

Scottish Requirements for Social Work Education

December 2024

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Introduction

The Scottish Requirements for Social Work Education form part of the Framework for Social Work Education which is being fully updated and will be published in full in due course. The Framework for Social Work Education also contains [The Standards in Social Work Education and Ethical Principles](#) which were updated in 2019 and provide the standards against which all students qualifying in social work in Scotland are assessed.

Programme providers must make sure that they meet the Scottish Requirements for Social Work Education that are set out in this document. They must make sure that students spend sufficient time in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator and are recognised and protected as students to fully engage with learning opportunities while in practice education settings.

The requirements are organised into two sections outlining the entry requirements under which applicants will be accepted onto a qualifying social work programme, and the teaching, learning and assessment requirements which govern the structure of the qualification.

The appendices provide information on the implementation schedule and mapping to requirements published in 2003 and admission criteria circulated in 2020.

Section one: Entry requirements

All providers must do the following:

- A. Make sure that the candidate meets the university's admission requirements for the degree or meets the SSSC admission requirements whichever are set at the higher level.
- B. Use selection procedures that take account of the candidate's strengths and areas for development; **and** exclude individuals who would not meet the SSSC's registration conditions.
- C. Make sure that the candidate is registered on the part of the Scottish Social Services Council's (SSSC) register for students. (The SSSC's registration requirements will normally be completed by the beginning of the course and will include relevant suitability checks. A student will not be able to start practice learning in a service delivery setting unless they are registered.)
- D. Make sure that selection policies and procedures include effective and appropriate ways of involving key stakeholders in social services. ('Stakeholders' include people who use services, carers and employers.)

Literacy requirements

E. Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must confirm on entry to the programme that students:

- (i) can demonstrate proficiency in English language
- (ii) have capability in literacy to meet programme outcomes
- (iii) have capability for digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes

These skills would normally be equivalent at point of entry to the programme to a minimum SCQF level 5 (Grade C at National 5 or equivalent). Literacy skills may also be evidenced by a test at point of interview mapped against SCQF Level 5 or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) at level 7.

It is essential for students to demonstrate skills in literacy and criticality over the course of the degree programmes to fully meet the Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE).

Numeracy requirements

F. Make sure that the candidate has **one** of the following:

- (i) The numerical skills required to understand the course materials and meet the Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE), for example:
 - financial assessment
 - budgetary procedures
 - managing care plans and resources
 - interpreting graphical data

These skills would normally be equivalent to a minimum SCQF level 5 Core Skills Numeracy at Grade C. Core Skills level 5 numeracy is a component of National 5 - Applications of Mathematics and National 5 -Mathematics. The Scottish Qualifications Certificate documents the Core Skills Profile. Numeracy skills may also be evidenced by a numeracy test at point of interview mapped against SCQF Level 5.

- (ii) The ability and opportunity to learn and to demonstrate the required numerical skills while studying for the degree, for example successful completion of an undergraduate statistics or data skills module in their first year.

Section two: Teaching, learning and assessment requirements

All providers must do the following

- G. Design the content, structure and delivery of the learning to allow social work students to show that they can meet the SiSWE and are suitable to be registered with the SSSC.
- H. Support students throughout the programme in continuously developing their abilities in numeracy, literacy, digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes and prepare for professional practice.
- I. Ensure that the programme is continually updated as a result of developments in legislation, government policy and best practice so students have the skills, knowledge and understanding they need.
- J. It is a requirement that students attend 80% of taught sessions regardless of the mode of delivery although a special dispensation can be allowed by negotiation to meet extenuating circumstances.
Practice skills development may include learning in relation to, but not limited to:
 - Expectations of professional practice.
 - Assessment and interviewing skills.
 - Group work; Communication skills.
 - Group practice and so on.
- K. Have mechanisms in place to engage with key stakeholders in social services to ensure that policies and procedures for assessments are effective and appropriate.
- L. Ensure that students' achievement against the SiSWE is regularly and accurately assessed and confirm that all social work students have been assessed and have met all the learning outcomes before they are awarded the degree in social work.
- M. Ensure that transition to work preparation is in place and that students' continuing learning requirements are recorded in an individual learning plan that they can take with them into their career in social work.
- N. Ensure that students understand that they have a duty to register with the SSSC to start and stay on the programme, and that if the SSSC removes them from the register as a result of fitness to practice proceedings, they will not be able to achieve the professional qualification in social work.
- O. Ensure that all students have the practice learning opportunities they need to demonstrate that they meet the SiSWE.

- P. The Practice Educator must be a registered Social Worker who also holds a relevant Practice Teaching qualification.
- Q. Ensure that all students undergo assessed preparation for direct practice to make sure they are safe and competent to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting. Assessed preparation for direct practice is different from direct practice and should not count towards the placement days.
- R. Ensure that all social work students spend a minimum of 180 days in practice learning. Practice learning is supervised, direct practice in a service delivery setting in which the student actively participates in the day-to-day work of the team and is formally assessed whilst doing so. The equivalent of half a day for every five practice days and a maximum of two university recall days are allocated reflective study time and count as part of the practice placement.
- S. Ensure that assessed practice learning is structured over the course of the degree programme to allow students to gain experience and develop abilities through:
- undertaking a minimum of one period of practice learning that lasts for at least 80 days and includes experience of statutory social work functions and tasks involving legal interventions, including but not limited to the protection of children and vulnerable adults ideally in a local authority setting.
 - Students must not undertake the primary or lead role in child protection, adult support and protection or the supervision and management of sex offenders.
 - Practice learning opportunities must offer contrast both between placements and between the placement and the students usual place of work, offering a breadth of opportunity between sectors of the workplace and the groups of people who use our services.
- T. A Practice Learning Opportunity or Practice Placement is a period of time in which Social Work Students are based in a service delivery setting in the statutory, private or voluntary sector. The setting must provide the learning opportunities necessary for the student to meet The Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE). There should be a minimum of two periods of practice learning. Each period of practice learning should include a minimum of three observations of direct practice, two of which must be conducted by the allocated Practice Educator. The third must be conducted by someone approved by the allocated practice educator but who is not necessarily a qualified practice educator themselves. A minimum of two observations of practice must involve direct work with people using the service. The student must demonstrate the ability to use critical reflection and link theory to practice in both placements. The student must have a different practice educator for each period of assessed practice learning.

Appendix one: Implementation schedule

Requirement Subsection	Implementation timescale
A, B, C, D, E, F, H	September 2021
G, I, J, K, L, M, N, O,	September 2025
Q, R,	September 2027
P	September 2027*

(*) In relation to subsection P, as an interim measure, Practice Educators who are already practicing and are not Registered Social Workers must be supported in each Practice Placement by a Link Worker / Workplace Supervisor who is a qualified and registered Social Worker. This will commence in September 2025 and cease to be permitted in September 2027 when requirement P comes into effect.

Appendix two: Comparison to previous version

Entry requirements revised 2020

Subsection		New wording
A – no change to lettering	Make sure that the candidate meets the university's admission requirements for the degree or meets the SSSC admission requirements whichever are set at the higher level.	No change to 2020 wording
B – no change to lettering	Use selection procedures that take account of the candidate's strengths and areas for development; and exclude individuals who would not meet the SSSC's registration conditions.	No change to 2020 wording
C – no change to lettering	Make sure that the candidate is registered on the part of the Scottish Social Services Council's (SSSC) register for students. (The SSSC's registration requirements will normally be completed by the beginning of the course and will include relevant suitability checks. A student will not be able to start practice learning in a service delivery setting unless they are registered.)	No change to 2020 wording
D – no change to lettering	Make sure that selection policies and procedures include effective and appropriate ways of involving key stakeholders in social services. ('Stakeholders' include people who use services, carers and employers.)	No change to 2020 wording
E – no change to lettering	Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must confirm on entry to the programme that students: (i) can demonstrate proficiency in English language	Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must confirm on entry to the programme that students: (i) can demonstrate proficiency in English language



	<p>(ii)have capability in literacy to meet programme outcomes</p> <p>(iii)have capability for digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes</p> <p>And</p> <p>(iv)support students throughout the programme in continuously developing their abilities in numeracy, literacy, digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes and prepare for professional practice.</p> <p>These skills would normally be equivalent at point of entry to the programme to a minimum SCQF level 5 (Grade C at National 5 or equivalent). Literacy skills may also be evidenced by a test at point of interview mapped against SCQF Level 5 or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) at level 7.</p> <p>It is essential for students to demonstrate skills in literacy and criticality over the course of the degree programmes to fully meet the Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE).</p>	<p>(ii)have capability in literacy to meet programme outcomes</p> <p>(iii)have capability for digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes</p> <p>These skills would normally be equivalent at point of entry to the programme to a minimum SCQF level 5 (Grade C at National 5 or equivalent). Literacy skills may also be evidenced by a test at point of interview mapped against SCQF Level 5 or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) at level 7.</p> <p>It is essential for students to demonstrate skills in literacy and criticality over the course of the degree programmes to fully meet the Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE).</p>
F – no change to lettering	<p>Make sure that the candidate has one of the following:</p> <p>(i)The numerical skills required to understand the course materials and meet the Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE), for example:</p> <p>financial assessment</p> <p>budgetary procedures</p> <p>managing care plans and resources</p> <p>interpreting graphical data</p>	No change to 2020 wording



	<p>These skills would normally be equivalent to a minimum SCQF level 5 Core Skills Numeracy at Grade C. Core Skills level 5 numeracy is a component of National 5 -Applications of Mathematics and National 5 - Mathematics. The Scottish Qualifications Certificate documents the Core Skills Profile. Numeracy skills may also be evidenced by a numeracy test at point of interview mapped against SCQF Level 5.</p> <p>(ii)</p> <p>The ability and opportunity to learn and to demonstrate the required numerical skills while studying for the degree, for example successful completion of an undergraduate statistics or data skills module in their first year.</p>	
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Teaching, learning and assessment requirements 2024

Subsection		New wording
H – now G	Design the content, structure, and delivery of the training to allow social work students to show that they can meet the SISWE and are suitable to be registered with the SSSC.	Design the content, structure and delivery of the <u>learning</u> to allow social work students to show that they can meet the SiSWE and are suitable to be registered with the SSSC.
I – now L	Make sure that students' achievement against the SiSWE is regularly and accurately assessed and confirm that all social work students have been assessed and have met all the learning outcomes before they are awarded the degree in social work.	Ensure that students' achievement against the SiSWE is regularly and accurately assessed and confirm that all social work students have been assessed and have met all the learning outcomes before they are awarded the degree in social work.
J now K	Make sure that policies and procedures for assessment	Have mechanisms in place to engage with key stakeholders in



	include effective and appropriate ways of meeting the requirements of key stakeholders in social services.	social services to ensure that policies and procedures for assessments are effective and appropriate.
K now N	Make sure that students understand that they must be registered with the SSSC to start and stay on the programme, and that if the SSSC removes them from the register as a result of their fitness to practice, they will not be able to achieve the professional qualification in social work.	Ensure that students understand that they have a duty to register with the SSSC to start and stay on the programme, and that if the SSSC removes them from the register as a result of their fitness to practice, they will not be able to achieve the professional qualification in social work.
L now O	Make sure that all students have the practice learning opportunities they need to demonstrate that they meet the SiSWE.	Ensure that all students have the practice learning opportunities they need to demonstrate that they meet the SiSWE.
M now R	Make sure that all social work students spend at least 200 days in practice learning, of which at least 160 must be spent in supervised direct practice in service delivery settings. This practice learning must be assessed. Up to 60 days of the supervised direct practice element can be subject to credit from prior experiential learning.	Ensure that all social work students spend a minimum of 180 days in practice learning. Practice learning is supervised, direct practice in a service delivery setting in which the student actively participates in the day-to-day work of the team and is formally assessed whilst doing so. The equivalent of half a day for every five practice days and a maximum of two university recall days are allocated reflective study time and count as part of the practice placement.
N now S	Make sure that this assessed practice learning is structured over the course of the degree to allow students to gain experience of and develop ability in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carrying out statutory social work tasks, involving legal interventions. • working in at least two contrasting service delivery settings (for students entering through work-based routes, at 	Ensure that assessed practice learning is structured over the course of the degree programme to allow students to gain experience and develop abilities through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertaking a minimum of one period of practice learning that lasts for at least 80 days and includes experience of statutory social work functions and tasks involving legal interventions, including but not limited to the



	<p>least one of these should be out with their employing agency other than in exceptional circumstances);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing services to at least two user groups; and • providing services in a way that reflects ethical practice and takes account of and values diversity. 	<p>protection of children and vulnerable adults ideally in a local authority setting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must not undertake the primary or lead role in child protection, adult support and protection or the supervision and management of sex offenders. • Practice learning opportunities must offer contrast both between placements and between the placement and the students usual place of work, offering a breadth of opportunity between sectors of the workplace and the groups of people who use our services.
O now Q	<p>Make sure that all students undergo assessed preparation for direct practice to make sure they are safe to carry out 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 role of social workers.</p>	<p>Ensure that all students undergo assessed preparation for direct practice to make sure they are safe and competent to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting.</p> <p>Assessed preparation for direct practice is different from direct practice and should not count towards the placement days.</p>
P now J	<p>Make sure that the students spend enough time in structured academic learning, under the direction of an educator, to meet the required level of competence. This is expected to be at least 200 days or 1,200 hours.</p>	<p>It is a requirement that students attend 80% of taught sessions regardless of the mode of delivery although a special dispensation can be allowed by negotiation to meet extenuating circumstances.</p> <p>Practice skills development may include learning in relation to, but not limited to: Expectations of professional practice; Assessment and interviewing skills; Group work</p>



		Communication skills; Group practice and so on.
Q now I	Make sure that the programme is continually updated as a result of developments in legislation, government policy and best practice so students have the skills, knowledge and understanding they need.	Ensure that the programme is continually updated as a result of developments in legislation, government policy and best practice so students have the skills, knowledge and understanding they need.
R now M	Make sure that transition to work preparation is in place and that students' continuing learning requirements are recorded in an individual learning plan that they can take with them into their career in social work.	Ensure that transition to work preparation is in place and that students' continuing learning requirements are recorded in an individual learning plan that they can take with them into their career in social work.
P	There is no current requirement.	The Practice Educator must be a registered Social Worker who also holds a relevant Practice Teaching qualification.
T	There is no current requirement	<p>A Practice Learning Opportunity or Practice Placement is a period of time in which Social Work Students are based in a service delivery setting in the statutory, private or voluntary sector. The setting must provide the learning opportunities necessary for the student to meet The Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE).</p> <p>There should be a minimum of two periods of practice learning. Each period of practice learning should include a minimum of three observations of direct practice, two of which must be conducted by the allocated Practice Educator. The third must be conducted by someone approved by the allocated practice educator but who is not necessarily a qualified practice educator themselves.</p>



		A minimum of two observations of practice must involve direct work with people using the service. The student must demonstrate the ability to use critical reflection and link theory to practice in both placements. The student must have a different practice educator for each period of assessed practice learning.
E (iv) now H	Support students throughout the programme in continuously developing their abilities in numeracy, literacy, digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes and prepare for professional practice.	No change to wording



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