

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Wolverhampton

Course approval: BA (Hons) Social Work, MA Social Work Full Time route with PGDip Social Work (Masters exit route), PGDip Social Work Part Time

Inspection dates: 17/05/22 – 20/05/22

Report date:	31 st January 2023
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	2 nd February 2023
Date conditions met and approved:	27 th September 2023

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Introduction

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

What we do

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

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

9. During this time a draft plan for the inspection is developed and shared with the education provider, to make sure it is achievable at the point of inspection.
10. Once the inspectors and officer are satisfied that an inspection can take place, this is usually undertaken over a two to three-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. As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, inspections are currently being carried out via remote virtual arrangements, and typically last three to four days.
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 Wolverhampton 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.

Inspection ID	UWOR2
Course provider	University of Wolverhampton
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	BA (Hons), MA Social Work with PGDIP exit route and PGDip Social Work
Mode of study	Full time and Part time
Maximum student cohort	
Date of inspection	17 th – 20 th May 2022
Inspection team	Naomi Barrett (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Hannah Brown (Head of Education Quality Assurance) Michelle Loughrey (Lay Inspector) David Ward (Registrant Inspector)
Inspector recommendation	Approval with conditions
Approval outcome	Approval with conditions

Language

16. In this document we describe The University of Wolverhampton as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the BA (Hons), MA Social Work, PGDip exit route and PGDip Social Work as ‘the course’.

Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from 17th to 20th May 2022. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employers, Practice Educators and people with lived experience of social work.

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

Conflict of interest

19. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

20. The inspection team met with students from both the BA (Hons) and MA Social Work courses. The MA students included those in years 1 and 2 of their course. BA (Hons) students were those at levels 4, 5 and 6. Discussions included students' experience of applying for the course, their overall experience of the course, teaching and learning, preparation for placement, student support services, awareness of being a regulated profession with professional standards and the resourcing of their course.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the course team, professional services support team and members of the senior leadership team.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with Service User and Carer Strategy Co-ordinator and people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in the course through the SUCCESS programme. Discussions included their experiences of working with the course team and students, the specific activities they have been directly involved in the current course and how they expect to be involved in the organisation and delivery of the course.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including Wolverhampton City Council, Shropshire County Council, Birmingham City Council and Walsall Council, along with CAFCASS, Shared Lives and St Christophers Fostering. The inspection team also met with a group of practice educators to understand how practice education is organised and overseen at the university.

Findings

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

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

25. The university provided documentary evidence relating to the admissions process and the wider university policies and procedures for admissions. All applications are processed by the Admissions Team who check for the required level of education and qualifications. They are then reviewed by the admissions tutor to review experience and suitability for interview. The inspection team saw evidence to demonstrate that the interview process was developed in line with the West Midlands Teaching Partnership Best Practice in Admissions to Pre-Qualifying Social Work Programmes guidance. The inspection team reviewed evidence outlining the written test to assess the applicants' ability to analyse and present written information; and a group discussion task is used to review communication and interpersonal skills. Evidence was also provided to outline the interview process and guidance on how this is undertaken.

26. The university also provided evidence to support the recruitment of international applications and gave examples of where this has been applied.

27. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

28. The inspection team reviewed the admission process and were satisfied that applicants are required to demonstrate evidence of lived experience, work and voluntary experience before any conditional offer is made. The application of this process was confirmed in discussion with the course team and with students.

29. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

30. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence to demonstrate the involvement of a range of perspectives in the admissions process. There was strong evidence of involvement of people with lived experience through the SUCCESS programme and it was clear that they were able to actively contribute to decision making. There was also evidence to demonstrate how employer representatives and registered social workers were involved in the process. It was acknowledged that Covid-19 and changes in course personnel had temporarily impacted on these arrangements.

31. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

32. The university provided evidence of the processes used to assess the suitability of applicants, including factors relating to their conduct, health and character. The inspection team confirmed with students that they had been required to complete a declaration of health and Disclosure and Barring Service check.

33. A third party provider is procured to provide occupational health questionnaires for applicants to complete.

34. Processes were also in place for non-UK applicants who are required to provide a copy of an international certificate of good character.

35. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

36. The course provider provided documentary evidence relating to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies prior to inspection. The inspection team met with support staff who specialise who confirmed that queries or concerns raised during an application would be picked up immediately and passed to the relevant team. This includes any support or reasonable adjustments required in advance of the interview.

37. When meeting with the students they confirmed to the inspection team that they had received individual support based on their needs and were confident that they knew where they could go and that they would be assisted should any additional support be needed. The inspection team heard from students about the positive experiences that they had at the university open days and the supportive conversations that they had with staff in relation to equality and inclusion.

38. The inspection team reviewed evidence to demonstrate the staff involved in the admissions process had received relevant training on equality, diversity and inclusion, including content on unconscious bias. Representatives from the SUCCESS group confirmed their completion of in-house equality and diversity training in respect of undertaking interviews.

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

Standard 1.6

40. The inspection team reviewed the information about the BA (Hons) course on the university website. This included information on entry requirements, fees and finance, career pathways, course structure and an overview of modules, practice placements and travel requirements. The inspection team found similar information for the MA

programme, including details of the PGDip exit route to allow students to apply to register as a social worker with Social Work England.

41. The inspection team heard about the information provided at the selection day presentations, including an overview of social work, technology and facilities at the university and information about the requirement to register with Social Work England. Information was also available to help students prepare for the start of their course and provided in the form of podcasts and social media posts.

42. In the meeting with students, they provided positive feedback about the detailed course information on the university website.

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

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

44. The inspection team agreed that based on the documentary evidence provided and from discussions with the course team and placement partners that all students would be able to access a suitable placement that would meet the requirements of this standard. The university provided evidence to demonstrate the recording of number of placement days completed and any absences. The university also demonstrated evidence that students have access to contrasting placement experience.

45. The inspection team reviewed the practice learning handbook which makes explicit reference to this standard. The placement provider agreement requires placement settings to make the university aware of any student absence from their placement.

46. The university provided a clear structure for how practice learning and skills days are mapped out throughout the course duration. In the discussions with students, they provided variable feedback on the relevance and effectiveness of skills days. Students were not always clear on the purpose or topic being covered on skills days. As such, the inspection team have agreed to recommend that the course provider should review the purpose and focus of specific skills days in order for students to understand the outcomes and value of the sessions. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [recommendations](#) section of this report.

Standard 2.2

47. The inspection team reviewed the university's arrangements for providing practice learning opportunities that enable students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop their practice and meet the professional standards. The inspection team reviewed information about the Practice Learning Development Worker role and the Placement 48.

48. Development Form to quality assure practice learning and how the experience will map across to the professional standards.

49. The inspection team considered the practice learning agreement to support the student to identify their key learning objectives and the experiences they need to have from their placement. There is also a student placement provider agreement in place to ensure that placements will have appropriate preparation and support for students.

50. The university provided evidence of the placement preparation workshop to give clear information about practice learning and the requirements and outcomes for practice placements.

51. Evidence was provided in relation to the mid-point review to ensure that the placement is appropriate and is providing opportunities for the student to develop knowledge and skills to meet the areas identified in the practice learning agreement.

52. The course team described how the professional standards are mapped across all learning opportunities to ensure that students are able to meet them by the end of the programme. The inspection team heard how the standards are used in the development of the skills days.

53. Meetings with placement providers and practice educators confirmed the effectiveness of the arrangements to match students with appropriate learning opportunities. The inspection team agreed it was evident that there are good working relationships with placement partners, and students have appropriate and diverse placement experiences. The students described this in their meeting with the inspection team and provided examples of positive experiences.

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

Standard 2.3

55. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included placement handbooks and the Practice Learning Agreement which covered the processes for induction, supervision and quality assurance.

56. Students have the support of their Personal Tutor, Practice Educator and Placement Supervisor who they can contact directly should they require additional advice or guidance whilst on placement. Placement supervisors are supported to attend 2 day training courses to outline the expectations of their role, including supervision, dealing with concerns, induction and the practice learning agreement. Students also told the inspection team of how the reasonable adjustments and personal support they needed was positively met by the placement provider, who were able to implement the adjustments. The students spoke positively about the support provided.

57. Student support was also explored with Practice Educators, who were able to provide examples of how they had supported students with reasonable adjustments or mitigating circumstances whilst on placement. Practice Educators described how students are clear on placement expectations and expressed their experiences of how students are confident to organise and coordinate meetings depending on their needs.

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

Standard 2.4

59. The inspection team reviewed the documentary evidence and processes for auditing placements, to determine the level of placement and matching of student to placement with the course team.

60. The inspection team heard from the course team about practice learning agreement meetings with students commencing placements. The learning needs and workload for each student is agreed at these meetings, as is the induction plan and the frequency of supervision throughout the placement. A mid placement review is also arranged to review progress, ensure learning objectives are being met and plan the latter half of the placement. Both the students and the Practice Educators gave clear examples to the inspection team of these processes working effectively. The inspection team heard examples of how the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) is used to guide learning opportunities and ensure that the student's responsibilities whilst on placement are commensurate with the stage of education and training.

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

Standard 2.5

62. The inspection team were satisfied with the evidence provided in relation to students' assessed preparation for practice. The evidence demonstrated that BA (Hons) and MA students were assessed on readiness for practice at regular intervals throughout the duration of the programme. A readiness for direct practice interview is undertaken by all students at the end of the Preparing for Social Work Practice module. Students who do not demonstrate the standard expected are required to re-sit the interview. Students are also required to complete self audit tools to enable them to reflect on their skills and development needs.

63. The SUCCESS group gave examples of how they are involved in the assessment process.

64. Practice Educators expressed confidence with the preparation and competence of students and gave examples of how the Practice Educator, student and university staff have worked well together to identify when a student needs additional support to ensure placement needs are met and worked to a clear process to attempt to resolve this.

65. The university also provided details of placement preparation days.

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

Standard 2.6

67. The university advised that practice educators have completed the practice educator professional standards (PEPS) course from the teaching partnership.

68. The inspection team heard how the university does not currently monitor the current knowledge and skills and how practice educators keep up to date with their practice in an ongoing and systematic way.

69. The inspection team felt that this left a gap in ensuring that practice educators still had relevant and current knowledge and that there needed to be a check to ensure that any practice educators are still registered on an ongoing basis. As such, the university was not able to demonstrate adequate assurance that the standard has been met.

70. The inspection team is recommending a [condition](#) is set against standard 2.6 in relation to the approval of this course.

Standard 2.7

71. The inspection team reviewed documentation that ensured relevant policies and procedures were available during placement. This included whistleblowing, complaints and safeguarding policies in the Practice Learning Handbook.

72. In discussions with students and practice educators, they were able to demonstrate their awareness of the policies.

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

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

74. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence submitted which included the course team CVs, information around the delivery of the course and module lead responsibilities.

75. Further evidence was provided of the governance structure of the course within the wider Faculty of Education, Health and Well-being along with the regular operational, quality assurance and strategic meeting schedules and this information was confirmed by inspectors when meeting with senior management. The inspection team were satisfied that they could see a clear course governance structure and support available for the course team.

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

Standard 3.2

77. The university provided documentary evidence of the processes and agreements in place with placement providers. The inspection team saw evidence of new placement agreements to clarify the expectations and requirements for agencies providing practice placements. The agreements set out arrangements for supervision, health and safety and explained roles and responsibilities.

78. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence to illustrate how placements met the regulatory standards and how placements were adjusted to meet the student's learning needs. This included the Quality Assurance Practice Learning (QAPL) audit.

79. Placement breakdown procedures were discussed with the course team, students and practice educators who described the process consistently and identified appropriate contingencies for alternative placement locations.

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

Standard 3.3

81. The inspection team reviewed policies and procedures which included information about student health, well-being and risk, along with the support that is available. This included the practice learning agreement and evidence from mid-point review meetings. Students provided examples of the support available from practice educators and personal tutors.

82. The inspection team also considered information relating to the training for practice supervisors and personal tutors covering support for students and dealing with concerns. The university also provided evidence from the Social Work Practice Quality Group outlining aspects of quality assurance in practice education, including arrangements for risk assessment and health and safety to ensure students are safe whilst on placement.

83. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

84. The inspection team reviewed evidence of how employers are involved in key aspects of the course, including the course management committee, confirming representation from a number of employers. There was also clear evidence of employer representatives delivering teaching on the programme.

85. The inspection team heard evidence of breakfast meetings held on a bi-monthly basis to provide a forum for the course team to meet with local partners and placement providers to discuss key issues from current research and identify further opportunities for collaboration.

The inspection team considered this to be particularly positive as a way of engaging employers in the programme. There was good evidence of consultation with employers around the development of the MA programme.

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

Standard 3.5

87. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence to demonstrate effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems. This included minutes from the Social Work Practice Quality Group meetings. There was clear evidence of the involvement of people with lived experience of social work as demonstrated by consultation findings with the SUCCESS group and wider consultation with people drawing on social work.

88. The inspection team heard from students about the opportunities they have to give feedback and to contribute to the monitoring and review of the programmes.

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

Standard 3.6

90. The university provided evidence to demonstrate how the number of students admitted to the programmes are aligned to the overall vision for the School and included in the practice learning strategy. The inspection team could see that this includes consideration of practice placement capacity and access to practice educators. This was confirmed by discussions with the course team who also provided evidence of effective working with as part of the West Midlands Teaching Partnership.

91. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

92. Prior to inspection the inspection team reviewed the curriculum vitae of the Programme Leaders for each of the programmes and confirmed they are registered social workers. The course team described to inspectors how they had recent and relevant knowledge of contemporary social work practice, and were supported by the university to maintain this knowledge and to grow relationships with key stakeholders such as placement partners and people with lived experience of social work, as well as dedicated time provided to pursue research opportunities.

93. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

94. The course team were able to demonstrate, through documentary evidence reviewed by the inspection team, that they are adequately resourced and supported by senior

management. The course team provided curriculum vitae to outline their qualifications and experience; and the inspection team could see that there was a broad range of experience and expertise across the team.

95. When the inspection team met with students they also gave positive feedback about teaching and assessment methods.

96. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

97. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence submitted about how the university collects and maintains executive level data including precise information about student performance and progression and student EDI data, and how these feed into monitoring and evaluative processes.

98. The inspection team heard how the SITS student management system provides a systematic way of collating student data; and the University's Strategic Planning and Performance Office provides statistical information by school, route, gender, ethnicity, disability, age, level of study, retention figures and module results.

99. At the programme level the inspection team saw and heard evidence of regular moderation and external examiner reporting and evaluation. The inspection team saw evidence of the system to record, monitor and assess progress at mid and end points of modules; and to evaluate practice placement progression.

100. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

101. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence submitted about the staff development programme, for staff to maintain awareness and skills in teaching and learning and specific sessions about current issues within social work. The course team provided evidence to demonstrate support for continuing professional development and are encouraged to undertake research. The inspection team heard how four members of the social work academic team are currently completing their PhDs with the university.

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

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

103. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence submitted prior to inspection which shows the how both the current and proposed programmes identify the module

content and learning outcomes mapped against the Social Work England Professional Standards. This included the course specification template and course module details.

104. The course team were able to demonstrate how the design and delivery of each module builds knowledge, skills and reflective practice and how the assessments are designed to link with module and course learning outcomes that link with the professional standards.

105. When meeting with students they were clear on the importance of being able to meet the professional standards prior to practise, and CPD requirements.

106. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

107. The university provided evidence to demonstrate that employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work contribute to the design, development and review of the curriculum. The inspection team considered evidence from consultations relating to the review and design of both the BA (Hons) and MA programmes. Evidence of consultation with practice educators, the SUCCESS group and employers was considered. The course team were able to provide examples of how this engagement shaped the development of the programmes. Meetings with those stakeholders confirmed the effectiveness of the approach taken and they could see how their views has contributed to development.

108. There was also evidence from the course management committee and the regular breakfast meetings held with local partners to engage them in course design and development.

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

Standard 4.3

110. The inspection team reviewed documentation to demonstrate that the course is designed to reflect equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and in accordance with human rights and the relevant legislative frameworks. The university provided evidence from the Inclusive Framework to demonstration EDI principles in the design and delivery of the curriculum. The inspection team also heard from students about the skills day on the MA programme for social workers to develop their own support systems and look after person well-being.

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

Standard 4.4

112. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence to demonstrate how the courses are continually updated. There was evidence to demonstrate how the courses have been developed to respond to in-house research and consultation findings. Evidence was provided to show that modules are developed by specialists in their respective areas of practice, drawing on research, policy and practice expertise.

113. Discussion with the course team provided assurance that there is a robust process for the programmes to be reviewed regularly through academic standards and quality assurance.

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

Standard 4.5

115. The inspection team reviewed the individual module descriptors to track across the programmes how theory and practice is integrated in the new BA (Hons) and MA courses. There is clear evidence to demonstrate where theory and practice are aligned along with the associated learning outcomes. This was explored in detail with the course team and examples were provided.

116. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

117. The inspection team reviewed evidence of a range of statutory and non-statutory placement settings to provide opportunity to work in a multi-agency context and with colleagues from other professional disciplines.

118. The university also provided information in relation to pre-placement workshops and resources to introduce students to professionals from other agencies and professional backgrounds as part of their learning.

119. The inspection team that they were satisfied that the standard was met.

120. However, from the evidence reviewed, the inspection team agreed that learning would be enhanced by additional opportunities to maximise the experience of joint working and learning from other professionals and have made a [recommendation](#) that the university explores this further.

Standard 4.7

121. The inspection team were able to review the module specifications within the Programme Specification, detailing the course structure with the required hours and could see that all academic modules on the BA (Hons) and MA programmes were aligned with the requirements of this standard.

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

Standard 4.8

123. The inspection team reviewed the MA assessment strategy documentation, and the course team provided examples of how the range of different assessment methods would test different skills and competencies. The inspection team considered the changes to the modules and timetables between the current course and the updated course. The documentary evidence demonstrated guidance in relation to assessment, marking, moderation and quality assurance processes. The module assessments are mapped against the curriculum, learning outcomes, PCF and relevant Social Work England Professional Standards.

124. The inspection team heard from the course team and support staff about support available regarding assessment and what reasonable adjustments were available for students with learning needs.

125. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

126. The inspection team reviewed documentation in relation to assessment, performance and progression. The inspection team agreed that the evidence reviewed demonstrated that assessments are carried out at appropriate stages during the current and updated programmes.

127. Through meetings with students at different stages and levels of the programmes, the inspection team heard about the effectiveness of specific modules and were provided with specific examples of the range of different assessment methods used.

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

Standard 4.10

129. The inspection team reviewed evidence to demonstrate that the university provided timely and meaningful feedback to students on their progress and performance at relevant stages of their course. The inspection team could see that there was a system for providing feedback through the virtual learning platform and that this was delivered within a set time of the submission of the assessment. The inspection team also heard that students at level 4 of the BA (Hons) and level 7 of the MA are allocated an Academic Coach to review feedback from assignments.

130. The inspection team heard from students who spoke positively about the quality of academic support provided and how it enabled them to progress against specific areas of learning and practice based on this feedback.

131. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

132. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence to demonstrate that assessment is carried out by individuals with appropriate expertise and experience. The inspection team cross referenced information in relation to external examiners which demonstrated that there were professionals with a diverse range of expertise involved in the assessment process, including social workers currently on the register with Social Work England.

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

Standard 4.12

134. The university provided evidence of clear systems and processes to review student progression, including direct practice observation. There was evidence outlining the processes for reviewing progression at regular intervals and the inspection team considered evidence from mid-point review meetings, involving practice tutors, practice educators and students.

135. Discussions with the course team, students and placement partners assured the inspection team that these processes were effective.

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

Standard 4.13

137. The university provided examples of how the programmes are designed based on evidence informed approaches to practice. The inspection team were satisfied that the course team had suitable skills, knowledge and understanding of research and evaluation based on their own experience. There was evidence of how modules for the current and new BA (Hons) and MA programmes both have a considerable research component.

138. Discussions with the course team and students demonstrated how the application of theory to practice underpinned the teaching on the course and the positive impact this had on reflective practice.

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

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

140. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence and university website links prior to inspection that outlined a range of advice and support services designed to meet both the academic and pastoral needs of all students. As well as the roles of Personal Tutors and Practice Educators, these services include confidential counselling services and student wellbeing, occupational health, careers advice, disability support, and student

finance and funding. Discussions with students confirmed that this support was available and gave positive feedback on their experience.

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

Standard 5.2

142. The inspection team considered evidence relating to the role of the personal tutor in relation to student support and academic development. Each student has an individual learner profile that includes communication, numeracy and digital skills. The inspection team heard how students are supported by an academic coach during the first year of both the BA (Hons) and MA programme.

143. The university provided evidence of support relating to study skills, including academic writing and referencing; and support relating to specific learning needs. When discussing individual needs and access to resources with students, the inspection team were provided with examples of reasonable adjustments and the effectiveness of this support.

144. The inspection team also heard about the value of academic support provided through the library, including study space and the loan of equipment.

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

Standard 5.3

146. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence, including the university code of conduct and disciplinary procedure and the Practice Learning Handbook, and were satisfied that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of student conduct, character and health. The Practice Learning Handbook covered areas relating to the professional standards, fitness to practice and BASW core values of social work.

147. The course team demonstrated how student suitability of conduct, character and health is assessed both at the start of the programme and through the duration of the programme. When meeting with students they were able to confirm their knowledge of the processes and requirements.

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

Standard 5.4

149. From reviewing documentation, including Policy Statement on Equality and Diversity, the Assessment Considerate Marking and Feedback Policy for Disabled Students, and practical tools such as the Tutor Awareness Sheet, the course provider was able to demonstrate that they are supportive of any reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments. When meeting with students, Practice Educators,

placement providers and specialist support staff, the inspection team were given specific examples of support that had been made available to students.

Standard 5.5

150. Following the review of documentary evidence provided by the university, the inspection team was not satisfied that students were provided with clear and consistent information about arrangements for practice placements. Information was also not available to support students to understand the transition to becoming a registered social worker and there was lack of clarity on the ASYE programme.

151. The inspection team was not satisfied that this standard was met and agreed that a [condition](#) should be set against standard 5.5 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that conditions are appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standards, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section.

Standard 5.6

152. The inspection team received evidence of this standard in documents and from discussion with the course team. There is clear explanation for students on the mandatory requirements of the programme detailed in the Practice Learning Handbook and course specification.

153. Information is provided to students at induction. There is clear instruction for students on what to do in case of absence and the handbook sets out clear information on the expectations of mandatory attendance such as the full numbers of days for placements.

154. Students confirmed their awareness of the mandatory elements of the course and consequences of non-attendance, as well as how to access support available to students if they are concerned about personal issues that may have an impact on attendance.

155. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

156. This standard is supported by commentary at 4.10. The inspection team heard from students that feedback was provided clearly and when expected, with options provided to students about following up on the feedback given.

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

Standard 5.8

158. The inspection team reviewed a range of documentary evidence, including the Procedure for Academic Appeals, Early Resolution Process, Student Complaints Procedure, and were satisfied that this demonstrated an effective process in place.

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

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

Standard 6.1

160. On the basis that the current and updated versions of the qualifying programmes are BA (Hons) and Masters in Social Work with a Postgraduate Diploma, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

114. The inspection team recommend that the course be approved with conditions. These will be monitored for completion.

Conditions

115. Conditions for approval are set if there are areas of a course that do not currently meet our standards. Conditions must be met by the education provider within the agreed timescales.

116. Having considered whether approval with conditions or a refusal of approval was an appropriate course of action, the inspection team are proposing the following conditions for this course at this time.

	Standard not currently met	Condition	Date for submission of evidence	Link
1	Standard 2.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates a robust process for checking and ensuring that practice educators are on the register and have the relevant qualifications and up to date knowledge and experience	3 months after report published	Paragraph 67
2	Standard 5.5	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates how and where accurate and timely information relating to placement activity and the transition to practice is provided and updated for students, enabling them to be best prepared for practice opportunities.	3 months after report published	Paragraph 150

Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	2.1	The inspection team recommend that the course review the focus of skills days in order for students	Paragraph 44

		to more effectively understand the purpose, outcomes and value of the sessions	
2	4.6	The inspectors are recommending that the course provider considers providing further opportunities for students to work with and learn from other professions in order to maximise the experience of joint working.	Paragraph 117

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

118. Table breakdown of standards met during preapproval and inspection.

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
Admissions			
1.1 Confirm on entry to the course, via a holistic/multi-dimensional assessment process, that applicants: i. have the potential to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards ii. can demonstrate that they have a good command of English iii. have the capability to meet academic standards; and iv. have the capability to use information and communication technology (ICT) methods and techniques to achieve course outcomes.	☒	☐	☐
1.2 Ensure that applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes.	☒	☐	☐
1.3 Ensure that employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work are involved in admissions processes.	☒	☐	☐
1.4 Ensure that the admissions processes assess the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character. This includes criminal conviction checks.	☒	☐	☐
1.5 Ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.	☒	☐	☐
1.6 Ensure that the admissions process gives applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on a course. This will include	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
information about the professional standards, research interests and placement opportunities.			
Learning environment			
2.1 Ensure that students spend at least 200 days (including up to 30 skills days) gaining different experiences and learning in practice settings. Each student will have: i) placements in at least two practice settings providing contrasting experiences; and ii) a minimum of one placement taking place within a statutory setting, providing experience of sufficient numbers of statutory social work tasks involving high risk decision making and legal interventions.	☒	☐	☒
2.2 Provide practice learning opportunities that enable students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards.	☒	☐	☐
2.3 Ensure that while on placements, students have appropriate induction, supervision, support, access to resources and a realistic workload.	☒	☐	☐
2.4 Ensure that on placements, students' responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training.	☒	☐	☐
2.5 Ensure that students undergo assessed preparation for direct practice to make sure they are safe to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting.	☒	☐	☐
2.6 Ensure that Practice Educators are on the register and that they have the relevant and current knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.	☐	☒	☐
2.7 Ensure that policies and processes, including for whistleblowing, are in place for students to	☒	☐	☐

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

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
includes consideration of local/regional placement capacity.			
3.7 Ensure that a lead social worker is in place to hold overall professional responsibility for the course. This person must be appropriately qualified and experienced, and on the register.	☒	☐	☐
3.8 Ensure that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff, with relevant specialist subject knowledge and expertise, to deliver an effective course.	☒	☐	☐
3.9 Evaluate information about students' performance, progression and outcomes, such as the results of exams and assessments, by collecting, analysing and using student data, including data on equality and diversity.	☒	☐	☐
3.10 Ensure that educators are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice.	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum and assessment			
4.1 Ensure that the content, structure and delivery of the training is in accordance with relevant guidance and frameworks and is designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards.	☒	☐	☐
4.2 Ensure that the views of employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work are incorporated into the design, ongoing development and review of the curriculum.	☒	☐	☐
4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
principles, and human rights and legislative frameworks.			
4.4 Ensure that the course is continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice.	☒	☐	☐
4.5 Ensure that the integration of theory and practice is central to the course.	☒	☐	☐
4.6 Ensure that students are given the opportunity to work with, and learn from, other professions in order to support multidisciplinary working, including in integrated settings.	☒	☐	☒
4.7 Ensure that the number of hours spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator is sufficient to ensure that students meet the required level of competence.	☒	☐	☐
4.8 Ensure that the assessment strategy and design demonstrate that the assessments are robust, fair, reliable and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards.	☒	☐	☐
4.9 Ensure that assessments are mapped to the curriculum and are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression through the course.	☒	☐	☐
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	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
appropriately qualified and experienced and on the register.			
4.12 Ensure that there are systems to manage students' progression, with input from a range of people, to inform decisions about their progression including via direct observation of practice.	☒	☐	☐
4.13 Ensure that the course is designed to enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice, underpinned by skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to research and evaluation.	☒	☐	☐
Supporting students			
5.1 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing including: I. confidential counselling services; II. careers advice and support; and III. occupational health services	☒	☐	☐
5.2 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their academic development including, for example, Personal Tutors.	☒	☐	☐
5.3 Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health.	☒	☐	☐
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.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
5.5 Provide information to students about their curriculum, practice placements, assessments and transition to registered social worker including information on requirements for continuing professional development.	☐	☒	☐
5.6 Provide information to students about parts of the course where attendance is mandatory.	☒	☐	☐
5.7 Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students on their progression and performance in assessments.	☒	☐	☐
5.8 Ensure there is an effective process in place for students to make academic appeals.	☒	☐	☐
Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register			
6.1 The threshold entry route to the register will normally be a bachelor's degree with honours in social work.	☒	☐	☐

Regulator decision

Approved with conditions

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

119. If conditions are applied to a course approval, Social Work England completes a conditions review to make sure education providers have complied with the conditions and are meeting all of the [education and training standards](#).

120. Inspectors will undertake the conditions review and make recommendations to Social Work England's decision maker.

121. This is in accordance with Social Work England's education and training rules 2019.

	Standard not met	Condition	Inspector recommendation
1	Standard 2.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates a robust process for checking and ensuring that practice educators are on the register and have the relevant qualifications and up to date knowledge and experience	Condition met
2	Standard 5.5	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates how and where accurate and timely information relating to placement activity and the transition to practice is provided and updated for students, enabling them to be best prepared for practice opportunities.	Condition met

Findings

The course provider submitted a wide range of evidence including their programme specification, practice handbook, information sheets and other documentation to assure the inspection team that they had taken appropriate action to respond to the conditions set.

The course provider submitted detailed evidence to demonstrate a robust approach for checking the qualifications, experience and registration of practice educators in response to the condition for standard 2.6. This included practice learning agreements, examples of curriculum vitae for practice educators and evidence of their qualifications. The provider maintains an overarching register of practice educators. As a result of this evidence, the inspection team agrees that this condition is now met.

The course provider submitted comprehensive documentation to evidence the range, level and depth of information provided to students to support them to prepare for practice

placements and to understand the requirements of practice learning. This related to the condition associated with standard 5.5. The evidence included learning materials used as part of a readiness for practice preparation session; induction and supervision arrangements; screenshots of learning from the online system; along with other support materials relating to the roles, responsibilities and requirements for practice learning. The inspection team agreed that this condition is now met.

Conclusion

The inspection team is recommending that the conditions have been met and as such, the course be approved.

Regulator decision

Approved