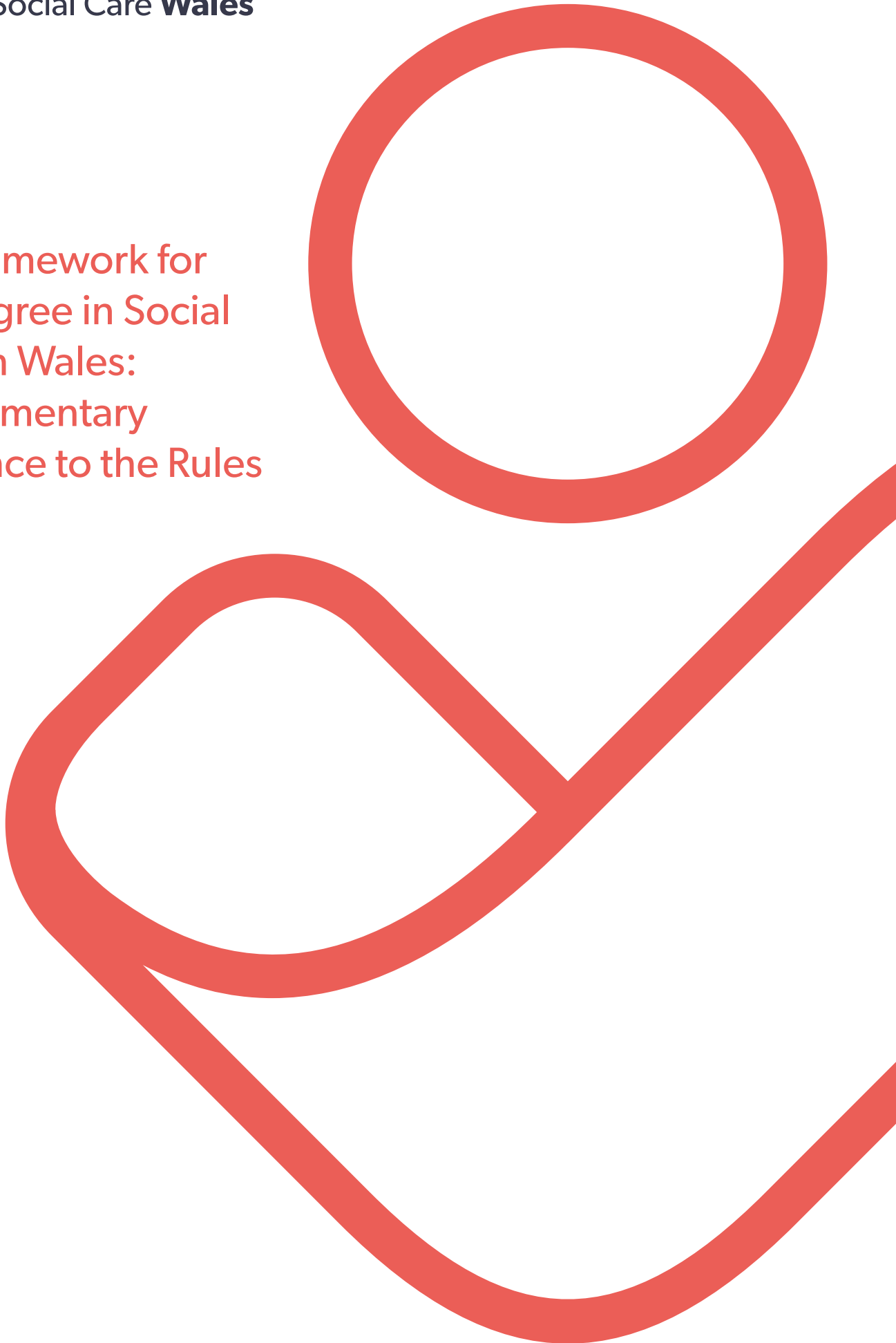




Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**  
Social Care **Wales**

The Framework for  
the Degree in Social  
Work in Wales:  
Supplementary  
Guidance to the Rules



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© 2019 Social Care Wales  
ISBN: 978-1-911463-87-0

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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.

1. Introduction and purpose

1.1. We want to make sure social workers are educated in Wales to a high and consistent standard. *The Framework for the Degree in Social Work in Wales* sets out the rules against which Social Care Wales regulates the professional qualification. This aims to ensure qualifying social workers have the knowledge and skills necessary to practise safely and effectively and contribute to public protection.

1.2. *The Framework for the Degree in Social Work* (the Rules) remains the primary document setting out the conditions for approval of a programme. This supplementary guidance builds upon the rules and has two main purposes:

- To provide further explanation of the rules;
- To ensure all social work students successfully completing the social work degree in Wales have demonstrated they meet the minimum requirements of competence as described in the rules.

2. Structure of the document

2.1. *The Framework for the Degree in Social Work* include both the rules and a schedule to the rules. The schedule comprises seven elements which describe the conditions for approval. This supplement follows the same structure as the schedule and must be read alongside those requirements.

2.2. In the guidance the terms ‘you must’ and ‘you should’ are used in the following ways:

- ‘You must’ is an overriding principle
- ‘You should’ is used when providing an explanation of how you will meet an overriding principle
- ‘You should’ is also used where the principle will not apply in all situations, or where there are factors

outside your control that affect how you can follow the guidance.

2.3. Each programme will need to demonstrate to Social Care Wales how it has incorporated the Supplementary guidance into its course and the Social Care Wales will consider the arrangements for the assessment of students as part of its quality assurance of social work degree programmes.

3. Partnership working

3.1. Paragraph 1 of the schedule sets out the requirements for programmes to be developed, managed and delivered through a partnership between employers of social workers and a Higher Education Institution (HEI). These partnerships may include social work employers from statutory, private or third sectors but must include at least one local authority and be signed by the Director of Social Services. Partnerships must be confirmed through a signed agreement which set out the roles and responsibilities of each partner and the resources being committed.

3.2. Programmes must also involve people with care and support needs and their carers in the development, management and delivery of the programme. Reference to specific aspects of their involvement is made in subsequent paragraphs below.

4. Resource provision

4.1. Paragraph 2 of the schedule relates to the resources the HEI must put into the programme. Some of these resources are secured through the partnership agreement(s) with employers.

In this paragraph resources refers to people involved in the development, the management and delivery of the programme, the physical resources such as library services and the teaching environment, and the financial resources available to the programme.

4.2. Paragraph 2 (1)(a) requires a university to have sufficient qualified and experienced registered social workers contributing to their qualifying programme. This refers to both academic and practice teaching. The footnote indicates that programmes must ensure

it has access to personnel with appropriate expertise to deliver all aspects of the qualifying programme.

**4.3.** Approved programmes must indicate the professional expertise of staff contributing to the programme, a majority of whom should be qualified and experienced social workers. It is expected that social work qualified teaching staff are also registered with Social Care Wales (or another UK regulator of social workers) as registration demonstrates commitment to:

- meeting post registration training and learning requirements
- social work as a regulated profession
- abiding by the *Code of Professional Practice*.

## 5. Selection of students for the degree programme

**5.1.** Paragraph 3(1)(b) requires the higher education institution to undertake an assessment of applicants. The institution must be satisfied the applicant has sufficient experience of social care that they can “demonstrate the values and basic skills that correspond to those generally expected of social workers”. The footnote to this requirement indicates that not less than 455 hours practice in a paid or voluntary capacity is required, apart from in occasional and exceptional circumstances when the experience can be shown to have been met through other ways. The practice must have been completed by the point of interview.

The occasional and exceptional circumstances allow for applicants to be admitted without the full level of experience. In such circumstances the applicant must be able to demonstrate how their experience has informed their understanding of people’s social care needs and experience of care services.

**5.2.** Paragraph 3(1)(d) relates to the applicants’ communication and number skills. A minimum of Level 2 as described by the *Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales* is required. This can be demonstrated through GCSE grade A\* - C or other measures. The CQFW provides guidance on

equivalence and can be found at: [Welsh Government | Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales](#).

**5.3.** Paragraph 3(1)(e) requires the institution to satisfy itself the applicant can communicate effectively in written and spoken English or Welsh. Where an applicant’s first language is neither Welsh nor English the university must satisfy itself of the applicant’s fluency. The university and its partners will need to determine how this will be tested. Suitable evidence could be:

- the applicant has recently achieved an acceptable score in an English language test such as International English Language Test System. In such cases an overall score of 7.0 with no sub score of 6.5 should be achieved.
- Recent successful completion of another higher education qualification which was taught and examined in English or Welsh.

**5.4.** With regard to a student’s registration with Social Care Wales, paragraph 3(3)(d) requires the HEI to inform students of the requirement to be registered and to be satisfied the student is so registered. This notification must indicate the need to be registered at the commencement of the programme. Where there is any delay in a student being registered, the HEI:

- should inform the local authority hosting the student, so a decision can be taken on the student’s participation in the programme;
- must contact Social Care Wales where a student is due to start a period of practice learning within 14 days and is not registered.

## 6. Required policies and procedures

**6.1.** The policies and procedures required for approval are described in paragraph 4 of the Schedule. Access to all of these should be made available to students on the programme.

## 7. Learning and assessment criteria

**7.1.** This section of the supplement relates to both paragraph 5 and 6 of the schedule to the rules and is a key element of ensuring all social work students successfully completing the social work degree in Wales have demonstrated they meet the minimum requirements of competence as described in the Rules.

**7.2.** Each programme will need to demonstrate to Social Care Wales how it has incorporated the overall supplementary guidance into its degree and Social Care Wales will consider the arrangements for the learning and assessment of students as part of its quality assurance of social work degree programmes.

**7.3.** As a vocational and academic degree leading to a professional qualification there can be no artificial division between the development of knowledge and skills; one must inform the other. This guidance on learning and assessment therefore provides a structure for standardising the learning outcomes as learners progress through the social work degree, and upon which programmes can base their curriculum for academic and practice development.

**7.4.** As the social work degree is an integrated academic and professional award leading to professional regulation, in order to pass the degree, students must:

- pass all assessed components of academic work
- successfully complete each academic level of learning before proceeding to the next
- successfully complete each practice learning element of the programme before proceeding to the next
- pass at least 200 days of assessed practice learning
- provide evidence of competence against the six Key Roles of Social Work and the twenty *National Occupational Standards NOS for Social Work 2012*
- demonstrate a growing understanding, analysis and application of the *Code of Professional Practice for Social Care*

- demonstrate they are able to use ICT methods and techniques to support their learning and practice as defined by the relevant QAA *Subject Benchmark Statement for Social Work* (See Appendix 2).

**7.5.** Except where agreed by Social Care Wales, students must have a period of practice learning in each year of study whilst on the programme.

**7.6.** Students will need to demonstrate their development over the course of the social work degree towards the 6 key roles and the 20 NOS. Appendix 1 sets out the broad structure for the social work qualifying programme and the stages of development expected of social work students. Individual programmes will develop their detailed arrangements for learning and assessment as part of their application for approval.

**7.7.** This structure draws from the *Code of Professional Practice for Social Care*, the *National Occupational Standards for Social Work* and the *Quality Assurance Agency Benchmark Statements for Social Work*. Each of the 20 NOS has associated Performance Criteria which provide an explanation of what is meant by the standard and therefore are indicators of competence. Whilst Performance Criteria do not need to be evidenced individually they should be used to inform judgements about competence against the standard.

**7.8.** All forms of teaching, learning and assessment, whether college or agency based, must integrate theory and practice. Overall assessment methods will be developed by the programme but can, for instance, draw upon:

- direct observation of practice;
- reflective accounts, diaries or logs
- assignments
- significant incident analyses
- presentations
- other practice or agency-based products
- examinations
- online tests.

**7.9.** Practice education in each period of practice learning must be assessed by a registered and experienced social worker who is, or is training to be, a qualified practice educator.

**7.10.** Programmes need a system for ensuring the quality of practice education. Although appointed by local authorities, practice educators make judgments and recommendations upon which exam boards make decisions regarding awards. Programme partnerships will therefore need to be satisfied that the practice of the practice educator is of suitable standard. Universities, as the awarding body, must ensure a system is in place to monitor and ensure the quality of practice education. Programmes may consider the Practice Assessment Panel is the most appropriate body to hold this responsibility.

**7.11.** Where the designated practice educator is not also providing on-site, day to day management of the student, the person who holds that responsibility must be provided with appropriate and timely preparation for the role. The nature of this preparation is for programme partners to agree but must ensure, as a minimum, the person is familiar with the requirements of the programme, their role and responsibilities and how their involvement contributes to the student's development.

**7.12.** Paragraph 5 (2)(d) of the Schedule to the Rules stipulates all students must undertake one practice learning opportunity of not less than 80 days in a Local Social Services Authority, which must include experience of statutory social services' functions, including safeguarding.

The use and delivery of statutory processes is a clear learning need for all social work students. Approved programmes must therefore ensure all students gain experience of working within a statutory framework delivered through a local authority PLO. Whilst other agencies may carry out statutory functions the local authority experience is considered essential in order to help develop:

- Experience of working within a statutory framework and the use and delivery of statutory processes and functions
- Greater resilience through exposure to the range of responsibilities specific to local authority work

- Increased employability resulting from local authority experience.

## 8. Quality assurance

**8.1.** The purpose of regulation of training is primarily to protect the public through the assurance that all practising social workers will have undertaken an approved programme of training which meets defined standards of competence. Regulation also assures social work students that the training they receive is recognised as meeting professional standards consistent with other approved programmes and represents an investment in their professional development

**8.2.** The legal framework for social care in Wales aims to ensure the best possible outcomes for those who need care and support with a strong voice and real control over the services they receive. It is therefore essential the professional qualifications for social workers and others are designed appropriately. Social Care Wales will exercise its regulatory function through:

- Setting Rules for the approval and quality assurance of social work courses at qualifying and post qualifying levels
- Considering applications for approval
- Undertaking annual monitoring of approved programmes to ensure they continue to:
  - Meet published standards
  - Use systems for evaluation and scrutiny and continue to develop and focus on improvement
  - Continue to hold learner and partner confidence.
- Undertake thematic reviews, when a specific aspect of social work education is considered across programme providers to share good practice and consider what lessons can be learnt
- Periodic Reviews which are comprehensive reviews of programme to ensure they continue to meet the requirements for approval

- Having a process for removal of approval where standards are consistently not met.

**8.3.** Together Part III of the rules and paragraph 7 of the schedule describe the regulatory relationship between the programme and Social Care Wales.

### Social Care Wales November 2018



Structure for social work degree

Appendix 1

Stages of Development	Content	How assessed	Exit Award
General Notes	Programme content is informed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Subject Benchmark Statements for Social Work 2016<sup>1</sup></li><li>• The National Occupational Standards for Social Work 2012<sup>2</sup></li><li>• The Code of Professional Practice for Social Care<sup>3</sup>.</li></ul>	All assessment must reflect the programme as an integrated academic and professional award. Assessment will therefore draw on evidence of the integration of skills and knowledge with relevant conceptual understanding and demonstration of competence.	Students who complete part but not all the professional programme need alternative exit awards to recognise their achievement.
Introduction and Foundation Phase	At this level students focus on awareness raising, skills and knowledge acquisition and become familiar with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The broad legislative and policy framework for social services and well-being in Wales</li><li>• the key skill areas required of social work professionals</li><li>• the impact of social work practice upon people in need of care and support and their carers</li><li>• the organisation and structure of services aiming to promote social care and well-being</li><li>• Research relevant to their Practice Placement.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formative and summative assessment of academic and practice learning in both college and practice settings which will include skills workshops. Through this assessment students should be able to demonstrate understanding of and developing competence in the 6 key roles of social work and the twenty National Occupational Standards.</li><li>• Completion of the assessment tasks for each module of the programme</li><li>• Assessed Practice Learning of at least 100 days over no more than two PLOs</li><li>• Student analysis and evaluation of their application of the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care through:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ their approach to professional and academic development</li><li>→ assessed work</li><li>→ practice learning</li><li>→ their conduct</li></ul></li><li>• Demonstration of an understanding of the six key roles of social work as defined by the NOS and the knowledge and skills required by them.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certificate in HE</li><li>• Diploma in HE</li><li>• or Post Grad Certificate in HE.</li></ul>
Applying Knowledge, Skills and Values in social work practice	At this level students focus on the development of a conceptual understanding of practice skills and experience and its application in professional practice. They will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the five areas of Subject Knowledge and Understanding<sup>4</sup><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Social Work theory</li><li>→ Values and Ethics</li><li>→ People with care and support needs and carers with support needs</li><li>→ Nature of social work practice</li><li>→ The leadership, organisation and delivery of social work and social care services</li></ul></li><li>• The five Subject Specific Skills and other skills<sup>5</sup><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Problem solving skills</li><li>→ Communication skills</li><li>→ Skills in working with others</li><li>→ Skills in personal and professional development</li><li>→ Use of technology and numerical skills<sup>6</sup>.</li></ul></li></ul>		

Stages of Development	Content	How assessed	Exit Award
Development and Confirmation of Competence in Social Work Practice	At this level students will be developing and confirming their competence in social work practice and the application of subject knowledge and skills. This will include <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An ability to apply the principles of Welsh social policy and the legislative framework into their practice</li><li>• The ability to make appropriate use of research in decision making and professional judgement about practice and in the evaluation of outcomes</li><li>• Students demonstrating professional judgement, intervention and critical reflection.</li></ul>	College based learning and at least 80 days of practice learning in one PLO. (The total number of practice learning days over this and previous PLOs must be at least 200).  By the end of this level and on graduating (with an honour's degree) students must be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meet the National Occupational Standards for Social Work</li><li>• Demonstrate they have met the Subject Knowledge and Understanding requirements of the Benchmark Statements</li><li>• Demonstrate they have acquired and integrated the Subject Specific Skills and other skills described by the Benchmark Statements</li><li>• Integrate the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care and critically analyse their application in all aspects of their work.</li></ul>	Non qualifying <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• degree</li><li>• PG Diploma or</li><li>• Masters.</li></ul>

**The Benchmark Statements describe the threshold standards all students must achieve. They are divided between knowledge and understanding and the associated subject specific and other skills.**

**1. Knowledge and understanding**

On graduating with an honour’s degree in Social Work, students must be able to demonstrate:

- 1. a sound understanding of the five core areas of knowledge and understanding relevant to social work, as detailed in Section 5 (of the Benchmark Statements)<sup>7</sup>, including their application to practice and service delivery
- 2. an ability to use this knowledge and understanding in an integrated way, in specific practice contexts
- 3. an ability to use this knowledge and understanding to engage in effective relationships with service users and carers and relationships with other professionals and through supervision
- 4. appraisal of previous learning and experience and ability to incorporate this into their future learning and practice, including engagement with supervision
- 5. acknowledgement and understanding of the potential and limitations of Social Work as a practice-based discipline to effect individual and social change
- 6. an ability to use research and enquiry techniques with reflective awareness, to collect, analyse and interpret relevant information
- 7. a developed capacity for the critical evaluation of knowledge and evidence from a range of sources.

**2. Subject-specific and other skills**

On graduating with an honour’s degree in Social Work, students must be able to demonstrate a developed capacity to:

- 1. apply creatively a repertoire of core skills as detailed in Section 5 (of the Benchmark Statements)<sup>8</sup>
- 2. communicate effectively with service users and carers, and with other professionals
- 3. integrate clear understanding of ethical issues and relevant codes or standards of ethics, conduct and practice with their interventions in specific situations
- 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. embed skills of critical reflection on their performance and take responsibility for modifying action and learning in light of this, drawing on appropriate support mechanisms where necessary.

**Quality Assurance Agency  
Subject Benchmark Statement  
for Social Work<sup>9</sup>  
Information and Communication Technology  
Requirements**

**Use of technology and numerical skills**

Paragraph 5.18 of the Subject Benchmark Statement requires graduates in social work to be able to use information and communication technology effectively and appropriately for:

- I. professional communication, data storage and retrieval and information searching
- II. accessing and assimilating information to inform working with people who use services
- III. data analysis to enable effective use of research in practice
- IV. enhancing skills in problem-solving
- V. applying numerical skills to financial and budgetary responsibilities
- VI. understanding the social impact of technology, including the constraints of confidentiality and an awareness of the impact of the ‘digital divide’.

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## References

1. *Subject Benchmark Statement – Social Work*, Oct 2016, The Quality Assurance Agency [Subject Benchmark Statements](#).
2. *National Occupational Standards for Social Work*, 2012, Social Care Wales, [Social Care Wales National Occupational Standards](#).
3. *Code of Professional Practice for Social Care*, 2017, Social Care Wales, [Social Care Wales Code of Professional Practice](#).
4. Based upon the *Subject Benchmark Statements for Social Work*, Quality Assurance Agency 2016.
5. Ibid p.17.
6. See appendix 2.
7. The five core areas of subject knowledge and understanding are described as:
  - Social Work Theory
  - Values and Ethics
  - Service User and Carers
  - The nature of social work practice
  - Leadership, organisation and delivery of social work services.
8. The five core areas of skills qualifying social workers should acquire and integrate are:
  - Problem solving skills
  - Communication skills
  - Skills in working with others
  - Skills in personal and professional development
  - Use of Information and communication technology.
9. Taken from: *Subject Benchmark Statement for Social Work*, 2016, The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2016.