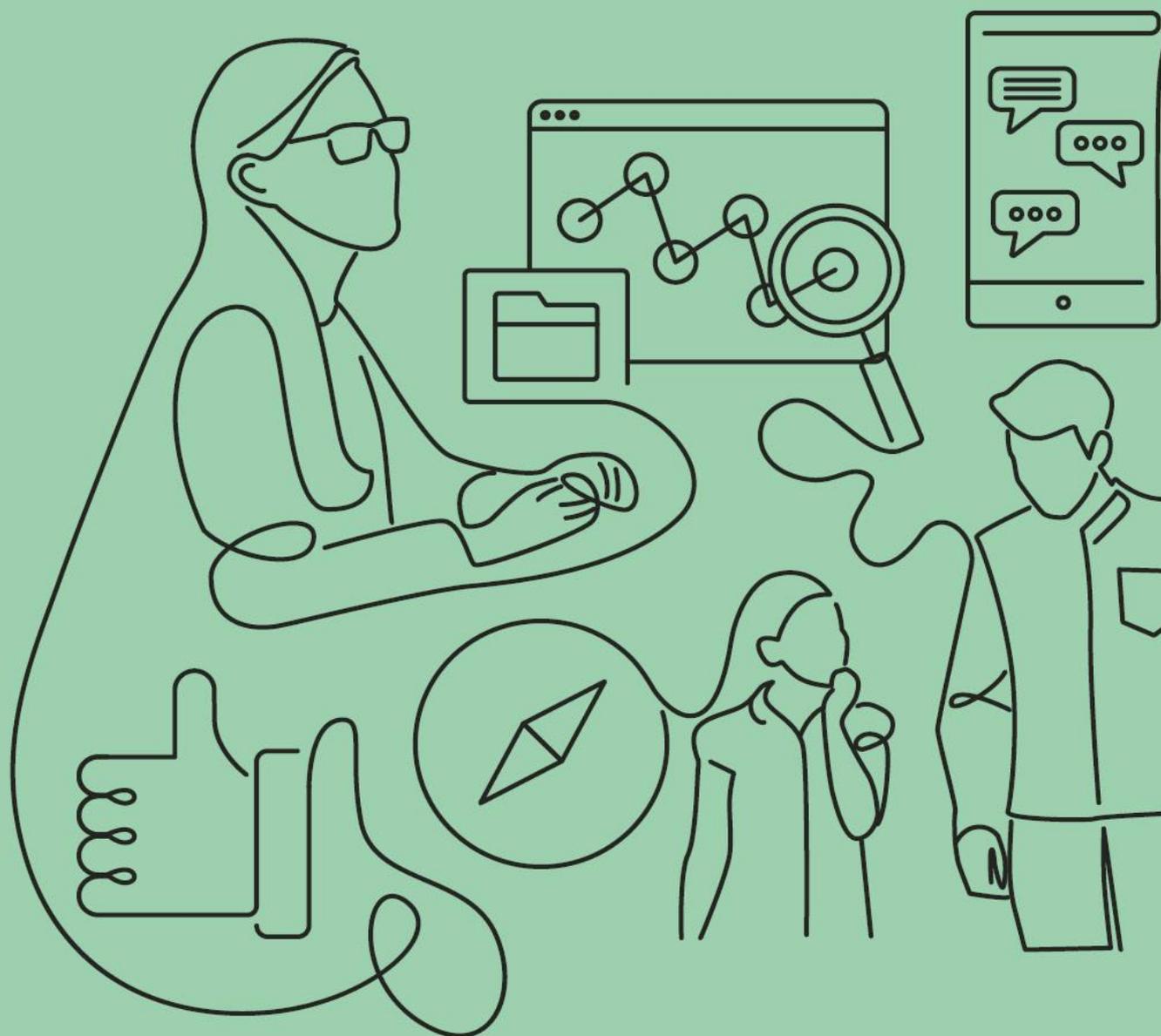
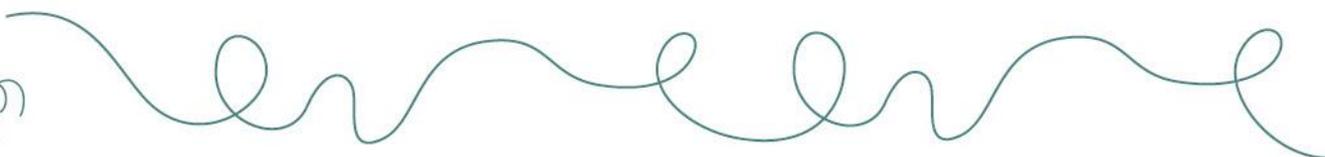


Consultation on qualifying education and training standards

Launch date 21 February 2019

Respond by 1 May 2019, 5pm





Introduction

1. Social Work England is preparing to become the new regulator for social workers in England, taking over from the Health and Care Professions Council. Our purpose is to protect the public by setting and promoting high standards of education and professional conduct amongst social workers. Our ambition is to provide a smooth and seamless transition of regulation and to maximise the opportunities of being both new and specialist to engage with the sector and listen to the public.
2. We were established by the Children and Social Work Act (2017) and The Social Workers Regulations (2018). This legislation requires us to consult on the rules that govern the way we will work and the standards which we will expect social workers and education and training providers to meet. Over and above that, we see consultation as an important means of us talking to you about our approach to regulation and hearing your views. This consultation represents a significant milestone on our journey to becoming the new regulator for social workers in England.
3. This document is one of five setting out the rules and standards we need to establish before taking over the regulation of social workers in England. The other four documents address:
 - i. professional standards;
 - ii. education and training rules;
 - iii. registration rules, and;
 - iv. fitness to practise rules.

What we are consulting on

4. Our qualifying education and training standards set out the requirements we expect courses of social work education and training to meet. Standards are different to rules. Our rules outline what we do, and our standards set out what we expect those we regulate to do.
5. The qualifying education and training standards are the standards against which we will assess and approve education and training courses of social work. The aim is to ensure that students who successfully complete a social work course can meet our professional standards and can apply to be registered with us.
6. Education and training providers will also need to ensure that their courses are aligned to the new professional standards, which will be implemented from the date we become the

social work regulator. You can find more details about this in the professional standards consultation.

7. Our proposed education and training standards apply to all social work qualifying routes, including:
 - i. undergraduate and post graduate courses;
 - ii. full and part-time courses;
 - iii. the social work degree apprenticeship;
 - iv. alternative training routes and courses.
8. Ahead of this consultation, we established a dedicated advisory group to assist us with the development of the standards. We also worked collaboratively with our professional expert group¹ and our experts by experience group² during the development of standards and discussed the potential impacts of change.
9. The advice we have received to date suggests that any significant immediate change to the qualifying education and training standards risks disruption for providers and students. Equally, there was strong support for us to develop a new set of standards that better reflect social work practice, alongside a plea for time to implement changes.
10. In order to balance these competing factors, we are proposing that our first set of standards will reflect the current standards with a small number of additions. We will also be consulting on the standards that we want to implement from autumn 2020. Both sets of standards are set out in this document.

¹ Association of Directors of Adults Social Services, Association of Directors of Children's Services, Association of Professors of Social Work, Become, British Association of Social Workers, CAFCASS, Chief Social Worker for Children and Families, Chief Social Worker for Adults, Frontline, Goldsmiths University London, Joint Social Work Education Council, Local Government Association, Northern Ireland Social Care Council, NSPCC, Principal Adult Social Worker Network, Principal Child and Family Social Worker Network, Professional Standards Authority, Scottish Social Services Council, Shaping Our Lives, Skills for Care, Social Care Institute for Excellence, Social Care Wales, Think Local Act Personal, Unison, University of Bradford, University of Central Lancashire, University of Sheffield and Youth Justice Board.

² The experts by experience group are composed of people with a wide variety of lived experience of social work. The group is facilitated by us and its purpose is to inform and challenge our thinking, increase communication and understanding of different perspectives and create real opportunities for engagement in order to make effective change happen.

Standards from the date we become the social work regulator

11. The first standards will closely mirror the current standards for education and training providers of social work courses, with some changes. We felt that these changes, although minor, were necessary to ensure they are applicable to us as a social work regulator. Our professional experts suggested we change 'must' to 'will' to place education and training providers at the centre of the standards. We also listened to our experts by experience group who recommended that we use the term 'people with lived experience of social work' throughout our work. The changes are outlined in bold at **Annex A**.

Standards from autumn 2020

12. We are also consulting on a new set of qualifying education and training standards for implementation from autumn 2020. These standards can be found at **Annex B** with a graphic at **Annex C**.

13. We want courses to be effective in preparing newly qualified social workers for the challenges they may face. We are proposing:

- i. admissions processes that involve employers and people with lived experience of social work, so that the people who are selected to be trained can take on the practical and academic expectations of their training and of social work;
- ii. that employers, people with lived experience and others are central to the design, and delivery of social work training; and
- iii. an emphasis on quality of both the academic and placement elements of courses, acknowledging that both are of equal importance to the quality of the overall course.

14. Features of the new standards include:

- i. a requirement for a lead social worker role 'to hold overall professional responsibility for the course' (standard 4.6);
- ii. a requirement for students to have 'a minimum of one placement taking place within a statutory setting, providing experience of statutory social work tasks involving legal interventions' (standard 3.1);
- iii. a new standard on supporting students (standard 6); and
- iv. requirements for education providers to ensure that 'employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work are involved in admissions processes' (standard 2.2) in 'course monitoring and evaluation' (standard 4.4), and in 'the design and ongoing development of the course curriculum' (standard 5.2).

15. We will appoint regional engagement leads. As registered and practising social workers, they will work with a range of stakeholders, including employers, people with lived experience of social work, social workers, and education and training providers. They will raise awareness and ensure the consistent implementation of our standards, including sharing analysis of when social workers or education and training providers fall short of standards, and they will drive forward our engagement across regions.

How do I take part?

16. The aim of this consultation is to invite your feedback and to test our thinking on the proposed standards. We welcome feedback on all the standards, but we have asked several targeted questions in an online survey, which you can find [here](#).

17. The survey makes use of open and scaling questions (1: strongly disagree - 5: strongly agree). The survey questions are reproduced below. Please see the 'how to respond' section for information about how to complete the online survey, or for assistance in responding to these questions.

Survey questions

1. To what extent do you agree with the approach we're taking?
2. To what extent do you agree that the 2020 standards reflect what is important in preparing people to be social workers?
3. Do you think we are being ambitious enough?
4. Is there anything you think should be added?
5. Is there anything in the standards you don't understand?
6. Do you have any other comments?

Impact assessment

18. Our aim is to enable change and ultimately improve people's lives by providing clear, effective and responsive regulation of social workers. The proposals are designed with people who use social work services in mind, ultimately striving for better public protection and increased confidence in social work as a profession.

19. We expect that any impact would be beneficial but will be felt most immediately by social workers and their employers, education and training providers, students and people who use social work services.

20. The impact assessment questions can be found at the end of the online survey, but are also listed in the grey box below, for reference.

Impact assessment questions

Do you think that the proposed changes will:

1. bring particular benefits for your organisation or those you represent?
2. impact differently on people based on protected characteristics³?

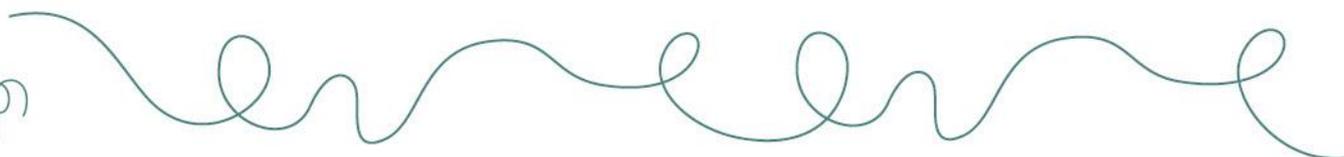
How to respond

21. The consultation is open until 5pm on Wednesday 1 May 2019.
22. You can answer the questions online via the survey found [here](#).
23. Or you can email us at consultation.responses@socialworkengland.org.uk.
24. Or by post to: Consultation Responses, Social Work England, 1st floor, 1 North Bank, Blonk Street, Sheffield, S3 8JY.
25. If you need any reasonable adjustments to help you respond, please contact us at consultation.responses@socialworkengland.org.uk.

What will happen next

26. Once the consultation period is completed, we will analyse the responses we have received. We will then publish a document which summarises the responses and explains the decisions we have taken as a result.
27. All standards require approval, and rules are subject to review, by the Secretary of State before publication. The final sets of rules and standards will be published on our website. The rules will govern how we operate as a regulator and will come into force on the day we assume regulatory responsibility. Social workers and education and training providers will be expected to meet the professional and qualifying education and training standards once we assume regulatory responsibility.

³ The Equality Act (2010) lists nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.



Annex A

Draft social work qualifying education and training standards 2019

1. Level of qualification for entry to the register

1.1 The threshold entry route to the register will be Bachelor's degree with honours.

2. Admissions

2.1 The admissions process **will** give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

2.2 The selection and entry criteria **will** include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.

2.3 The admissions process **will** ensure that applicants have a good command of English.

2.4 The admissions process **will** assess the suitability of applicants, including criminal conviction checks.

2.5 The admissions process **will** ensure that applicants are aware of and comply with any health requirements.

2.6 There **will** be an appropriate and effective process for assessing applicants' prior learning and experience.

2.7 The education provider **will** ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.

3. Programme governance, management and leadership

3.1 The programme **will** be sustainable and fit for purpose.

3.2 The programme **will** be effectively managed.

3.3 The education provider **will** ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and on the register.

- 3.4 The programme **will** have regular and effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place.
- 3.5 There **will** be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.
- 3.6 There **will** be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.
- 3.7 **People with lived experience of social work will** be involved in the programme.
- 3.8 Learners **will** be involved in the programme.
- 3.9 There **will** be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.
- 3.10 Subject areas **will** be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.
- 3.11 An effective programme **will** be in place to ensure the continuing professional and academic development of educators, appropriate to their role in the programme.
- 3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings **will** be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme and will be accessible to all learners and educators.
- 3.13 There **will** be effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the wellbeing and learning needs of learners in all settings.
- 3.14 The programme **will** implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to learners.
- 3.15 There **will** be a thorough and effective process in place for receiving and responding to learner complaints.
- 3.16 There **will** be thorough and effective processes in place for ensuring the ongoing suitability of learners' conduct, character and health.
- 3.17 There **will** be an effective process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of people with lived experience of social work.
- 3.18 The education provider **will** ensure learners, educators and others are aware that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to eligibility for admission to the register.

4. Programme design and delivery

- 4.1 The learning outcomes **will** ensure that learners meet **Social Work England's professional standards**.
- 4.2 The learning outcomes **will** ensure that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour.
- 4.3 The programme **will** reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.
- 4.4 The curriculum **will** remain relevant to current practice.
- 4.5 Integration of theory and practice **will** be central to the programme.
- 4.6 The learning and teaching methods used **will** be appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.
- 4.7 The delivery of the programme **will** support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.
- 4.8 The delivery of the programme **will** support and develop evidence-based practice.
- 4.9 The programme **will** ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.
- 4.10 The programme **will** include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from **people with lived experience of social work** and learners.
- 4.11 The education provider **will** identify and communicate to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory and will have associated monitoring processes in place.

5. Practice based learning

- 5.1 Practice based learning **will** be integral to the programme.
- 5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning **will** support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the **professional standards**.
- 5.3 The education provider **will** maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.
- 5.4 Practice based learning **will** take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and **people with lived experience of social work**.
- 5.5 There **will** be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.

5.6 Practice educators **will** have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, will be on the register.

5.7 Practice educators **will** undertake regular training, which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

5.8 Learners and practice educators **will** have the information they need in a timely manner in order to be prepared for practice-based learning.

6. Assessment

6.1 The assessment strategy and design **will** ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet **Social Work England's professional standards**.

6.2 Assessment throughout the programme **will** ensure that learners demonstrate they are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour.

6.3 Assessments **will** provide an objective, fair and reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.

6.4 Assessment policies **will** clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.

6.5 The assessment methods used **will** be appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes.

6.6 There **will** be an effective process in place for learners to make academic appeals.

6.7 The education provider **will** ensure that at least one external examiner for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the register.

Annex B

Draft social work qualifying education and training standards 2020

Outcomes

Standard 1 – Level of qualification for entry onto the register: all students meet the threshold entry level.

Standard 2 – Admissions: social work courses recruit students, who have the capability and suitability to develop towards meeting the professional standards and become registered upon completion of the course.

Standard 3 – Learning environment: social work courses deliver, in partnership with practice placement providers, practice learning experiences which support readiness to practice at the point of graduation. This includes providing learning opportunities that reflect and allow students to learn from the diversity of the communities they will work with.

Standard 4 – Course governance, management and quality: social work courses are governed, managed, continually improved and administered to a consistent quality and resourced sufficiently to ensure they meet the expectations of the regulator.

Standard 5 – Curriculum and assessment: social work courses are shaped by the needs and insights of employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work. This is to ensure a continually evolving curriculum which matches the contemporary demands of the whole sector, is delivered by appropriately qualified and experienced professionals, and produces informed, capable, prepared and motivated graduates who deliver safe and effective services.

Standard 6 – Supporting students: social work students have effective educational and pastoral support to progress through their course and meet the professional standards when they qualify.

1	Level of qualification for entry onto the register	The threshold entry route to the register is Bachelor’s degree with honours.
2	<p>Admissions Admissions processes must be robust, transparent, ensure that applicants meet course entry requirements and involve a range of stakeholders.</p>	<p>Outcome: Social work courses recruit students who have the capability and suitability towards meeting the professional standards and become registered upon completion of the course.</p> <p>Education and training providers will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirm on entry to the course, via a holistic/multi-dimensional assessment process, that applicants: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. have the capability 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. 2. Ensure that employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work are involved in admissions processes. 3. Ensure that the admissions processes assess the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character. This includes criminal conviction checks. 4. Ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored. 5. 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 information about the professional standards, research interests and placement opportunities.

<p>3 Learning environment The learning environment must provide education and training opportunities that allow students to develop their skills and knowledge, gain required experience in practice settings and meet the professional standards in supportive, supervised and safe settings.</p>	<p>Outcome: social work courses deliver, in partnership with practice placement providers, practice learning experiences that support readiness to practice at point of graduation. This includes providing learning opportunities that reflect and allow students to learn from the diversity of the communities they will work with.</p>
	<p><i>Education and training providers will:</i></p>
	<p>1. Ensure that students spend at least 200 days gaining different experiences and learning in practice settings. Each student will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 statutory social work tasks involving legal interventions.
	<p>2. Provide practice learning opportunities that allow students to develop and meet the professional standards.</p>
	<p>3. Ensure that while on placements, students have appropriate induction, supervision, access to resources and a realistic workload.</p>
	<p>4. Ensure that on placements, students' responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>6. Ensure that practice educators are on the register and that they have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.</p>
<p>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.</p>	

4	<p>Course governance, management and quality</p> <p>Social work courses must be governed, resourced and managed using effective and transparent processes in collaboration with employers and people with lived experience of social work. There must be processes to monitor and manage the quality and delivery of courses.</p>	<p>Outcome: social work courses are governed, managed, continually improved and administered to a consistent quality and resourced sufficiently to ensure they meet the expectations of the regulator.</p> <p>Education and training providers will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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. Ensure placement providers have contingencies in place to deal with practice placement breakdown. 3. 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. 4. 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. 5. Ensure that the number of students admitted is aligned to a clear strategy, which includes consideration of local/regional placement capacity. 6. 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. 7. 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. 8. 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.
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		<p>9. Ensure that educators are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice.</p>
		<p>10. Ensure that educators who are on the register are enabled to continue to meet the professional standards through continuing professional development.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Curriculum and assessment Courses must be designed to allow students to develop the required behaviours, skills, knowledge and understanding to meet the professional standards.</p>	<p>Outcome: Social work courses are shaped by the needs and insights of employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work. This is to ensure a continually evolving curriculum which matches the contemporary demands of the whole sector, is delivered by appropriately qualified and experienced professionals, and produces informed, capable, prepared and motivated graduates who deliver safe and effective services.</p> <p>Education and training providers will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that the content, structure and delivery of the training is designed to allow students to demonstrate that they can meet the professional standards and is in accordance with relevant guidance and frameworks. 2. Ensure that the views of employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work are incorporated into the design and ongoing development of the curriculum. 3. Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and human rights and legislative frameworks. 4. Ensure that the course is continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice. 5. Ensure that the integration of theory and practice is central to the course. 6. Ensure that students are given the opportunity to work with, and learn from, other professions in order to support multidisciplinary working.

		<p>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.</p> <p>8. Ensure that the assessment strategy and design demonstrate that the assessments are robust, reliable and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course meet the professional standards.</p> <p>9. Ensure that assessments are mapped to the curriculum and are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression through the course.</p> <p>10. Ensure students are provided with feedback throughout the course to support their development.</p> <p>11. Ensure assessments are carried out by people with appropriate expertise, and at least one external examiner for the course is appropriately qualified and experienced and on the register.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
6	<p>Supporting students Students must receive appropriate educational and pastoral support.</p>	<p>Outcome: Social work students have effective educational and pastoral support to progress through their course and meet the professional standards when they qualify.</p> <p>Education and training providers will:</p> <p>1. Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing and develop their resilience including:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. confidential counselling services; ii. careers advice and support; and iii. occupational health services.
	2. Ensure that students have access to resources to support their academic development including, for example, personal tutors.
	3. Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health.
	4. Make supportive and reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions and disabilities to enable them to progress through their course and meet the professional standards, in accordance with relevant legislation.
	5. Provide information to students about their curriculum, practice placements and assessments.
	6. Provide information to students about parts of the course where attendance is mandatory.
	7. Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students on their progression and performance in assessments.
	8. Ensure there is an effective process in place for students to make academic appeals.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING STANDARDS 2020



1. Level of Qualification for Entry onto the Register

The threshold entry is a Bachelors degree with honours.



2. Admissions

Bring people onto courses who can take on the practical and academic expectations of their training and of social work.



3. Learning Environment

Employers, people with lived experience of social work and others are central to the design, and delivery of social work training.



4. Course Governance, Management and Quality

Social work courses are governed, managed, continually improved and administered to a consistent quality.



5. Curriculum and Assessment

Emphasis is placed on the quality of both the academic and placement elements of courses, acknowledging that both are of equal importance to the quality of the overall course.



6. Supporting Students

Support for students to develop the required skills, knowledge and experience to meet the new professional standards.