

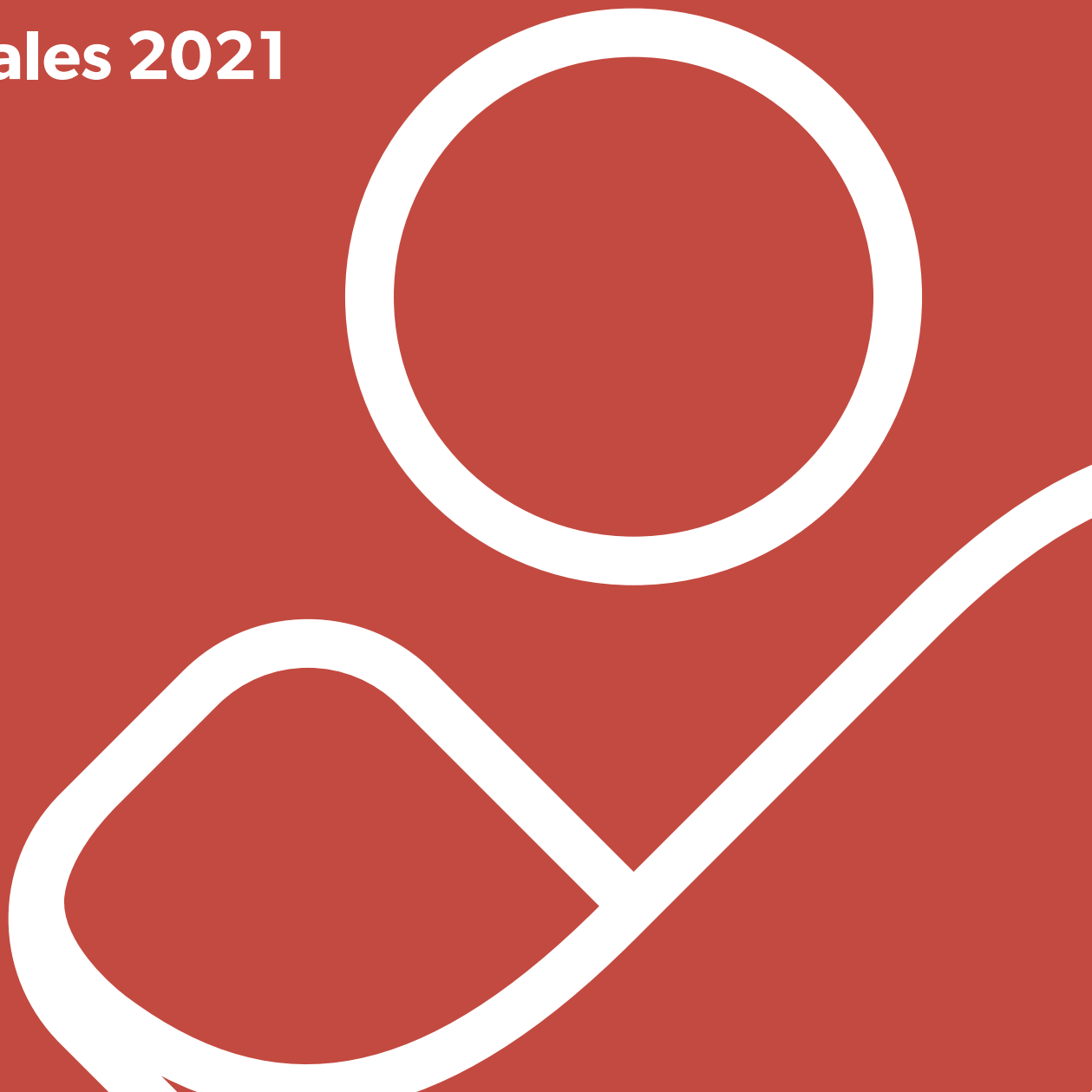


Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**  
Social Care **Wales**



Noddir gan  
**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
Sponsored by  
**Welsh Government**

# The Framework for the Degree in Social Work in Wales 2021



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### **Other formats:**

This document is also available in Welsh. Copies of this document are available in large print or other formats, if required.

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# Introduction

Social Care Wales was established under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 to promote an integrated approach to social care workforce regulation, workforce development and service improvement through one organisation.

Our aim is to improve the quality of social care and support to the people of Wales. We have a particular role to play in workforce development and are responsible for assuring the quality of social work education.

Social workers in Wales have a central role to play in ensuring the social care and support needs of people are understood and met in a way that promotes their well-being and safety. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 recognises that staff and their skills are a vital resource; often they are the very best resource we have to offer people.

The professional training of social workers is therefore a key element in preparing professional, competent and confident social workers.

We support this by:

**Developing the workforce:** We support the workforce so they are able to work in ways that are collaborative, effective and grounded in the values of social care, and are open to new ways of working.

**Leading and supporting improvement:** We use information from data, research and evaluation, as well as inspection and policy, to support our work with the sector to explore and understand the models, practice and workforce skills needed to provide more effective care and support and secure improved outcomes for children and adults who rely on care and support, their families and carers.

**Providing public confidence:** We regulate the workforce to assure the public that those regulated workers are of good character, confident and competent to provide safe care to the people of Wales and support for their families. By establishing clear requirements for professional education and training we ensure the next generation of social workers have the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve this vision for social care in Wales.

The social work degree is the professional qualification for social workers in Wales and throughout the UK. The title is protected and only people with a recognised social work qualification can practise as a social worker<sup>1</sup>. Once qualified, social workers must continue to develop their practice through ongoing learning and development. We have established standards for the education and training of social workers at both qualifying and post-qualifying levels.

This document sets out the standards for the professional qualification and includes:

- the rules governing the approval and regulation of social work qualifying programmes
- a schedule that sets out more detailed requirements for approval of programmes.

We have also published separate documents providing supplementary guidance to the rules and more detailed guidance about students' practice education.

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<sup>1</sup>. A person can be prosecuted for misuse of the title. You can find more information at: [socialcare.wales/resources/misuse-of-social-worker-title](https://socialcare.wales/resources/misuse-of-social-worker-title)

Another publication about the requirements for post-qualifying training of social workers is also available.

# The Approval and Inspection of Degree Courses in Social Work (Wales) Rules 2021

## Arrangement of Rules

### Part I General

1. Citation and commencement
2. Interpretation

### Part II Approval of Degree Programmes in Social Work

3. Applications for approval
4. Consideration of applications
5. Requirements for approval
6. The required standard of proficiency in relevant social work
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8. Modifications to degree programmes

### Part III Monitoring and Quality Assurance

9. Provision of information
10. Reviews
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12. Focused investigations
13. Inspections directed by the Inspection Committee

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14. Review of decisions

### The Schedule

#### Criteria for the Approval and Quality Assurance of Degree Programmes in Social Work.

Social Care Wales in the exercise of powers conferred on it by Sections 74(1)(a) and (2)(c), 114(1)(a), (3), (6), 115(1) and (2), of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, and of all other powers enabling Social Care Wales in that behalf, and with the agreement of Ministers makes the following Rules:

# Part I

## General

### 1. Citation and commencement

These Rules may be cited as the Approval and Inspection of Degree Courses in Social Work (Wales) Rules 2021 and shall come into force on 1 May 2021.

### 2. Interpretation

#### 1) In these Rules –

“the Act” means the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016;

“assessment level” shall be construed by reference to the structure for the social work degree in Wales as outlined in appendix 1 in the supplementary guidance to the Rules;

“application” means, for the purposes of Rule 4, the application made under Rule 3 and, for the purposes of Rule 8, the application made under Rule 8(2), and “applicant” shall be construed accordingly;

“approved degree programme” means a degree programme that has been approved under these Rules;

“Benchmark Statement for Social Work” means the Subject Benchmark Statement for Social Work as amended from time to time, and published by The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education;

“degree programme” means a course in relevant social work for persons who wish to become social workers;

“designated senior officer” means a senior member of the staff of Social Care Wales who has been authorised by it to act as such under these Rules;

“duly authorised officer” means an officer of the staff of Social Care Wales who has been authorised by it to act as such under these Rules;

“external examiner” shall be construed in accordance with paragraph 7(2)(c) of the Schedule;

“focused investigation” means an investigation under Rule 11;

“Inspection Committee” means the Committee of Social Care Wales that has been authorised by it to act as such under Rule 13;

“institution” means, in relation to a degree programme (whether or not it is an approved degree programme), the institution that made an application for its approval under these Rules, or an institution that has inherited responsibility for an approved degree programme from another institution;

“National Occupational Standards” means the National Occupational Standards for Social Work as amended from time to time and published by Social Care Wales;

“partnership agreement” means an agreement of a type referred to in paragraph 1(1) (a) of the Schedule;

“practice assessment panel” means a panel constituted in accordance with paragraph 6(1)(f) of the Schedule;

“practice educator” means a person referred to in paragraph 6(1)(j) of the Schedule;

“practice learning” shall be construed in accordance with Rule 6(2)(j);

“programme specification” is referred to in paragraph 5(1) of the Schedule;

“quality assurance” shall be construed in accordance with paragraph 7(1) (a) of the Schedule;

“QAA” means The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education;

“register” means the register maintained by Social Care Wales under Section 80 of the Act, and “registration” and “registered” shall be construed accordingly;

“required standard of proficiency in relevant social work” means the standard described in Rule 6;<sup>2</sup>

“retained EU law” shall have the meaning given in sections 2 to 4 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018;

“Review Committee” means a committee of Social Care Wales that has been authorised by it to act as such under Rule 14;

“routes” shall, in relation to a degree programme, be construed in accordance with Rule 4(7);

“Social Care Wales” means the corporate body previously called the Care Council for Wales, which was renamed ‘Social Care Wales’ by Section 67(3) of the Act

“student” means, in relation to a degree programme, a student who is or (as the context requires) may be enrolled on the programme;

“student transcript” has the meaning given by paragraph 5(2)(n) of the Schedule;

“inspector” shall be construed in accordance with Rule 11.

**2)** In these Rules, a reference to –

a) a numbered Rule is to the Rule in these Rules bearing that number;

b) a numbered paragraph in a Rule or the Schedule is to the paragraph in that Rule or the Schedule bearing that number;

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**2.** “Relevant social work” is defined by section 79(4) of the Act as social work which is required in connection with any health, education or social services provided by any person.



- c) a numbered sub-paragraph in a paragraph is to the sub-paragraph in that paragraph bearing that number; and
- d) the Schedule is to the Schedule to these Rules.

## Part II

# Approval of Degree Programmes in Social Work

### 3. Applications for approval

- 1) An application to Social Care Wales under Section 114(1) of the Act for the approval of a degree programme in social work must be –
  - a) made in writing on a form approved by Social Care Wales;
  - b) accompanied by a programme specification, a copy of the institution’s partnership agreement or agreements and such other information as may be required by the form;
  - c) accompanied by a fee of such reasonable amount as Social Care Wales may require; and
  - d) made by an institution of a type that is referred to in Section 214(2)(a) or (b) of the Education Reform Act 1988.<sup>3</sup>

### 4. Consideration of applications

- 1) An application duly made under Rule 3 for the approval of a degree programme shall be considered by a duly authorised officer of Social Care Wales. An application that has not been duly made shall not be considered.
- 2) The duly authorised officer of Social Care Wales must –
  - a) where he or she considers that –
    - i) the requirements of Rule 5 are or (as appropriate) will be satisfied;
    - ii) the programme will enable persons completing it to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work (Rule 6); and
    - iii) the institution will be able to comply with requirements under Rule 9; but
    - iv) the programme need not be approved subject to conditions

recommend to Social Care Wales approval of the programme and notify the applicant of that fact in writing.

- b) where he or she considers that –
  - i) the requirements of Rule 5 are or (as appropriate) will be satisfied;
  - ii) the programme will enable persons completing it to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work (Rule 6); and

**3.** 1988 c.40 (“the 1988 Act”). Section 214(2)(a) of the 1988 Act refers to universities, colleges and other bodies authorised by Royal Charter or by or under an Act of Parliament to grant degrees. Section 214(2)(b) of the 1988 Act refers to bodies permitted by bodies falling within Section 21(2)(a) to grant degrees on their behalf.

iii) the institution will be able to comply with requirements under Rule 9; but

iv) approval should be granted subject to conditions

will notify the applicant of the proposed conditions.

c) following notification under paragraph (2)(b) and where the applicant has agreed in writing to the proposed conditions, recommend to Social Care Wales approval of the programme subject to those conditions and notify the applicant of that fact in writing;

d) refer the application to a designated senior officer if –

i) he or she considers that the requirements of Rule 5 are not or (as appropriate) will not be satisfied or that the programme will not enable persons completing it to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work (Rule 6) or that the institution will not be able to comply with requirements under Rule 9; or

ii) following notification under paragraph (2)(b), the applicant has not agreed to the proposed conditions in writing within 15 working days of receipt of that notification.

**3)** Where an application has been referred under paragraph (2)(d),

a) if the designated senior officer considers that the requirements of Rule 5 are or (as appropriate) will be satisfied, the programme will enable persons completing it to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work (Rule 6) and that the institution will be able to comply with requirements under Rule 9, he or she must recommend to Social Care Wales the programme is approved (with or without conditions as he or she thinks fit);

b) if the designated senior officer considers that the requirements of Rule 5 are not or (as appropriate) will not be satisfied, the programme will not enable persons completing it to attain that standard (Rule 6) or that the institution will not be able to comply with requirements under Rule 9, he or she must recommend to Social Care Wales refusal to approve the programme;

c) notify the applicant in writing of the recommendation on the application; and

d) where the recommendation of the designated senior officer is to refuse to approve the programme or to approve it subject to conditions that have not been agreed in writing between the applicant and Social Care Wales, he or she must give his or her reasons in that notification and inform the institution of its right of review under Rule 14.

**4)** A decision of a type referred to in paragraph (3)(d) –

a) shall have effect 28 days after the day on which the applicant received notification of it if, during that period, the applicant has not referred the decision in writing to the Review Committee for consideration under Rule 14; but

b) shall not have effect if the applicant does so refer the decision; and any other decision under paragraph (3) shall have effect as soon as it is made.

**5)** A duly authorised officer of Social Care Wales may at any time require the applicant to provide it with such further information as it may reasonably require for the purposes of considering an application.

- 6) Any approval given under these Rules shall come into force on such day as is specified in the notification of approval given under paragraph (2) or (3) under Rule 14 (review of decisions).
- 7) Where there is more than one means by which students may complete a degree programme (referred to in these Rules as “routes”):
- a) any reference in these Rules to an Officer of Social Care Wales or the Review Committee considering –
    - i) that the requirements of Rule 5 are or (as appropriate) will be satisfied, is a reference to considering whether the requirements are or (as appropriate) will be satisfied in relation to each of those routes;
    - ii) that the degree programme will or will not enable a person completing it to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work (Rule 6), is a reference to considering whether each of those routes will or will not enable such a person to attain that standard;
    - iii) that the institution will or will not be able to comply with requirements under Rule 9, is a reference to considering whether the institution will or will not be able to comply with those requirements in relation to each of those routes;
  - b) any approval granted under these Rules shall only relate to such routes (if any) as were specified in the application.

## 5. Requirements for approval

- 1) The requirements of this Rule are that:
- a) a student’s successful completion of the degree programme will result in either:
    - i) the grant of an award that confers upon the holder the right to the title of bachelor so long as that award may also (in accordance with the instruments relating to or regulating the applicant) take the form of an honours degree;
    - ii) the grant of an award that confers upon the holder the right to the title of master; or
    - iii) the grant of a Postgraduate Diploma; and
  - b) the degree programme and the institution do or (as appropriate) will satisfy the criteria set out in the Schedule to these Rules.

## 6. The required standard of proficiency in relevant social work

- 1) For the purpose of Section 63(5) of the Act, the “required standard of proficiency in relevant social work”<sup>4</sup> is the standard described in paragraph (2).

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4. Section 114(5) of the Act provides that “a course must not be approved by SCW under this section unless SCW thinks that the course will enable persons completing it to attain the required standard of proficiency in social care work”.

- 2) A student completing the degree programme (whether or not he or she intends to practise as a social worker) must demonstrate by the point of final assessment that he or she:
- a) demonstrated throughout the degree programme that he or she had complied with the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care published by Social Care Wales under Section 112 of Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016;
  - b) has met the Benchmark Statements for Social Work and the National Occupational Standards for Social Work;
  - c) has successfully completed all elements of assessed work and has proceeded through the three levels of the degree programme as outlined in the supplementary guidance to the Rules;
  - d) would be able to integrate Welsh, UK and retained EU law, knowledge and research evidence about best practice and theory, related to social work, into his or her practice as a social worker;
  - e) would be able to integrate requirements under the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language Measure 2011 into his or her practice as a social worker;
  - f) would understand the desirability for, and would promote in his or her practice as a social worker, the assessment of people in need of care and support and carers who need support, in their preferred language;
  - g) subject to any credit granted to the student in accordance with any arrangements for the accreditation of prior experience and learning, had undertaken approximately 1,200 hours of academic learning, and that such learning has been appropriately guided, structured and assessed;
  - h) subject to any credit granted to the student in accordance with any arrangements for the accreditation of prior experience and learning, has successfully completed at least 1,400 hours of assessed practical training in social work ("practice learning") which included;
    - i) at least two separate periods of practice learning;
    - j) one such period of practice learning involved social work with a materially different service user group to the other;
    - k) at least one such practice learning opportunity of not less than 560 hours was in a Local Social Services Authority and included experience of statutory social services' functions including safeguarding;
    - l) over the 1,400 hours he or she demonstrated:
      - i) they understand the professional role in relation to safeguarding children and adults
      - ii) they have the skills to contribute appropriately to safeguarding interventions;

- m) has had experience of working with, and learning from other professions to support working in a multi-disciplinary context and in integrated settings;
- n) where a student is also employed as a social care worker whilst undertaking the degree programme, at least one of these periods was undertaken within a setting that is materially different to the setting within which he or she is employed.

## 7. Duration and lapse of approvals

- 1) The approval of a degree programme given under these Rules shall cease to have effect if –
  - a) it is withdrawn under Rule 13 or 14;
  - b) the institution makes a written request to Social Care Wales for the approval to be withdrawn and Social Care Wales accedes to that request;
 or
- 2) The approval of a degree programme given under these Rules shall cease to have effect if during any 12-month period, no student has been enrolled on the programme except for those students already registered with the programme for whom approval will remain so long as Rule 7(1)(a) does not apply.

## 8. Modifications to degree programmes

- 1) In the event of a public health or other national crisis which has affected, is affecting or is likely to affect the delivery of social work degree programmes, Social Care Wales may make modifications to the requirements for approval of degree programmes in social work to enable student progression, where the required level of competency has been assessed and confirmed.
- 2) An institution must not make any of the following modifications to a degree programme without prior consent of Social Care Wales –
  - a) an alteration to the programme specification or any partnership agreement, whether in their original forms as at the date of approval of the programme or as subsequently modified under this Rule;
  - b) a material reduction in the ratio of programme resources (including staffing resources, physical resources and financial resources) to students undertaking the programme (or any route of the programme), as that ratio stood at the date of approval of the programme or as it stands having been subsequently modified under this Rule;
  - c) a variation in the number of students for which the programme (or any route of the programme) is designed, as that design stood at the date of approval of the programme or as it stands having been subsequently modified under this Rule.
- 3) An application for consent under this Rule must be made by the institution in writing on a form approved for the purpose by Social Care Wales and include such information as may be required.
- 4) An application duly made under paragraph (3) shall be considered by a duly authorised officer of Social Care Wales. An application that is not duly made shall not be considered.

- 5) A duly authorised officer of Social Care Wales must –**
- a) where he or she considers that the proposed modification will not call into question the ability of the programme to continue to satisfy the requirements of Rule 5 or to continue to enable persons completing it to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work, give consent to the modification and notify the applicant of that fact in writing;
  - b) where he or she considers that, if the proposed modification is implemented in an altered form, it will not call into question the matters referred to in sub-paragraph (a), notify the applicant of the proposed alteration, and, if the applicant agrees in writing to the proposed alteration, give consent to the proposed modification as altered and notify the applicant of that fact in writing;
  - c) refer the application to a designated senior officer where –
    - i) in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (b), he or she considers that the proposed modification will call into question the matters referred to in sub-paragraph (a); or
    - ii) the applicant has not agreed to a proposed alteration under sub-paragraph (b).
- 6) Where a reference has been made under paragraph 5(c), the designated senior officer must make one of the following decisions as he or she thinks fit –**
- a) refuse to consent to the proposed modification;
  - b) give consent without requiring either the proposed modification to be implemented in an altered form or the applicant to produce an action plan;
  - c) give consent but require the proposed modification to be implemented in an altered form;
  - d) give consent but require the applicant to produce and implement an action plan with a view to ensuring that the implementation of the modification does not call into question the matters referred to in paragraph (5)(a);
  - e) give consent but require the proposed modification to be altered as described in sub-paragraph (c) and require the applicant to produce and implement an action plan as described in sub-paragraph (d).
- 7) The designated senior officer must –**
- a) notify the applicant in writing of his or her decision; and
  - b) where he or she has refused to consent to the proposed modification, required the modification to be implemented in an altered form that has not been agreed in writing with the applicant or required the applicant to produce an action plan –
    - i) give his or her reasons in that notification; and
    - ii) inform the applicant of the right of review under paragraph (9).
- 8) A duly authorised officer of Social Care Wales may require the applicant to provide it with such further information as it may reasonably require at any time for the purposes of considering an application.**

**9) A decision of a type referred to in paragraph (7)(b) –**

- a) shall have effect 28 days after the day on which the applicant received notification of it if, during that period, the applicant has not referred the decision, in writing, to the Review Committee for consideration under Rule 14; but
- b) shall not have effect if the applicant does so refer the decision; and any other decision under paragraph (6) shall have effect as soon as it is made.



## Part III

# Monitoring and Quality Assurance

### 9. Provision of information

- 1) An institution must provide all prospective students with information on –
  - a) its student selection process and criteria;
  - b) routes to successful completion of the degree programme;
  - c) any arrangements it has for the accreditation of prior experience and learning;
  - d) its equal opportunities policies;
  - e) its arrangements for disabled students; and
  - f) how the institution meets the Welsh Language Standards, the degree programme's Welsh language policy, and arrangements for students to learn and be assessed through the medium of the Welsh language;
  - g) the requirement for social work students to be registered with Social Care Wales.
- 2) An institution must produce an annual student handbook containing current information on –
  - a) the programme specification;
  - b) the assessment process;
  - c) complaints, termination of a student's place on the programme and appeal and whistleblowing procedures; and
  - d) the provision of transcripts of student attainment and future learning needs.
- 3) An institution must provide Social Care Wales with the following information in the format, on the date, in respect of the time period, and at a level of detail, specified by Social Care Wales –
  - a) number of applicants for places on the degree programme;
  - b) number of offers made for places on the degree programme;
  - c) number of student registrations on the degree programme;
  - d) number of students at each assessment level of the degree programme who have –
    - been referred (that is they have been required to resubmit a piece of work for further assessment);
    - been deferred;
    - temporarily withdrawn from the programme;

- permanently withdrawn from the programme;
  - exited the programme with a qualification;
  - failed the programme.
- e) number of students offered entrance with a credit due to accreditation of prior experience and learning;
- f) number of late-starting practice learning placements.
- 4)** An institution must provide Social Care Wales annually with –
- a) the current student handbook; and
  - b) a report summarising the outcome of all complaints investigated in the previous year under paragraph 4(7)(a) of the Schedule.
- 5)** An institution must –
- a) immediately notify Social Care Wales of any matter that may reasonably call into question a student's continued registration with Social Care Wales under Section 80(1)(b) of the Act;
  - b) immediately notify Social Care Wales of any student whose place on the degree programme is terminated;
  - c) provide Social Care Wales with a written report of any evaluation undertaken, or action plan produced, under the arrangements referred to in paragraph 4 of the Schedule (required policies and procedures);
  - d) in addition to the requirement under paragraph (4)(b) provide Social Care Wales at regular intervals with details of decisions taken under the complaints procedure required under paragraph 4(7)(a) of the Schedule;
  - e) provide Social Care Wales with a copy of any report produced under paragraph 7(2)(b) (quality assurance evaluations) or 7(2)(d) (external examiners' reports) of the Schedule;
  - f) provide Social Care Wales with a copy of any action plan produced under paragraph 7(2)(f) of the Schedule.
- 6)** An institution must provide Social Care Wales with such other information as it may reasonably require for the purpose of considering whether a degree programme of the institution continues to meet the requirements under this Rule and Rule 5 and whether the degree programme will continue to enable persons completing it to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work (Rule 6).

## 10. Reviews

- 1)** An institution must –
- a) invite Social Care Wales to participate in any review it proposes to undertake as part of the quality assurance process required under paragraph 8 of the Schedule;

- b) where Social Care Wales is to take part in such a review, liaise with it over the timing and methodology of the review;
- c) in the case of a review under paragraph 7 of the Schedule, address in it such matters as Social Care Wales may require, and permit Social Care Wales to contribute to any report arising from a review in which it has taken part;
- d) provide Social Care Wales with any report or action plan resulting from such a review; and
- e) co-operate with Social Care Wales in any review of the degree programme that Social Care Wales decides to undertake.

## 11. Inspectors

- 1) Social Care Wales may appoint persons (referred to in these Rules as “inspectors”) to inspect any places at which or institutions by which or under whose direction –
  - a) a degree programme (or part of such a programme) is, or is proposed to be, given; or
  - b) any examination is, or is proposed to be, held in connection with any other relevant course (or part of such a course)<sup>5</sup>.
- 2) No inspector may act as such in relation to:
  - a) any place or institution at which he or she regularly gives instruction in any subject; or
  - b) any place or institution with which the inspector has such a connection that a fair-minded observer would conclude that there would be a real possibility that he or she would be biased if he or she were to act as an inspector of the place or institution.
- 3) Where Social Care Wales arranges for a place or institution to be inspected under this Rule, it must notify in writing the institution concerned of –
  - a) the inspector; and
  - b) the purpose of the inspection.
- 4) Following an inspection, a duly authorised officer of Social Care Wales may request the inspector to provide a draft report on such matters relating to the nature and quality of –
  - a) the instruction given, or to be given, and the facilities provided or to be provided, by the institution or place (including matters relating to quality assurance processes and course management) as Social Care Wales may have specified when making arrangements for the inspection or at a later date; and
  - b) any examination held, or proposed to be held, in connection with any relevant course as Social Care Wales may have specified when making arrangements for the inspection or at a later date.

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5. Section 114 of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 provides that ‘relevant course’ means (a) any course for which approval by Social Care Wales has been given, or is being sought, under Section 114; or (b) any training which a person admitted to the part for social workers of the register maintained by Social Care Wales may be required to undergo after registration.

- 5) Social Care Wales must on receipt of a draft report under paragraph (4) –**
- a) send a copy of it to the institution; and
  - b) notify the institution of a period, being not less than one month from the date of the notification, within which it may make observations on the draft report.
- 6) Having taken into account any observations under paragraph (5), Social Care Wales must prepare a final report and send a copy of it to the institution.**
- 7) Social Care Wales must not take any action under these Rules in light of a report produced under this Rule before the end of the period specified in paragraph (5)(b).**
- 8) Social Care Wales may pay reasonable fees, allowances and expenses (being allowance and expenses that are similar to those payable to the staff of Social Care Wales) to inspectors who are not members of Social Care Wales’s staff, taking into account the length of any inspection undertaken or to be undertaken, the time taken or likely to be taken to prepare any draft report and the complexity of the issues to be considered or likely to be considered in connection with an inspection.**
- 9) Social Care Wales may treat an inspector as a member of Social Care Wales’s staff for the purpose of Schedule 2 of the Act.**

## **12. Focused investigations**

- 1) Subject to paragraph (2), Social Care Wales may undertake an investigation (referred to in these Rules as a “focused investigation”) into an approved degree programme in any of the following cases –**
- a) where it is of the opinion that the programme or the institution may no longer satisfy the requirements of Rule 5 or the degree programme may no longer allow persons completing it to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work;
  - b) where it is of the opinion that the programme is not being provided in compliance with any condition of its approval;
  - c) where it is of the opinion that the institution has failed to seek consent to modify as required under Rule 8(1);
  - d) where it is of the opinion that the institution has failed to implement a modification in a form altered under Rule 8 (or, on review, under Rule 14);
  - e) where it is of the opinion that the institution has failed to implement an action plan required under Rule 8 (or, on review, under Rule 14);
  - f) where it is of the opinion that the institution has failed to comply with any requirement under Rule 9;
  - g) where it is of the opinion that the institution has failed to comply with any requirement under Rule 10.

- 2) Social Care Wales must not proceed with a focused investigation unless:
  - a) within 30 days of its decision to undertake the investigation, it has given the institution concerned written notice of that fact; and
  - b) that notice specifies the reasons for the decision, the procedure that the investigation is intended to follow (including whether it is intended to involve scrutiny of documentation and interviews with persons connected with the degree programme) and the timescale over which it is intended to take place.
- 3) The institution concerned must assist Social Care Wales in the conduct of the investigation.
- 4) Following completion of the investigation, a duly authorised officer of Social Care Wales must –
  - a) compile a report of the investigation including the reason why it was undertaken, its conduct and its findings;
  - b) express in the report his or her opinion as to at least one of the following:
    - i) whether or not the degree programme and the institution satisfy the requirements of Rule 5;
    - ii) whether or not the programme will allow persons completing it to attain the required standards of proficiency in relevant social work;
    - iii) whether or not the programme is being provided in accordance with any condition of its approval; and
  - c) provide the institution with a copy of the report.
- 5) Where the duly authorised officer expresses a negative opinion under sub-paragraph (4)(b), a designated senior officer of Social Care Wales must consider the matters raised by the report in accordance with paragraph (6).
- 6) The designated senior officer must –
  - a) invite observations from the institution concerned about the report;
  - b) having taken those observations into account, make his or her own finding about the matter or matters in respect of which the duly authorised officer expressed a negative opinion (and for the purposes of these Rules, where his or her finding concurs with that opinion the programme is referred to as being “in breach”); and
  - c) inform the institution of those findings in writing.
- 7) Where the degree programme is in breach, the designated senior officer may, in any of the following circumstances, recommend to the Inspection Committee that an inspection should take place under Rule 13 –
  - a) where he or she has been unable to agree an action plan with the institution to remedy the breach;

- b) where he or she is of the opinion that the institution has failed to implement such an action plan within a timescale specified by the officer;
- c) where he or she is of the opinion that it would not be possible to remedy the breach within an acceptable timescale;
- d) where he or she is of the opinion that the institution failed to assist the duly authorised officer of Social Care Wales in the conduct of a focused investigation,

and where the officer has so recommended, he or she must notify the institution of that fact and his or her reasons for referral.

### **13. Inspections directed by the Inspection Committee**

**1)** The circumstances in which an inspection of an approved degree programme may be undertaken under this Rule are as follows –

- a) following a recommendation under Rule 12(7);
- b) where on more than one occasion a focused investigation has resulted in a finding under Rule 12(6)(b) that a programme is in breach;
- c) where the Inspection Committee is of the opinion that there has been a failure to comply with a requirement imposed under paragraph (3)(b)(ii) or Rule 14(1)(c) (reviews of decisions);
- d) where the Inspection Committee is of the opinion that there is a real risk that the degree programme would not enable a person completing it to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work.

**2)** The Inspection Committee shall –

- a) have the function of deciding whether or not an inspection is to take place;
- b) if it decides that an inspection is to take place –
  - i) notify the institution in writing of its decision specifying its reasons, the procedure the inspection is intended to follow and the timescale over which it is intended to take place; and
  - ii) appoint a sub-committee to carry out the inspection, and require that sub-committee to report to it on the inspection;
  - iii) the sub-committee must have at least two members (including at least one officer of Social Care Wales), and may include persons appointed under Rule 11;
  - iv) no member of a sub-committee appointed may also take part in the proceedings of the Inspection Committee.
- c) following receipt of the sub-committee's report –
  - i) provide the institution with a copy; and

- ii) notify the institution of the period, being not less than one month from the date on which the institution received the copy, within which it may submit observations to the Inspection Committee on the report.
- 3) Where an inspection has taken place, the Inspection Committee must –**
- a) decide, having taken into account the report of the sub-committee and any observations of the institution under paragraph (2)(c), whether, in its opinion, the degree programme and the institution is or is not meeting the requirements of Rule 5, whether the programme will or will not enable persons completing it to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work and whether it is or is not being carried on in accordance with any condition of its approval; and
  - b) where the committee is of a negative opinion about any of the matters mentioned in subparagraph (a), either –
    - i) withdraw the approval of the degree programme granted under these Rules; or
    - ii) impose requirements as to the future conduct of the degree programme.
- 4) The Inspection Committee must notify the institution in writing of a decision under paragraph (3), together with its reasons and a statement setting out the institution's right of review under Rule 14.**
- 5) Where the Inspection Committee makes a decision under paragraph (3)(b), the decision shall –**
- i) have effect 28 days after the day on which the applicant was notified of it if, during that period, the applicant has not referred the decision, in writing, to the Review Committee for consideration under Rule 14; but
  - ii) not have effect if the applicant does so refer the decision.

## Part IV

# Review of Decisions

### 14. Review of Decisions

- 1) Upon a reference duly made under Rule 4, 8 or 13, the matter in question shall be considered by a Review Committee which must in accordance with this Rule –
  - a) in the case of a reference under Rule 4 (consideration of applications), make one of the decisions referred to in Rule 4(3)(a) or (b), and for the purposes of this sub-paragraph that Rule shall apply as if any reference to the designated senior officer were a reference to the Review Committee;
  - b) in the case of a reference under Rule 8 (modifications to degree programmes), make one of the decisions referred to in Rule 8(5), and for the purposes of this sub-paragraph that Rule shall apply as if any reference to the designated senior officer were a reference to the Review Committee;
  - c) in the case of a reference under Rule 13 (inspections), make a decision on the matters referred to in Rule 13(3)(a) and if it is of a negative opinion as to any of those matters, make one of the decisions referred to in Rule 13(3)(b), and for the purposes of this sub-paragraph that Rule shall apply as if any reference to the designated senior officer were a reference to the Review Committee.
  
- 2) A Review Committee must –
  - a) consist of a Chair and two other persons, all of whom must be members of Social Care Wales; and
  - b) on a reference under Rule 13, not include any person who was a member of the Inspection Committee or sub-committee that considered the matter under that Rule.
  
- 3) A Review Committee –
  - a) must consider the review within 30 working days of the receipt by Social Care Wales of the institution's written notice referring the matter for review under this Rule, or such longer period as the committee may reasonably specify before the expiry of the 30 days just referred to;
  - b) may hear oral or written submissions before making its decision; and
  - c) must notify the institution concerned of its decision within five working days of the day on which it was made and provide it with written reasons for its decision within 20 working days of the day on which it was made.



Signed on behalf of Social Care Wales

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mick Giannasi', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Mick Giannasi**

Chair of Social Care Wales

# The Schedule

## Criteria for the Approval and Quality Assurance of Degree Programmes in Social Work

### 1. Partnership working

- 1) For a programme to be approved by Social Care Wales:
  - a) evidence will be required of a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and employer(s) of social workers sharing responsibility for the development, delivery and management of a social work degree. Such evidence would include a formal partnership arrangement between at least one Director of Social Services and the HEI<sup>6</sup>. All such arrangements will specify the resources (including sufficient practice learning opportunities) to be provided in order to support the delivery and management of the degree programme.
  - b) the institution must involve people with care and support needs and carers, and representatives of employers of social workers in all stages of the development, management and delivery of the degree programme (including the selection and assessment of students).
- 2) The degree programme may also enter into further written partnerships with other employers of social workers in the course of their business or in the exercise of their functions.

### 2. Resource provision

- 1) The institution must allocate sufficient resources to the degree programme to ensure that:
  - a) there are sufficient qualified and experienced persons (the majority of which should be social workers) contributing to the degree programme so that all students may have sufficient guided, structured and assessed academic and practice learning<sup>7</sup>;
  - b) students are able to learn and be assessed to the same standard through the medium of the Welsh language;
  - c) students have adequate access to appropriate and current learning materials;
  - d) students have access to a learning environment that can accommodate varied learning models and methods<sup>8</sup>;

6. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 Part 8 Code of Practice on the Role of the Director of Social Services (Social Services Functions) indicates: "The director should promote collaborative workforce learning through networks and relationships with other bodies. This includes working with education and training providers, such as Higher Education bodies, to ensure they are able to deliver relevant and effective training and support a competent workforce." (paragraph 75).

7. Programmes will need to ensure they have access to personnel with appropriate expertise to deliver all aspects of the qualifying programme. Approved programmes will need to indicate the professional expertise of staff contributing to the programme, a majority of whom must be qualified and experienced social workers. It is expected as part of their continuing professional development such staff have opportunity to undertake relevant learning and development activity in order to support their currency in contemporary social work practice.

8. Approved programmes will need to be able to confirm they have access to a physical learning environment conducive to a range of teaching and learning approaches.

- e) all those people involved in the provision of the degree programme, including people with care and support needs and their carers, receive induction and ongoing training to enable them to contribute effectively to the programme and update their knowledge and skills in relation to the training of social workers.
- 2)** The Institution must, through its partnership agreement or agreements and otherwise, have sufficient resources to ensure that –
- a) students have sufficient practice learning opportunities for the purpose of Rule 6(2)(h); and
  - b) there are sufficient practice educators to assess students in each period of practice learning.

### **3. Selection of students for the degree programme**

- 1)** Before admitting an applicant to a degree programme, the institution must undertake such assessment of him or her as will allow it to be reasonably certain that<sup>9</sup>:
- a) the applicant has the potential to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work (Rule 6) upon completion of the course<sup>10</sup>;
  - b) the applicant has sufficient relevant experience of social care that they can demonstrate the values and basic skills that correspond to those generally expected of social workers<sup>11</sup>;
  - c) the applicant has read and understood the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care issued by Social Care Wales under Section 112 of the Act;
  - d) the applicant has communication and application of number skills equivalent to Level 2 or higher as specified by the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales; and
  - e) the applicant is able to understand and communicate effectively in written and spoken English or Welsh.
- 2)** The assessment referred to in paragraph (1) must include an individual face to face interview.
- 3)** Before admitting an applicant to a degree programme, the institution:
- a) must satisfy itself as to an applicant's medical fitness and character in terms of their suitability to work in social work;
  - b) if it is possible for a certificate to be issued to an applicant under Part V of the Police Act 1997 (criminal record certificates), must require the applicant to produce to it the most comprehensive certificate that may be issued under that Part;
  - c) must satisfy itself that where the applicant is required to be registered under the

**9.** Assessment may include a range of approaches but must include an individual interview.

**10.** Approved programmes will need clear entry criteria for applicants following a range of routes into higher education. They will need to demonstrate entry requirements are sufficiently robust for the academic level of study and for the professional role.

**11.** Approved programmes must set requirements for relevant experience of social care of not less than 360 hours' practice in a paid or voluntary capacity, apart from in occasional and exceptional circumstances when the experience can be shown to have been met through other ways. For example, as a person with lived experience of social work/social care services.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the number allocated to that applicant by the Disclosure and Barring Service has been provided;

- d) must inform students who wish to become social workers of the requirement to be registered with Social Care Wales under Section 80(1)(b) of the Act; and
- e) must satisfy itself that the student is so registered<sup>12</sup>.

#### 4. Required policies and procedures

- 1) The institution must have policies that meet the legal requirements of both equalities and Welsh language legislation. They must also meet the requirements of these Rules.
- 2) The institution must promote and respect equal opportunities and human rights in all aspects of the delivery of the degree programme including (but not limited to):
  - a) the recruitment of staff for purposes of the programme;
  - b) the selection of students for the programme;
  - c) the delivery of the programme;
  - d) the assessment of students on the programme.
- 3) The institution must use its best endeavours to protect any person connected with the delivery of the degree programme from mistreatment in any form.
- 4) The institution must set up and comply with arrangements to evaluate its compliance with its equal opportunities, anti-discriminatory practice and Welsh language policies
- 5) The institution must ensure that under the arrangements mentioned in sub-paragraph 4 it will:
  - a) develop and follow an action plan in any case where it is at risk of not complying with the requirements under sub-paragraph (1) or any of the responsibilities referred to in sub-paragraph (2); and
  - b) audit the Welsh language skills of students and record the numbers who wish to undertake all or part of the degree programme through the medium of Welsh.
- 6) The institution must set up, follow and publicise procedures for:
  - a) the consideration of complaints related to the degree programme;
  - b) determining the suitability of students and the termination of a student's place on the degree programme should they be found unsuitable for social work;
  - c) appeals by students on the degree programme against assessment decisions made about

<sup>12</sup> An approved programme must demonstrate how it will satisfy itself that students are registered and must have systems to take action against students who fail to register with Social Care Wales. For guidance on selection and Social Care Wales's registration see [Suitability for Social Work: guidance for social work programme partnerships about student social worker fitness to practise](#), Social Care Wales, 2021

them; and

d) whistleblowing by students.

**7)** The procedures under paragraph (6) must specify (as appropriate):

a) the timescales within which decisions under the procedures are to be taken;

b) the persons by whom decisions under the procedures are to be taken;

c) the possible range of outcomes of decisions under the procedures;

d) that written records of decisions under the procedures will be kept, including the reasons for them;

e) that the institution is committed to taking decisions under the procedures fairly; and

f) the process of appeal against decisions taken under the procedures.

## **5. Learning criteria**

**1)** The institution must provide Social Care Wales with a programme specification that:

a) meets the most recent QAA's Quality Code on such specifications and which demonstrates how the degree programme will enable students to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work (Rule 6);

b) will provide each student with the opportunity to develop a professional identity as a social worker through a coherent and integrated learning experience.

**2)** Without prejudice to sub-paragraph (1), the institution must ensure:

a) that each student is offered approximately 1,200 hours of guided, structured and assessed academic learning which is sufficient to provide him or her with the opportunity to meet the National Occupational Standards for Social Work;

b) the programme content meets the requirements of the subject knowledge and subject-specific and other skills described in the Subject Benchmark Statements for Social Work;

c) each student is offered opportunities to develop social work practice skills in both the 1,200 hours of guided, structured and assessed academic learning and through assessed practice learning opportunities as specified in the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work (Rule 6);

d) at least one such practice learning opportunity of not less than 560 hours is in a Local Social Services Authority and includes experience of statutory social services' functions including safeguarding;

e) that there is provision for students to learn through the medium of the Welsh language;

f) that learning and teaching in both the institution and practice settings reflects contemporary

legislation, social policy and legislative developments relevant to Wales. This will include the active promotion of equality and human rights, including the promotion of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice;

- g) that students can identify, understand and respond to issues relating to the statutory functions of safeguarding and protection of both children and adults at risk;
- h) that students understand research methods and can make appropriate use of research in decision making and professional judgement about practice and in the evaluation of outcomes;
- i) that students can identify, understand, and respond to issues which are specific to or characteristic of the needs of Wales, its languages, legislation, culture, geography and institutions and the distinctive position of the Welsh language;
- j) that on completion of the degree programme, students will receive a transcript indicating their attainments and future learning needs (a "student transcript").

## 6. Assessment criteria

- 1) The institution must, in the assessment of students, meet the following requirements –
  - a) ensure that each student must satisfy the assessment criteria at each academic level of the degree programme before proceeding to the next level;
  - b) without prejudice to paragraph 4(6)(c), ensure that at each assessment level, each student is assessed by an Examination Board, which shall then decide, in accordance with the structure for the social work degree whether the student has met the assessment requirements for that level;
  - c) ensure that the Examination Board satisfies itself, at final assessment, each student has attained the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work (Rule 6);
  - d) ensure that the Examination Board includes at least one external examiner, the Chair of the Practice Assessment Panel and a representative of employers of social workers;
  - e) ensure that the Examination Board and Practice Assessment Panel have agreed a current terms of reference;
  - f) ensure the degree programme has a Practice Assessment Panel (made up of staff of the degree programme, representatives of employers of social workers and people with care and support needs and carers) to manage the process of practice assessment at each level, moderate practice educator recommendations, and make recommendations accordingly on each student to the Examination Board;
  - g) undertake an interim review with the practice educator of each student's progress during any period of assessed practice learning greater than 280 hours;
  - h) have systems to identify students whose practice learning indicates that they may not be able to meet the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work (Rule 6) by the end of their training, and take appropriate action;

- i) ensure that the competence in social work practice of each student will be assessed in accordance with the requirements for practice learning referred to in Rule 6(2)(h);
- j) ensure that all students are assessed in each period of practice learning by a registered and experienced social worker who is, or is training to be, a qualified practice educator;
- k) ensure that where the designated practice educator is not also providing on-site, day to day management of the student that the person who holds that responsibility is provided with appropriate and timely preparation for the role;
- l) ensure that the student's practice will be assessed by a minimum of 10 observations of direct work with people in need of care and support at a ratio of approximately one observation for 140 hours of practice learning. Seven of the direct observations must be made by the designated practice educator, the others by a registered social worker;
- m) ensure that the assessment of students draws on a range of assessment methods suited to the range of knowledge and skills required;
- n) ensure that there is provision for students to be assessed through the medium of the Welsh language;
- o) ensure that any arrangements for the accreditation of prior learning and experience allow for recognition of up to a maximum of 50 percent of the programme, provided all requirements are met in full<sup>13</sup>.

## 7. Quality assurance criteria

- 1) a) The institution must set up and comply with arrangements for the monitoring and review at appropriate intervals of all aspects of the degree programme (referred to in these Rules as the "quality assurance process").
  - b) The quality assurance process must involve, as well as Higher Education and employer staff of the degree programme, other persons (including people with care and support needs, carers and students) connected with the delivery of the programme.
- 2) Without prejudice to the general requirement in sub-paragraph (1), the institution must ensure that under the quality assurance process it will:
  - a) at least annually, seek and respond to the views of students, people with care and support needs, and carers, staff involved in academic and practice teaching and assessment, and employers of social workers about the degree programme;
  - b) at least annually, evaluate in a written report the performance of the degree programme;
  - c) appoint examiners who are independent of the institution (referred to in these Rules as "external examiners") to evaluate whether students on the degree programme are likely to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work (Rule 6);

**13.** Approved programmes should be able to show how all programme outcomes and requirements have been met in both theory and practice by the end of the programme through a mix of prior learning and programme attendance. Students cannot be exempted from meeting any programme requirement.

- d) require the external examiners to produce an annual report on the results of their evaluation under sub-paragraph (c) above;
  - e) in light of a report under sub-paragraph (b) or (d), take such action as is necessary to ensure that the degree programme continues to meet the requirements of this Schedule and will continue to enable persons completing the programme to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work (Rule 6); and
  - f) produce and implement an action plan in any case where the institution considers that the degree programme is at risk of not continuing to meet the requirements of this Schedule or of not continuing to enable persons completing the programme to attain the required standard of proficiency in relevant social work (Rule 6).
- 3)** The institution must provide Social Care Wales with details of a member of staff who Social Care Wales may correspond with about the operation of its quality assurance process.