Education quality assurance – Course change review report

Report date:

25/08/2026

Contents

Documentary review details....1
About the review....1
Findings....2
Conclusions....5
Regulator decision....5

Documentary review details

Inspection ID	EHU001_002
Course provider	Edge Hill University
Validating body (if different)	Click or tap here to enter text.
Course name	MA Social Work BA (Hons) Social Work
Mode of study	Full time
Proposed first intake	01/09/2026
Maximum student cohort	MA Social Work – 20 BA (Hons) Social Work – 50 Agreed flexibility of cohort numbers across both programmes, with a maximum combined total of 70.
Review type	Course change
Review team	Registrant Inspector – Chris Stogdon Lay Inspector – Jo Benn Education Quality Assurance Officer – Caroline Reynolds
Review team recommendation	Approved
Regulator decision	Approved
Regulator decision date	21/10/2026

About the review

1. Edge Hill University have made several changes to the MA Social Work (full-time). This is to accommodate the co-teaching associated with the introduction of the new MA Social Work (part-time). The approval inspection for this new course took place during 7-9 July

2026. In addition, revisions have been made to the recruitment and admissions processes for the BA (Hons) Social Work and the MA Social Work (full-time).

2. The key objectives of the changes were to align elements of the full-time and part-time programmes through a co-teaching model where appropriate. The course provider outlined that this approach enabled shared learning opportunities, promoted consistency in the student experience, and ensured equitable access to teaching, resources, and academic support across both modes of study.

3. The review also provided an opportunity for the course provider to strengthen the applicant and student journey by refining recruitment, admissions, and programme processes, increasing clarity and consistency from initial enquiry through to enrolment and progression, ensuring applicants received accurate information and a streamlined admissions experience while maintaining compliance with professional standards and university regulations.

4. In addition, the changes aimed to improve the overall student experience by reducing duplication, increasing consistency across programme documentation, and ensuring programme information accurately reflected current practice.

5. As part of the course change request process, the course provider submitted narrative outlining the changes, together with documentary evidence.

6. Inspector partners were recruited to review the course change. Within the evidence submission, the course provider identified that the following education and training standards were impacted by the changes: 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 2.1, 2.5, 3.1, 3.7, 3.8, 4.8 and 5.3.

Findings

Standard 1.1

7. We reviewed the course provider's application process. Applicants were required to submit a personal statement and demonstrate appropriate information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Applications were screened by the central admissions department against defined criteria.

8. Suitable applicants were shortlisted, with cases relating to widening participation or suitability referred to the social work admissions lead for a decision.

9. Applicants were required to hold a minimum 2:1 degree in a relevant subject and an appropriate English language qualification. International applicants were required to achieve an IELTS score of 7.0 overall, or an equivalent qualification. In line with the Cheshire & Merseyside Social Work Teaching Partnership (CMSWTP) guidance, applicants meeting widening participation criteria could be considered with a 2:2 degree.

10. We heard that any further suitability concerns were reviewed by the programme lead or, in their absence, the admissions lead. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

11. We reviewed the entry criteria and interview preparation guidance. Eligible candidates were required to provide evidence of relevant paid or voluntary work experience and demonstrate how this related to the skills and values of social work. Applicants were assessed through a pre-prepared short presentation and an individual interview, with a strong emphasis placed on communication and group-working skills. Interviews were conducted by a member of the academic team alongside a person with lived experience.

12. We also heard that applications from individuals seeking to transfer from other institutions or programmes through the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RP[E]L) process were considered for admission against a defined set of criteria. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

13. We examined the DBS guidance and process, including the electronic Declaration of Suitability (DoS) form. We heard that the form was revisited when students re-enrolled for subsequent years of study. The DoS form had been updated to include consideration of private proceedings, social care involvement within the previous 12 months, prior enrolment on social work programmes at higher education institutions, and professional registration. Applicants were advised that this information would not automatically preclude admission to the course and were signposted to relevant university and professional body guidance. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

14. Documentary evidence, including details of offer-holder days and postgraduate open evenings, was reviewed. The course provider outlined that applicants were reminded during their interview of placement requirements, the mode of study, relevant professional standards, and additional programme obligations, such as DBS checks and completion of the DoS. We heard that this helped ensure applicants were fully informed before deciding whether to accept an offer. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 2.1

15. Documentary evidence was provided on the new level 7 module, Preparation for Contemporary Practice, which was introduced to replace Contemporary Social Work Practice. The module brought together year one University Placement Days (UPDs), skills development, the Assessed Readiness for Direct Practice (ARDP), and personal and professional development planning, which had previously been delivered separately. We heard that this change was to improve coherence, strengthen the ARDP process, and reduce student workload.

16. The new module included 17 UPDs, including 3 ARDP sessions, contributing to the 30 UPDs requirements. Students completed a digital reflective workbook and were required to pass the ARDP before progressing to placement. The module also introduced the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), the Professional Standards, and the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) required for practice.

17. The remaining 13 UPDs and skills sessions were aligned to key progression points, including court-room skills preparation before statutory placement and employment preparation in the final year. Learning outcomes remained broadly unchanged.

18. The programme's credit weighting was revised to reflect Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) requirements. The new module was reduced from 20 to 10 credits, with the remaining 10 credits reallocated to placement 2 to reflect its increased complexity and assessment requirements. There were no changes to placement one, the 100-day placement.

19. Evidence of partner consultation was provided. The inspectors determined that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

20. As stated under standard 2.1, the ARDP has been incorporated into the new module, which is delivered and assessed in year one. The assessment components previously included within the ARDP have been retained and now form part of the module's summative assessment. The assessment includes practical elements, such as conducting an interview with a person with lived experience and completing a reflective workbook. We heard that the workbook encouraged students to critically explore and reflect on the social work values that underpin their developing professional practice. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.1

21. We reviewed the updated staffing structure and staff CVs. The lead social worker role was undertaken by a registered and qualified social worker who was a member of the academic team across all social work programmes. They remained actively involved in management team forums; however, responsibility for this role no longer formed part of the head of department position. The inspectors determined that the new management structure clearly supported the roles and responsibilities of the course team and therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

22. The inspectors agreed that the lead social worker who holds overall professional responsibility for the social work programmes, is appropriately qualified, experienced and registered, and therefore were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

23. As highlighted under standard 3.1, there had been some changes within the social work course team; however, the overall number of lecturer posts had remained unchanged. Staff profiles demonstrated the team's experience and qualifications. All members of the team, except for one individual, were registered. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

24. The programme team outlined how they had responded to student feedback and progression data by revising assessment strategies across several modules. We heard that the changes reflected in module specifications had reduced assessment burden, improved alignment with learning outcomes, and strengthened preparation for professional practice.

25. Programme enhancements included the introduction of a pass/fail reflective workbook to support preparation for direct practice. Assessments were streamlined across the programme, reducing over-assessment while maintaining achievement of learning outcomes. A revised case study presentation and Q&A format replaced previous assessment methods, responding to student feedback, reducing resubmission rates, and providing a more practice-focused evaluation of legal knowledge, critical reflection, and professional communication skills.

26. Research-focused learning was repositioned earlier in the programme to strengthen dissertation preparation and progression. This supported earlier development of research proposals, increased engagement with research methods, and enabled reassessment opportunities to be completed before final placements. We heard that additional research methodology and ethics workshops, combined with individual supervision, further strengthened students' confidence in applying research principles and promoted interdisciplinary learning.

27. Placement timings were adjusted to allow greater use of reassessment opportunities and reduce pressure during practice learning. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

28. As highlighted under standard 1.4, a review stage was introduced within the DoS process, enabling students to revisit and update the information provided at the start of the programme to ensure its accuracy and currency. To support this, we heard that DoS reviews were incorporated into transition weeks for continuing students. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Conclusions

The inspectors are recommending that the change be approved.

Regulator decision

Approved.