



*Requirements for
Social Work Training*

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Foreword



Social workers deal with some of the most vulnerable people in our society at times of greatest stress. There can be tragic consequences if things go wrong. Social workers often get a bad press. What they do not get is day to day coverage of the work they do to protect and provide for some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Social workers need to be properly equipped for such challenging tasks. The new degree level qualification must prepare social workers for the complex and demanding role that will be required of them. This is an opportunity to transform the status, image and position of social workers and put social work training on a level with other professions.

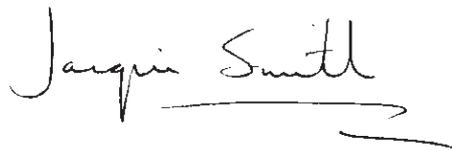
The new award will require social workers to demonstrate their practical application of skills and knowledge and their ability to deliver a service that creates opportunities for service users. It will require all social workers to demonstrate their knowledge of human growth and development, particularly development of children and other vulnerable groups, their communication skills and their ability to work confidently and effectively with other professionals. The emphasis must be on practice and the practical relevance of theory.

The new degree must produce competent practitioners. Students will have to undertake much of their learning in practice settings and demonstrate their competence in practice. Service providers, working in partnership with other key stakeholders, must deliver sufficient quantity and quality of practice learning opportunities in order to ensure that tomorrow's social workers are properly trained to do their job.

We have involved service users, employers, students and providers of social work education in determining the shape of the new qualification.

Delivery of this new qualification presents a huge challenge for all partners in the education of social workers: universities, employers in all sectors, users of services and students. Those providing the teaching and learning opportunities for social work students need to ensure that they take on board the implications of these changes.

This is not tinkering at the edges of social work training. This is a major shift in expectations of those providing the training and of those undertaking it.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacqui Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jacqui Smith, Minister of State.

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Introduction

1. The Secretary of State has the function of ascertaining what training is required by persons who are, or wish to become, social care workers. This function is given by section 67(1) of the Care Standards Act 2000. This document sets out the Secretary of State's requirements of those providing qualifying training and education for social workers.
2. The General Social Care Council (GSCC) has the responsibility for the approval of social work courses under section 63 of the Care Standards Act 2000. The GSCC will publish its arrangements for quality assuring the new degree in social work. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) also has a role in monitoring the provision of higher education. GSCC will be working closely with the QAA in ensuring that social work courses offer high quality education and training for social workers.

Standards for the Award of the Social Work Degree

3. The standards for the award of the social work degree are outcome statements that set out what a student social worker must know, understand and be able to do to be awarded the degree in social work. The National Occupational Standards for Social Work set out what employers require social workers to be able to do on entering employment. These standards form the basis of the assessment of competence in practice. Social workers will be required to demonstrate competence across the full range of standards before being awarded the degree. Practice is central to the new degree, with academic learning supporting practice, rather than the other way round.
4. The Quality Assurance Agency benchmark statement for social work sets out, in outcome terms, the requirements for the achievement of an academic award at degree level. Students would be expected to reach this level before being awarded the degree.
5. The occupational standards and the benchmark statement taken together form the basis of the assessment of students at the end of the degree programme. Programme providers need to ensure that their course equips students to achieve these outcomes. These outcomes are summarised in Appendix 1. How programmes choose to deliver these outcomes will be for them to determine, within the constraints of the Requirements for Social Work Training, which details inputs in specific key areas.

6. The GSCC accreditation arrangements require HEIs to publish a programme specification detailing how they intend to cover the required areas in their programme. The programme specification will have to set out how the HEI and its stakeholder partners will ensure that all the requirements of the occupational standards and benchmark statement are covered in their programme.

Requirements for Training and Assessment

7. The Requirements for Social Work Training specify what providers of social work training must do. They are organised in two sections, entry requirements and teaching, learning and assessment requirements. These Requirements will be necessary, but not sufficient in themselves, to achieve the required outcomes. Taken together, the Requirements for Social Work Training, the National Occupational Standards for Social Work and the QAA Benchmark Statement for Social Work comprise the Prescribed Curriculum for the social work degree. Appendix 2 gives a diagrammatic representation of the prescribed curriculum.

Entry Requirements

All providers must:

- A. Satisfy themselves that all entrants have the capability to meet the required standards by the end of their training and that they possess appropriate personal and intellectual qualities to be social workers.
- B. Ensure that, in addition to the university's own admission requirements for the degree, all entrants have achieved at least Key Skills level 2 in English and mathematics. This would normally be equivalent to grade C in the GCSE examination in English and mathematics.[†]
- C. Satisfy themselves that all entrants can understand and make use of written material and are able to communicate clearly and accurately in spoken and written English.
- D. Ensure that, as part of the selection procedures, all candidates admitted for training have taken part in an individual or group interview.
- E. Ensure that representatives of stakeholders, particularly service users and employers, are involved in the selection process.

[†]Footnote:

See Qualifications and Curriculum Authority publication National standards for adult literacy and numeracy.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Requirements

All providers must:

- F. Design the content, structure and delivery of the training to enable social work students to demonstrate that they have met the national occupational standards for social work and the social work benchmark statement and are suitable for admission to the General Social Care Council register of social workers.
- G. Ensure that the teaching of theoretical knowledge, skills and values is based on their application in practice.
- H. Ensure that students' achievement against the required standards is regularly and accurately assessed, and confirm that all social work students have been assessed and have met all the standards before being awarded the degree in social work.
- I. Ensure that the principles of valuing diversity and equalities awareness are integral to the teaching and learning of students.
- J. Ensure that all social work students spend **at least** 200 days gaining required experience and learning in practice settings.
Each student must have experience:
 - in **at least** two practice settings
 - of statutory social work tasks involving legal interventions
 - of providing services to **at least** two user groups (e.g. child care and mental health)
- K. Ensure that all students undergo assessed preparation for direct practice to ensure their safety to undertake practice learning in a service delivery setting. This preparation must include the opportunity to develop a greater understanding of the experience of service users and the opportunity to shadow an experienced social worker.
- L. As well as providing teaching, learning and assessment across the full range of the occupational standards and benchmark statement, providers will have to demonstrate that all students undertake specific learning and assessment in the following key areas
 - Human growth, development, mental health and disability

- Assessment, planning, intervention and review
 - Communication skills with children, adults and those with particular communication needs
 - Law
 - Partnership working and information sharing across professional disciplines and agencies
- M. Ensure that the number of hours spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator is sufficient to ensure that students meet the required level of competence. This is expected to be at least 200 days or 1,200 hours.
- N. Ensure that teaching and learning are continually updated to keep abreast of developments in legislation, Government policy and best practice.

May 2002

Appendix 1 (a)

The National Occupational Standards for Social Work

The National Occupational Standards aim to provide a baseline for identifying standards of practice which should be reached by a newly qualified social worker. The full version of the Occupational Standards is available on the TOPSS website.

Key Role 1: Prepare for and work with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities to assess their needs and circumstances

- Prepare for social work contact and involvement
- Work with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities to help them make informed decisions
- Assess needs and options to recommend a course of action

Key Role 2: Plan, carry out, review and evaluate social work practice, with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities and other professionals

- Respond to crisis situations
- Interact with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities to achieve change and development and to improve life opportunities
- Prepare, produce, implement and evaluate plans with individuals, families, carers, groups, communities and professional colleagues
- Support the development of networks to meet assessed needs and planned outcomes
- Work with groups to promote individual growth, development and independence
- Address behaviour which presents a risk to individuals, families, carers, groups, communities

Key Role 3: Support individuals to represent their needs, views and circumstances

- Advocate with and on behalf of, individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Prepare for, and participate in decision making forums

Key Role 4: Manage risk to individuals, families, carers, groups, communities, self and colleagues

- Assess and manage risks to individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Assess, minimise and manage risk to self and colleagues

Key Role 5: Manage and be accountable, with supervision and support, for your own social work practice within your organisation

- Manage and be accountable for your own work
- Contribute to the management of resources and services
- Manage, present and share records and reports
- Work within multi-disciplinary and multi-organisational teams, networks and systems

Key Role 6: Demonstrate professional competence in social work practice

- Research, analyse, evaluate, and use current knowledge of best social work practice
- Work within agreed standards of social work practice and ensure own professional development
- Manage complex ethical issues, dilemmas and conflicts
- Contribute to the promotion of best social work practice

Appendix 1 (b)

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statement for Social Work

The QAA benchmark statement for social work sets out, in outcome terms, the requirements for the achievement of an academic award at degree level. Students would be expected to reach this level before being awarded a degree.

Core Statements for social work

- Social work services and service users
- The service delivery context
- Values and ethics
- Social work theory
- The nature of social work practice

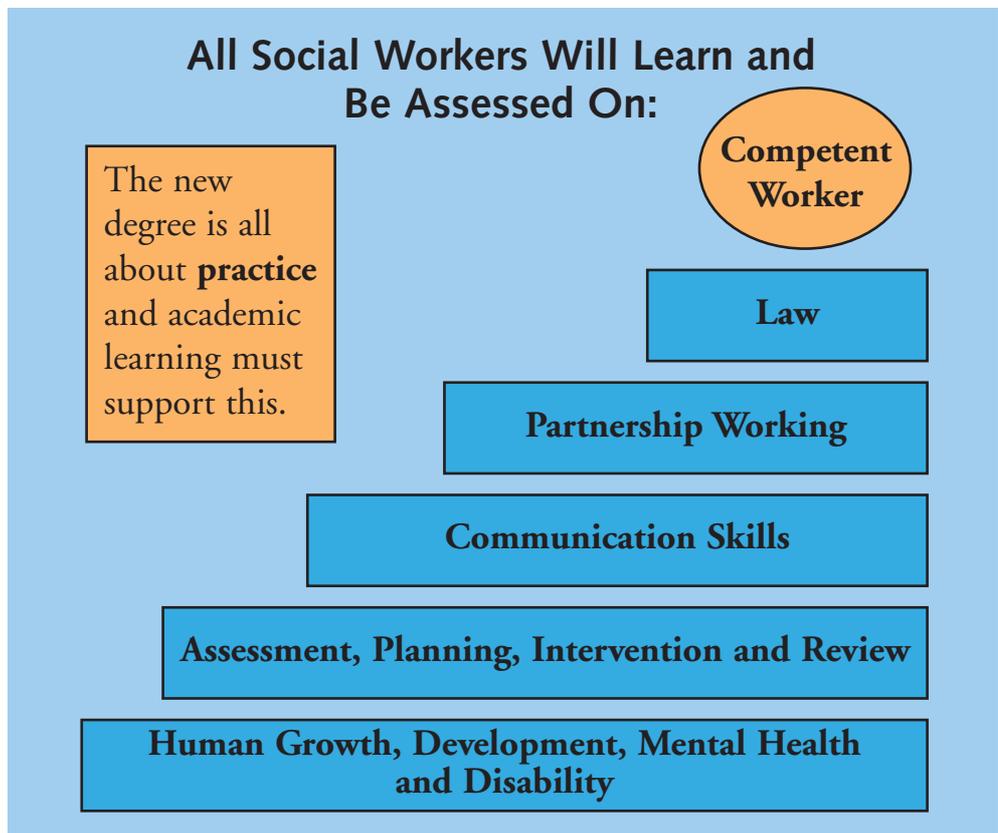
Which includes

- Communication and Information Technology and Numerical skills
- Problem solving skills
- Communication skills
- Skills in working with others
- Skills in Personal and Professional Development

In order for social work degree graduates to be able to demonstrate core applied knowledge and skills they must show through teaching, learning and assessment;

- Subject knowledge and understanding as defined in the benchmark statement
- Subject skills and other skills as defined in the benchmark statement
- Attainment of the specified standards in relation to academic and practice capabilities.

Appendix 2



Roles of stakeholders in programme design and delivery

Stakeholders	Roles							
	Student selection	Assessment of students	Provision of placement	Design of degree	Teaching and learning provision	Learning agreements	Quality assurance	Preparation for practice learning
Employers	✓	–	✓	✓	✓	–	✓	✓
HEIs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Students	–	–	–	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
Service Users	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Practice assessors	✓	✓	–	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
External examiners	–	✓	–	✓	–	✓	✓	✓
GSCC	–	–	–	✓	–	–	✓	–



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