence review and throughout the inspection, the inspection team were provided with a range of evidence which demonstrated how the course team monitored and evaluated elements of the course. Examples of how these

systems contributed to the improvement of the course were also provided, and how these processes involved relevant stakeholders.

47. Students were required to engage in an Early Feedback Survey, complete mid-way and end point module evaluations, attend the Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings, and complete feedback after their placement. The inspection team heard how students were informed about the impact of their feedback and any changes resulting from it, and the feedback was fed into the Annual Evaluation Report for the programme.

48. During the meeting with members of the IMPACT group, the inspection team heard that if they were unable to attend the SSLC meetings, they were invited to submit a statement of their views which was shared at the meeting. Members of the group attended the Practice Assessment Panels and were involved in evaluating the students' practice portfolios.

49. The Social Work Steering Group facilitated the collection of views from employer partners. During the meetings held with employer partners and staff involved in practice learning, the inspection team heard how staff were proactive in responding to placement feedback, acknowledging issues and identifying themes. Practice educators' final assessment reports were reviewed by course staff, and they were provided with constructive feedback, which the inspection team heard was a valued contribution to practice educators' role. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

50. In relation to this standard, the inspection team reviewed minutes of the Social Work Steering Group meeting where staff and employer partners planned for practice educator provision, placement and student numbers. Through the teaching partnership, staff attend the Workforce Planning Working Group, and the inspection team were provided with the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership Workforce Analytics findings document. This synthesised recruitment, completion and employment data from the region, and identified the impact of various local training courses alongside practice placement capacity. In addition, the inspection team were provided with the Worcestershire Children First Workforce Strategy document which presented a strategic vision and set of principles which supported planning for the future of the local workforce.

51. During the inspection, the inspection team met with the Practice Facilitator who attended the Practice Learning Forum every 6 weeks to facilitate planning for placement provision. Additionally, the course staff met as part of the South Region's

Placement Coordinators meeting, a subgroup of the teaching partnership. Further confirmation of the processes in place was gained during meetings held with the senior managers and the course team. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

52. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the CV for the Programme Lead which confirmed appropriate qualification and experience. The inspection team were also able to confirm professional registration. During the inspection, the inspection team heard details of the professional role held by the Programme Lead and were presented with numerous examples of managerial oversight the Lead had for the course. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

53. The inspection team were provided with a range of the teaching team's CVs, which illustrated appropriate qualification and experience. Further evidence gained throughout the inspection demonstrated the range of specialisms and areas of expertise held by the team, which was also accessible through the staff profiles on the course webpage. During the meetings with the course team and the senior managers, the inspection team explored resource management and staff capacity and were assured that they were able to deliver an effective course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

54. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were provided with the Annual Evaluation Report and Enhancement Plan. This report presented the collected and evaluated data on student progression and characteristics of cohorts, and resulted in action points and plans to develop and improve the course. As part of additional evidence received, the inspection team reviewed the ethical approval documentation for the Belong and Thrive project, which was developed in response to increased numbers of international students joining the course, the Access and Participation Plan 2020-2025, and non-continuation rates for some groups of students. The aim of the project was to gain understanding of students' perspectives and staff's application of equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and ultimately to understand how to improve non-continuation rates.

55. During the inspection, the course team presented details of a pilot project which aspired to support international students in areas such as academic performance, wellbeing and integration within the student and wider community. These projects provided the inspection team with examples of ways in which the course team were evaluating student data and using it to inform changes and developments and improve outcomes for students. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

56. As part of the documentary evidence submission, the inspection team reviewed the course staff CVs which illustrated examples of contemporary professional practice experience. During the inspection, the ways in which staff were supported to maintain knowledge and understanding in this area were explored with the senior managers and the course team. The inspection team heard that course team members had opportunities to shadow social workers in adults' services, belonged to youth justice panels, were practising best interest assessors, and were involved in research projects and attended academic and practice-linked conferences. The senior managers described a responsive and supportive approach to the provision of time and funding for staff and utilised a workload management and appraisal system to monitor this. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

57. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the Course Specification which outlined the learning outcomes for the course and were mapped to the PCF and the professional standards. The Course Handbook, in addition, outlined how the course was designed to align to both the professional standards and the corresponding levels provided by the PCF. Module specifications and final practice placement assessment templates demonstrated clearly how and when students had opportunities to learn about and be assessed in relation to the professional standards.

58. The inspection team considered the proposed changes to the course as part of the inspection. Consultation events were held with members of the IMPACT group (people with lived experience of social work), employer partners and current and former students. Following the consultation, the team held a planning day where the revised programme was drafted. The proposed changes included replacing 2 first year modules, Assessment and Safeguarding and Law and Policy with Adult Law and Safeguarding and Children and Family Law and Safeguarding. Another module,

Complex Practice, will be replaced by Complex Practice and Skills in order to enhance the focus on application of skills. Resilience and cultural competence were enhanced in all modules through self-reflection, evaluation and the use of case studies, and sociological content was transferred between 2 modules to modify taught content. The course provider submitted internal approval documentary evidence which outlined the detail of the changes along with the consultation process, the new module descriptors, and the new programme Award Map. The content of both the current and new modules for the course were mapped to the professional standards.

59. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

60. In relation to this standard, the inspection team reviewed the course reapproval documentation which outlined the stakeholder groups involved in the changes to the course. Consultations were carried out with members of the IMPACT group, employer partners and current and former students who were practising social workers.

61. Ongoing review and development of the course was carried out within the Social Work Steering Group meetings and the Staff Student Liaison Committee meetings, which involved people with lived experience of social work.

62. During the meeting held with the IMPACT group, members shared a range of examples of how they worked with the course team to help deliver the course. The group had developed IMPACT on Tour, which promoted the work of the group, and helped to share their aims. Additionally, the IMPACT group were responsible for writing the questions used in recruitment for the course, case studies used in role plays in Ability House as part of the assessment for readiness for direct practice, and they attended the Practice Assessment Panels as panel members. The group described themselves as critical friends of the course and spoke of feeling valued and included. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

63. During the meetings held with the university's professional support services and the course team, the inspection team heard how the course was designed in line with equality, diversity and inclusion principles. Students were provided with accessible learning environments, reasonable adjustments and assessments, which took into account particular learning needs.

64. The inspection team were referred to particular modules within the course which incorporated human rights and legislative frameworks. Additionally, evidence that the course content prepared students to develop an understanding of policy related and legal contexts of social work was demonstrated within the Programme Specification. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

65. Examples of research submissions, article presentations and peer reviewed journals were provided as examples of staff remaining connected to contemporary issues within the profession. Staff CVs demonstrated the work the course team were involved in, which included social work practice in local services. During the inspection, the inspection team heard that the Programme Lead had developed interprofessional learning opportunities involving the wider School.

66. The team held annual development days where the course was reviewed and redeveloped in line with feedback from employer partners and students, along with contemporary developments. Additionally, the Social Work Steering Group and membership of the teaching partnership were mechanisms used to ensure developments in legislation, policy and best practice were incorporated into the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

67. In relation to this standard, the inspection team reviewed the Programme Specification, which contained the role of theory within the course. The module, Skills and Approaches to Practice supported the teaching of applying theory to practice and the inspection team were able to see where students' application of theory was assessed on placement. During the meeting held with practice educators, the inspection team heard how students from the university started their placements with a strong knowledge base of theory ready to apply to practice. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

68. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed a commitment to multidisciplinary learning illustrated within the Course Handbook. Examples of learning opportunities included midwifery colleagues teaching on the course, a case discussion with occupational therapy and physiotherapy students, a mock hospital discharge

meeting and a mock initial child protection conference with teaching and midwifery students.

69. During the meeting with practice educators, the inspection team heard how they worked to identify learning gaps for students and planned learning opportunities for students such as attending multidisciplinary meetings with clinical professionals within a hospice placement. Students described how the practice learning agreement meeting was used to plan engagement with multiagency meetings, which included colleagues from probation and police, for example. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

70. The inspection team were provided with the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework prior to the inspection. This stipulated that one academic credit was aligned to 10 hours of academic study. Further documentary evidence outlined the module content of the course within the specifications and the Award Map illustrated the structure of the course. During the meeting with the course team, the inspection team heard that the attendance rate on the course was high and was overseen by clear and robust monitoring mechanisms. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

71. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the Programme specification which outlined the assessment strategy and included a range of assessment methods and overarching methodology. The PCF and the professional standards were evidenced as supporting the structure of the assessments for students on placement, and module specifications provided clear and explicit assessment content detail for students to follow. Processes such as internal moderation, assessment verification and oversight and feedback from the external examiner helped to ensure the integrity and reliability of assessments used on the course. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

72. The Award Map and module specifications demonstrated for the inspection team how the course was designed to align to students' progression and development through their curriculum. As part of the annual development days, assessments were reviewed to ensure they provided appropriate sequencing across the levels of the

course. The inspection team also noted the assessment schedule included for students within the Course Handbook, and students commented on their workload and assessment timetable. As part of a request for additional evidence, the inspection team were provided with a marking rubric which they heard was introduced at induction for students and was clearly mapped to the learning outcomes. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

73. Students received formative assessment feedback on a written assignment 6 weeks into their course. This feedback informed appropriate support which could be offered to students in relation to academic writing skills, facilitated through their personal academic tutor. Students described finding their feedback supportive of ongoing development and noted the enriching assessment feedback they received through role play activities in Ability House, the simulated learning environment. The inspection team heard that students were encouraged to explore their feedback during meetings with their personal academic tutors in order to maximise their potential for development. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

74. The course team's CVs demonstrated the expertise held by the group, which included professional registration and numerous external examiner posts at other higher education institutions. Further evidence provided included the experience held by the current external examiner for the course, and confirmation of professional registration was established. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

75. The requirement for direct observations to be completed was outlined in the module specifications, and assessment templates were provided for practice educators to use. Members of the IMPACT group, social work practitioners and academic staff were involved in the assessments of students, and relevant levels of the PCF were used to guide benchmarking. The Taught Courses Regulatory Framework provided detail for the assessment boards and how they operated, and the subject exam board was used to review the assessment outcomes from practice placements. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

76. The course learning outcomes and specific modules, such as Approaches and Skills and the current and newly proposed Complex Practice and Skills, provided evidence of how the course enabled students to develop evidence informed approaches. The Dissertation module, both current and newly proposed, provided an opportunity for students to complete a literature review of empirical study, consolidating their learning in this area. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

77. Evidence provided by the course provider demonstrated the provision of counselling and occupational health services as well as careers advice and support. Clear information on the university website provided access details for the services, the Course Handbook listed resources and an online hub, Firstpoint, all supported students to know where to access services. Induction was used to introduce students to services they could access, which included support from the Students' Union. During the meeting held with students, the inspection team heard that personal academic tutors and on-campus posters provided relevant information to students about the support available. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

78. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the Course Handbook and Programme Specification which both outlined the personal academic tutor system on offer to students, including what students were entitled to. Students on the course were also able to access the services from the library, Writers in Residence scheme, the Disability and Dyslexia service and the Centre for Academic English and Skills. Incorporated into the module Fundamentals for Practice were three 2-hour academic writing workshops which supported all students. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

79. The fitness to practise procedures and student disciplinary processes were laid out within the Course Handbook and reviewed by the inspection team prior to the

inspection. A Conduct, Health and Safety agreement was required to be signed by students each year for all modules which included practise based learning. Occupational health assessments were completed by a private provider and students were able to be referred for an assessment at any point during the course. The students the inspection team met with confirmed they would feel comfortable sharing information with the Programme Lead if their circumstances changed whilst studying on the course. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

80. In relation to this standard, the inspection team were provided with policy guidelines governing inclusive assessment and reasonable adjustments at the university. Other overarching policies informed the processes followed by the course team and included the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and the Inclusion Toolkit. Students were made aware of support available to them within their handbook, and personal academic tutors were also able to advise them. Practice Placement Adjustment Plans were put in place to facilitate the provision of reasonable adjustments for students in their practice settings and were coordinated by the Disability and Dyslexia Service. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

81. Information for students on the course was provided through a range of sources, and included details of their curriculum, placements, assessments and requirements of professional registration including CPD. The course webpage provided information about professional registration, and this was repeated in the Course Handbook, along with curriculum and assessment content. Within the module Fundamentals of Practice, students were taught about the professional requirements and being employed as a social worker.

82. During the meeting with the course team, the inspection team received additional evidence about the pre induction information provided to international students. The inspection team heard that international students were sent an infographic which included information about Social Work England, the professional standards and the nature of regulation for social work. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

83. The inspection team were provided with the university's Attendance policy, the Programme Specification, Course Handbook and the Award Map which all stipulated that modules were compulsory. Attendance at skills days and placement days were recorded on an online register within PebblePad, the online portfolio assessment tool. An online register was maintained for attendance at teaching sessions at university and was managed and overseen by personal academic tutors. During the meeting with the course team, the inspection team heard that 6 weeks into the course, data was shared with staff which included students' attendance levels, engagement with assessments and assessments which required repeating. This supported the course team with early identification of particular needs of students, and the opportunity to revisit important course requirements where necessary. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

84. Principles for students' assessment and feedback was outlined and reviewed by the inspection team within the Assessment policy, and information was provided for students within Blackboard, the online learning platform. The module specifications illustrated the variety of summative and formative assessments integrated into the course and students confirmed that they received feedback in a timely manner. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

85. In relation to this standard, the inspection team reviewed the academic appeals process and associated guidance available on the university's website. The Course Handbook provided details of these processes for students. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

86. As the qualifying course is an MA Social Work course, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

The inspection team recommend that the course be approved.

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
Admissions			
1.1 Confirm on entry to the course, via a holistic/multi-dimensional assessment process, that applicants: i. have the potential to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards ii. can demonstrate that they have a good command of English iii. have the capability to meet academic standards; and iv. have the capability to use information and communication technology (ICT) methods and techniques to achieve course outcomes.	☒	☐	☐
1.2 Ensure that applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes.	☒	☐	☐
1.3 Ensure that employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work are involved in admissions processes.	☒	☐	☐
1.4 Ensure that the admissions processes assess the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character. This includes criminal conviction checks.	☒	☐	☐
1.5 Ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.	☒	☐	☐
1.6 Ensure that the admissions process gives applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
take up an offer of a place on a course. This will include information about the professional standards, research interests and placement opportunities.			
Learning environment			
2.1 Ensure that students spend at least 200 days (including up to 30 skills days) gaining different experiences and learning in practice settings. Each student will have: i) placements in at least two practice settings providing contrasting experiences; and ii) a minimum of one placement taking place within a statutory setting, providing experience of sufficient numbers of statutory social work tasks involving high risk decision making and legal interventions.	☒	☐	☐
2.2 Provide practice learning opportunities that enable students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards.	☒	☐	☐
2.3 Ensure that while on placements, students have appropriate induction, supervision, support, access to resources and a realistic workload.	☒	☐	☐
2.4 Ensure that on placements, students' responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training.	☒	☐	☐
2.5 Ensure that students undergo assessed preparation for direct practice to make sure they are safe to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting.	☒	☐	☐
2.6 Ensure that practice educators are on the register and that they have the relevant and	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
current knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.			
2.7 Ensure that policies and processes, including for whistleblowing, are in place for students to challenge unsafe behaviours and cultures and organisational wrongdoing, and report concerns openly and safely without fear of adverse consequences.	☒	☐	☐
Course governance, management and quality			
3.1 Ensure courses are supported by a management and governance plan that includes the roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability of individuals and governing groups in the delivery, resourcing and quality management of the course.	☒	☐	☐
3.2 Ensure that they have agreements with placement providers to provide education and training that meets the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards. This should include necessary consents and ensure placement providers have contingencies in place to deal with practice placement breakdown.	☒	☐	☐
3.3 Ensure that placement providers have the necessary policies and procedures in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk, and the support systems in place to underpin these.	☒	☐	☐
3.4 Ensure that employers are involved in elements of the course, including but not limited to the management and monitoring of courses and the allocation of practice education.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
3.5 Ensure that regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems are in place, and that these involve employers, people with lived experience of social work, and students.	☒	☐	☐
3.6 Ensure that the number of students admitted is aligned to a clear strategy, which includes consideration of local/regional placement capacity.	☒	☐	☐
3.7 Ensure that a lead social worker is in place to hold overall professional responsibility for the course. This person must be appropriately qualified and experienced, and on the register.	☒	☐	☐
3.8 Ensure that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff, with relevant specialist subject knowledge and expertise, to deliver an effective course.	☒	☐	☐
3.9 Evaluate information about students' performance, progression and outcomes, such as the results of exams and assessments, by collecting, analysing and using student data, including data on equality and diversity.	☒	☐	☐
3.10 Ensure that educators are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice.	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum and assessment			
4.1 Ensure that the content, structure and delivery of the training is in accordance with relevant guidance and frameworks and is designed to enable students to demonstrate	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendatio n given
that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards.			
4.2 Ensure that the views of employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work are incorporated into the design, ongoing development and review of the curriculum.	☒	☐	☐
4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and human rights and legislative frameworks.	☒	☐	☐
4.4 Ensure that the course is continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice.	☒	☐	☐
4.5 Ensure that the integration of theory and practice is central to the course.	☒	☐	☐
4.6 Ensure that students are given the opportunity to work with, and learn from, other professions in order to support multidisciplinary working, including in integrated settings.	☒	☐	☐
4.7 Ensure that the number of hours spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator is sufficient to ensure that students meet the required level of competence.	☒	☐	☐
4.8 Ensure that the assessment strategy and design demonstrate that the assessments are robust, fair, reliable and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
necessary to meet the professional standards.			
4.9 Ensure that assessments are mapped to the curriculum and are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression through the course.	☒	☐	☐
4.10 Ensure students are provided with feedback throughout the course to support their ongoing development.	☒	☐	☐
4.11 Ensure assessments are carried out by people with appropriate expertise, and that external examiner(s) for the course are appropriately qualified and experienced and on the register.	☒	☐	☐
4.12 Ensure that there are systems to manage students' progression, with input from a range of people, to inform decisions about their progression including via direct observation of practice.	☒	☐	☐
4.13 Ensure that the course is designed to enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice, underpinned by skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to research and evaluation.	☒	☐	☐
Supporting students			
5.1 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing including: i. confidential counselling services; ii. careers advice and support; and iii. occupational health services	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendatio n given
5.2 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their academic development including, for example, personal tutors.	☒	☐	☐
5.3 Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health.	☒	☐	☐
5.4 Make supportive and reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments to enable them to progress through their course and meet the professional standards, in accordance with relevant legislation.	☒	☐	☐
5.5 Provide information to students about their curriculum, practice placements, assessments and transition to registered social worker including information on requirements for continuing professional development.	☒	☐	☐
5.6 Provide information to students about parts of the course where attendance is mandatory.	☒	☐	☐
5.7 Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students on their progression and performance in assessments.	☒	☐	☐
5.8 Ensure there is an effective process in place for students to make academic appeals.	☒	☐	☐
Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register			

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendatio n given
6.1 The threshold entry route to the register will normally be a bachelor’s degree with honours in social work.	☒	☐	☐

Regulator decision

Approval.