

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Central Lancashire

Course approval:

BA (Hons) Social work

MA Social Work

PG Dip Social Work (Masters exit route)

Inspection dates: 9th August 2022 to 12th August 2022

Report date:	22 January 2023
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	10 January 2023
Date conditions met and approved:	13 July 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 Central Lancashire 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	UCLR1
Course provider	University of Central Lancashire
Validating body (if different)	n/a
Course inspected	BA Social Work MA Social Work PG Dip (exit route)
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	BA – 130 MA - 65
Date of inspection	9 th August 2022 to 12 th August 2022
Inspection team	Laura Mellon (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Glenn Mathieson (Lay Inspector) Stephen Stericker (Registrant Inspector)
Inspector recommendation	Approved with conditions
Approval outcome	TO BE ADDED

Language

16. In this document we describe the University of Central Lancashire as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the BA Social Work and MA Social work as ‘the course’.

Inspection

17. An offsite inspection took place from Tuesday 9th August 2022 until Friday 12th August 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.

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 twelve BA students from all three years of the course and five MA students from both years. Discussions included admissions, feedback, raising concerns and processes, placements, various support services, appeals and evidence informed practice.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the course team, admission team, central support teams, members of the placement team, lecturers, and senior staff members.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in work with the university. Discussions included their opportunities to be involved in various elements of the course.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including the teaching partnership and practice educators.

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 their admissions policies and procedures in place. During the inspection, the inspection team heard more about the admissions process from members of the admissions team, in particular how information communication technology and communication and soft skills are assessed during the admissions process.

26. The inspection team were in agreement that there appeared to be clear and well managed processes in place and were satisfied that the university had a clear and holistic approach to admission on to the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

27. The university provided documentary evidence that candidates are required to prepare a presentation for interview to focus on previous learning and experience and how it has helped prepare them for the course, including voluntary or lived experiences. They also assess experience via written statement and as part of questions asked during the interview process.

28. The inspection team heard from the admissions team how prior experience is assessed and that they will also consider other relevant skills when assessing suitability. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

29. The inspection team met with people with lived experience who confirmed their involvement in admissions interviews. The inspection team also heard from the admissions team that practitioners and people with lived experience are involved in the interview process and that there is a meeting beforehand for 30 minutes with the panel to discuss the interview and to go through the paperwork and check everyone is familiar with the process.

30. They also confirmed that people with lived experience participate in the review of interview questions and that feedback is sought from both groups via email and that there is an intention to set up a focus group for verbal feedback to be sought also.

31. During the inspection further evidence was provided to the inspection team giving a breakdown of the level of involvement of people with lived experience and practitioners in the recent admissions cycle. As a result, the inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

32. The university demonstrated the process used to assess the suitability of an applicant's character, conduct and health through documentary evidence by providing evidence of the process and a copy of the self-declaration form.

33. The inspection team spoke with students some of whom expressed fear of being able to continue the course if they made a declaration, particularly in relation to health.

34. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met, and that the university are carefully assessing applicant's suitability and provide applicants with information about why declarations are needed and what will happen if a declaration is made. However, having spoken to students who advised of a lack of clarity around the implications of making a declaration, it is recommended that the university look to amend the information provided to applicants making a declaration of suitability. This is recommended to ensure that it is clear to applicants that making a declaration is not an automatic barrier to proceeding with the course and that the information that they provide will be assessed.

35. Therefore, the inspection team recommend that the university look at amending the information provided to applicants to make it clear that making a declaration is not an automatic barrier to proceeding on the course. [Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcomes section of this report.](#)

Standard 1.5

36. Prior to the inspection the university provided evidence of their equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) policies and provision for EDI training for all staff.

37. The inspection team spoke to the people with lived experience, admissions, and course teams and all confirmed that everyone involved in the admissions process completes specific EDI training.

38. The inspection team also heard various examples of reasonable adjustments being put in place from the support staff.

39. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard is met.

Standard 1.6

40. Prior to the inspection the university provided documentary evidence of the information available to applicants at the admissions stage.

41. The inspection team noted that there was very little information provided to applicants in relation to placements on both courses. The website pages for both courses provide very little mention about the placements.

42. During the inspection, the students were asked when they applied what information they received about placements, and students advised of difficulties with not knowing when their placement would commence or how much flexibility there was around start and finish times. An example was given of this impacting upon the need for advance notice to ensure that adequate childcare arrangements were in place.

43. The placement team were asked what information was available to applicants and advised that information is provided to applicants in the interview letter and on the open days. The inspection team noted that not all students will attend open days and re-reviewed the interview letter template provided in the documentary evidence prior to the inspection but could not see any reference to placements.

44. The inspection team were therefore concerned that given the demographic of the applicants and potential for caring commitments; any potential applicants may be impacted if not enough information is provided about placements early on at the application stage. This could impact their ability to make an informed decision whether or not to take up the course.

45. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending a condition is set against standard 1.6 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 the inspection team is 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 proposed outcomes sections of this report.](#)

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

46. The university provided documentary evidence in the Practice Learning Guidance document and an overview of practice skills days. The practice learning team also ask students to submit additional information and placement profile forms before each placement which helps assess skills and knowledge to assist the matching process.

47. The placement team advised the inspection team on the work that goes in to matching students to placements considering geographical locations and the involvement of the teaching partnership in workforce planning and ensuring placements are regularly discussed at meetings. They also advised of recent work with providers to increase placements, not

just develop new placements but to try to increase capacity with existing placements as well.

48. The inspection team were satisfied that there was a robust system in place for ensuring placements for students on both courses and that there was a consideration given to the relation between the first and second placements to ensure a contrast but also to consider themes. The inspection team were therefore in agreement that this standard is met.

Standard 2.2

49. The inspection team were provided with evidence that placement documents are reviewed annually and provided to students and practice educators before the start of placement.

50. It was noted that the placement profile forms help assess skills and knowledge to assist the matching process and if there are additional learning needs an Individual Learning Plan is put in place with reasonable adjustments or support needs.

51. The practice learning agreement (PLA) provides for opportunities and indicates how learning needs will be met, and in final placements it also records opportunities for statutory roles and functions.

52. The review at the mid-point of the placement is used to evaluate learning and progress, and any gaps can be added to an action plan, and clear objectives agreed for the second half of placement. The review includes a presentation from the student about their learning and development on placement.

53. A quality assurance in practice learning (QAPL) tool is used to audit placements and updated every three years. A QAPL is also completed at the end of each placement and the practice learning team monitor any issues raised and feedback to the relevant agencies.

54. The practice learning team advised the inspection team that workshops are held for practice educators ahead of placement cycles to provide information and updates, and a bi-monthly support group is available for offsite practice educators.

55. The readiness for practice module is also mapped to the professional standards. As such the inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

56. Prior to the inspection the university provided evidence of the PLA that sets out information about the placement, induction, supervision, support, access to resources, records learning opportunities, and how direct practice will be observed. There is also a pre-placement checklist.

57. The practice learning guidance outlines roles and responsibilities, assessment, attendance, how to raise concerns or difficulties on placement, whistleblowing, and suitability and fitness to practise (FTP).

58. The inspection team spoke to practice educators who confirmed that there was clear pre-placement planning in place prior to placements, and that support is available from the university. Examples were given of specific situations demonstrating the communication and support from the university. The practice educators also confirmed that supervision is available for students.

59. The students that the inspection team spoke with provided a variety of responses in relation to their experiences of the support available to them. They confirmed that support structures are there and that they know how to access support on placement. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

60. The university has provided evidence of the QAPL process used to audit placements, and also confirmed that placements are reviewed bi-annually looking at feedback from practice educators and students.

61. Members of the practice learning team participate in the practice educator training and provide regular refresher training which includes discussion about learning opportunities being appropriate for students. The PLA details the learning outcomes which are mapped against the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

62. The inspection team heard from practice educators that students are supported to develop skills and knowledge incrementally, starting with shadowing or joint working and building up to more autonomy.

63. The students spoken with, as part of the inspection, also confirmed that the workload was appropriate.

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

Standard 2.5

65. Prior to the inspection the university provided the module descriptors for the readiness for practice modules which set out pre-practice learning opportunities with appropriate assessments. The inspection team agreed that the modules covering readiness for practice appear to provide students with a good foundation for the placement.

66. Readiness for direct practice is assessed by successful completion of the year 1 modules for BA students and semester 1 for MA students, and also considers students attendance, completion of skills days and consideration of any FTP concerns. The university advised that attendance below 80% would require a student to produce a portfolio evidencing how they have addressed any learning gaps.

67. Readiness for Practice panels are held following the course assessment boards and the placement team advised that they are part of the readiness for practice panels and the course team will offer the student support, and the placement team will keep them informed what is happening. An example was given of student having to retake the year.

68. The students also confirmed that they felt prepared for placement and that they were able to apply their learning to practice and confirmed their understanding of when and how to seek help if needed.

69. The inspection team felt that the university was responsive to feedback around ensuring students are prepared for direct practice. An example was given of feedback over communication issues during placements and the university took this on board and changed the curriculum as a result, by introducing a simulation with a phone call before placement.

70. As a result, the inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

71. The university advised that some practice educators come to them through the teaching partnership and that practice educator portfolios are assessed for their potential suitability and quality assured by the teaching partnership. The practice learning team are members of the portfolio checking panel and hold a list of approved stage 2 practice educators.

72. The placement team advised that their offsite practice educators are frequently taking students. The evidence provided prior to the inspection also indicated that they offer biannual training workshops to keep practice educators aware of current issues with social work education and student welfare, that they offer continuing professional development (CPD) courses to practice educators, and that pre-placement workshops are offered twice a year before placements commence.

73. The placement team also advised that conversations take place with previous practice educators who return to the university to check if they have had a student recently. They advised that if a practice educator has not had a student for 5 years, they would advise the practice educator to do a refresh course.

74. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met as checks are carried out when practice educators join the list, and it appeared that the university do take steps to ensure the currency of practice educators. The inspection team did however feel that this appeared to be ad hoc, based largely around verbal conversations and that there was no robust or formal procedure in place to ensure that all practice educators had relevant and current knowledge.

75. The inspection team therefore recommend that a process could be implemented to check to ensure that all practice educators are still registered and current on an ongoing basis. [Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcomes section of this report.](#)

Standard 2.7

76. The university provided documentary evidence of the PLA that clearly states the whistle blowing policy and other relevant policies and the practice learning guidance also includes guidance for students if concerns arise.

77. It was clear to the inspection team that students were confident about what they would need to do to raise concerns, and that policies and procedures are in place.

78. The inspection team was therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management, and quality

Standard 3.1

79. Documentary evidence provided by the university demonstrates policy and lines of accountability with a course leader timeline and summary of module leadership roles being provided.

80. The teaching partnership provides support for the courses, and the individual steering groups offer strategic oversight and the practice learning and CPD group supports high quality learning. The curriculum development group also includes academics and local employers to ensure it is up to date and relevant for a future workforce. Each module has a lead who oversees assessment, teaching, module information packs and learning materials and participates in quality assessment. All courses also complete a course resource review which is factored into the delivery plan and an example was given of the review of online resources.

81. It was noted that the 2019/2020 reapproval event involved the consultation of stakeholders and placement numbers and practice educators are considered within the teaching partnership steering group meetings.

82. The inspection team met with the senior management team who advised of the new course review process which will be ongoing instead of an end of year review, which means it will be developed and reported on throughout the year. They advised that this will allow a more continuous and action focused approach and look at live data across the different programmes around attainment, recruitment, and professional services issues.

83. It was noted by the inspection team that quality management and governance systems are evident from the documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection and the university confirmed that students will have access to a year tutor and personal tutor going forward. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

84. The university confirmed that the placement team are in contact with employer partners through teaching partnership meetings, practice educator workshops, training, and email. They also confirmed that placement providers are core members of the practice issues panel which meets monthly to discuss placement breakdown and issues arising.

85. The placement team confirmed that they do not have formal written agreements in place with employer partners but have regular conversations with employer partners and a letter of expectation is signed every 2 years by employer partners and sets out expectations around placements.

86. The placement team, employer partners and students gave examples of working together to resolve concerns about placement breakdown and implementing structured support to remediate problems.

87. As a result, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

88. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were provided with a copy of the audit template of placements which includes health & safety, accessibility, and insurance issues. The university also provided a copy of the H&S guidance which stipulates party responsibilities and the requirements of the placement provider.

89. The inspection team met with employer partners and practice educators who gave examples of relevant and appropriate measures put in place to support students during the placement and confirmed that they can also contact the placement team for support if needed. They confirmed that if escalation of any concerns is needed, there are appropriate processes and systems in place for this.

90. The students that met with the inspection team also gave examples of support received on placement and confirmed that support could be sought from team managers, practice educators and academic tutors.

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

Standard 3.4

92. The university has provided documentary evidence of employer partner involvement through the teaching partnership and the steering groups for strategic direction and sub-groups relating to CPD and practice learning, ASYE, practice educator panel and curriculum development.

93. Employer partners are also involved in admissions, suitability panels, placement provision, readiness for practice and practice issue panels and they also contribute to teaching and learning.

94. The inspection team spoke to employer partners who were able to confirm their involvement, that there are open communications with the university and that they can provide feedback to the university. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

95. The documentary evidence confirms that continuing course enhancement reports (CCE) have been part of the annual quality assurance process and feed into the Head of School Report. The senior management team advised that there will be ongoing reviews going forward throughout the year.

96. The people with lived experience group, SUCAG, are included in the meetings and the action lists, reviews and reports will also be provided to external examiners.

97. Each cohort of students has a representative who has regular liaison meetings with the course team. The university blackboard includes a 'you said, we did' to feedback actions to students. They also participate in Student Feedback Reviews each semester to provide feedback.

98. There is a new student involvement toolkit, which provides a framework to involve students in decision making, governance and strategy, and curriculum development. And this also includes module evaluations, staff student meetings, observing micro teaching and providing feedback. Documentation was provided by the university in the form of a mock teaching scoring template, interview notes template and student declaration for participation in staff selection.

99. The university also confirmed that they use an online feedback platform called Unitu which allows real time feedback from students, and examples were provided of issues raised through this system.

100. All modules have a midpoint evaluation and end point questionnaire and an example of this was provided. Placements also have a QAPL placement evaluation form for students and practice educators.

101. As previously referred to in standard 3.4 above, there is evidence of employer partner involvement through the teaching partnership and its various subgroups. A wider stakeholder consultation also took place in 2019 in relation to previous course changes.

102. The inspection team could see from the documentary evidence that processes are in place, and that meetings involve people with lived experience and employer partner involvement. The people with lived experience also confirmed their involvement in various aspects of the course and that they were consulted as part of the periodic review.

103. The inspection team spoke with students who confirmed that their feedback is sought informally and gave examples of changes being implemented as a result of their feedback.

104. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team were satisfied that there was evidence of people with lived experience, employer and student involvement in the monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of the course, and agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

105. Documentary evidence has been provided by the university of the workforce planning with the teaching partnership to ensure capacity in relation to placements and practice educators. The consideration of capacity takes into account regional factors and other criteria for matching students is also considered by the placement team.

106. The university confirmed that their current cohorts for the BA course are approximately 100 third year students, approximately 80-90 second year students, and approximately 85 first year students. They also confirmed that there are 25-30 students at their Burnley campus each year on the BA course, and the current cohorts for the MA course are approximately 65 students in their first year and approximately 65 second year students.

107. The senior management team advised the inspection team that the strategy for course numbers is considered as part of the budget setting and is restricted by placements and that there are no current plans to increase the numbers to the BA or MA course.

108. They also advised that there is some development of potential placement opportunities and investment taking place in the east area. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

109. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed the CVs for the lead social worker and the course leaders for the BA and MA courses.

110. The inspection team were satisfied that the lead social worker is a registered social worker and appropriately qualified and experienced and therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

111. The documentary evidence received from the university showed a clear range of staff expertise in a range of relevant subject areas that are key to the curriculum.

112. The majority of the teaching staff are registered social workers, and all have or are working towards the fellowship of higher education academy and have time for CPD or working in practice settings. A number of staff are also aligned to research centres and facilitate knowledge exchange seminars.

113. The course team confirmed that staffing levels do fluctuate but that they are recruiting as they go and make use of ad hoc staff for personal tutor roles and marking where needed but ensure that the quality and standard of work is monitored in these situations.

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

Standard 3.9

115. The university provided documentary evidence that the strategic data and policy insight team provide attainment data regarding progression and outcomes, and also linked data on EDI issues.

116. The university confirmed that it is also looking at decolonizing the curriculum with a working group in place and that they are also looking at data on placement breakdowns and referrals to the practice issue panel.

117. The inspection team were shown a demonstration of how performance is monitored through the online systems and the inspection team were talked through the various mechanisms in place to address issues that are flagged and to offer appropriate support to students.

118. The course team provided examples of changes made to the law exam as a result of poor results and advised that where issues are identified they will look at reframing teaching or assessment.

119. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard is met.

Standard 3.10

120. The documentary evidence provided by the university showed examples of lots of staff opportunities to develop, research, and take part in training.

121. The university confirmed that all teaching staff have or are working towards the fellowship of higher education academy and have time for CPD, and that staff are also aligned to a number of research centers and facilitate knowledge exchange seminars.

122. All staff have quarterly action plans which identify development needs, and in addition to mandatory training all staff have opportunity to spend time in practice and the school fund supports access to CPD opportunities.

123. The teaching partnership also provides contact information for offers of shadowing or joint working with practitioners.

124. During the inspection, the course team provided further examples of staff being supported to undertake CPD, shadowing and research.

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

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

126. As part of the course review in 2019/2020 changes were made to the courses in 2021-2023 and the learning outcomes were updated and mapped to reflect Social Work England's professional standards.

127. The inspection team reviewed the handbooks and individual module descriptors for the courses prior to the inspection which showed the learning opportunities available to students.

128. The inspection team met with employer partners who confirmed that students were prepared academically for placement and students who confirmed that they felt prepared for employment and had support in relation to their future careers.

129. The inspection team was therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

130. The documentary evidence provided by the university indicated that people with lived experience have been involved in and provided input into teaching and learning on the courses and that volunteers sit on committees within the school and meet quarterly with the academic leads.

131. The inspection team met with people with lived experience who provided examples of their involvement in discussing courses changes and being consulted on the periodic review.

132. The employer partners confirmed that they are involved in a curriculum review group as part of the teaching partnership and that the university seek their feedback on what needs to be in the teaching and training of the courses. They also confirmed that there is a monthly reflection group for practice educators, and this has been used to co-produce practice standards.

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

Standard 4.3

134. The university provided the inspection team with evidence prior to the inspection that the module content has been reviewed annually to ensure changes to social work practice are reflected.

135. The periodic review has allowed an increase in the focus on relationship-based practice, and the course team advised that going forward there will be continuing improvements throughout the year rather than at the end of year review.

136. The university also advised of the appointment of an EDI director who is looking at decolonising the curriculum and that they are reviewing available data from the EDI dashboard.

137. The inspection team heard more from the course team about the move towards inclusive practice for all modules and examples were provided of reasonable adjustments, support and wellbeing resources being available to students. The inspection team agreed therefore that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

138. The university have provided documentary evidence, prior to the inspection, of examples of working with employers to reflect changes in practice and advised that they also have an element of practitioner involvement in most modules.

139. The university advised that module content is reviewed annually, and staff are supported to have time in practice, and this is reflected in staff workload tariffs.

140. The university advised of using community care inform to access up to date evidence on which to base teaching. They are also part of the national Making Research Count network which brings together practitioner knowledge and expertise and people with lived experience expertise to develop an annual programme of events.

141. The inspection team met with the course team who advised of the development of a simulated learning environment for the school which will include learning mapped to the professional standards and PCF.

142. As a result of information provided the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

143. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the documentary evidence provided in the practice placement guidance and module descriptors which referred to the integration of theory into practice through learning in lectures. This is then developed by giving students activities to see how their learning is relevant to practice, for example, through case studies, simulations and working with practitioners.

144. During the inspection it was made clear from both the course team and students that theory and practice is central to the course. The students were able to speak confidently

about applying theory to practice and provide examples of this. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

145. The university provided evidence of the Comensus Congress Day in which social work students learn alongside other programmes. They also advised that they have brought in guest lecturers who have been practitioners from substance misuse workers to health professionals, people working in prisons and other criminal justice settings.

146. The inspection team met with the course team who advised that they are aware that they need to do more in this area and have identified lecturers who are leading on this area and that they are also developing multi-disciplinary practice simulations.

147. The inspection team heard that they are looking at developing more interprofessional learning days, embedding them within the courses.

148. The inspection team agreed that whilst there is evidence of some multidisciplinary working from the evidence provided, this could be improved upon as proposed by the course team.

149. The inspection team therefore recommend that the university continue to take steps to strengthen multidisciplinary learning opportunities available to students to work with and learn from other professionals on both courses. The inspection team recommend that this should be outside of the placement opportunities already available to students. [Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcomes section of this report.](#)

Standard 4.7

150. The inspection team were satisfied that the module descriptors and programme specifications demonstrated sufficient amounts of learning in both academic and practice placements and that there are systems in place to monitor attendance and engagement, and flags if this becomes an issue.

151. The inspection team heard more about how attendance and engagement are monitored during the inspection and that there are year tutors, personal tutors and student coaches available to support students.

152. There was evidence that there are mechanisms to record and monitor student attendance in both the academic and placement environments. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

153. The documentary evidence provided by the university prior to the inspection showed that the assessment strategy links to the modules and provides a robust appraisal of

students. The student's work is internally and externally moderated and the placement portfolios are reviewed in consultation with stakeholders and students.

154. The documentary evidence received advised of changes made to the portfolio on both courses to reduce the assessment workload. The course team clarified with the inspection team that these were not formal changes that would be going through quality assurance but rather that they sought to incorporate and streamline the portfolio instead of having a separate additional piece of work that duplicated other student assessments.

155. The inspectors were happy that there is a strategy in place and that the changes to the portfolio would not negatively impact the students in developing the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards.

156. As a result, the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

157. As with standard 4.8 above, the inspection team have reviewed documents in relation to assessments.

158. The placement team advised that they ensure contrasting placements by looking at the first placement when considering the second and will involve students in the conversations to ensure that their learning needs are considered. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

159. The documentary evidence provided indicated that feedback is provided on summative assessed work within 15 days and that students also participate in formative assessments which offer immediate feedback encouraging the development of knowledge and confidence.

160. The university advised that feedback is given that identifies areas for future development and is linked to the learning outcomes. The standard is for 3 points to be given of what has been done well, 3 areas for development and some overall comments. The module leads are also encouraged to use marking rubrics and all modules will have these by September 2023. Turnitin is also used to annotate students' submissions in relation to gaps or with positive commentary.

161. The inspection team spoke to students who confirmed that feedback was meaningful and that they were given guidance on how to improve.

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

Standard 4.11

163. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence in the form of CVs which evidenced the social work registration, qualifications and experience of the external examiners and that staff have clear academic expertise in the relevant subject areas. The external examiners are asked to give verbal feedback to the board and their reports were positive.

164. The university advised that marking is mostly done by the staff who teach on that module, many of whom are on the social work register and all have formal teaching qualifications or are working towards them.

165. They also have marking teams who work together before marking begins to ensure that they all understand the learning outcomes, and guidance is given of what a good submission looks like and there is an advice for markers document.

166. Placements are assessed by practice educators with practice educator professional standards (PEPS) training and they have ongoing support from the university and placement providers.

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

Standard 4.12

168. The university provided documentary evidence prior to the inspection of the attainment dashboard and the routes for progression are detailed in the course handbook and assessment strategy. The students must meet all learning outcomes and all modules must be passed before students can proceed to the next year.

169. During the inspection, the inspection team were shown the system for monitoring attendance and engagement with the courses. The process for escalation of any issues and providing support to students was also explained. Direct observations also form part of the assessment for placements.

170. The inspection team was therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

171. The inspection team agreed prior to the inspection that there was evidence-based practice apparent across all the modules, with the inclusion of research and evaluation skills within the curriculum.

172. The inspection team met with the course team who advised that they work with employer partners to see what specific models employers are using so that they can ensure that students can have knowledge of this already and then link it to practice.

173. The course team also advised that they emphasise that the learning does not end when the course is completed, but is an ongoing journey throughout students' careers. There are opportunities for students to be involved in research through internships and PhDs.

174. The students also gave examples of various theories they have learnt and put into practice whilst on placement. The inspection team was in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

175. Prior to the inspection the inspection team was provided with documentation of the support resources available to the students, which included a careers service, counsellors, and advisors.

176. During the inspection, the students confirmed that the support from the university was available on placement and that when issues were raised, they generally felt supported although it was noted that some students had issues with the support received.

177. The inspections team met with support services and agreed that the range of student support that was offered was strong. The inspection team heard more about the student wellbeing ambassador scheme, student coaches and the availability of a British sign language team. The support services also advised that they monitor engagement with services and carry out a review of available adjustments to ensure a move to an inclusive learning environment.

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

Standard 5.2

179. The university ensures that each student has a personal academic tutor and a year tutor who has oversight of academic and personal development.

180. The inspection team met with members of various support teams who provided examples of support available to students. They also advised that at the start of the year they have triage meetings with the year lead and identify students where they have some concerns and as a result, they can then offer support early on.

181. They advised of the availability of an inclusion support office, student coaches for academic performance and personal development, ambassadors, wellbeing support, and toolkits to assist students.

182. In the first semester students have a formative assessment where they receive feedback and support, and this is used to identify any specific study skills needed and students may be referred to a student coach within the school.

183. The library and IT staff can provide resources and free training sessions on skills and the availability of personal development planning allows student reflections and action plans for personal and career development.

184. The inspection team met with students who confirmed that support was available to them and therefore the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

185. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with documentation setting out the fitness to study and fitness to practice (FTP) processes.

186. During the inspection, the students confirmed that they were made aware of the need to make a declaration at the start and as the course progresses an annual declaration is required.

187. During the inspection examples were given by the course team of the FTP process and support offered to students.

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

Standard 5.4

189. As highlighted under standard 4.3, throughout the inspection the inspection team were provided with examples of support, reasonable adjustments and wellbeing resources being available to students.

190. The inspection team met with practice educators and the support team who confirmed the availability of support for students throughout the course and placement. There is an inclusive support team for disability or learning needs and once referred each student is allocated a student advisor. There are also student wellbeing ambassadors, and the starfish system records any reasonable adjustment information.

191. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that guidance and procedures are in place and that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

192. Prior to inspection the documentary evidence provided by the university provided evidence to the inspection team of information on the website for students and available in the handbook.

193. The inspection team heard further evidence from the careers team about the careers fair, and the course team emphasised the importance of ensuring the employability of students.

194. The students also confirmed that they are aware of support available to them in relation to their careers and that they felt prepared for employment. They gave examples of information given to them on interview processes, the ASYE process, placement offers,

guidance on CV preparation and confirmed that there are learning hubs to support students on how to write personal statements.

195. Therefore, the inspection team are in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

196. The inspection team were provided with the course handbook which confirms the requirement to complete all modules and had a clear section on attendance expectations. The university advised that students are informed of the requirements during welcome week, and also sign an attendance contract.

197. Attendance is monitored closely via the university SAM system, the students will scan their UCLAN card at lectures and seminars, and on placement the practice educators and tutors monitor attendance via placement calendars which must be signed and verified.

198. The inspection team saw how the monitoring of attendance and engagement with the course is carried out by the student coach to ensure that early support is offered to students and that reasons for reduced attendance are explored. The inspection team were also given an explanation of the SEAM processes to escalate any issues relating to this.

199. The students also confirmed that they are aware of mandatory requirements of the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

200. As highlighted under standard 4.10, the inspection team reviewed the documentary evidence provided and discussed feedback mechanisms with current students.

201. The university has advised that feedback given to students identifies areas for future development and is linked to learning outcomes. The standard is for 3 points to be given of what has been done well, 3 areas for development and some overall comments. The module leads are also encouraged to use marking rubrics and all modules will have these by September 2023. Turnitin is also used to annotate students' submissions in relation to gaps or with positive commentary.

202. The inspection team spoke to students who confirmed that feedback was meaningful and that they were given guidance on how to improve.

203. The inspection team are therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

204. The university provided documentary evidence of their academic appeals processes.

205. During the inspection, the students confirmed their knowledge and understanding of the appeal process and that they knew where to seek help if they needed assistance. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

206. As the qualifying courses are a BA (Hons) social work, MA social work and PG diploma (exit route for the MA) the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

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

BA Course 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	1.6	The university ensure that sufficient information is provided about placements at the admissions stage, including timing and duration, to allow applicants to make an informed decision whether or not to take up the course.	January 2023	Paragraph 40

BA course 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	1.4	It is recommended that the university look at amending the information provided to applicants to make it clearer that making a declaration is not an automatic barrier to proceeding on the course and that information provided will be assessed fairly.	Paragraph 32
2	2.6	It is recommended that a systematic and robust process be introduced to ensure that all practice educators are still registered and current on an ongoing basis.	Paragraph 71

3	4.6	It is recommended that the university continue to take steps to strengthen the multidisciplinary learning opportunities available to students to learn with and from with other professionals.	Paragraph 145
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MA Course 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	1.6	The university ensure that sufficient information is provided about placements at the admissions stage, including timing and duration, to allow applicants to make an informed decision whether or not to take up the course.	31 January 2023	Paragraph 40

MA course 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	1.4	It is recommended that the university look at amending the information provided to applicants to make it clearer that making a declaration is not an automatic barrier to proceeding on the course and that information provided will be assessed fairly.	Paragraph 32
2	2.6	It is recommended that a systematic and robust process be introduced to ensure that all practice educators are still registered and current on an ongoing basis.	Paragraph 71

3	4.6	It is recommended that the university continue to take steps to strengthen the multidisciplinary learning opportunities available to students to learn with and from with other professionals.	Paragraph 145
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Annex 1: Education and training standards summary for the BA and MA Courses

Table breakdown of standards met for both courses during preapproval and inspection.

Standard	Met	Condition	Met with 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	☐	☒	☐

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

Standard	Met	Condition	Met with 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 employers, people with lived experience of social work, and students.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Condition	Met with Recommendations
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, ongoing development, and review of the curriculum.	☒	☐	☐
4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Condition	Met with 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	Condition	Met with 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	Condition	Met with 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 for the BA course

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.

	Standard not met	Condition	Inspector recommendation
1	1.6	The university ensure that sufficient information is provided about placements at the admissions stage, including timing and duration, to allow applicants to make an informed decision whether or not to take up the course.	Condition is met

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions for the MA course

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.

	Standard not met	Condition	Inspector recommendation
1	1.6	The university ensure that sufficient information is provided about placements at the admissions stage, including timing and duration, to allow applicants to make an informed decision whether or not to take up the course.	Condition is met

Findings

This conditions review was undertaken as a result of conditions set during course reapproval as outlined in the original inspection report above.

After the review of the documentary evidence, the inspection team are satisfied that the condition set against the approval of the BA (Hons) Social Work, MA Social Work and Pg Dip Social Work (Masters exit route) courses is met.

In relation to the condition set for standard 1.6, the course provider submitted evidence to demonstrate that they have updated the placement information provided to students on the Social Work webpages. The update outlines the timing and duration of placements for both the BA and MA placement cycles.

Conclusion

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

Regulator decision

Approved.