



**Highlands**  
University  
College Jersey

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



# **Course Handbook**

## **BA in Social Work (Jersey)**

### **Stage 1**

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All the information in this handbook is correct at the time of printing.

University College Jersey (UCJ) is proud of its teaching and research and it undertakes all reasonable steps to provide educational services in the manner set out in this Handbook and in any documents referred to within it. It does not, however, guarantee the provision of such services. Should industrial action or circumstances beyond the control of the Institution interfere with its ability to provide educational services, the University undertakes to use all reasonable steps to minimise the resultant disruption to those services.

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## **1. Section 1 The BA in Social Work (Jersey) at University College Jersey**

### Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the Social Work Programme and to University College Jersey (UCJ) at Highlands. We are delighted that you have chosen to study with us. Our aim is to make the learning process enjoyable, enhance your academic achievement and bring about personal and professional success. Studying social work will be challenging, offering you the opportunity to draw out your best efforts but you can also expect to find it a stimulating and rewarding experience. All members of the department will do their best to ensure that you are well supported as you undertake this social work journey.

### **Brief overview of the BA in Social Work**

#### The History of the Course

Following an Independent Care Enquiry in July 2017, The Government of Jersey and University College Jersey, in partnership with the University of Sussex, introduced a new Social Work Degree. The course is designed to enable you to make sense of the Social Work profession within relevant historical, policy and practice contexts unique to Jersey. At the end of your three-year course, you will be a well-trained and appropriately qualified and accredited Social Worker ready to join the Island's workforce.

#### The Ethos of the Course

This small class sizes mean that students will be able to get to know each other and members of the department well. At Highlands we pride ourselves on establishing strong working relationships in a nurturing and supportive environment.

#### Involvement of Service Users and Carers

Users of services and carers across the Island are involved in all aspects of the degree. Their involvement is invaluable in giving students the time and opportunity to explore the nature of the profession and gain an insight into the wide of variety of roles social workers carry out. Service users contribute in everything from our admissions procedures to teaching sessions, to assessment of students' work across the course.

#### The Management of the Course

The BASW is accredited by the University of Sussex. Social Work at the University of Sussex has been taught for more than forty years and in 2013 and 2014 was ranked first in The Guardian and in 2014 first in The Times university rankings.

Our colleagues at Sussex conduct some of the teaching sessions for Jersey Students, with the two campuses sharing expertise and resources.

The course is subject to rigorous quality assessments, with meetings held twice a year to review and revise the structure, organisation, and content of the courses. Student representatives from each cohort are invited to participate in these meetings, as well as provide feedback throughout the year.

### The Structure and Organisation of the Course

This is laid out in detail in Section Four below.

Briefly, the Course is taught over three years which correspond with Stages 1, 2 and 3. Your learning will involve lectures, tutorials, workshops, practical placements, and private study. Marks from Stage 1 of the Course do not count towards the final degree classification: this is based on marks from Stages 2 and 3.

### **The Purpose of the Handbook**

The purpose of this Stage 1 Course Handbook is to provide you with essential information about the Course including an overview of the whole course and also the aims, structure, brief content and forms of assessment of the modules during Stage 1 of the degree.

Detailed information about Stages 2 and 3 of the course and specific information on Practice Education are provided in separate handbooks which can be found on Moodle and Teams. This course handbook should be used in conjunction with the module handbooks, which outline each element of the course in greater detail.

Information throughout your course will also be communicated via Teams:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3a129fc670d01343ecbade6c6b277f821e%40thread.skype/conversations?groupId=1d8ba47e-1913-441d-a4dd-8b6349190bbc&tenantId=f9dffa36-d653-45bb-9a25-c00d720a77c7>

Please familiarise yourself with the Teams platform and remember to check it regularly for updates.

## **The Course Team**

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## **The Role of the Academic Advisor (Tutor)**

Each student on the course will be assigned an Academic Advisor (Tutor) who will meet you individually and in group tutorials throughout Stage 1. During the course, your Tutor will provide you with professional, as well as academic and personal advice, guidance and support. They will also monitor your progress in all aspects of learning on the course (i.e., academic and practice learning) and during Stages 2 and 3 will liaise with your placements and the agency staff responsible for assessment.

Your tutor will make sure you have their contact details at the start of the term and should be your first point of contact for academic, professional or general concerns and queries.

### **Contacting Tutors**

All staff at Highlands are committed to maintaining clear and efficient communication with students. The best way to contact tutors is always by e-mail or Teams in the first instance rather than by telephone as tutors can access e-mail off campus but not telephone messages. If you e-mail and give a telephone number, then tutors will call you back. If a tutor is away for any reason, there will be a message on their email indicating an alternative contact.

Especially in the current climate, off-site working has many advantages. Many people find mobile devices and apps to be easy and quick. This can mean it is tempting to check messages and updates throughout the evening and on weekends. However, to ensure that you 'switch off', try to block out certain times of the week to do other things. Even if you have made a conscious decision to work outside of normal college hours, messages to staff and students via Teams should, ordinarily, only be sent between the hours of 8 am and 6 pm Monday to Friday, to help to support home/life balance. If you message one of your tutors outside of this time, they are not expected to reply until they are back within working hours.

The Individual Tutorials will be for 30 minutes and Group Tutorials will be for 1 hour. Tutorials are important resources for your learning during the course. They are a significant part of professional development and you are expected to attend at the agreed time (and to prepare for the sessions in order to benefit as much as possible from this time) rather than seeing these as optional elements of the course.

At Stage 1 tutorials are a mandatory element of the assessment of 'Readiness for Direct Practice'. All students will submit reflective summaries from tutorials in their final 'Introduction to Learning and Professional Development' portfolio.

Please note that tutors are not permitted to read full drafts of work to be submitted, nor are module staff. Tutors can help with general academic development, learning from feedback and personal and professional development and may agree to look at and discuss plans for assessed work with you or may agree to look at a very short extract (no more than a page) of your work if you have asked for help with expression/referencing etc. but this needs to be in a planned way during tutorial contact. As you prepare for your first tutorial do consider for yourself how you have settled into the course and come with any queries you have about what you have done so far or what has been expected of you.

## **Agency Partners**

UCJ has partnered with academics, local practitioners, and experts by experience in the development of this course. These partners contribute very significantly to the design,

delivery, management, review and monitoring of our courses alongside student representatives and University tutors. A Partnership Agreement has been agreed in respect of these aspects of collaboration.

Our agency partners include:

- Autism Jersey
- Government of Jersey: Adult Services
- Government of Jersey: Children's Services
- Government of Jersey: Criminal Justice & Home Affairs
- Probation and After Care Services
- Jersey Alzheimer's Association
- Jersey Institute of Law
- Jersey Library
- Les Amis
- Mental Health Care Group
- MIND Jersey
- NSPCC

## **Student Representation**

UCJ takes the student voice very seriously and actively engages with students to gather feedback through both meetings and individual module feedback links which can be found on Moodle. This feedback is reflected upon regularly to inform and improve the teaching and learning experience for all students

Student representative roles are an important part of leadership during your social work training. There are a number of ways in which students can make representations and advise on the course. Students in every course and cohort elect student representatives to represent students in a variety of departmental, school and university committees and functions. Elections for these are normally held during the first weeks of the course. The Programme Leader will meet with student reps on a regular basis and reps are invited to attend quality assurance meetings. These meetings are held as one way to ensure good communication between the student cohort and the members of the department.

### Student Perception Questionnaire (SPQ)

You are encouraged to complete an annual online questionnaire specifically focused on your experiences as a Higher Education student. Both of these provide valuable information to enable us to improve your programme and learning experience. You will receive feedback from tutors on changes that have been made due to your feedback, so it is key to engage with these surveys to have your voice heard.

## **2. Section 2: Facilities and Resources**

### **Program Specific Resources**

University College Jersey (UCJ) provides the resources that you need to successfully complete your studies. If you have come across materials or resources that would be useful to other students or if you feel that the resources you can reasonably expect are not available - be they online, library, physical materials etc. - then report this as soon as possible to the appropriate member of the academic or support staff. If you judge the response to be not adequate, contact your Programme Manager and your student representative so that the issue can be addressed at the next Programme Committee meeting.



## **Your Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)**

University College Jersey (UCJ) uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle. Here you can access most of the information/resources to support you with your studies. Resources you can expect to find here include:

- Module guides - Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Teaching materials
- Links to appropriate academic resources
- Links to Study Skills
- Guide to referencing

## **Library and Learning Resources**

Resources needed to successfully complete your studies are provided. You will be introduced to these resources during your induction into the Learning Resource Centre (LRC). You will also be inducted in how to borrow books, access online materials, use systems and obtain the necessary resources to assist you with your studies.

Your Highlands Student ID card doubles as a Jersey Library card. You are able to take out a 7-day loan from the Jersey Library for any Adult Non-Fiction or Reference materials.

## **IT Facilities and Wi-Fi**

During Fresher's week all students are offered an IT induction session. At this point students are navigated around the IT systems and allocated a printer pin number which can be used at any printing machine in the college. If students should experience any IT problems during their studies, they can contact the IT helpdesk link on the portal page or by contacting them directly on 01534 608519

## **Room Access**

As a UCJ student you have access to a dedicated university coffee lounge (UC 215). The LRC also has a computer suite which can be booked out by individual students if required

## **Campus Information**

Parking: Students should apply for a parking permit if travelling to college by car. Forms are given out during induction or can be requested from Beth Abbott. All motorbikes are required to park in the designated motorbike parking area on the D'Hautree Site (entrance on St. Saviour's Hill)

ID: To adhere with the College's Safeguarding policy all students are issued with ID and a lanyard to be worn at all times whilst in college. This card will grant you door access to the building during college open hours.

Careers Advice and Guidance: can be accessed through your personal tutor or through the Careers and Employability team in the Highlands Information Centre. Please contact [mary.hubert@highlands.ac.uk](mailto:mary.hubert@highlands.ac.uk)

Student Life team: this service can be accessed through your personal tutor or independently through their main office in the Café Connect Lounge. This service is also available to students outside of term time hours.

## Campus Map



### **3. Section 3: Course Overview**

#### **Achieving Professional Capability and Proficiency**

Qualifying in social work requires the development and demonstration of a standard of proficiency and a level of capability sufficient to meet the requirements of the regulator (the Health and Care Professions Council or HCPC). The HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics must be adhered to throughout the course. Students on all qualifying courses must meet these standards and level of performance and conduct. In addition, as a BASW student you will need to demonstrate in your work both in the university and in placement assessments the level of academic achievement required by the Qualifications and Accreditation Agency (QAA). This section of the handbook describes the HCPC and QAA requirements in outline and provides web links to the detailed descriptors. Also included is the Professional Capabilities Framework that currently underpins the content of the course. The requirements for readiness for direct practice are set out in fuller detail in section four of this handbook.

#### **Professional Capabilities Framework**

The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) is a profession-owned and profession-driven framework that sets out consistent expectations of social workers at each career stage in England. There are nine domains of Professional Capability, which are interdependent. Capability in respect of each of these domains and overall is assessed on the course in three stages or levels where progression is characterised by developing ability to manage complexity, risk, ambiguity and increasingly autonomous decision making across a range of situations. The brief PCF descriptors are listed here.

### **PROFESSIONALISM:**

**This domain requires you to, identify and behave as a professional social worker, committed to professional development.**

*Social workers are members of an internationally recognised profession, a title protected in UK law. Social workers demonstrate professional commitment by taking responsibility for their conduct, practice and learning, with support through supervision. As representatives of the social work profession they safeguard its reputation and are accountable to the professional regulator.*

### **VALUES AND ETHICS:**

**This domain requires you to apply social work ethical principles and values to guide professional practices.**

*Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves and make decisions in accordance with our Code of Ethics. This includes working in partnership with people who use our services. We promote human right and social justice. We develop and maintain our understanding of the value base of our profession throughout our career, its ethical standards and relevant law*

### **DIVERSITY:**

**This domain requires you to recognise diversity and apply anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in practice.**

*Social workers understand that diversity characterises and shapes human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. Diversity is multi-dimensional and includes race, disability, class, economic status, age, sexuality, gender (including transgender), faith and belief, and the intersection of these and other characteristics. We understand that because of difference, and perception of difference, a person's life experience may include oppression, marginalisation and alienation as well as privilege, power and acclaim. We identify this and promote equality.*

### **RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC WELLBEING:**

**This domain is about advancing human rights and promote social justice and economic wellbeing.**

*Social workers recognise and promote the fundamental principles of human rights, social justice and economic wellbeing enshrined in national and international laws, conventions and policies. These principles underpin our practice, and we use statutory and case law effectively in our work. We understand and address the effects of oppression, discrimination and poverty. Wherever possible, we work in partnership with people using services, their careers and families, to challenge inequality and injustice, and promote strengths, agency, hope and self-determination.*

### **KNOWLEDGE:**

**This domain requires you to develop and apply relevant knowledge from social work practice and research, social sciences, law, other professional and relevant fields, and from the experience of people who use services**

*We develop our professional knowledge throughout our careers and sustain our curiosity. As a unified profession, we develop core knowledge that relates to our purpose, values and ethics. We also develop specific knowledge needed for fields of practice and roles. Our knowledge comes from social work practice, theory, law, research, expertise by experience, and from other relevant fields and disciplines. All social workers contribute to creating as well as using professional knowledge. We understand our distinctive knowledge complements that of other disciplines to provide effective services*

### **CRITICAL REFLECTION AND ANALYSIS:**

**This domain requires you to apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision-making.**

*Social workers critically reflect on their practice, use analysis, apply professional judgement and reasoned discernment. We identify, evaluate, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge and evidence. We continuously evaluate our impact and benefit to service users. We use supervision and other support to reflect on our work and sustain our practice and wellbeing. We apply our critical reflective skills to the context and conditions under which we practise. Our reflection enables us to challenge ourselves and others, and maintain our professional curiosity, creativity, and self-awareness.*

#### **INTERVENTION AND SKILLS:**

**This domain requires you to use judgement, knowledge and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support, prevent harm and enable progress.**

*Social workers engage with individuals, families, and communities, working alongside people to determine their needs and wishes, and what action may be helpful. We build productive working relationships and communicate effectively. Using our professional judgement, we employ appropriate interventions, promoting self-determination, support, protection, and positive change. We develop and maintain skills relevant to our roles. We understand and take account of power differentials and use our authority appropriately. We evaluate our own practice and its impact, and how we improve outcomes for those we work with.*

#### **CONTEXTS AND ORGANISATIONS:**

**This domain requires you to engage with, inform, and adapt to changing organisational contexts, and the social and policy environments that shape practice. Operate effectively within and contribute to the development of organisations and services, including multi-agency and inter-professional settings.**

*Social workers are informed about and pro-actively respond to the challenges and opportunities that come from changing social, policy and work contexts. We fulfil this responsibility in accordance with our professional values and ethics, as individual and collective professionals and as members of the organisations in which we work. We collaborate, inform, and are informed by our work with other social workers, other professions, individuals, and communities.*

#### **PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP:**

**This domain expects you to promote the profession and good social work practice. Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others. Develop personal influence and be part of the collective leadership and impact of the profession.**

*We develop and show our leadership, individually and collectively, through promoting social work's purpose, practices and impact. We achieve this through diverse activities which may include advancing practice; supervising; educating others; research; evaluation; using innovation and creativity; writing; using social media positively; being active in professional networks and bodies; contributing to policy; taking formal leadership/ management roles. We promote organisational contexts conducive to good practice and learning. We work in partnership with people who use services and stakeholders in developing our leadership and aims for the profession.*

Full details of the PCF can be found at:

<https://www.basw.co.uk/pcf/>

Section Four below includes a summary of how PCF Readiness for Practice Indicators are addressed at Stage 1 on the BA course.

## Knowledge and Skills Statements

The Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) set out what a qualified social worker should know, and be able to do, in specific practice settings, roles, responsibilities and levels of seniority. Alongside the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), the KSS provides the foundation for social work education and practice in England across all pre-qualifying, post-qualifying levels and in continuous professional development (CPD). The KSS are mapped against the PCF domains of Knowledge, Critical Reflection and Analysis, Interventions and Skills. Both frameworks work hand in hand. The KSS are aimed to help and guide everyday practice.

- Knowledge and skills statement for child and family practitioners can be found here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/708704/Post-qualifying\\_standard-KSS\\_for\\_child\\_and\\_family\\_practitioners.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/708704/Post-qualifying_standard-KSS_for_child_and_family_practitioners.pdf)
- Knowledge and Skills Statement for Social Workers in Adult Services can be found here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/411957/KSS.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/411957/KSS.pdf)

## The HCPC Standards of Proficiency

The HCPC Standards of Proficiency for Social Workers in England set the threshold required for entry to registration. There are fifteen HCPC Standards of Proficiency that you must achieve to complete the BA course successfully and be registered.

Registered social workers must be able to demonstrate the following:

1. To practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice
2. To practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession
3. To maintain fitness to practise
4. To practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement
5. To be aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice
6. To practise in a non-discriminatory manner
7. To maintain confidentiality
8. To communicate effectively
9. To work appropriately with others
10. To maintain records appropriately
11. To reflect on and review practice
12. To assure the quality of their practice
13. To understand the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to their profession
14. To draw on appropriate knowledge and skills to inform practice
15. To establish and maintain a safe practice environment

## **The HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance, and Ethics**

You will be required to be familiar with the HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics and be asked to sign a declaration to confirm that you have read and will keep to the standards on registration as social worker.

In order to meet these standards, you must:

16. Act in the best interests of service users
17. Respect the confidentiality of service users.
18. Keep high standards of personal conduct.
19. Provide any important information about your conduct and competence.
20. Keep your professional knowledge and skills up to date.
21. Act within the limits of your knowledge, skills, and experience and, if necessary, refer the matter to another practitioner.
22. Communicate properly and effectively with service users and other practitioners.
23. Effectively supervise tasks that you have asked other people to carry out.
24. Get informed consent to provide care or services (so far as possible).
25. Keep accurate records
26. Deal fairly and safely with the risks of infection.
27. Limit your work or stop practising if your performance or judgement is affected by your health.
28. Behave with honesty and integrity and make sure that your behaviour does not damage the public's confidence in you or your profession.
29. Make sure that any advertising you do is accurate.

## **The Higher Education Qualifications Accreditation Agency Requirements**

The QAA requires that students graduating with a bachelor's qualification in social work are able to:

1. Apply creatively a repertoire of core skills
2. Communicate effectively with service users and carers, and other professionals
3. Integrate clear understanding of ethical issues and codes of values, and practice with their interventions in specific situation
4. Consistently exercise an appropriate level of autonomy and initiative in individual decision-making within the context of supervisory, collaborative, ethical and organisational requirements
5. Demonstrate habits of critical reflection on their performance and take responsibility for modifying action in the light of this

## **Social Work Pledge**

The following is a pledge to the profession of social work provided by our partners at Sussex University. It will be introduced and discussed during induction week and will be reconsidered periodically throughout the course. You may well wish to discuss the pledge with fellow students and with your tutor before you sign it. The pledge is deliberately kept simple but many of the issues raised within it are deeply complex and you will be guided and supported in considering them throughout the course. Signing the pledge is a voluntary undertaking and there will be no sanction against any student who refuses to sign. It is, however, to be taken as an opportunity for you to begin to demonstrate your commitment to the social work profession and as a sign of your appreciation of the seriousness of the endeavour that you are now embarked upon.

### **THE UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX SOCIAL WORK PLEDGE**

I pledge that as a social work student at University College Jersey and in my subsequent career I will do all I can to uphold my own personal integrity and that of the profession I will represent.

I will treat my fellow students, members of the university staff and all those colleagues and people I work alongside with respect and kindness.

I will, whenever I can do so, prioritise the needs of those with whom I am working above other considerations.

I will maintain the confidentiality of any personal information I receive in accordance with statutory requirements.

I will diligently develop my knowledge and understanding of the profession whilst being aware at all times of the limits of my knowledge and capabilities. I also understand I will be held accountable within the agency in which I work to meeting the requirements of the social work role.

In fulfilling this pledge, I understand I will be able to ensure that my conduct adheres to the Health and Social Care Professions Council Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics.

Signature:

Date:



## Course Specification, Aims and Learning Outcomes

### Course Specification:

Awarding Body	University of Sussex	
Location of Study	Highlands College	
Department Home	University College Jersey	
School / Faculty	University College Jersey	
Professional Regulators	Health and Care Professions Council / Social Work England	Qualifying degree leading to professional practice
<b>Award</b>		<b>Title</b>
Final Award	BA (Hons) (360 Credits)	Social Work
Intermediate Award	DipHE (240 Credits)	Social Care
Intermediate Award	CertHE (120 Credits)	Social Care
Exit Award	BA (Ordinary) (300 min Credits)	Social Care
<b>Course Codes</b>		
UCAS Code	L500	
Subject Benchmark	Social Work 2008	
<b>Course Regulations</b>		
Maximum Registration Period	3 Years	
Mode of Study	Full Time	
Credit Ratings	360 Credits	
Course Specification Approved at	29 <sup>th</sup> January 2019	

## Course Aims

Aims	<p>The aims of the course are:</p> <p>The overarching aims of the BA in Social Work (Jersey) are to enable students to become social work practitioners who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Competent and research-minded</li><li>• Critically reflective and able to take effective decisions in a context of complexity, change and uncertainty</li><li>• Able to identify and manage the impact of working in difficult situations, including the working with the distress of vulnerable people</li><li>• Committed to the values of social work and to ethical and anti-oppressive practice</li><li>• Able to practice in accordance with the requirements of the Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Work The course will enable students to develop and apply:</li><li>• Knowledge of a welfare society and practice skills in relation to issues of social exclusion and social justice</li><li>• Knowledge of issues of diversity, discrimination and oppression and skills in identifying and challenging oppressions</li><li>• Knowledge of service users' and carers' perspectives and the ability to take account of these fully in practice</li><li>• Practice skills in communication and in assessment, intervention, planning and review of service users' needs in a range of statutory, voluntary and independent settings</li><li>• Knowledge of the legal framework of social work and its application to practice</li><li>• Knowledge of the multi-professional context of social work</li><li>• Knowledge of social work research and the ability to employ research mindedness in practice</li></ul>
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## Course Learning Outcomes

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p>At the end of the course, the successful student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Critically evaluate and apply knowledge for effective social work practice in a welfare society, responsive to issues of social exclusion and social justice.</li><li>• Critically evaluate and apply knowledge for effective social work practice in a legal framework.</li><li>• Plan, undertake and evaluate effective social work practice that is responsive to issues of diversity, discrimination, and oppression.</li><li>• Plan, undertake and evaluate effective ethically based social work practice with service users in a range of statutory, voluntary, and independent settings.</li><li>• Plan, undertake and evaluate effective social work practice in a complex context, often multi-professional and characterized by change and uncertainty.</li><li>• Understand and evaluate social work research and employ research mindedness in practice.</li><li>• Integrate theoretical and practice-based learning and apply this learning creatively, critically and ethically in practice</li><li>• Evidence through academic work and practice related written work a critical and evaluative approach to examining a range of social problems and experiences</li></ul>
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## Teaching Learning and Assessment

<b>Learning and Teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A student-centred approach to learning and teaching will be adopted. A variety of learning and teaching methods will be used throughout the course with a clear focus on the application of knowledge and skills to practice, in line with the requirements of the Professional Capabilities Framework and Social Work Benchmark Statement.</li><li>• Students will be encouraged to be active learners and to take responsibility for their own learning, becoming increasingly independent learners (singly and in groups), in preparation for competent qualified professional practice, life-long learning and continuing professional development. Opportunities for self-assessment and critical reflection at each level will further contribute to this.</li><li>• Students will be given the opportunity to develop competence in the use of information and communication technologies and e-learning will be used in relevant modules, including learning in practice settings.</li><li>• Learning and teaching strategies on the course will have a clear focus on the practice relevance of knowledge and skills and will provide clearly structured opportunities both in the university and in placements to develop and practice skills in relation to direct work with users and carers</li><li>• Learning and teaching will take account fully of the perspectives of service users and carers who will regularly and directly contribute to teaching.</li><li>• Learning and teaching will provide the opportunity for students to learn about the multidisciplinary context for professional social work and will afford the chance to work confidently and effectively with other professionals both in university-based workshops and in practice settings</li><li>• Learning and teaching will aim to develop social work students as critical thinkers, able to think analytically and reflectively about the professional social work task. This will be integrated, demonstrated and modelled in teaching that is characterized by an exploratory, enquiring, questioning, critical and evaluative approach. Students will be expected to develop and demonstrate these skills in a variety of small group settings.</li><li>• In line with effective and competent professional practice in a context that is characterized by complexity and change, learning and teaching will be concerned with and relevant to contemporary practice, research-informed and up to date.</li></ul>
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## Assessment

Assessment	<p>The course is committed to using a diverse range of assessment methods explicitly linked to the learning outcomes of the modules by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a range of assessment methods appropriate to the learning outcomes being assessed</li> <li>• Ensuring that more than one mode of assessment will be experienced at each stage.</li> <li>• Requiring a sustained and in-depth assessment at Stage3, via the BA Social Work Research Minded Project. Assessment of practice on the course addresses the following requirements:</li> <li>• Assessment of student readiness for direct practice with service users or carers. This includes confirmation of appropriate and professional standards of behaviour.</li> <li>• Assessment of student practice over 170 days in at least two practice settings, with at least two user groups, and in relation to statutory social work tasks, including legal interventions, with 30 additional Practice Development Workshops based at the university.</li> <li>• Assessment of student practice against the Professional Capabilities Framework of Social Work</li> </ul> <p><b>At Stage 2:</b> Evidence of satisfactory practice and progress in line with the PCF</p> <p><b>At Stage 3:</b> Evidence of satisfactory practice in line with the PCF as assessed by an experienced and qualified social worker at the point of qualification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At both Stage 2 and Stage 3 there will be a formal midway review</li> <li>• At both Stage 2 and Stage 3 there will be three structured and formally organized Direct Observations of student practice with service users/ carers, one of which must occur before the Midway Assessment, by the Practice Educator or her/his nominee (who must be a qualified social worker with experience of assessing students on placement).</li> <li>• Students will maintain a Practice Portfolio. The Practice Portfolio at Stage 2 and Stage 3 MUST include at least three Practice Educator reports of satisfactory Direct Observations of practice as detailed above.</li> </ul>
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## Regulations

Regulations	<p>All modules undertaken on the course must be passed in order to obtain the award.</p> <p>Students are required to complete placements to a satisfactory standard for a specified number of days.</p> <p>Satisfactory attendance is a requirement of this degree.</p> <p>Students are subject to specific regulations concerning fitness to practise</p> <p>The general regulations of the University of Sussex apply to this degree, including in relation to student complaints and appeals, and whistleblowing.</p>
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**Credits for the BASW Course are as follows:**

Module Codes	Status	Module Title	Credits
<b>Stage 1</b>			
L5087	M*	Introduction to Professional and Learning Development (Part 1)	15
L5088	M	Contexts of Social Work	15
L5089	M	Human Growth and Development	30
L5090	M	Introduction to Professional and Learning Development (Part 2)	15
L5091	M	Values, Ethics and Theories	15
L5092	M	Law for Social Work	30
<b>Stage 2</b>			
L5093	M	Working with Adults, their Families and Carers	30
L5094	M	Working with Children, Young People and Families	30
L5095	M	Stage 2 Practice Learning. 70 Day Placement	45
L5097	M	Research Methods	15
<b>Stage 3</b>			
L5096	M	Understanding Organisations, Management and Interprofessional Practice	15
L5100	M	Group Reflection on Practice 1	15
L5068B	M	Stage 3 Practice Learning Reflective Summary	15
L5068C	M	Stage 3 Practice Learning Viva	15
L5100B	M	Group Reflection on Practice 2	15
L5023	M	Research Minded Project (Dissertation)	45
L5068A	M	Stage 3 Practice Learning 100 Day Placement	0

\*Mandatory

## **Assessment Procedures**

### **Principles of Assessment**

The guiding principle for assessment on the course is that there should be rigorous, fair and transparent assessment of student learning and practice. In accordance with this guiding principle, students will be entitled to receive clear, full and fair feedback that supports their ongoing learning. Assessment on the course will help students to improve their learning and provide certification to enter qualified social work practice.

### **Assignment Presentation**

The following formatting is required for all assignments:

- All written work must be submitted in an appropriate format. Word processors must be used
- Spell checks should be carried out.
- Font size: 12pt.
- Style: Arial/Tahoma/Comic Sans.
- Margins: At least 2cm at the top, bottom, left and right.
- Margins: Fully justified.
- Line spacing: 1.5 or double.
- Header: Contains Student ID number (with no initials) on every page of your document.
- Footer: Contains the page number on every page (either in the centre or in the right margin).
- Word Count: This needs to be inserted at the end of your document and before your Reference List.

### **Checklist for Assignments**

- Are the criteria for length, presentation and referencing met?
- Does the formatting fit with the guidelines above?
- Have the grammar, punctuation and spelling been checked?
- Has the whole assignment been proofread and checked for confidentiality/anonymity?
- Are references properly supplied in the required format?
- Is your Student ID number on each page of the assignment?

Your Submissions will be E-Submissions via Turnitin on Moodle. You will be shown how to upload your work by your tutor



## **Marking and Moderation**

During Stage 1 of the BA Social Work (Jersey) you will be assessed using a range of different methods including:

- Group presentation
- Case study
- Essay
- Viva
- Examination

These different assessment approaches have been chosen to fit the learning outcomes of each module and to enable you to demonstrate a range of skills and knowledge. The course is committed to fairness, transparency, and consistency in marking by ensuring that each piece of assessed work has clear, written criteria, which match the learning outcomes.

All assessed work will be subject to internal moderation, which may include double marking and will include cross marking a sample of work from each module and from each marker. Where a fail mark is recorded for the module, all contributory work for that module will be subject to formal double marking.

In addition, External Examiners will have ongoing responsibility for reviewing the assessment process and reporting on its quality.

## **Feedback**

All students will receive written feedback commenting on the quality of the assignment providing pointers for future development and improvement. We will endeavour to provide this feedback within fifteen working days of the final submission date. Tutorials can be used for discussion of general progress and areas for development. Your assignments will usually be marked by the relevant module tutors and all marking is moderated internally to ensure consistency as well as samples being seen by our External Examiners.

The course follows the UCJ requirement that all work is marked anonymously wherever practical.

## Marking Scheme

### Below 40%: Fail

Work at this level has failed to meet degree standard. Your work is likely to be characterised by:

- Inadequate reference to readings, content and concepts covered in the taught course.
- Dependence on a too narrow range of references
- Confused and incoherent assignment structure
- Weak use of written English

At whichever level you are studying assessed work will be given the following marks if:

**1%-9%**            The submitted work does not meet any learning outcomes.

**10%-19%**        Only one learning outcome is addressed but unsuccessfully

**20%-39%**        Only one learning outcome is addressed successfully.

Stage 1	
<b>40%-49%</b>	Acceptable. You will have met the learning outcomes but will need to develop your work in some areas. You will have demonstrated that you have understood the main module themes at a basic level. Your work will generally have been presented clearly and accurately. There will be some use of supported reading, but the range will be narrow, and it will have been used largely descriptively.
<b>50%-59%</b>	A competent piece of work that demonstrates a clear understanding of the assessment tasks. All the learning outcomes will have been met with some areas of strength. Your work will be coherently structured, and the arguments will be supported by the use of a range of references specified throughout the module.
<b>60%-69%</b>	You will have produced a confident assignment, which shows an assured grasp of all the main relevant concepts and content of the module. Arguments demonstrate evidence of significant skill in interpreting complex material supported by a wide range of source material. Referencing will be accurate. You will have met all the learning outcomes and show strength in a number of areas.
<b>70%-79%</b>	You will have demonstrated all of the above but with a more secure critical grasp of the course content. You will have demonstrated a clear ability to present original arguments and to place them in a wider context. Your referencing will be extensive and meticulous. You will have met all the learning outcomes and shown strength in most areas.
<b>80%-100%</b>	Assignments at this level are outstanding, representing the best that is expected of an undergraduate at this level. Your work is likely to be characterised by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Originality</li><li>- Economy of argument</li><li>- Meticulous presentation</li></ul> All the learning outcomes are strongly and clearly met.

## 4. Section 4: Stage 1 in Detail

### Module Information

Each module has its own handbook, which will be made available to you on Moodle. Each Module Handbook will give you more details of the content of the teaching. It will also include recommended reading, teaching and learning content and requirements for assessment. What follows is a general overview of the curriculum for Stage 1 of the course.

In Stage 1 of the course you will study the following modules:

Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Term	Placement (Y/N)	Assessment
L5097	Introduction to Professional and Learning Development (Part 1)	15	Autumn	No	Portfolio
L5088	Contexts of Social Work	15	Autumn	No	Report on Research
L5089	Human Growth and Development	30	Autumn	No	Group Presentation and Case Study
L5090	Introduction to Professional and Learning Development (Part 2)	15	Spring	No	Portfolio
L5091	Values, Ethics and Theories	15	Spring	No	Case Study
L5092	Law for Social Work	30	Summer	No	90 Minutes Open book Exam and Essay *
	Readiness for Direct Practice		Summer	No	Professional Learning Development Portfolio. Reflective Accounts RDP Viva

\* Exams held on campus may be subject to change as a result of Covid-19 government guidelines. You will be kept abreast of any and all changes to assessments.

▪ **Introduction to Professional Learning and Development Part 1** (Autumn Term) & **Introduction to Professional Learning and Development Part 2** (Spring Term)

These two modules provide opportunities to focus on two main areas of knowledge and learning. These are the development of identity, and the development of a range of techniques and skills essential for Higher Education learning on a professional course. The first part of IPLD begins in the autumn, but you will collect evidence for final assessment throughout Stage 1. The second part of IPLD is taught in term two under the title IPLD2. The module continues to offer academic and professional development focusing more on linking theory to practice. Students will continue to work reflectively as they work towards developing professional competence in Social Work.

Content

You will explore the concept of identity through a number of different teaching and learning approaches. These include theoretical and narrative reading, structured input and related seminars.

Observational and experiential learning will be developed by structured input and the use of seminars and other learning groups.

Workshop sessions will provide additional opportunities for skill development in preparation for using observational learning while 'shadowing' professional practice.

▪ **Contexts of Social Work** (Autumn term)

The Contexts of Social Work course provides a grounding in the history, politics, and practice of social work in the UK. It looks at both the national and international picture of contemporary social work.

Content

This course will help students to locate the contemporary UK social work profession within relevant historical and global contexts. Students will learn through a variety of means that include lectures and workshops, but also through group and individual research and investigation tasks. Key policy changes will be highlighted and the political, contested and controversial aspects of the social work role will be introduced in order to form a firm basis for modules that follow later in the degree. Active participation by service users, carers and/or practitioners alongside course faculty will provide students with a range of perspectives and different forms of knowledge.

▪ **Human Growth and Development** (Autumn term)

This module explores human development from a number of theoretical perspectives. Connections will be made between the individual and family experience and the social context. The relevance of these issues to social work and social care practice will be explored in relation to 'normal' development and human diversity.

Content

The module will include

- An introduction to theories of child, adolescent and adult development.
- Definitions of lifespan development and ideas about 'normal' development.
- How key issues from research such as attachment, resilience and identity influence social work theory and practice.
- How individual and family development is affected by inequalities such as poverty, race, disability and class.
- An introduction to making use of learning groups. Organising material for and making contributions to a group assessment.

#### ▪ **Law for Social Work** (Spring term)

In this module you will gain knowledge of the legal framework that underpins social work practice, and (building on the Contexts of Social Work module) explore the ways law and policy interact to provide a broad framework for assessment and intervention.

##### Content

The module will introduce you to the structure of the English Legal System, and the legal rules that give social workers powers and duties to assess, support and intervene with children, their families, and adults in need of support. You will explore the relationship between law and social work values and reflect on the ways in which legal rules can support practice that is both lawful and ethical. Lectures will introduce core knowledge, and you will also take part in small group exercises and guided independent reading to consolidate your understanding, before applying the legal rules to case scenarios discussed in class under the guidance of the tutor.

#### ▪ **Values, Ethics and Theories** (Spring term)

In this module students build on the work they have done earlier in the stage but with a particular focus on professional formation through considerations of values, ethics and theories in social work. The module brings social work theory to the fore and emphasises its importance for practice. A range of different social work theories are presented and analysed. The module examines the historical development and contemporary expression of social work values and ethics. It also considers the use of codes of ethics and codes of practice as well as the ethical and value basis to theories. The module will use case studies to tie the theoretical and ethical discussions to the reality of practice situations in order to better prepare students for future placements.

##### Content

Typical content on this module may include

- Anti-Opressive/Anti Discriminatory Values in Social Work
- Ethics based on principles
- Ethics based on character
- Ethics, Religion and Spirituality
- Radical Theories of Social Work
- Liberal/Conservative Theories of Social Work
- Psychodynamic Theories and Social Work
- Systems Theories/Ecological Approaches
- Ethics, Theory and Culture

#### **Professional Capability Framework: Readiness for Practice Capabilities**

The text in CAPITALS below indicated where PCF Readiness for Practice capabilities are addressed at Stage 1 of the course.

By the point of assessment of readiness for direct practice (prior to first placement), students should demonstrate basic communication skills, ability to engage with users, capacity to work as a member of an organisation, willingness to learn from feedback and supervision, and demonstrate basic SW values, knowledge and skills in order to be able to make effective use of first practice placement.

##### Professionalism

Social workers are members of an internationally recognised profession, a title protected in UK law. Social workers demonstrate professional commitment by taking responsibility for

their conduct, practice and learning, with support through supervision. As representatives of the social work profession, they safeguard its reputation and are accountable to the professional regulator.

- Describe the role of the social worker  
ADDRESSED IN IPLD, CONTESTS OF SOCIAL WORK AND ACROSS STAGE ONE
- Describe the mutual roles and responsibilities in supervision  
ADDRESSED IN PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT DAYS
- Describe the importance of professional behaviour  
ADDRESSED AND MODELLED THROUGH STAGE 1 AND WHOLE COURSE
- Describe the importance of personal and professional boundaries  
ADDRESSED IPLD, VALUES, ETHICS AND THEORIES IN SOCIAL WORK
- Demonstrate ability to learn, using a range of approaches  
ADDRESSED ACROSS STAGE 1
- Describe the importance of emotional resilience in social work  
ADDRESSED IN PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT DAYS

#### Values and Ethics: Apply social work ethical principles and values to guide professional practice.

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making, including through partnership with people who use their services. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of their profession, its ethical standards and relevant law.

- Understand the profession's ethical principles and their relevance to practice  
COVERED IN VETS
- Demonstrate awareness of own personal values and how these can impact on practice.  
COVERED IN VETS, IPLD AND THROUGHOUT STAGE 1

#### Diversity: Recognise diversity and apply anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in practice

Social workers understand that diversity characterises and shapes human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. Diversity is multi-dimensional and includes race, disability, class, economic status, age, sexuality, gender and transgender, faith and belief. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experience may include oppression, marginalisation and alienation as well as privilege, power and acclaim, and are able to challenge appropriately.

- Recognise the importance of diversity in human identity and experience, and the application of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in social work practice.  
COVERED IN HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT AND ACROSS STAGE 1.

#### Rights, Justice and Economic Wellbeing: Advance human rights and promote social justice and economic well-being

Social workers recognise the fundamental principles of human rights and equality, and that these are protected in national and international law, conventions and policies. They ensure these principles underpin their practice. Social workers understand the importance of using and contributing to case law and applying these rights in their own practice. They understand the effects of oppression, discrimination and poverty.

- Understand the principles of rights, justice and economic wellbeing, and their significance for social work practice.

**COVERED ACROSS STAGE 1 INCLUDING IN THE LAW MODULE**

**Knowledge: Apply knowledge of social sciences, law and social work practice theory**

Social workers understand psychological, social, cultural, spiritual and physical influences on people, human development throughout the life span and the legal framework for practice. They apply this knowledge in their work with individuals, families and communities. They know and use theories and methods of social work practice.

- Demonstrate an initial understanding of the application of research, theory and knowledge from sociology, social policy, psychology, health and human growth and development to social work

**COVERED ACROSS THE WHOLE OF STAGE 1**

- Demonstrate an initial understanding of the legal and policy frameworks and guidance that inform and mandate social work practice

**COVERED PARTICULARLY IN THE LAW MODULE**

- Demonstrate an initial understanding of the range of theories and models for social work intervention.

**COVERED PARTICULARLY IN VETS**

**Critical Reflection and Analysis: Apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision-making**

Social workers are knowledgeable about and apply the principles of critical thinking and reasoned discernment. They identify, distinguish, evaluate and integrate multiple sources of knowledge and evidence. These include practice evidence, their own practice experience, service user and carer experience together with research-based, organisational, policy and legal knowledge. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity.

- Understand the role of reflective practice and demonstrate basic skills of reflection
- Understand the need to construct hypotheses in social work practice
- Recognise and describe why evidence is important in social work practice

**ADDRESSED THROUGHOUT STAGE 1 AND IN IPLD IN PARTICULAR**

**Intervention and Skills: Use judgement and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support and prevent harm, neglect and abuse**

Social workers engage with individuals, families, groups and communities, working alongside people to assess and intervene. They enable effective relationships and are effective communicators, using appropriate skills. Using their professional judgement, they employ a range of interventions: promoting independence, providing support and protection, taking preventative action and ensuring safety whilst balancing rights and risks. They understand and take account of differentials in power and are able to use authority appropriately. They evaluate their own practice and the outcomes for those they work with.

- Demonstrate core communication skills and the capacity to develop them
- Demonstrate the ability to engage with people in order to build compassionate and effective relationships
- Demonstrate awareness of a range of frameworks to assess and plan intervention
- Demonstrate basic ability to produce written documents relevant for practice
- Demonstrate initial awareness of risk and safeguarding

**ADDRESSED IN PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT DAYS, SHADOWING, GROUPWORK AND ACROSS STAGE 1**

Contexts and organisations: Engage with, inform, and adapt to changing contexts that shape practice. Operate effectively within own organisational frameworks and contribute to the development of services and organisations. Operate effectively within multi-agency and inter-professional partnerships and settings

Social workers are informed about and pro-actively responsive to the challenges and opportunities that come with changing social contexts and constructs. They fulfil this responsibility in accordance with their professional values and ethics, both as individual professionals and as members of the organisation in which they work. They collaborate, inform and are informed by their work with others, inter-professionally and with communities.

- Demonstrate awareness of the impact of organisational context on social work practice

ADDRESSED IN CONTEXTS OF SOCIAL WORK AND THROUGHOUT STAGE 1

Professional Leadership: Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others through supervision, mentoring, assessing, research, teaching, leadership and management

The social work profession evolves through the contribution of its members in activities such as practice research, supervision, assessment of practice, teaching and management. An individual's contribution will gain influence when undertaken as part of a learning, practice-focused organisation. Learning may be facilitated with a wide range of people including social work colleagues, service users and carers, volunteers, foster carers and other professionals.

- Demonstrate awareness of the importance of professional leadership in social work.

COVERED THROUGHOUT STAGE 1

## **5. Section 5: Progression**

### **Progression**

In order to progress from one stage of the course to the next the student must pass all modules at each stage, i.e., 120 credits at each stage.

All modules are mandatory (modules from other courses cannot be substituted) and must be passed in order to progress to the next level. All elements of each assessment must be passed.

Where a module is marked on a percentage scale, a mark of 40% must be achieved in order to pass and obtain credit.

Students will usually have one opportunity to re-sit the assessment or assessment element for a failed module, including resit for Honours at Stage 3. The resit mark will be capped at 40%.

A repeat of either the Stage 2 and Stage 3 placement modules must be agreed by the Practice Assessment Panel and the Examination Board. In any repeat placement the student will be required to repeat all elements of assessment of the module. Students are only entitled to one resit placement.

Where a student has failed a module (after a resit attempt), the student shall usually have the right to repeat the module, usually during the following academic year. This may entail



temporarily withdrawing from the main course for one year. The original fail will be indicated on the student's transcript.

Students who temporarily withdraw may be required to complete a new DBS Check as a condition of their return to the course

## **6. Section 6: Course Standards**

### **Institution Policies**

Relevant Institutional policies can be accessed through Teams using the following link:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3a129fc670d01343ecbade6c6b277f821e%40thread.skype/conversations?groupId=1d8ba47e-1913-441d-a4dd-8b6349190bbc&tenantId=f9dffa36-d653-45bb-9a25-c00d720a77c7>

Policies include:

- Student Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety
- Equality and Diversity

### **Extenuating Circumstances**

Extenuating Circumstances are circumstances which:

- Affect your ability to attend or complete an assessment
- Are exceptional
- Are outside your control
- Can be corroborated by independent evidence
- Occurred during or shortly before the assessment in question

Students who wish to claim Extenuating Circumstances should obtain a claim form from Beth Abbott. The form should be submitted to the HE Office accompanied by independent supporting evidence.

Extenuating Circumstances claims should be submitted as soon as possible, and normally no later than 10 working days after the deadline for the submission of the work.

Extenuating Circumstances claims with respect to formal examinations should be submitted no later than the Monday after the end of the formal examination week.

### **Academic Offences**

Issues of plagiarism and any form of academic dishonesty are treated very seriously. They could result in you failing a module or even having to leave your programme.

Information on the types of academic misconduct, including Plagiarism can be found by clicking the following link:

[Academic misconduct: University of Sussex](#)

## Referencing

Your assignments should result from your own hard work and they need to show academic integrity. That said, your work is not limited to just your views and opinions. Instead, it should be developed by thinking about ideas put forward by others.

Be honest about anyone else's ideas that you have used or mentioned in your work and acknowledge these sources clearly. This practice is referred to as citing or referencing and it is crucial to maintaining academic integrity.

Whenever you directly copy the words of another author (quoting) or put their ideas into your own words (paraphrasing) you must acknowledge that you have done so. This practice helps to:

- substantiate the knowledge and theories that you present in your work
- show that you have researched your material, and that the ideas you present have been considered in light of documented material on the subject
- demonstrate that you have read a range of sources
- allow your readers to identify and retrieve your sources for their own use
- avoid plagiarism.

Your tutor will provide you with information on how to correctly reference in your work ahead of your first assignment submission. You can also go to the [English Language for Academic Study](#) Canvas site for more information about referencing, paraphrasing, summarising and quoting.

## **Section 7: Support for Students with a Disability**

### **Support for Students with a Disability**

The University will do its best to provide appropriate support for students with a disability. In the context of Higher Education study, the term disability covers a range of impairments, medical conditions, mental health issues and specific learning difficulties. We have put in place a number of changes to procedures and to our campus to make our courses more accessible, and this is reflected in the diversity of students studying with us. However, it is important for us to consider any individual requirements sufficiently far in advance to enable us to advise you on the range of options available and to put in place appropriate arrangements.

### **So please ensure you have told us about any disability even if you do not think it will affect you while you are at the University**

If you have already told us about a disability, we may ask you for further information or invite you for an information meeting (with the Assistant Principal responsible for student support if necessary). We can then properly assess, in discussion with you, your individual requirements and ensure that we have the best possible chance of having any necessary adjustments in place at the start of your course. We can also advise you further about claiming for Disabled Students' Allowance.

If you have a disability but have not yet told us about it, please contact Desiree Madelin at [desiree.madelin@highlands.ac.uk](mailto:desiree.madelin@highlands.ac.uk)

While we can make reasonable adjustments to our provision, we may not be able to meet your individual requirements if we do not have the opportunity to assess them in advance, and that could impact negatively on your experience of the course or even your ability to complete your course, or to take up your place.

Please respond positively to any requests from us for information. We can then explore with you the support available such as assistive technologies, study skills sessions and personal enablers. We can also address any health and safety issues and relevant academic or professional expectations and if necessary, advise you on alternative options. Any information you give us will be dealt with in confidence and only shared within the University with your consent and on a 'need to know' basis. We want to give you the best possible chance to take up your place, to be ready for study and to be able successfully to complete your university course.

## Appendix 5 Suitability for Professional Practice

### 1. Introduction and preamble

- 1.1 All approved social work courses are required to have in place procedures for assessing the suitability of their students for professional practice prior to admission to the course and throughout their studies. In addition, Universities are required to ensure that only those suitable for professional practice successfully complete their studies. All courses are, therefore, required to operate procedures that serve to review the suitability of individual students at any point during their training and to ensure that such procedures allow for the removal of students who are deemed unsuitable to continue with their professional training.
- 1.2 Students are required to maintain their suitability for professional practice by adhering to Social Work England Professional Standards and also the British Association Codes of Ethics and remain responsible for informing the relevant person (usually the Course Convenor) in a timely manner of any changes to their circumstances that may have any impact upon their ongoing suitability (this may include, but is not limited to, the acquisition of new cautions, reprimands or convictions, involvement in disciplinary proceedings or more personal issues).
- 1.3 Where a student is deemed unsuitable to practise as a social worker, the University may require the student to leave the University and terminate his or her course of study. The University's Ordinances and, Regulations (including Student Discipline Ordinance) and Examination Rules (as published via relevant handbooks) apply to all students.
- 1.4 Behaviour (or lack thereof) that leads to the Suitability for Professional Practice Procedure being invoked may arise at **any time** during **any aspect**<sup>1</sup> of the student's course of study, regardless of the source or location of the matter in question and may relate to recent or historical issues and may arise from academic, practice or personal arenas of a student's life.
- 1.5 Note: Although this document refers to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and SWE, the procedure will also apply to any authorities that replace these. In the same way, reference to particular SWE documents should be interpreted to refer also to any later published documents that replace those mentioned in this document.

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<sup>1</sup> Including, but not limited to professional placements, out of course employment or personal and social activities, classroom and other educational activities as well as behaviour during the process of investigations into concerns.

## **2. Pre-course assessment of suitability**

- 2.1 All applicants invited to attend for interview are required to complete a pre-course 'suitability declaration' based upon the template recommended in national guidance for social work admissions tutors. These declarations are submitted to the Admissions Tutor prior to the interview and will be discussed at the end of the individual interview so that candidates may provide an explanatory account of relevant factors where these exist. If candidates have concerns about what should be disclosed and how, they are invited to contact the Admissions Tutor directly.
- 2.2 Following the interview, interviewers will make a preliminary recommendation regarding whether the candidate should be offered a place on the course in relation to their performance at interview and in other elements of the selection process. Where the interviewers recommend that an offer for a place on the course should be made, this recommendation plus information regarding suitability related disclosures will be passed to the Admissions Tutor who will consult with the Course Convenor regarding the applicant's suitability for social work training. In many cases, the Admissions Tutor or Course Convenor will need to seek further advice, and this may include consulting on an anonymous basis with placement providers regarding the likelihood of obtaining placements in the given circumstances. Further references may be sought at this point if appropriate. Where concerns relate to criminal convictions, cautions or formal warnings, no offer of a place on the course will be made (formally or informally) until the matter has been discussed and agreed by the University's Criminal Convictions sub-committee. Where that committee agree that an offer should be made, this will be subject to a standard disclaimer detailed in a letter to the applicant confirming that although the offer is based upon our assessment of their suitability, if we are subsequently unable to place them as a result of their offence history, there will be no liability on the part of the university where appropriate pre-offer checks have been conducted.
- 2.3 All offers are made conditional upon receipt of satisfactory Enhanced DBS Check (or later successor) and satisfactory health checks. Where information comes to light following these checks that was not included on self-declaration forms, the offer of a place will be withdrawn, regardless or not of whether the course has begun (students will have provisional registration only until all checks are returned and deemed satisfactory). Additional Enhanced DBS Checks and other checks may be carried out during the course of the students' studies at the request of a placement provider or following a change in the student's circumstance or where students take more than 3 years to complete their course.

- 2.4 Health checks for this course are required by our regulatory and professional bodies although in line with Equality Act 2010 requirements, we ensure that the nature of such checks is proportionate to the purpose. The health checks comprise of a self-declaration form where applicants are required to disclose details of health where this may have an impact upon their ability to study and practice safely. Where information disclosed requires further investigation, students may be referred to Occupational Health and/or further information from their GP or Consultant may be requested. In line with Data protection requirements, such disclosures are handled with care and sensitivity and consent to share will be requested when required.
- 2.5 The health checks referred to above may identify disabilities, but the purpose of the check is to screen for health issues that may affect the ability of the applicant to practice safely. Therefore, applicants disclosing disabilities will be encouraged to share this with the Student Support Unit (SSU) so that reasonable adjustments may be considered in order to support the student during the course.
- 2.6 Students may be referred to Occupational Health at any point during their studies. This may be due, for example, to a period of extended sick leave, the development of a new health condition or to re-assess health needs prior to the beginning of placements. In addition, all students who are diagnosed with a disability (except SLDs) or a long-term illness during their course may be referred for a new assessment in order to obtain up to date information and so that the impact and recommended adjustments for practice learning as well as academic work can be considered if the information from the student's doctor and/or SSU needs to be further explored.
- 2.7 It is important to note that individually, as well as collectively, staff in the social work department are committed to enabling diversity and fair access to the profession. The processes and procedures outlined here are intended to safeguard vulnerable members of society and ensure our compliance with all statutory duties in relation to student selection and progression, but in doing so we remain mindful of our obligations under equalities legislation.
- 2.8 Suitability declarations will be completed each year upon enrolment and re-enrolment and students are responsible for informing the Course Convenor of **any** changes that **may** affect their suitability in a timely manner rather than waiting until the next annual declaration takes place.

### **3. Referral to the Suitability for Professional Practice Procedure**

- 3.1 This Procedure is to be used where it appears that a student is failing to maintain suitability for professional social work practice. Such circumstances may include but should not be seen as being limited to: behaviour which is damaging or dangerous to service users, other students or course providers; behaviour which creates an unacceptable risk to others or to the student him or herself; serious breaches of the Social Work England Professional Standards; the emergence of information about previous relevant matters not declared by the student.

### **4. Professional Assistance**

- 4.1 Where it becomes clear that a student may be experiencing problems which give rise to concern about suitability to practise as a social worker, and where the student wishes to address such problems with assistance, the student's tutor will usually advise the student to seek advice from the appropriate University provision (such as general pastoral support, careers advice, disability support, counselling, study skills) or external services. The student may be advised to temporarily withdraw from studies pending attempts to resolve the issues giving cause for concern.

### **5. Referral to the Suitability for Professional Practice Procedure**

- 5.1 Any person who has concerns about the student's suitability may refer the matter to the Course Convenor for consideration under the Course's Suitability for Professional Practice Procedure.

### **6. Stage One of the Suitability for Professional Practice Procedure**

- 6.1 When the Course Convenor is notified of concerns, he or she will evaluate the information and take such further advice as is necessary. In the case of a student on placement, the placement agency, having consulted with the Course Convenor may suspend the student from placement pending investigation and make a referral to the University to initiate it. The Course Convenor may also refer the concerns to the Vice Chancellor who may, in consultation with the Head of School, decide that the student should be suspended from studies pending investigation in accordance with the Regulations of the University (Statute V.4)
- 6.2 Where the Course Convenor believes the concerns may have substance, he or she will arrange to meet with the student to raise the concerns and ascertain the student's view/explanation. The student should usually receive at least 5 days' notice of the meeting, together with a copy of any documentary evidence relating to the concern.

- 6.3 The student's tutor or other member of course team will usually be invited by the Course Convenor to attend the meeting, and in any event will offer advice to assist the student in understanding the procedure and accessing appropriate support. Administrative support will be provided where needed to produce a note of the key issues discussed and outcomes of the meeting. Where the Course Convenor is also the tutor for the student concerned, temporary tutorial support will be provided by a different member of the course team until a conclusion is reached.
- 6.4 In planning for the meeting, the Course Convenor will be mindful of any needs that may arise from any disabilities the student has disclosed to the university and will consider, in consultation with the student, how the process described here may reasonably be adjusted to reduce the impact of such disabilities upon the student's participation in this process. The University, as represented by the Course Convenor, will be proactive in considering adjustments that may be required and will also determine the reasonableness of any additional adjustments requested by the student.
- 6.5 The student will have the right to be accompanied by an advisor or representative, and to make a written submission prior to the meeting should they wish to do so. The student will, at least two days in advance of the meeting taking place, provide in writing to the Course Convenor the following:
- Confirmation as to whether or not she or he will be accompanied, and by whom.
  - any supporting written documentation the student wishes to provide.
  - whether or not any additional adjustments for reason of disability are requested.
- 6.6 Following the meeting, the Course Convenor may institute any further investigation deemed necessary, including meeting with the person who raised the concerns, to review the evidence and ascertain whether concerns remain or have been allayed. If concerns remain, the Course Convenor will determine whether the concerns can be resolved at this stage without reference to a Suitability Panel hearing.
- 6.7 If the Course Convenor, having consulted with the Head of School or other appropriate person, considers the concerns are justified but could be resolved without progressing to a Panel investigation and hearing, he or she will set the student targets for change, together with specific criteria for their achievement within an appropriately short time scale (usually weeks). The Course Convenor will usually review the situation at the end of the time period and if he or she considers that the targets have been met the student will be permitted to remain registered on the course. If necessary, the Course Convenor may set a continued programme of targets, which will be similarly closely monitored by the Course Convenor, in consultation with the student's tutor, either until no further cause for concern exists or there is reason to move to Stage Two. Where the Course Convenor considers that targets have not been met, Stage Two will be invoked.



- 6.8. If the Course Convenor, having consulted with the Head of School or other appropriate person, considers the concerns remain and, in their professional judgment, are such that the concerns cannot be resolved at Stage One of this process, Stage Two will be invoked, and the Chair of the Suitability Panel will be notified.
- 6.9 The Course Convenor will keep a record of all matters resolved within Stage One and will regularly provide the Qualifying Courses Management Committee with a factual report on such matters without sharing student names. The notes of the Stage One meeting and relevant correspondence will be stored on the student file until the end of their studies.

## **7. Stage Two**

- 7.1 When concerns have not been allayed or resolved during Stage One of this procedure, as in 6.7 above, the Course Convenor will notify the student in writing that the case is to be referred to the Suitability Panel.
- 7.2 The role of the Suitability Panel is to operate Stage Two of the Suitability for Professional Practice Procedure. It shall usually comprise the following members:
- Chair: For all courses Head of the School of Education and Social Work, University of Sussex (or their nominee).
  - the Head of Department of Social Work and Social Care, University of Sussex (or their nominee).
  - the Director of Teaching and Learning or nominee, School of Education and Social Work, University of Sussex.
  - Two representatives from local practice agencies, who shall have had no previous involvement with the case being considered.

The Panel may be observed and advised by any person with specialist expertise requested to attend by the Chair. The Chair will arrange administrative support for the Panel.

- 7.3 Arrangements for the Panel hearing (including incorporation of adjustments to the process where this is appropriate due to needs arising from a student's disability) will be initiated and coordinated by the Chair, or nominee. The student will be given at least 15 working days' notice of a Panel hearing and the details of Panel membership. At the same time, the student and the Panel members will be provided with information about the Suitability for Professional Practice Procedure and details of the grounds for concern (the latter will be prepared by the Course Convenor). The student will usually be provided with copies of any written reports and other relevant documentary evidence in the case at this stage.

The Course Convenor and the student may, at the discretion of the Chair, and through the Chair's prior agreement, ask certain witnesses to attend the hearing in person.

The student should, by at least five working days in advance of the hearing, provide the Chair with the following clarifications and documentation:

- whether or not he or she intends to contest the case presented.
- whether, in what way and by whom he or she intends to be represented.
- any written response to the case presented, including any supporting evidence or witness statements and the details of any witnesses they wish to be called.

The Chair (or nominee) will circulate these clarifications and materials to members of the Panel and to the Course Convenor in advance of the hearing.

- 7.4 In any case where the student informs the Chair that he or she intends to be accompanied or represented by a legal advisor, or by a representative who is legally qualified, the University (as represented by the Course Convenor) shall reserve the right to be accompanied or represented by a legal advisor. The University will not usually agree to defray costs incurred by the student in seeking specialist or legal advice, by their representative or by witnesses called by the student. Where no legal advisor accompanies the Course Convenor, he or she may be accompanied by a colleague with appropriate experience for support and/or guidance during the hearing.
- 7.5 The Chair shall have discretion to arrange for the Panel itself to have access to legal advice.
- 7.6 The Panel, to be quorate, must have at least two-thirds of its members present. If the student does not appear at the hearing, the Panel may either proceed to deal with the case in the student's absence or, in the light of any mitigating circumstances communicated, agree to reschedule.
- 7.7 The hearing will observe the following procedure. Those participating may not change, extend or distort the procedure or roles set out below, except by prior agreement with the Chair of the Panel who may agree such variation where doing so may assist the process of assessing suitability for professional practice in the specific case being considered in such cases, the student will be informed of this change and the reasons for this.

The Chair will summarise the nature of the case presented. The student will indicate whether s/he or the representative will speak on her/his behalf.

The Course Convenor will present the case to the Panel and will then answer questions from the Panel and from the student. The Course Convenor may call witnesses. Witnesses called by the Course Convenor may also be questioned by the student (or his/her representative) and by members of the Panel.

The student (or his/her representative) will make a statement of his/her case and then respond to questions from the Panel and the Course Convenor. The student may call witnesses who may be questioned on their evidence by the student (or his/her representative), by the Course Convenor (or his/her legal representative) and by members of the Panel.

If required, either the student or the Course Convenor may request a break to consult with their advisor.

At the conclusion of questioning, the student (or his/her representative) and the Course Convenor (or his/her representative) will be invited in turn to present a short summary of their respective cases.

- 7.8 The Panel may accept a witness's written statement in evidence where the student and the Course Convenor agree that the witness need not attend in person, or where it is impracticable for the witness to attend, or where in the opinion of the Panel it is reasonable to do so in order to allow an assessment of the student's suitability for professional practice to take place.

- 7.9 The Panel will reserve the right to request medical evidence, in which case the student will be asked to agree to medical reports or records being obtained. If the student refuses agreement, the Panel may draw an adverse inference.

The Panel may also accept as evidence the outcomes of previous investigative procedures, e.g., the investigation of a complaint or misconduct that has clear relevance to the case before it.

- 7.10 The Panel may adjourn if, in their professional opinion, this is necessary. When an adjournment is required, the reasons for this and anticipated timescales will be explained to all parties.

- 7.11 At the end of a hearing, the parties will be asked to retire while the Panel makes its decision in accordance with the options available to it in section 7.11. The Panel's decision will usually be notified to the student and Course Convenor in writing within 21 days of the hearing. This notification will outline key decisions and the basis for such decisions and will usually relate decisions to the Social Work England Professional Standards.

Where it is feasible to do so, the Panel may offer an indicative, oral outcome at the end of the deliberation process. In such cases, the Panel will re-call the student (and representative) and the Course Convenor (and his/her representative) to hear either: (a) its decision and summary rationale for that decision, or (b) that the Panel feels the need to consider its decision at further length.

7.12 The Panel will consider its decision in private. The options available to the Panel include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) decide that there are insufficient grounds for concern and dismiss the matter;
- b) decide that there are grounds for concern but not sufficiently serious to result in termination of the course of study. In appropriate circumstances the Panel may decide upon an outcome or course of action that recognises the existence of concerns, and this may include placing a formal warning on the student's record.
- c) decide that there are serious grounds for concern which may be remediable and offer a course of remedial action with clear objectives and outcomes with a defined period for review. The Course Convenor, assisted by the student's tutor, will monitor the student's attainment on targets for change. At the end of the review period the Panel will reconvene and decide whether the matter has been concluded satisfactorily or whether further steps should be taken, which may include termination of the student's course of study;
- d) decide that there are sufficient grounds to conclude that the student is unsuitable for professional social work and that the student's course of study should be terminated.

The above list of outcomes is not exhaustive, and the Panel may agree other outcomes as appropriate to the individual case under consideration. The Panel may decide to combine options under (b) and (c). The Panel will reach its decision by simple majority vote, with the Chair having a second and casting vote if necessary.

7.13 The Panel will report its decisions to the relevant Examination Board, to the central Student & Academic Services division and to the Social Work England (usually via the Course Convenor).

7.14 The Course Convenor will keep a record of all matters resolved within Stage Two and will regularly provide the Qualifying Courses Management Committee with a factual but anonymous report on such matters.

7.15 Where the decision is to terminate the student's course of study, the student will be advised by the Director of Student Experience (DoSE) (or their nominee if it was the DoSE for the school who presented the case at Stage Two or otherwise had substantial involvement in the proceedings) where to seek counselling and/or careers advice, including advice on the possibility of arrangements for transfer to other courses of study

## 8. Right of Appeal

**N.B. The appeals procedure for Suitability cases is currently under review. What follows is the procedure in place at the time of producing this handbook. Students are advised to check the university website for updated information.**

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/complaintsappeals>

8.1 The student has a right to appeal under regulation 94 of the University Ordinance and Regulations for the Award of Degrees, which states:

A student shall have the right to appeal against a decision, made by a Suitability Panel in accordance with the Suitability for Professional Practice Procedure that the student is required to withdraw from the University on one or more of the following grounds:

- (a) that there is new evidence material to the decision that was not considered by the Suitability for Professional Practice Panel;
- (b) that there was a procedural irregularity in the Suitability for Professional Practice process of such a nature as to cause doubt as to whether the result might have been different had there not been such an irregularity;
- (c) that the Suitability for Professional Practice Panel failed to comply with the guidance of the relevant professional body;
- (d) that the panel reached a decision not consistent with a reasonable evaluation of the evidence placed before it.

8.2 Where an appeal is found to be admissible under Regulation 100 of the Regulations for the Award of First Degrees, the University Appeals Board shall convene an Appeals Panel for the purpose of examining an appeal made under Regulation 94. The Panel shall be composed of three members of the Appeals Board, namely a Chair, one academic faculty member with significant recent experience of a discipline requiring the determination of professional competence requirements (but who should not be from the appellant's Department), and one student member, with the addition of one senior professional co-opted to the Panel from the profession relevant to the appellant. The role of Chair and student member shall be restricted to members of the Appeals Board designated as candidates for these roles in the *Organisation of the University* document. The absence of any Panel member shall render the Panel inquorate.

8.3 Decisions of the Appeals Panel shall be reached by a simple majority vote of those members present and voting, with the Chair having a second and casting vote if necessary.

- 8.4 A nominee of the Registrar & Secretary shall act as Secretary of the Appeal Board and the Appeals Panel and shall attend their meetings.
- 8.5 Before lodging an appeal, the student must first discuss the matter with the relevant Head of School or Head of School's nominee.
- 8.6 To lodge an appeal, a written submission to the Registrar & Secretary must be received in the Registrar & Secretary's office within twenty-one days of the publication of the decision against which the appeal is made and stating the grounds of the appeal. Subsequent to lodging an appeal, the appellant may be required to complete a standard pro-forma, in a format prescribed by the Appeals Board.
- 8.7 The Appeals Board shall define a mechanism to determine whether appeals are admissible, in terms of being:
- (a) received in time (or, if received out of time, whether mitigating circumstances exist which justify waiving the usual time-limit); and
  - (b) that the grounds of the appeal are admissible.
- 8.8 Where an appeal is determined to be admissible it shall be considered by an Appeals Panel, in one of these ways:
- (a) where the appeal appears to be readily decidable in favour of the appellant on the basis of the evidence available, an Appeals Panel may reach a decision without the need for a hearing.
  - (b) otherwise, the appeal will be examined at a hearing, at which the appellant shall have the right (though not the obligation) to attend, and the Appeals Panel shall be entitled to ask (but not require) the appellant to attend, to provide further information.
- 8.9 An appellant who attends an Appeals Panel hearing shall be entitled to be accompanied by a person of his or her choice, who may represent him or her. If the appellant wishes to be so accompanied or represented, he or she shall inform the Registrar & Secretary accordingly at least five working days in advance of the time of the hearing and shall at that time also supply the name of that person.
- 8.10 The appellant should provide any written documentation relating to the grounds of their appeal at least five working days in advance of the hearing.
- 8.11 The Appeals Panel may secure further information relevant to those grounds for appeal through consultation with the Chair of the original Suitability Panel.

- 8.12 After the Appeals Panel hearing has been presented with the evidence in the case, the appellant (and the person accompanying him or her) shall withdraw while the Panel considers its decision in private. The Appeals Panel will usually invite the appellant (and the person accompanying him or her) to return to hear its decision. However, Appeals Panels reserve the right to defer immediate decision and instead to provide a later written decision. In such cases, the usual time-limit (for reaching a decision, formulating it in writing and despatching it to the appellant) shall be seven working days unless otherwise specified by the Appeals Panel at the time of the hearing, in which case a specific reason for needing the additional time will be given to the appellant.
- 8.13 The Appeals Panel, whose decision shall be final, shall in the case of an appeal under regulation 95, either:
- (a) arrange for the appellant and the relevant Suitability for Professional Practice Panel to be informed that the appeal is not upheld, and that the decision of the Suitability for Professional Practice Panel should not be altered; or
  - (b) uphold the appeal and determine a remedy appropriate in the circumstances and inform the appellant and the Suitability for Professional Practice Panel accordingly.
- 8.14 Notwithstanding that an appeal has not yet been heard and decided, the University reserves the right to withdraw a student's registration with immediate effect.

## **FAQs relating to Suitability Hearing**

### **1. Statutory requirements to consider and assess suitability**

All approved courses leading to professional social work qualifications are required to uphold their duty to the wider public to ensure that only those suitable to work with vulnerable members of society are able to qualify as social workers.

The SWE has provided detailed guidance which sets out regulatory expectations. This guidance can be consulted at the following website:

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/>

### **2. Thresholds**

According to SWE guidance, the Standards are the appropriate thresholds when assessing suitability. There are no definitive statements regarding particular conditions or circumstances affecting suitability as these are all considered along with relevant contextual information.

### **3. Nature of the process**

- a) *General issues:* The Suitability Procedure outlines the format for the hearings. Although these occasions are inevitably stressful and can be unpleasant for all parties, the intention is to retain a neutral and professional approach at all times to ensure that all parties are treated with appropriate levels of respect and to minimize distress as far as possible. Students with particular needs arising from disabilities are invited to liaise with the Chair/their nominee prior to the hearing in order to ensure that all necessary adjustments have been considered, although the Panel Chair will already have considered adjustments to the process in light of information held by the university in relation to previously disclosed disabilities.
- b) *Panel membership:* The composition of the Panel is detailed in the suitability procedure. The University will make every effort to ensure that members of the Panel have not had substantial direct experience of working with the student concerned, but it is acknowledged that given the size of, and resources available to, the course or department, this may not always be possible. However, at the very least, the University will ensure that the Panel members have not been directly involved in Stage One of the Suitability process. As such, the Panel will be independent of any prior in-depth knowledge or experience of the concerns being investigated. This contributes to ensuring that the student has a fair hearing in accordance with current Human Rights legislation (HRA 1998).



- c) *Timescales*: Whilst it is important that processes are implemented in a timely manner, it is also important that time is taken to prepare for the hearing appropriately. However, the complexities of the putting together a Panel with the required composition may result in some delay between a student being notified of a referral to Stage Two and a date being confirmed for the hearing.

Students or other parties may request postponements of hearings where they have good reason to do so. The Panel will consider all such requests and balance the evidence provided in favour of a postponement with their wider responsibilities to ensure that the proceedings are conducted in a timely manner. Ultimately the Panel will make that decision and will have the right to proceed.

Following the hearing, the decision will be communicated in writing usually within 21 days of the hearing. The student (according to Appeals procedures in place at the time of writing this document) then has 21 days to submit an appeal should they wish to do so.

#### **4. Involvement in multiple or concurrent processes**

Sometimes parallel processes are commenced in relation to a student situation. This may be the case where there have been disciplinary or misconduct allegations against a student or where a student has made a complaint, a DPA access request, or an appeal about a different matter.

In many cases, it will be appropriate to adhere to the planned timescales for the suitability hearing although specialist advice/guidance from Registry and/or legal advisors may be sought by the course team.

However, there are some exceptions to the statement above. These exceptions include circumstances in which students have been accused of academic misconduct or disciplinary offences and in such instances, the usual expectation would be that those processes are concluded prior to making a decision regarding the need to progress suitability procedures in respect of this student either in relation to the issues under investigation elsewhere, or in relation to those being additional factors in an assessment of suitability that commenced for other reasons. In addition, where a formal complaint has been submitted regarding either the process of the Stage One investigations or the processes of setting up the panel hearing or against an individual involved in the decision-making process at Stage Two, it will usually be advisable for the complaint to be investigated prior to the commencement of the Panel hearing. However, this is a matter for the University to decide on a case-by-case basis.

The fact that a student has made a DPA subject access request that has not been completed prior to the hearing will not usually render any postponement of the hearing to be necessary. This is because all documentation relevant to the Panel processes will be provided as per the procedures and is also due to the fact that proper channels exist for completion (and complaints in relation to the handling) of such processes.

Whilst in the majority of cases students make appropriate use of the procedures available to them in a timely manner, it is expected that the suitability processes will not usually be interrupted by multiple complaint or other applications that are considered to have the intention of delaying suitability procedures without appropriate cause. Where vexatious or otherwise disruptive tactics are employed, the Panel may take such behaviour into account in their assessment of the student's suitability.

Indeed, it is important to note that the Panel will keep the suitability of the student for professional practice central to their considerations on the basis of all available evidence, including evidence in the form of behaviour during the hearing and associated processes.

## **5. Issues relating to 'proof' and evidence**

### **a) 'Proof'**

It is important to note that decisions relating to suitability are matters of professional judgment and that in many cases, decisions cannot be made on the basis of a mere 'tick list' approach to facts being found proven or not proven. Indeed, in the majority of cases where such professional judgments are required, it will be important to assess the significance of all concerns raised and this may include assessing the cumulative impact of such issues.

In relation to issues of fact pertinent to the case under consideration, civil ('balance of probabilities') rather than criminal standards of proof will be applied within this process. However, it is important to note that the suitability process is an internal process that is not intended to be overly legalistic. The Suitability Procedure follows the principles of natural justice and relevant legislation such as the Human Rights Act. The principles will therefore be observed by the Panel, but they should not be used to frustrate the ultimate purpose and focus of the suitability process which remains at all times the suitability of the student concerned for professional practice.

'Facts' considered and deemed relevant to the case under consideration may be drawn from a range of sources, including observations regarding the student's conduct during these proceedings, as well as historic facts where these relate to the case under consideration.

As stated in the Suitability for Professional Practice Procedures, the student is responsible for maintaining their suitability for professional practice throughout their studies in relation to the Social Work England Professional Standards and other relevant published documents. Where concerns have been raised and not been resolved at Stage One of that procedure, the university (as represented by the Course Convenor) is responsible for presenting the case against the student in relation to their suitability for professional practice to the panel operating under Stage Two of the procedures.

The Panel will carefully assess all available evidence in order to evaluate each aspect of the case against the student, as well as considering the combination of concerns that may suggest a situation is more serious than each individual element of concern considered on its own merits.

## **b) Evidence and presentation of evidence**

Evidence may be presented in oral or written formats. Where evidence is submitted in writing, this will usually be made available to all parties and all Panel members in advance of the hearing as outlined in the procedures. There are no particular requirements for the format of documents to be presented to the Panel and no requirements that 'summing up' statements are presented in written format. However, where a 'bundle' of documents is to be submitted, these should be suitably cross-referenced or indexed in advance of the hearing for ease of reading. Students and presenters of cases should attempt to avoid duplication of materials included in their own submissions and attempt to restrict submissions to documents most relevant to the case being considered.

A recommended template for case presenters' reports is appended to this document and presenters are advised to ensure that reference to relevant Social Work England Professional Standards (and breaches of such Standards) are clear in their documentation. Similarly, Panel chairs are advised to ensure that the outcome letter sent to students clearly outlines the concerns arising from the hearing (if any) and which elements of the Standards have been breached (if any).

Evidence may include reports of interviews or meetings and may contain 'hearsay' evidence as well as more direct forms of evidence, including evidence provided by witnesses where appropriate. The Panel will bear in mind the sources and likely validity of all information placed before it for consideration.

## **6. Representation**

The student may bring a representative who may be a students' union officer, a friend, or any other suitable person. They are entitled to bring a legal representative as specified in the Suitability Procedures, although the costs of this will not usually be met by the university. Either the student or their representative may present their response to the case against them to the Panel and ask questions of witnesses and the case presenter. However, the student themselves is likely to be required to respond to questions directed to them by the presenter and Panel members given that the procedure is used to ascertain the student's own suitability for ongoing professional training.

Representatives are asked to be mindful of the fact that suitability hearings are not court processes and all parties are required to maintain standards of conduct appropriate to the nature of these procedures.

## **7. Decision making – who and how?**

Only members of the Panel take part in decision making in relation to the case presented. The Course Director has no role in this process. The Panel will deliberate in private and may adjourn to elicit further information if required. Their decisions may consider each element of concern (where more than one have been raised) and may relate these to the Standards. However, in their final decision making, their professional judgment will consider the totality of the concerns that have been raised. The professional judgment of the Panel will be provided in writing to all parties usually within 21 days of the hearing. Where appropriate and feasible to do so, the Panel may also report their indicative finding orally to all parties on the day of the hearing.

## **8. Seconded students**

Students seconded onto a social work degree need to be aware that where their employer has concerns regarding their suitability, these will be shared with the university for investigation via our suitability procedures. Similarly, where the university becomes aware of concerns relating to suitability, the employer will be informed about these concerns.

## **9. Appeals**

The Appeals procedure is detailed at the end of the Suitability procedure. The grounds for appeal are listed along with the process to be followed. No appeal will be allowed solely on the grounds of challenging professional judgment.

As stated in the procedure, students have 21 days following receipt of the Panel's outcome to lodge an appeal. An indication of whether an application to appeal has been deemed admissible or not will usually be given in writing to the student within 28 days of receipt of the appeal application. Where this is not possible (due to the complexities of the case, the unavailability of key people or other reasonable explanation), the student will be informed of any likely delay.