

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Salford

Course approval: Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (Step Up to Social Work)

Inspection dates: 29/03/2022 - 01/04/2022

Report date:	30/05/2022
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	25/10/2022
Date conditions met and approved:	14/06/2023

Contents

Introduction	3
What we do	3
Summary of Inspection	5
Language	5
Inspection.....	6
Meetings with students	6
Meetings with course staff.....	6
Meeting with people with lived experience of social work	6
Meetings with external stakeholders.....	6
Findings	7
Standard one: Admissions.....	7
Standard two: Learning environment	10
Standard three: Course governance, management and quality.....	12
Standard four: Curriculum assessment.....	14
Standard five: Supporting students	18
Standard six: Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register	21
Proposed outcome.....	22
Conditions	22
Recommendations	23
Annex 1: Education and training standards summary	25
Regulator decision	32
Annex 2: Meeting of conditions.....	33
Findings	34
Conclusion.....	35
Regulator decision	35

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, onsite, or a combination of both 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 Salford's Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (Step Up) 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	USR2CP71
Course provider	University of Salford
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (Step Up to Social Work)
Mode of study	Full time accelerated
Maximum student cohort	60 across 2 partnerships
Date of inspection	29/03/2022 - 01/04/2022
Inspection team	Helen Challis, Education Quality Assurance Officer Lyn Westcott, Lay Inspector Aidan Phillips, Registrant Inspector
Inspector recommendation	Approved with conditions
Approval outcome	

Language

16. In this document we describe the University of Salford as 'the education provider' or 'the university' and we describe the Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (Step Up) as 'the course'.

Inspection

17. A remote inspection took place from 29th March to 1st April 2022. 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. The inspection team joined these meetings online with stakeholders joining both online and onsite at the course provider campus.

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 four student representatives; two of which were from the Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (Step Up to Social Work). Discussions included support for students, information for applicants, course content and delivery, and practice placements.

Meetings with course staff

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

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with two people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in admissions, assessment and delivery. This meeting also included a representative of a young people's group, with some lived experience, who was involved in the delivery of the course. The inspection team lead in discussions including how they became involved with the course and what elements they were involved in.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners, including Salford City Council and Leeds City Council, who are the Regional Leads for the Step Up to Social Work course.

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. It is a national requirement of the Step Up to Social Work course that applicants have a minimum of 6 months full-time (or equivalent) direct experience of working with vulnerable children, young people and/or families, carers or adults, either in a paid or voluntary capacity. Examples of relevant experience are therefore provided by applicants as part of their initial application, and these are reviewed via the application portal hosted by Capita and the regional partners before applicants are invited to attend the next recruitment step with the course provider.

26. The university provided documentary evidence including the Candidates List of Formal Interview Questions and Interview Assessors Guidance and Template. The latter included the scoring criteria relating to interview questions. Also, information on the wider university support mechanisms related to these processes was reviewed by the inspection team.

27. Meetings with regional leads, the course team and people with lived experience further confirmed that an assessment process was in place that ensured applicants had the capability and potential to meet the professional standards.

28. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

29. The inspection team was able to review examples of interview questions that would provide applicants with an opportunity to demonstrate prior relevant experience as part of the assessment centre and interview process.

30. They were also able to meet with applicants who provided examples of how they had applied and demonstrated their relevant experience as part of the admissions process.

31. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

32. At a national level, social workers and people with lived experience are required to be involved in interviewing, assessing, and selecting prospective candidates for all Step Up to Social Work courses. The Department for Education also sets an expectation that regional partnerships involve people with lived experience of social work in reviewing assessment exercises, interview questions and role plays at a local level.

33. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work who had been involved in the selection process for the course, including engaging in activities such as role plays. However, as their role was not explicit in the admissions documentation, the inspection team are recommending that the education provider outline and document the role of people with lived experience in the admissions process.

34. The inspection team were assured this standard was met but is making a recommendation in relation to Standard 1.3. Full details of recommendation can be found in the [recommendations table](#).

Standard 1.4

35. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection and during inspection included an Occupational Health Form, Applicant and Student Criminal Convictions Policy, and Admissions Retention Policy.

36. During meetings with students, the inspection team were given confirmation of annual checks on suitability. Processes were also discussed during meetings with course staff and the regional leads.

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

Standard 1.5

38. For all Step Up to Social Work courses the initial information made available to applicants is hosted by the Department for Education on an online portal/webpage. As the application process for this cohort had been completed, the portal was no longer accessible to the inspection team.

39. The inspection team did review the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy and had discussions with students, admission lead, regional leads and equality and diversity and inclusion lead. Topics discussed included specialist support and reasonable adjustments that had been made for students, the proactive measures being taken by the university with regards to widening participation and the national criteria for the Step Up to Social Work course and its impact on widening diversity.

40. In conversations with students, it was reported that applicants felt that they were applying to the local authority rather than the university.

41. Although it was clear to the course team and regional leads that any queries would be passed on to the most suitable person to answer them, it was not clear how the applicants would be aware of how to get in touch or find this information.

42. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against Standard 1.5 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard 1.6

43. The inspection team were aware, prior to inspection that applicants to the national Step Up to Social Work course apply via an online portal provided by the Department for Education. For Cohort 7, this had been hosted by Capita. This means the initial information provided about the Step Up to Social Work course is made available through these webpages and not via the university the applicants would be attending.

44. Meetings with students confirmed they felt that they were applying to the local authority rather than the university. Students also explained that the Frequently Asked Questions Sheet produced by the university had been extremely useful, but it had only been available at the interview stage.

45. The inspection team found that local authority websites dedicated to the course did not identify the university partner that students would be studying with. (As the tendering process for this has not been completed, the university partner cannot be advertised). This meant that during the admissions process, applicants did not have access to information they required to make an informed choice about whether or not to take up an offer of a place.

46. In addition, some course documents both at applicant and student stages refer to the previous regulator for social work.

47. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending conditions are set against Standard 1.6 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding 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 standard. Full details of the conditions, their monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

48. This standard is supported by commentary at 2.6.

49. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to and during the inspection included the HEI Audit, a sample list of the placements available, Practice Assessment Record and Evaluation (PARE) system files and the Local Authority Skills Days Guidance Document.

50. Meetings with regional leads, the course team and practice educators clarified their role in ensuring that contrasting placements are undertaken, and students are working at the right level with access to different learning opportunities.

51. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met and that the requirement for 200 days of placement activity is present.

Standard 2.2

52. Documentation submitted prior to the inspection included the First Placement Learning Agreement and Final Placement Learning Agreement. These, along with discussions with regional leads and students assured the inspection team that learning opportunities are both available and appropriate to the student's stage of education and training. These opportunities are monitored and documented through the ongoing review process via PARE.

53. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met.

Standard 2.3

54. Documentation submitted prior to and during the inspection included Quality Assurance Placement Learning forms, details from the PARE system. Discussions with students and practice educators confirmed that induction, supervision, support resources and realistic workloads were in place.

55. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met.

Standard 2.4

56. Documentation reviewed by the inspection team included the Interim Placement Report, student evaluation (on the PARE system) and the Placement Learning Agreement. All these documents contained the planning and monitoring of student responsibilities.

57. The inspection team met with students, practice educators and regional leads who all confirmed that these issues were discussed at both the initial and interim placement

meetings. Regional Leads also discussed the high rates for students transition from placements to roles within placement providers.

58. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met.

Standard 2.5

59. Documentation submitted prior to the inspection included the Readiness for Direct Practice Assessment Handbook, which outlined the assessment required prior to undertaking practice learning placements.

60. Students, staff, and people with lived experience confirmed their involvement in the assessment and the elements involved.

61. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met.

Standard 2.6

62. The inspection team reviewed the HEI Placement Audit document prior to inspection. This checks that practice educators have either a practice educator stage 1 or stage 2 qualification. It states that if stage 1 qualification is held, the practice educator must be observed by a mentor.

63. However, during meetings with practice educators, the inspection team learned that one practice educator had stage 1 and could not identify who was their mentor.

64. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met but is making a recommendation in relation to Standard 2.6. Full details of recommendation can be found in the [recommendations table](#).

Standard 2.7

65. The inspection team were able to review the Placement Handbook which outlined the university Whistleblowing Policy at Appendix 5. In addition, the HEI Audit confirms relevant policies are in place for the placement provider, whilst the Placement Learning Agreement documents have been explained to students.

66. During meetings with students and practice educators, they were able to identify relevant whistleblowing policies and procedures both in the workplace and at University of Salford.

67. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

68. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included the External Examiner Report Scheme of Academic Governance, the School of Health and Society Structure Chart, and the School of Health and Society Goals and Priorities document. These outlined how the course was governed and managed effectively.

69. In addition, during discussions with the Senior Management Team and the course team, the Programme Monitoring and Enhancement Procedure (PMEP) was outlined with the inspection team being given a copy of the Action Log that is produced from this process.

70. Throughout the inspection, meetings with stakeholders provided examples of how management structures had been communicated to them. When asked, students demonstrated clarity in understanding the course team structure and who to go to for support.

71. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met.

Standard 3.2

72. The inspection team reviewed the Placement Handbook prior to inspection, and a sample of practice placements undertaken by students during inspection.

73. During meetings with practice educators, regional leads and employers, the relationship with the Greater Manchester Social Work Academy (GMSWA) was outlined giving details about how placements were arranged. The GMSWA is the social work teaching partnership for this area and oversees placement sourcing and allocation.

74. The inspection team was informed that as two of the local authorities involved in the GMSWA were in special measures, the Department for Education and regional leads had oversight of placements to ensure no placements took place in any of the services that are currently in special measures.

75. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met.

Standard 3.3

76. In discussions with the course team and support services, the systems in place for student well-being were described, including the methods available for students to access these both on campus and on placement.

77. Discussions with regional leads and students confirmed the support available for students. One graduate the inspection team met with gave an example of how she had autism and dyslexia but chose not to disclose this. Support from tutors enabled her to

disclose her learning needs to the relevant teams. The specific support put in place for this student was described as 'instantaneous'.

78. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met.

Standard 3.4

79. In order to deliver this course, the university underwent a tendering process. Through this, employers clearly outline the requirements they have for the course, including student numbers.

80. During inspection the inspection team reviewed meeting minutes for the course, which included evidence of attendance from employers and their input. While meeting with employers, their involvement was confirmed.

81. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met.

Standard 3.5

82. The inspection team reviewed documentation relating to the PMEP, including the Action Log and meeting minutes with stakeholders. In addition, employers, students and people with lived experience discussed the involvement in the improvement systems.

83. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met.

Standard 3.6

84. Local Authorities, in consultation with the Department for Education establish the number of students within each regional partnership. The Local Authority numbers are fixed from the beginning and capacity is taken into account in their planning.

85. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met.

Standard 3.7

86. Prior to inspection, the inspection team reviewed the CVs for Head of Social Work and Course Lead. The inspection team confirmed that they were on the Social Work England register.

87. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met.

Standard 3.8

88. The inspection team reviewed student numbers and the CVs from the course team prior to inspection.

89. Discussions with the Senior Management Team included the methods used to evaluate staff and other resources, such as the staffing equation and the use of associate lecturers.

90. The inspection team were assured that this standard had been met.

Standard 3.9

91. 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.

92. Documents reviewed included the university's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy and Annual Report, and the External Examiner's report. During meetings with the course team, the Blackboard system elements relating to capturing performance and progression were shown and explained to the inspection team.

93. At the programme level the inspection team saw and heard evidence of regular moderation and external examiner reporting and evaluation.

94. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met.

Standard 3.10

95. During inspection, the inspection team met with the course team and Senior Management Team during which the various methods of maintaining currency in professional practice were discussed. Such methods included attending conferences, working with colleagues in practice and working with people with lived experience.

96. Evidence submitted prior to inspection included a list of staff development events. It was discussed how the university's staff development programme was halted during Covid but has now become available.

97. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

98. The inspection team were able to review the professional standards mapping form and module learning outcomes which showed consideration of design and assessment against the Professional Capabilities Framework and Social Work England professional standards.

99. This was further evidenced by students articulating their understanding of the professional standards in discussions with the inspection team, who were able to hear

examples of how the standards are taught and embedded throughout the course, in reflective assessment and on placement.

100. The inspection team agreed that there was clear evidence of how the course had been designed and structured to prepare students for professional practice as social workers.

101. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met.

Standard 4.2

102. The inspection team reviewed minutes from meetings with stakeholders and the Step Up to Social Work Action Log. During discussion with the inspection team, employers and practitioners gave examples of their input.

103. Whilst there was evidence of people with lived experience being involved in the application, delivery and assessment processes, the inspection team were unable to see evidence of how this stakeholder is involved in the formal process of development and review of the course.

104. The inspection team considered that where stakeholder feedback had been gathered formally, they were unable to see evidence of the changes made as a result. For example, on the Action Log it states amendment to module specifications yet does not explain the origin of this action or the reason for the change.

105. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that conditions are set against Standard 4.2 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding 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 standard. Full details of the conditions, their monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard 4.3

106. During discussions with the senior management team, EDI lead, course team and students the university was able to demonstrate how consistently the themes of social justice, equality, diversity and inclusion were embedded across the course.

107. The inspection team concluded that this standard had been met.

Standard 4.4

108. The inspection team found that throughout the inspection stakeholders provided confirmation that the course was continually updated. The oversight given by the

Department for Education to the Step Up to Social Work course means the course content is continually updated to reflect legislation and government policy.

109. The inspection team were able to review Step Up to Social Work meeting minutes and the Step Up to Social Work Action Log which identified embedding the revised Knowledge and Skills Statement for Children and Family Practitioners as requiring action.

110. The inspection team concluded that this standard had been met.

Standard 4.5

111. Evidence submitted included the module details for the course. They were reviewed by the inspection team. Social Work and Society is the first module studied on the course which underpins social work theory for students. Other modules further evidence the integration of theory to practice. The practice placement handbook also encourages theory and includes elements of critical reflection pieces of work and skills days.

112. Integration of theory and practice was also discussed with the course team and students during the inspection. These discussions gave an overview of how theory and practice are integrated throughout the course.

113. Whilst the inspection team agreed that there was integration of theory and practice within the course, they did find that there was inconsistency of the learning outcome descriptions within course documentation which students would also refer to. The inspection team agreed that this standard as met with a recommendation in relation to improving the course documentation to better reflect the level of study and to ensure consistency. Full details of recommendation can be found in the [recommendations table](#).

Standard 4.6

114. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence which demonstrated opportunities for multi-disciplinary learning in course modules, from guest practitioners and people with lived experience who contribute to the courses across the curriculum.

115. The senior management team told the inspection team about how they are developing interprofessional learning for health professions and police students, which will include using a simulation suite. Although this project doesn't currently include social work students, they are included as part of the wider development plans.

116. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met but are making a recommendation in relation this Standard 4.6. Full details of recommendation can be found in the [recommendations table](#).

Standard 4.7

117. During inspection, the inspection team saw and heard about the various systems for monitoring student attendance and performance.

118. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were able to examine the Programme Handbook and the university's Fitness to Practice Procedure which outlined the requirements of learners regarding attendance and level of competence.

119. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met.

Standard 4.8

120. The inspection team were able to review two previous External Examiner reports, assessments and the Assessment Strategy.

121. Further details were provided through discussion with students and the course team which assured the inspection team that this standard was met.

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

Standard 4.9

124. The inspection team reviewed course documents that set out how programme level outcomes are mapped to the curriculum and that the assessments have been set to best support student learning and progression at level 7. Documents reviewed also provided evidence of the systems of academic quality assurance processes and review with the teaching partnerships.

125. Further detail on students having the relevant knowledge and skills was provided through discussion with students, practice educators and regional leads.

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

Standard 4.10

127. The inspection team reviewed the Placement Handbook, the Assessment and Feedback Policy and assessments on the Blackboard system.

128. When meeting with students, the inspection team heard how about the feedback they had received and access to the academic markers helped their progression. Students also spoke about the assistance access to support services to help with study skills and their academic progression.

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

Standard 4.11

130. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included staff CVs and the External Examiner reports. The External Examiner was confirmed to be a registered social worker.

131. From the evidence provided the inspection team was assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

132. During inspection, the inspection team viewed the tracking system, PARE, used by the course team to track students' academic progression. Students and practice educators confirmed information from the Placement Handbook that outlined the process for direct observation procedure and resulting report.

133. During the inspection, students and employers stated that the tripartite meetings were vital for both tracking progression and identifying any potential barriers to progression.

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

Standard 4.13

135. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence prior to inspection which included the descriptor for Children and Families: Theory, Research and Legislation module. This module introduces research methods and consolidates student understanding of the evidence base for social work practice.

136. The inspection team heard how members of the programme team are engaged in social work research. The majority of lecturers contributing to the programme are skilled in research methods and research ethics.

137. The inspection team also heard from students how an evidence-informed approach is embedded throughout the course.

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

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

139. The inspection team reviewed links to the university's website that included details of the dedicated support services offered to students, including the Wellbeing and Counselling Service, Report and Support system, careers advice and the Disability Support service.

140. During the inspection, discussions were held with staff from the Wellbeing and Counselling Service, careers advice and the Disability Support service. These representatives assured inspectors that support is accessible to students both on campus and in the workplace, and that students are made aware of these services during induction.

141. The provision of responsive and effective support services was affirmed in discussions with students, who felt that even through the disruption and difficult circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, staff had been available to support their studies and signpost them to relevant specialist services.

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

Standard 5.2

143. Documents submitted in support of this standard included links to resources on the Student Hub, the Personal Tutor Policy and a list of personal tutors.

144. Discussions with the specialist librarian included the range of academic support available and its accessibility.

145. Meetings with employers and students the during the inspection week assured inspectors that support is accessible to students in all learning environments. The provision of responsive and effective support services was affirmed in discussions with students and staff.

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

Standard 5.3

147. Documentary evidence submitted included the university's Fitness to Practice Procedure, Fitness to Study Procedure, Annual Declaration of Good Health and Programme Handbook.

148. Discussions with the regional leads, practice educators and students throughout the inspection additionally assured inspectors that there were processes in place to ensure ongoing suitability.

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

Standard 5.4

150. Documentary evidence submitted prior to inspection summarised how students with health conditions or impairments were identified, assessed, and reasonable adjustments made via a Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP). In addition, RAPs are available for students who are estranged from family, care leavers, pregnant and new parents.

151. Examples of inclusive practice and reasonable adjustments being made in all learning environments were given during meetings with students and the course team.

152. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met but as not all students are onsite for the start of the course, they would like to make a recommendation to the course team that information about student support services is clearly covered at induction to strengthen this area of support and ensure consistency. Full details of recommendation can be found in the [recommendations table](#).

Standard 5.5

153. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Programme Handbook and links to Blackboard, the virtual learning environment. The inspection team found that this provided students with an overview of the curriculum, placements, learning outcomes and how these meet the professional standards. It also contained a summary of registering with Social Work England.

154. During inspection, the inspection team were given access to the course virtual learning environment, which supplemented information previously submitted. Discussions with students assured the inspection team that relevant information had been given.

155. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met but felt that a recommendation is appropriate to formalise the information students are given about registration with Social Work England. Full details of recommendation can be found in the [recommendations table](#).

Standard 5.6

156. Documentary evidence submitted included the programme handbook which stated the expectations of attendance and of the mandatory parts of the course. In addition, the staff team outlined how PARE system monitors attendance.

157. Meeting with students confirmed that the induction they received also made expectations clear and described the different methods for monitoring attendance and providing support.

158. The inspectors agreed that based on the documentary evidence provided the standard had been met.

Standard 5.7

159. Documentary evidence and narrative submitted outlined when and how the feedback would be given to support student development. These included documents such as the Assessment and Feedback Policy.

160. During meetings, students confirmed how feedback, especially from the Enhanced Learning Skills Coaches had helped them progress and improve.

161. The inspectors agreed that the standard had been met.

Standard 5.8

162. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included The Academic Appeals Procedure. The inspection team were informed that university complaints policy is also available through the University student pages.

163. The inspectors agreed that the standard had been met.

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

Standard 6.1

164. As the qualifying course is a Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (Step Up to Social Work), the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

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.

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	Standards 1.5 and 1.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that applicants have access to information regarding the accessibility of the assessment process, examples of the reasonable adjustments that could be made and contact details for discussing requirements.	14/11/2022	Paragraph 38 Paragraph 43
2	Standard 1.6	The education provider will provide evidence that Social Work England is named as the regulator in all course resources and documentation.	14/11/2022	Paragraph 43
3	Standard 1.6	The education provider will ensure that all information provided to applicants accurately communicates that completing the course successfully is not a guarantee that they will be able to register with Social Work England.	14/11/2022	Paragraph 43
4	Standard 1.6	The education provider will provide evidence that they have ensured applicants are able to access information they require to make an informed choice	14/11/2022	Paragraph 43

5	Standard 4.2	The education provider will provide evidence that they have ensured people with lived experience to be involved in formal processes for the development and review of the course.	14/11/2022	Paragraph 102
6	Standard 4.2	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that they have documented all stakeholder feedback and identified actions from this.	14/11/2022	Paragraph 102

Recommendations

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	Standard 1.3	The inspectors are recommending that the education provider consider how they will outline and document the role of people with lived experience in the admissions process.	Paragraph 32
2	Standard 2.6	The inspectors are recommending that the that the education provider consider how they will ensure that any practice educator stage 1 and their mentor have met prior to the placement beginning.	Paragraph 62
3	Standard 4.5	The inspectors are recommending that the education providers ensure learning outcomes are consistent throughout all course documentation.	Paragraph 111
4	Standard 4.5	The inspectors are recommending that the education providers review learning outcomes to ensure that they are reflective of the level of study as outlined in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards.	Paragraph 111

5	Standard 4.6	The inspectors are recommending that the education provider consider how they will ensure that the plans outlined by the Senior Management Team to introduce formal inter professional learning sessions for students be carried out.	Paragraph 114
6	Standard 5.4	The inspectors are recommending that the education provider considers how students are made aware of the wellbeing and academic support services and reasonable adjustments during their induction to strengthen this area of support and ensure consistency.	Paragraph 150
7	Standard 5.5	The inspectors are recommending that the education provider considers how they formalise the information given to students about registration with Social Work England once they have qualified.	Paragraph 153

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

Table breakdown of standards met during preapproval and inspection.

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	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	Not Met – condition applied	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.	☒	☐	☒

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendations
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.	☒	☐	☐
3.5 Ensure that regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems are in place, and that these involve	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendations
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 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,	☐	☒	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendations
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 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.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendations
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	☒	☐	☐
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.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendations
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			
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

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](#).

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

This section of the report will be completed when the conditions review is completed.

Condition	Standard not met	Condition	Inspector recommendation
1	Standards 1.5 and 1.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that applicants have access to information regarding the accessibility of the assessment process, examples of the reasonable adjustments that could be made and contact details for discussing requirements.	Condition met
2	Standard 1.6	The education provider will provide evidence that Social Work England is named as the regulator in all course resources and documentation.	Condition met
3	Standard 1.6	The education provider will ensure that all information provided to applicants accurately communicates that completing the course successfully is not a guarantee that they will be able to register with Social Work England.	Condition met
4	Standard 1.6	The education provider will provide evidence that they have ensured applicants are able to access information they require to make an informed choice	Condition met
5	Standard 4.2	The education provider will provide evidence that they have ensured people with lived experience to be	Condition met

		involved in formal processes for the development and review of the course.	
6	Standard 4.2	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that they have documented all stakeholder feedback and identified actions from this.	Condition met

Findings

This conditions review was undertaken as a result of conditions set during course approval as outlined in the original inspection report above. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence provided, and a further request for additional evidence was made against some of the conditions. An extended timescale to submit the additional evidence was agreed. The inspection team are satisfied that all of the conditions set against the approval of the PG Dip Social Work (Step Up) course are now met.

In relation to the condition 1 set against standard 1.5 and 1.6 the education provider has evidenced that applicants have access to information regarding the accessibility of the assessment process and has provided examples of the reasonable adjustments that could be made and contact details for discussing requirements. There is also information on the [Salford Step-Up website](#).

In relation to condition 2 set against standard 1.6, some course documentation provided as part of the initial evidence submission for this inspection included reference to HCPC rather than Social Work England. The education provider has produced up to date copies of these documents to confirm that they are now up to date.

In relation to condition 3 set against standard 1.6 the education provider has ensured that the website and course documentation has been updated to ensure applicants are aware that completing the course successfully is not a guarantee that they will be able to register with Social Work England.

In relation to condition 4 set against standard 1.6 in order to meet this condition the education provider has introduced information on the [Salford Step-Up website](#).

In relation to condition 5 set against standard 4.2 an overview of the timetable of work that is underway with people with lived experience of social work was provided by the education provider. This work is ongoing and the course team have committed to involving people with lived experience of social work in the continued development of the course. The

inspection team were also provided with additional evidence that showed how the education provider is publicising and sharing information about their ongoing work.

In relation to condition 6 set against standard 4.2 the education provider sent a selection of helpful evidence documenting stakeholder feedback and reflecting the current landscape of action. The feedback from step-up students was noted as part of this together with the responsive action by the team along with meeting notes. The inspection team also noted the dialogue in the annual programme reports between the EE and programme and that an annual programme review is being introduced.

Conclusion

The inspectors are recommending that these conditions have been met.

Regulator decision

Conditions met and approved.