



Education quality assurance – Course change review report

Report date:

30/01/2026

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Documentary review details

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Inspection ID | USU1903 |
| Course provider | University of Suffolk |
| Validating body (if different) | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Course name | BA (Hons) Social work & BA (Hons) Social work degree apprenticeship |
| Mode of study | Choose an item. |
| Proposed first intake | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| Maximum student cohort | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Review type | Course change |
| Review team | Michael Isles – Registrant Inspector Luke Tibbits – Lay Inspector Daisy Bragadini – EQA Officer Nikki Steel-Bryan – Senior EQA Officer |
| Review team recommendation | Approved |
| Regulator decision | Approved |

About the review

The course provider underwent curriculum development to update their BA (Hons) Social work and BA (Hons) Social work degree apprenticeship. The changes included:

- A change in modular value across the courses from 20 credits per module to 30 credits per module
- The communication skills module was removed
- The research module was removed

- A new level 4 module was introduced which included new learning outcomes
- The module diet was reorganised across the learning levels
- All assessments were revised
- An update to the admissions process took place to remove the group exercise from the selection process
- Removal of the maths entry requirement for the apprenticeship had taken place for 2025/26 entry
- Removal of the maths entry requirement for the BA was planned for the 2026/27 entry

The course provider submitted a mapping form which identified the following standards as impacted by the changes:

| | |
|--------------|---------------|
| Standard 1.1 | Standard 4.7 |
| Standard 4.1 | Standard 4.8 |
| Standard 4.2 | Standard 4.9 |
| Standard 4.3 | Standard 4.10 |
| Standard 4.4 | Standard 4.13 |
| Standard 4.5 | Standard 5.1 |

Findings

The inspectors considered the reported changes to the admissions process and entry requirements and concluded that the relevant standards continued to be met (1.1).

The inspectors considered the changes to the module diet, curriculum and structure of the programme including the removal of the research and skills modules, and the change from 20 credit modules to 30 credit modules. The inspectors reported that the new course structure had been appropriately mapped to the professional standards and therefore the standard continued to be met (4.1). However, it was noted that inconsistencies appeared within the mapping of the apprenticeship knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs). Inspectors specifically highlighted that some module specification documents (MSDs) included KSB mapping, whereas others did not. Some MSDs had been updated to Skills England whereas others continued to refer to the Institute of Apprenticeships which was out of date at the point of the documentary review.

The course provider reported that there had been no changes made to the way in which the institution met standard 4.2 since the last inspection. However, evidence was submitted that demonstrated an event took place in June 2025 that aligned to this standard. The inspectors received and noted this evidence. Additionally, the course provider provided evidence against standard 4.13, however reported that no changes had been made to the evidence informed approach to practice of these courses. Therefore, inspectors acknowledged this evidence and agreed the standard continued to be met.

Following consideration of the evidence the inspectors were assured that the course continued to:

- Be designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and human rights and legislative frameworks (4.3)
- Ensure integration between theory and practice, and that this continued to be central to the course (4.5)
- Ensure a number of hours spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator that was sufficient to ensure that students met the required level of competence (4.7)
- Ensure that the assessment strategy and design that demonstrated assessment were 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 (4.8)
- Have assessments that were mapped to the curriculum and appropriately sequenced to match student progression (4.9)
- Provide feedback to students throughout the course to support ongoing development (4.10)
- Provide services to students to support their health and wellbeing including confidential counselling services, careers advice and support and occupational health services (5.1)

The inspectors carefully considered the evidence provided for the change in module value, and the removal of the dedicated communication skills module and the research skills module, in relation to standard 4.4. They noted that the introduction of 30 credit modules allowed for topics to be delivered in greater depth commensurate with the increase in guided learning hours. The spread of topics and modules was reported as being in line with coverage of the core components of a direct entry social work degree, and the spread of modules across the learning levels was appropriate.

The inspectors noted the loss of a dedicated communication skills module, however, acknowledged that the *Fundamentals of Social Work* module explicitly referenced communication skills development within the module aims and the learning outcomes. Inspectors also reported that the courses had been mapped to the professional standards where communication skills were reflected under 2.4, 2.5, 3.10, 3.11 and 5.6 demonstrating where these skills had been retained within the course changes. Inspectors agreed that this standard continued to be met.

Conclusions

The inspectors are recommending that the changes be approved.

However, it was noted that the documentation submitted in response to standard 1.1 included an entry requirement of BBB/DDM and that the course provider website advertised an entry requirement of BBC/DMM. The inspectors recommended that the university review to ensure consistency (1.6).

Inspectors recommended that the university consider the MSDs for the undergraduate qualifying courses to ensure accuracy in mapping.

Regulator decision

After reviewing the changes made to the BA (Hons) Social Work and BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship, the regulator has agreed that the course changes are approved.