



# Northern Ireland Framework Specification for the Degree in Social Work

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## **FOREWORD**

In October 2001, my predecessor, Barbara De Brún announced a programme of radical reform for social work education and training in Northern Ireland. We all know that social workers are working with some of the most vulnerable people in our society during their times of greatest personal stress. The opportunity to improve the preparation for this challenging work is therefore widely welcomed.

The Framework document for the new honours degree specifies the skills, knowledge and final outcomes to be achieved as well as highlighting the values on which all social work practice is based. It will make a significant contribution to the shape of the social work profession in Northern Ireland for the future. The Framework is the result of extensive consultation with all key interests, including direct contributions from service users, employers, students, academics and other professions.

The honours degree will provide professional education and training for social workers operating in health and social services, criminal justice, education welfare and in the wider voluntary sector. While provision of care is a major responsibility for social workers, protection, control and rehabilitation are also essential elements of social work practice.

The Framework makes use of relevant national occupational standards as well as academic benchmarks. It makes clear that the degree will require social workers to demonstrate their competence as fully rounded professionals, based on sound understanding of human development; of the systems in which we live and work; and methods of intervention which have been proved to produce beneficial outcomes for people who use social work services.

It should be acknowledged that Northern Ireland provides a unique learning ground for social work students. It offers the chance for students destined for the criminal justice sector, social services, the voluntary sector and education welfare to learn together; the opportunity to learn to practise in an integrated health and social services multi-disciplinary structure; and the opportunity to learn how to work with individuals in communities which have to deal with the consequences of conflict. Successful completion of the new degree will therefore prepare students for social work practice anywhere in the United Kingdom and beyond.

Delivery of this new degree programme will be demanding for all the partners involved in the enterprise, universities and colleges, employers in all sectors, users of services and, of course, the students themselves. Partnership in social work education in Northern Ireland has a successful history of nearly a quarter of a century. Nonetheless this is an opportunity, in particular for employers and educators to make further improvements to this record by ensuring that they respond fully to the implications of these changes, both for teaching and practice learning. The social workers of the future and the people they serve deserve no less.



# NORTHERN IRELAND FRAMEWORK SPECIFICATION

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.** The Northern Ireland Framework Specification for the Degree in Social Work (the Framework) is a joint publication by Department of Health and Social Services and Personal Safety (DHSSPS) and the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) and sets out a single comprehensive set of learning requirements and outcomes for the honours degree in social work. The framework incorporates both academic and practice learning components of social work education and takes account of the full range of social policy, law and service delivery arrangements for social work in Northern Ireland. It also specifies the value base as an integral part of the knowledge and practice requirements.
- 1.2.** Service users, employers, students and providers of social work education have been involved in determining the content of the Framework and this document incorporates feedback from extensive consultations with a broad range of stakeholders.
- 1.3.** NISCC is a statutory body established by the Health and Personal Social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. The main purpose of NISCC is to regulate the social care workforce and their education and training. The aims of NISCC are to provide protection to those who use services, promote high standards of conduct and practice among social care workers, strengthen and support the professionalism of the workforce and promote confidence in the sector.
- 1.4.** Under Section 10(3) of the Act, NISCC has the authority to make rules about the provision of social work education and training. These may include rules about the content of courses. In accordance with Section 18(3) no rules shall be made by NISCC without the consent of the DHSSPS.
- 1.5.** NISCC will approve social work courses whose content has been determined by the Framework and course providers will need to ensure that their course equips students to achieve the learning outcomes. How course providers choose to deliver these outcomes will be for them to determine, within the constraints of the Framework and the Rules for Social Work Training<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.6.** The Framework will also be used by NISCC to ensure consistency of standards of course provision for all students undertaking social work training in Northern Ireland.

<sup>1</sup> Draft Rules for Social Work Training will be presented for endorsement to NISCC and DHSSPS in April 2003.



- 1.7** The Degree in Social Work in Northern Ireland will prepare students to work in Northern Ireland and elsewhere in the United Kingdom. It is designed to be generic and will prepare students to work in a variety of settings, including health and social services, the Probation Board (for Northern Ireland), education welfare, juvenile justice, other criminal justice settings and the voluntary and private sectors.
- 1.8** All students undertaking social work training in Northern Ireland will be expected to be registered with NISCC before they commence their training. The Register will allow employers and the public to verify that a social work student has met the requirements for entry to the Register and has formally agreed to abide by the standards set in the NISCC Code of Practice for Social Care Workers.
- 1.9** Following successful attainment of the Degree in Social Work, social work graduates, wishing to practise in Northern Ireland, will be required to undertake an assessed year in employment before they become eligible to register as a social worker with NISCC. During the assessment year, graduates will have the opportunity to apply and consolidate the knowledge and skills acquired during training in the setting of their employment. NISCC will specify requirements for the assessed year in employment.
- 1.10** Following registration as a social worker it will be for the individual, his or her employer and NISCC to ensure the outcomes acquired on qualification are maintained and enhanced for the benefit of the public and the social worker.



## 2 RATIONALE

- 2.1** The Framework specification addresses the professional education and development of social workers building on the strengths of the Diploma in Social Work and lessons learned from it. It sets out what a student social worker must know, understand and be able to do to be awarded the Degree in Social Work. It replaces the Statement of Requirements for Qualification in Social Work as set out in Assuring Quality in the Diploma in Social Work – 1 and as such will provide the basis for quality assurance of the new degree.
- 2.2** The Framework specification draws on the National Occupational Standards for Social Work (the NOS). Full details of the NOS can be accessed on the NISCC website: [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info). In developing their curriculum, course providers can usefully refer to these standards for detailed breakdown of the underpinning knowledge and competence requirements.
- 2.3** Course providers may wish to refer to other relevant national occupational standards in the development of their curriculum, for example, NOS for Qualifying Probation Officers in England and Wales and NOS for Youth Justice Services. Information regarding NOS relevant to the Criminal Justice sector can be accessed on [www.cjnto.org.uk](http://www.cjnto.org.uk). Information regarding other national occupational standards relevant to the Health and Social Care Sector can be accessed on the Sector Skills website [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)
- 2.4** The Framework also incorporates the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Benchmark Statement: Academic Standards – Social Work. The standards are underpinned by defining principles which describe the scope and complexity of social work courses offered at honours degree level. They provide guidance on subject knowledge and skills and reflect the fact that practice learning is central to the new degree and should cover a broad spectrum of connected learning experiences. The QAA Benchmark Statement can be accessed on the QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk). This document also provides useful additional information which will be of benefit to course providers in developing the curriculum.
- 2.5** The NISCC Code of Practice for Social Care Workers describes the standards of professional conduct and practice required of social care workers. The NISCC Code of Practice for Employers sets down the responsibilities of employers in the regulation of social care workers. The Codes reflect existing good practice and it is expected that course providers will ensure students understand and adhere to these standards in all aspects of their training.



- 2.6** Social workers work in a wide range of settings which offer services for children, families, older people, people with mental health problems, physical or learning disabilities, sensory impairment, those who experience homelessness, and those whose lives are adversely affected by drugs, alcohol, and HIV/AIDS. Some social workers work in youth and criminal justice services, education welfare or in adoption and fostering. Social work training must prepare students to make a difference to the quality of life for the broad range of people with whom they work and the communities in which they live. It must also enable them to understand, work with and value people as individuals with unique life histories.
- 2.7** In recognition of the wide scope of social work practice, the Degree in Social Work in Northern Ireland is generic and should be designed to help students acquire knowledge and develop skills which are transferable across social work settings and with different client groups, as well as to other areas of study and professional employment. The ability to transfer knowledge and skill appropriately is not additional to the requirements specified in the Framework but will, rather, be a natural outcome for successful students.
- 2.8** Social work is a professional activity with obligations to service users, carers, families, communities, their employers, to each other, to colleagues in other disciplines and to society. It involves questions of ethics, morals and values about individual rights and welfare; about rights and interests of parties other than users; about freedom and fairness; about inequality and structural oppression and about the distribution of scarce resources. Social workers deal with complex, ambiguous and difficult situations and have to exercise professional judgements about human situations and this cannot be reduced to prescribed performance. Social work training must prepare students to exercise professional judgements about complex situations that involve the potential for benefit or harm.
- 2.9** Social workers practise in a society of complexity, change and diversity. This diversity is reflected through religion, ethnicity, culture, language, social status, family structure and lifestyle. While social work training needs to prepare students to work with individuals from different backgrounds and cultures in different jurisdictions throughout the United Kingdom and Europe, it is important that it also takes account of the particular needs of providing services locally. The impact of past and current violence, conflict and divisions in Northern Irish society requires particular emphasis in the education and training of social work students in Northern Ireland.



- 2.10** Social work and criminal justice agencies are given specific responsibilities and powers through government policies and statute and professional workers have to practise within legislative frameworks and organisational policies and procedures. They have to balance the needs, rights and responsibilities of people with those of the wider community, and provide appropriate levels of support, advocacy, care, protection and control within available resources. Social workers in justice settings also need to balance the needs and rights of perpetrators with the needs and rights of victims, potential victims, communities and the courts. Social work training must prepare students to participate in formal decision-making forums, including courts, and to understand their responsibilities in relation to the courts according to the statutory function they carry.
- 2.11** The way in which social work is delivered is changing and will continue to change. Current government policies promote inter-professional and inter-agency working. Social work training should therefore prepare students to work effectively with other professions and agencies and in multi-disciplinary teams.
- 2.12** Social work education and training must prepare students to work in a broad range of situations and to respond and contribute to change in the professional context. Social work courses must promote 3 main elements of professional development:
- **Ethical Practice;**
  - **Professional Responsibility and Accountability; and**
  - **Professional Competence.**



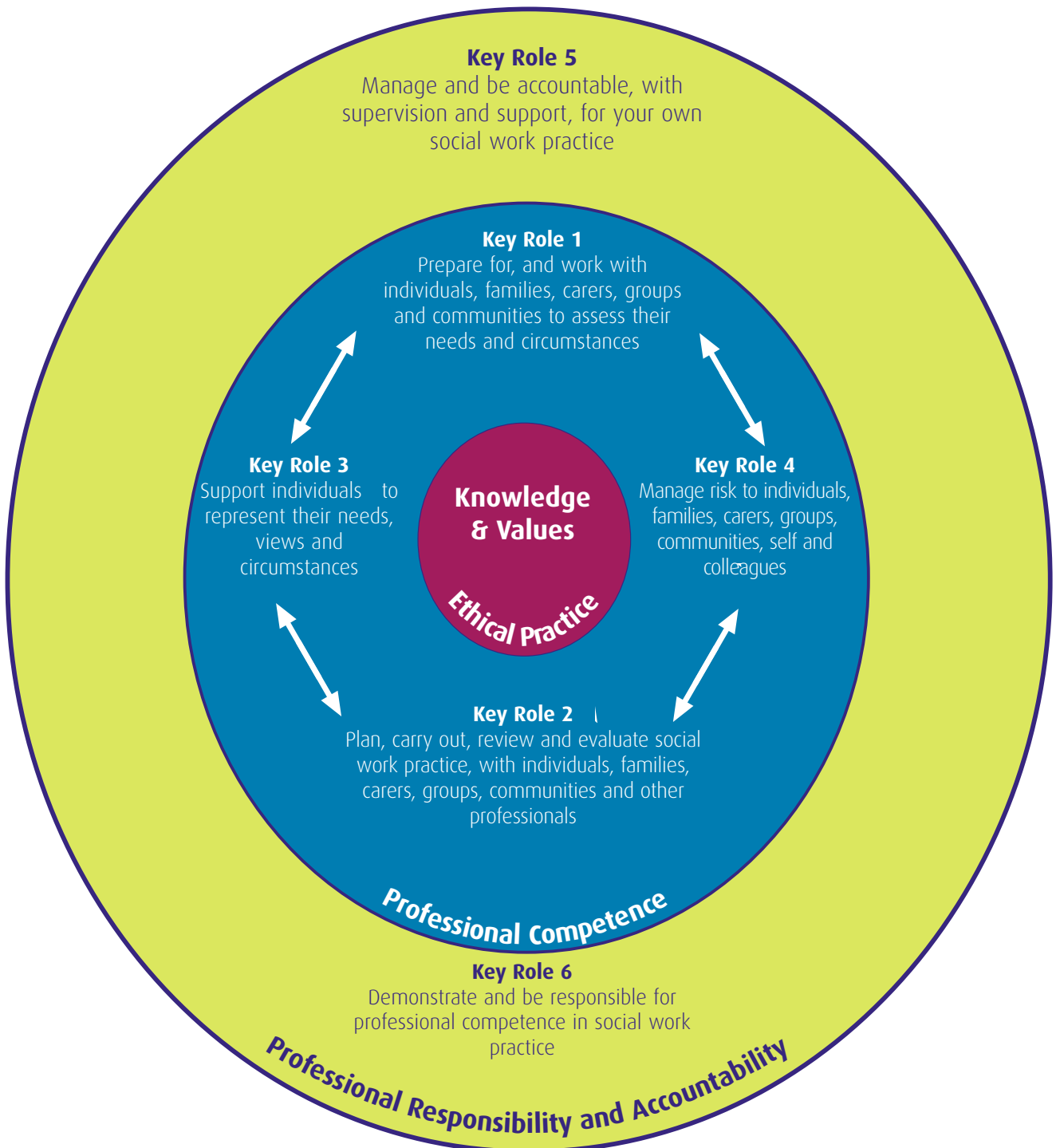
- 2.13** The inter-relationship and synthesis between these 3 elements is fundamental to developing professional social workers whose practice is founded on values, is carried out in a skilled manner and is informed by knowledge, critical analysis and reflection. Courses should be designed to help foster the integration of these 3 elements in a holistic way.



### 3. **FORMAT**

**3.1** The learning requirements are set out under 6 Key Roles. These are set out in Diagram 1 below, which shows how the Key Roles relate to the 3 key elements of professional development.

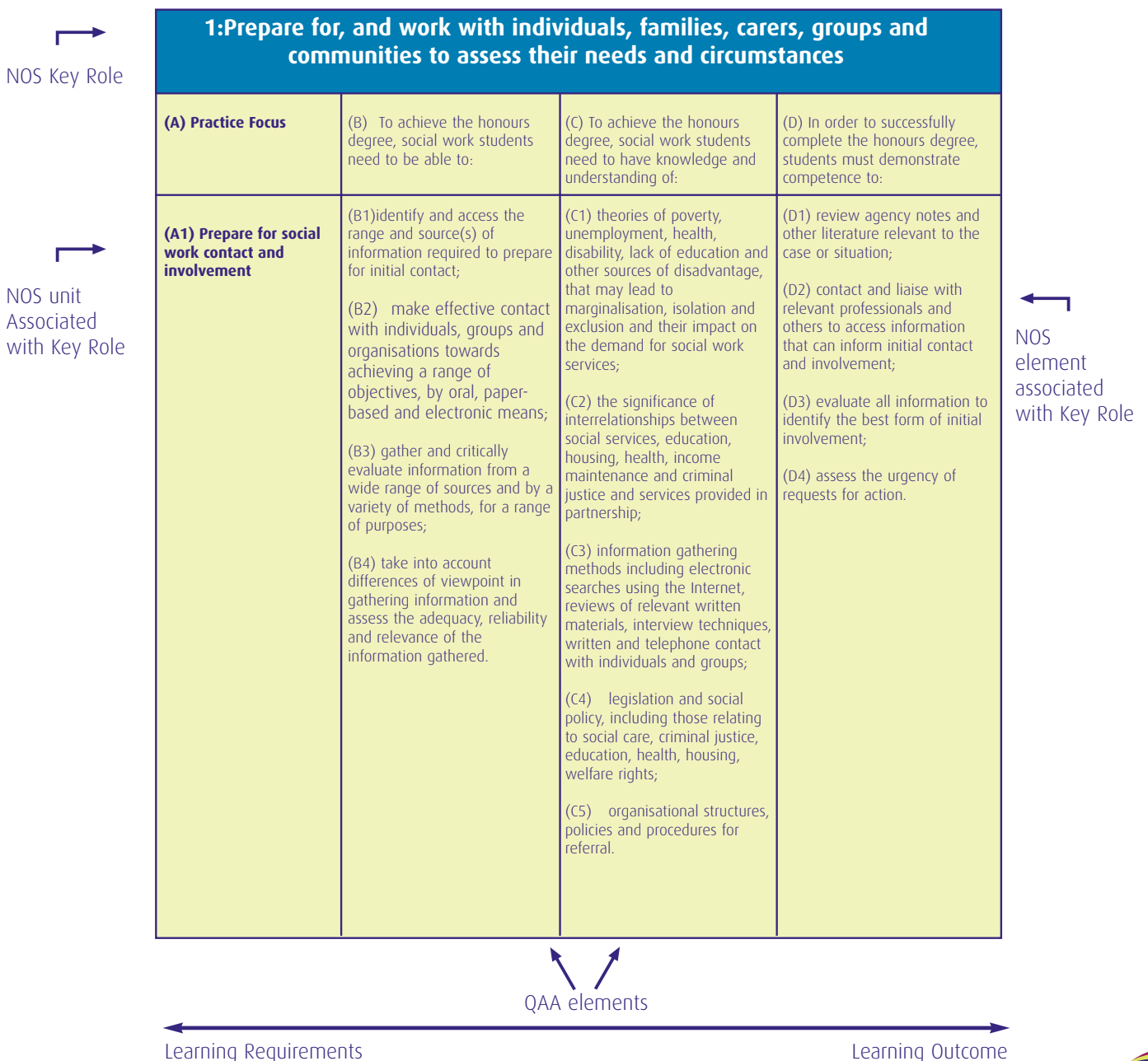
**Diagram 1**





**3.2** Diagram 2 illustrates the format of the framework and the links with the NOS and the QAA Benchmark Statement: Academic Standards – Social Work. Some of the NOS Unit and Element and QAA statements have been modified and statements have been added. These changes make explicit general statements already contained within the NOS and the QAA Statement and are not additional requirements as such. Rather they emphasise areas of learning that are of particular relevance for social work in Northern Ireland and also reflect current Northern Ireland policy and legislation and findings and recommendations from recent inspections, inquiries and research.

**Diagram 2**





- 3.3** There are 6 sections in the Framework Specification reflecting each of the 6 key roles as specified in the NOS for Social Work. Column A outlines the particular practice focus required to fulfil these key roles and these reflect the 21 Units of the NOS. Column D reflects the standards of practice which students need to demonstrate in order to successfully complete the honours degree.
- 3.4** Columns B and C are drawn from the QAA Benchmark Statement: Academic Standards – Social Work, which covers social work as an applied academic subject at honours degree level. Column B sets out the key underpinning skills required to achieve the outcomes in Column D. Column C sets out the key underpinning knowledge required to achieve the outcomes in Column D.
- 3.5** While skills and knowledge have been specified separately for ease of reference, course providers will be expected to develop a curriculum which includes both academic and practice learning, and fosters the integration of knowledge, skills, and values in teaching, learning and assessment.
- 3.6** In specifying what social work students must be able to do and understand, the Framework seeks to avoid repetition of skills and knowledge. The core skills and knowledge relevant to each key role are identified, but it is important to note that these skills and knowledge may be relevant to other key roles as well. It will be the responsibility of the course provider to support students to identify and demonstrate the full range of skills and knowledge relevant to each key role.



## **4 NORTHERN IRELAND FRAMEWORK SPECIFICATION FOR THE DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK**

### **4.1 The Key Purpose of Social Work**

The key purpose of social work internationally has been defined as:-

"a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work".<sup>2</sup>

### **4.2 The Key Roles of Social Work**

<b>Key Role 1</b>	Prepare for, and work with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities to assess their needs and circumstances.	<b>Page 13</b>
<b>Key Role 2</b>	Plan, carry out, review and evaluate social work practice, with individuals, families, carers, groups, communities and other professionals.	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>Key Role 3</b>	Support individuals to represent their needs, views and circumstances and to achieve greater independence.	<b>Page 20</b>
<b>Key Role 4</b>	Manage risk to individuals, families, carers, groups, communities, self and colleagues.	<b>Page 22</b>
<b>Key Role 5</b>	Manage and be accountable, with supervision and support, for their own social work practice within their organisation.	<b>Page 24</b>
<b>Key Role 6</b>	Demonstrate and be responsible for professional competence in social work practice.	<b>Page 28</b>

<sup>2</sup> International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (2001).



<b>1: Prepare for, and work with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities to assess their needs and circumstances</b>			
<b>(A) Practice Focus</b>	<b>(B) To achieve the honours degree, social work students need to be able to:</b>	<b>(C) To achieve the honours degree, social work students need to have knowledge and critical understanding of:</b>	<b>(D) In order to successfully complete the honours degree, students must demonstrate competence to:</b>
<b>(A1) Prepare for social work contact and involvement</b>	<p>(B1) identify and access the range and source(s) of information required to prepare for initial contact;</p> <p>(B2) make effective contact with individuals, groups and organisations towards achieving a range of objectives, by oral, paper-based and electronic means;</p> <p>(B3) gather and critically evaluate information from a wide range of sources and by a variety of methods or a range of purposes;</p> <p>(B4) take into account differences of viewpoint in gathering information and assess the adequacy, reliability and relevance of the information gathered;</p>	<p>(C1) theories of poverty, unemployment, health, disability, lack of education and other sources of disadvantage that may lead to marginalisation, isolation and exclusion and their impact on the demand for social work services;</p> <p>(C2) the significance of interrelationships between social services, education, housing, health, income maintenance and criminal justice and services provided in partnership;</p> <p>(C3) information gathering methods including electronic searches using the Internet, reviews of relevant written materials, interview techniques, written and telephone contact with individuals and groups;</p> <p>(C4) legislation and social policy, including those relating to social care, criminal justice, education, health, housing, welfare rights;</p> <p>(C5) organisational structures, policies and procedures for referral;</p>	<p>(D1) review agency notes and other literature relevant to the case or situation;</p> <p>(D2) contact and liaise with relevant professionals and others to access information that can inform initial contact and involvement;</p> <p>(D3) evaluate all information to identify the best form of initial involvement;</p> <p>(D4) assess the urgency of requests for action;</p>



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

<p><b>(A2) Work with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities to help make informed decisions</b></p>	<p>(B5) consider a range of factors, including legal obligations, risk, rights, cultural differences, community contexts and linguistic sensitivities, to assess and make informed decisions about needs, circumstances, risks and preferred options;</p> <p>(B6) clarify and negotiate the purpose of contacts and the boundaries of their involvement;</p> <p>(B7) negotiate goals and plans with others including service users and professional colleagues, analysing and addressing in a creative manner human, organisational, community and structural impediments to change;</p> <p>(B8) engage with a range of people from different communities and backgrounds;</p>	<p>(C6) theories and methods of working with the main groups of people accessing services including the following areas: childcare; mental health; justice; learning disability; older people; minority and ethnic groups; drug and alcohol use; physical disability and sensory impairment;</p> <p>(C7) the nature of social work services in a diverse society with particular reference to concepts such as prejudice, inter-personal, institutional and structural discrimination including sectarianism, disempowerment and anti-oppressive practices;</p> <p>(C8) the nature and validity of different explanations for the characteristics and circumstances of service users and the services required by them;</p> <p>(C9) community development approaches to understanding local communities and the interrelationship between individuals, families, groups and the provision of public services within communities to enable them to better meet needs and the equality agenda;</p>	<p>(D5) inform individuals, families, carers, groups, communities, professionals and others about the social worker's and the organisation's duties and responsibilities;</p> <p>(D6) work with relevant disciplines and others to inform assessments of needs and circumstances and any associated risks;</p> <p>(D7) work with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify, gather, analyse and understand information;</li> <li>• enable them to analyse, identify, clarify and express their strengths, expectations and limitations;</li> <li>• enable them to assess and make informed decisions about their needs, circumstances, risks, preferred options and resources.</li> </ul>
<p><b>(A3) Assess needs and options to recommend a course of action</b></p>	<p>(B9) observe and analyse human behaviour to inform assessment;</p> <p>(B10) analyse information gathered, modify in light of new information, and relate this information to a particular task, situation or problem;</p> <p>(B11) assess human situations holistically, taking into account a variety of factors including the views of participants, theoretical concepts, research evidence, legislation, organisational policies and procedures and the social, economic and cultural context.</p>	<p>(C10) the range of need expressed by, and attributed to, service users and their carers and the social processes by which such needs become defined;</p> <p>(C11) the nature and validity of different explanations for the characteristics and circumstances of service users and the services required by them;</p> <p>(C12) links between definitional processes contributing to social differences (for example, social class, gender and ethnic differences) to the problems of inequality and differential need faced by service users;</p> <p>(C13) models and methods of assessment in different practice contexts.</p>	<p>(D8) work in partnership with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities to assess and review their preferred options;</p> <p>(D9) assess needs, justify and recommend appropriate courses of action for individuals, families, carers, groups and communities;</p> <p>(D10) assess needs, risks and options taking into account legal and other service standards requirements.</p>





<b>2: Plan, carry out, review and evaluate social work practice, with individuals, families, carers, groups, communities and other professionals</b>			
<b>Practice Focus</b>	<i>To achieve the honours degree, social work students need to be able to:</i>	<i>To achieve the honours degree, social work students need to have knowledge and critical understanding of:</i>	<i>In order to successfully complete the honours degree, students must demonstrate competence to:</i>
<b>(A4) Respond to crisis situations</b>	<p>(B12) think logically and systematically, even under pressure;</p> <p>(B13) plan a sequence of actions to achieve specified objectives;</p> <p>(B14) manage the processes of change;</p> <p>(B15) meet time deadlines and comply with external definitions of task;</p>	<p>(C14) models and methods of crisis intervention in different practice contexts;</p> <p>(C15) factors influencing the selection and testing of relevant information, especially where collected under pressures of time;</p> <p>(C16) the nature of professional judgement and processes of risk assessment;</p> <p>(C17) principles about balancing the rights of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities with the interests of society and the requirements of practice;</p>	<p>(D11) identify the need for legal and procedural intervention;</p> <p>(D12) plan and implement action to meet immediate needs and circumstances;</p> <p>(D13) review the outcomes with individuals, families, carers, groups, communities, organisations, professionals and others;</p>



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

<p><b>(A5) Work with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities and other professionals to achieve change and development and to improve life opportunities</b></p>	<p>(B16) use communication skills effectively addressing potential barriers resulting from differences in culture, ethnicity, gender, disability, language, age, belief and political opinion, status or sexual orientation;</p> <p>(B17) use knowledge of a range of interventions and evaluation processes to build and sustain purposeful relationships with people and organisations in community-based and inter-professional contexts, including group-care;</p> <p>(B18) implement plans using a range of methods of intervention which are knowledge and evidence based;</p> <p>(B19) contract with others and work effectively in multi-disciplinary and interagency settings;</p> <p>(B20) bring work to an effective conclusion, taking into account the implications for all involved;</p>	<p>C18) psychological and physiological perspectives on individual and social development and functioning from infancy to old age;</p> <p>(C19) the nature and characteristics of developmental delay, disruption, trauma and loss;</p> <p>(C20) the personal and community consequences of the Northern Ireland conflict for individuals, families, groups, and communities and the implications for social work practice;</p> <p>(C21) theoretical perspectives and evidence from international research on the design and implementation of effective social work intervention with a wide range of service users, carers and others;</p> <p>(C22) research-based concepts and critical explanations from social work theory and other disciplines including their distinctive epistemological status and application to practice;</p> <p>(C23) theories and methods of social work interventions to promote personal, social and emotional well-being; to achieve change and development; and to improve life opportunities and to promote social inclusion and equality;</p> <p>(C24) methods and skills of communication and potential barriers to effective communication including those due to sensory impairment and/or disability;</p>	<p>(D14) develop and maintain relationships with individuals, families, carers, groups, communities and others, sometimes over sustained periods, to facilitate implementation of planned work;</p> <p>(D15) work in a structured way with individuals, families, carers, groups, communities and others:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to achieve change and development;</li> <li>• to improve life opportunities;</li> <li>• to avoid crisis situations;</li> <li>• to address problems and conflict;</li> <li>• to promote personal, social and emotional well-being.</li> </ul> <p>(D16) apply and justify social work methods and models to achieve change and development and to improve life opportunities;</p> <p>(D17) regularly monitor, review and evaluate changes in circumstances and adapt plans accordingly;</p> <p>(D18) reduce contact and withdraw from relationships appropriately;</p>
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2: Plan, carry out, review and evaluate social work practice, with individuals, families, carers, groups, communities and other professionals			
<p><b>(A6) Prepare, produce, implement and evaluate plans with individuals, families, carers, groups, communities and professional colleagues</b></p>	<p>(B21) select and apply appropriate skills to prepare, produce, implement and evaluate plans;</p> <p>(B22) make decisions, set goals and construct specific plans to achieve these, taking into account relevant factors including ethical guidelines, options and potential resources;</p> <p>(B23) apply ethical principles and practices critically in planning and evaluating problem-solving activities;</p> <p>(B24) work in partnership with colleagues, provider organisations and inclusively with individuals, families, carers, groups, and communities to identify, plan and implement creative ways of meeting needs;</p>	<p>(C25) approaches and methods of intervention in a range of settings including group-care at individual, group and community levels;</p> <p>(C26) the nature and characteristics of skills required to prepare, produce, implement and evaluate plans with a range of service users in a variety of settings including group-care;</p>	<p>(D19) negotiate the services and resources to be included in plans;</p> <p>(D20) identify content and actions, and construct plans;</p> <p>(D21) carry out their own responsibilities and monitor, co-ordinate and support the actions of others involved in implementing plans;</p> <p>(D22) regularly review the effectiveness of plans in partnership with the people involved;</p> <p>(D23) renegotiate and revise plans to meet changing needs and circumstances;</p>



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

<p><b>(A7) Support the development of networks to meet assessed needs and planned outcomes</b></p>	<p>(B25) develop effective helping relationships and partnerships with professional colleagues and others and with groups, communities and organisations that facilitate change;</p> <p>(B26) consult with others, including service users, who hold relevant information or expertise;</p> <p>(B27) constructively challenge others to produce positive outcomes;</p>	<p>(C27) the current range and appropriateness of statutory, voluntary and private agencies providing community-based, day-care, residential and other services and the organisational systems inherent within these;</p>	<p>(D24) identify and examine support networks that can be accessed and developed with individuals, families, carers, groups, communities and others;</p> <p>(D25) work with individuals, families, carers, groups, communities and others to initiate and sustain support networks;</p> <p>(D26) contribute to the development and evaluation of support networks;</p>
<p><b>(A8) Work with groups to promote growth, development and independent living</b></p>	<p>(B28) involve people, groups and communities in ways that increase their resources, capacity and power to influence factors affecting their lives through group activity;</p> <p>(B29) identify and use opportunities for purposeful work and supportive communication with individuals in group care settings;</p>	<p>(C28) the community context of practice and its potential contribution to address assessed need and the broader equality agenda;</p> <p>(C29) evidence-based approaches and methods of group work in a range of settings, including group care;</p> <p>(C30) the relevance of sociological perspectives to understanding societal and structural influences on human behaviour at individual, group and community levels;</p> <p>(C31) theories explaining group and organisational behaviour, adaptation and change;</p>	<p>(D27) identify opportunities to form and support groups;</p> <p>(D28) use group programmes, processes and dynamics to promote individual participants' skills and promote growth, development and independence and foster interpersonal skills;</p> <p>(D29) help groups to achieve planned outcomes for their members and to evaluate the appropriateness of their work;</p> <p>(D30) disengage from groups appropriately;</p>



**2. Plan, carry out, review and evaluate social work practice, with individuals, families, carers, groups, communities and other professionals**

<p><b>(A9) Address behaviour which presents a risk to the wider public, individuals, families, carers, groups, and communities.</b></p>	<p>(B30) help people to gain, regain and maintain control of their own affairs, insofar as is compatible with their own or others' safety, well-being and rights;</p> <p>(B31) use both verbal and non-verbal cues to guide interpretation of behaviour and to assess risk;</p> <p>(B32) contribute to the prevention of behaviour which presents a risk to individuals, families, carers, groups and communities and other professionals;</p> <p>(B33) plan for, manage and evaluate situations in which there is a significant element of risk.</p>	<p>(C32) the complex relationships between justice, care and control and the practical and ethical implications of these;</p> <p>(C33) statutory duties and responsibilities to protect the public and uphold the law;</p> <p>(C34) the characteristics of social work practice in the criminal justice system, including the judicial system;</p> <p>(C35) models and methods of intervention including factors underpinning the selection and testing of relevant information, the nature of professional judgement and the processes of risk assessment and management.</p>	<p>(D31) take immediate action to deal with behaviour that presents a risk to the wider public, including service users, carers, or colleagues;</p> <p>(D32) work with individuals, families, carers, groups, communities and others to identify and evaluate situations and circumstances that may trigger risk behaviour and to reduce or contain the level of risk;</p> <p>(D33) plan and manage intervention in ways that could positively change the identified risk behaviour.</p>
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**3: Support individuals to represent their needs, views and circumstances and to achieve greater independence**

Practice Focus	<i>To achieve the honours degree, social work students need to be able to:</i>	<i>To achieve the honours degree, social work students need to have knowledge and critical understanding of:</i>	<i>In order to successfully complete the honours degree, students must demonstrate competence to:</i>
<p><b>(A10) Advocate with, and on behalf of, individuals, families, carers, groups and communities to help them achieve and sustain greater independence</b></p>	<p>(B34) identify and promote opportunities for people to use their own strengths and expertise to enable them to secure rights, achieve change and greater independence;</p> <p>(B35) act effectively with others to promote social justice by identifying and responding to prejudice, institutional and other forms of discrimination including sectarianism and structural inequality;</p> <p>(B36) listen actively to service users, respond appropriately to their life experiences and understand accurately their viewpoint;</p> <p>(B37) overcome personal prejudices to respond appropriately to a range of complex personal and interpersonal situations;</p> <p>(B38) manage the complex dynamics of dependency and, in some settings, provide direct care and personal support in every day living situations;</p> <p>(B39) work with others to build their capacity to advocate on their own behalf;</p>	<p>(C36) social work roles as statutory agents, particularly in upholding the law in respect of discrimination with particular reference to relevant legal statutes in Northern Ireland;</p> <p>(C37) different models and methods of advocacy;</p> <p>(C38) the role of the social worker and other related disciplines and agents as advocates in a range of contexts;</p>	<p>(D34) assess to what extent the social worker should act as advocate for the individual, family, carer, group or community;</p> <p>(D35) assist individuals, families, carers, groups and communities to access independent advocacy;</p> <p>(D36) advocate for, and with, individuals, families, carers, groups and communities as appropriate;</p> <p>(D37) assist people who use services in the management of their affairs, including financial management;</p> <p>(D38) contribute with others to enabling service users to achieve and sustain greater independence;</p>





<b>3: Support individuals to represent their needs, views and circumstances and to achieve greater independence</b>			
<p><b>(A11) Prepare for, and participate in decision-making forums, and assist others (where appropriate) to do so as well</b></p>	<p>(B40) communicate clearly, accurately and precisely (both orally and in writing) with individuals and groups in a range of formal and informal situations;</p> <p>(B41) make effective preparation for, and contribute to meetings in an appropriate and productive way;</p> <p>(B42) plan for and present evidence in formal decision making forums including courts;</p> <p>(B43) evaluate the viewpoints of, and evidence presented by, others;</p> <p>(B44) articulate views professionally and logically, even under pressure;</p> <p>(B45) follow and develop lines of argument.</p>	<p>(C39) the nature and characteristics of decision-making in a variety of settings including justice;</p> <p>(C40) the complex relationships between public, social and political philosophies, policies and priorities and the organisation and practice of social work, including the contested nature of the latter;</p> <p>(C41) issues and trends in modern public and social policy and their relationship to contemporary practice and service delivery;</p> <p>(C42) factors that inhibit effective participation in decision-making within different settings including courts.</p>	<p>(D39) prepare reports and documents for decision-making forums, including courts, tribunals and other formal hearings;</p> <p>(D40) work with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities to select the best forms of representation;</p> <p>(D41) present reports and evidence to decision-making forums, including courts, tribunals and other formal hearings;</p> <p>(D42) help individuals, families, carers, groups and communities to understand procedures and the possible and actual outcomes;</p> <p>(D43) enable individuals, families, carers, groups and communities to be involved in decision-making forums.</p>



<b>4 : Manage risk to individuals, families, carers, groups, communities, self and colleagues</b>			
<b>Practice Focus</b>	<b><i>To achieve the honours degree, social work students need to be able to:</i></b>	<b><i>To achieve the honours degree, social work students need to have knowledge and critical understanding of:</i></b>	<b><i>In order to successfully complete the honours degree, students must demonstrate competence to:</i></b>
<b>(A12) Assess and manage risks to individuals, families, carers, groups and communities</b>	<p>(B46) analyse the nature of risks and harm associated both with the circumstances indicating intervention and with the planned interventions;</p> <p>(B47) establish the identify of the person(s) most at risk and the appropriate method of managing the situation, including onward referral to other agencies;</p> <p>(B48) identify support networks which will share the management of risk;</p> <p>(B49) undertake practice in a manner that promotes the well-being and protects the safety of all parties and upholds public trust and confidence;</p> <p>(B50) manage aggression and challenging behaviour in appropriate ways;</p> <p>(B51) use, with support, legal powers to protect people from harm;</p>	<p>(C43) the concepts of rights, responsibility, freedom, authority and power inherent in the practice of social workers as moral and statutory agents;</p> <p>(C44) social workers' roles as statutory agents with duties and responsibilities to protect the public and uphold the law in respect of assessing and managing risk;</p> <p>(C45) the basis of legal powers to protect and control;</p> <p>(C46) methods and models of risk assessment and risk management within a social work context;</p> <p>(C47) de-escalation techniques, safe methods of restraint, and skills of conflict resolution;</p> <p>(C48) criminology, penology and research on offending behaviour, including patterns, types and predisposing factors;</p> <p>(C49) lessons learnt from serious failure of both service and practice and from successful intervention;</p>	<p>(D44) identify and assess the nature and level of risk;</p> <p>(D45) balance the rights and responsibilities of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities with the associated risks;</p> <p>(D46) plan and implement action to reduce risk;</p> <p>(D47) manage risk to individuals, families, carers, groups and communities over time and regularly monitor and re-assess priorities and actions;</p>



<b>4 : Manage risk to individuals, families, carers, groups, communities, self and colleagues</b>			
<b>(A13) Assess, minimise and manage risk to self and colleagues</b>	<p>(B52) identify and establish the nature and level of risk to self and colleagues;</p> <p>(B53) practise in ways that maximise safety and effectiveness, especially in situations of uncertainty or incomplete information;</p> <p>(B54) review intentions and actions in the light of foreseen and unintended consequences;</p> <p>(B55) take appropriate action to minimise risk to self or colleagues.</p>	<p>(C50) the nature of risks and harm associated with intervention;</p> <p>(C51) behaviours, situations and circumstances related to individuals, families, carers, groups and communities which have, or could, present a risk to self and colleagues.</p>	<p>(D48) assess and analyse potential risk to self and colleagues;</p> <p>(D49) work within the risk assessment and management procedures of own and other relevant organisations and professions;</p> <p>(D50) plan, monitor and review outcomes and actions to minimise risk, stress and harm.</p>



<b>5: Manage and be accountable, with supervision and support, for their own social work practice within their organisation</b>			
<b>Practice Focus</b>	<b><i>To achieve the honours degree, social work students need to be able to:</i></b>	<b><i>To achieve the honours degree, social work students need to have knowledge and critical understanding of:</i></b>	<b><i>In order to successfully complete the honours degree, students must demonstrate competence to:</i></b>
<b>(A14) Manage and be accountable for own work</b>	<p>(B56) plan and prioritise work within competing demands;</p> <p>(B57) advance own learning and understanding with an appropriate degree of independence;</p> <p>(B58) reflect on and modify own professional behaviour in the light of growing experience;</p> <p>(B59) identify and keep under review personal and professional boundaries;</p> <p>(B60) manage uncertainty, change and stress in work situations;</p> <p>(B61) handle inter-personal and intra-personal conflict constructively;</p> <p>(B62) take responsibility for own further and continuing acquisition of knowledge and skills;</p> <p>(B63) take responsibility for own practice and professional judgements;</p>	<p>(C52) the relationship between agency policies, legal requirements and professional boundaries in shaping the nature of services;</p> <p>(C53) the significance of modern communication and information technologies in the planning and management of work programmes including developments in health and social care informatics;</p> <p>(C54) the nature, characteristics and boundaries of professional activity and judgement;</p> <p>(C55) the complex nature of accountability in different contexts;</p> <p>(C56) awareness of own values, prejudices, ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest and their implications on own practice;</p>	<p>(D51) manage and prioritise their workload within organisational policies and changing demands;</p> <p>(D52) carry out duties using accountable professional judgement and evidence based practice;</p> <p>(D53) monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of own programmes of work in meeting organisational requirements and the needs of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities;</p> <p>(D54) improve their own practice, using critical reflection, professional and managerial supervision and other supports as appropriate;</p> <p>(D55) prepare for, and participate in decision-making forums;</p>





5: Manage and be accountable, with supervision and support, for their own social work practice within their organisation			
<p><b>(A15) Contribute to the management of resources and services</b></p>	<p>(B64) use information and communications technology methods and techniques for a variety of purposes including professional communication, data storage and retrieval, information searching and service development;</p> <p>(B65) manipulate and understand numbers in both statistical and financial contexts;</p> <p>(B66) contribute to the information required for the purchasing of services;</p> <p>(B67) work with others to obtain and communicate relevant information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gaps in resources;</li> <li>• unmet need;</li> <li>• any associated risks.</li> </ul> <p>(B68) contribute to the provision or purchase of appropriate levels of support, care, protection and control;</p>	<p>(C57) the contribution of different approaches to management, leadership and quality in public and independent human services;</p> <p>(C58) the implications of modern communication and information technology for service delivery, especially in management information systems;</p> <p>(C59) basic statistical and budgetary procedures and techniques;</p> <p>(C60) the organisational structures in relation to planning and purchasing of services;</p>	<p>(D56) contribute to monitoring the outcomes, quality and cost effectiveness of services in meeting need;</p> <p>(D57) contribute to the procedures involved in purchasing and commissioning services for individual packages of care;</p> <p>(D58) work with individuals requiring services who decide to use direct payments;</p> <p>(D59) contribute to identifying unmet need in service provision;</p> <p>(D60) contribute to managing and sharing information;</p>



5: Manage and be accountable, with supervision and support, for their own social work practice within their organisation			
<p><b>(A16) Manage, present and share records and reports</b></p>	<p>(B69) write accurately and clearly in styles adapted to the reader, purpose and context of the communication;</p> <p>(B70) present conclusions orally and in writing, in a structured form, appropriate to the audience and setting for which these have been prepared;</p> <p>(B71) summarise and synthesise information;</p> <p>(B72) use records to inform planning, decision-making and professional development;</p> <p>(B73) synthesise information and lines of reasoning and sustain detailed argument;</p>	<p>(C61) the statutory basis of reports and the requirement to share these with relevant parties;</p> <p>(C62) the legal requirements, and organisational policies and procedures relating to data protection, confidentiality and security and sharing of information;</p> <p>(C63) the importance of sharing information and the use of technology in the preparation of reports including the dissemination and storage of official information;</p> <p>(C64) the purpose of recording in different contexts and the appropriate use of records in multi-professional and multi-agency work;</p>	<p>(D61) maintain accurate, complete, accessible, concise and up-to-date records and reports;</p> <p>(D62) provide evidence for professional judgements and decisions;</p> <p>(D63) implement legal and policy frameworks for access to records and reports and the protection of data;</p> <p>(D64) share records with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities as appropriate;</p> <p>(D65) share records with other professionals and agencies as appropriate;</p>



5: Manage and be accountable, with supervision and support, for their own social work practice within their organisation			
<p><b>(A17) Work in and across multidisciplinary and multi-organisational teams, networks, systems and agencies to contribute to the integration and effectiveness of services</b></p>	<p>(B74) act co-operatively with others, liaising and negotiating across organisational and professional boundaries, taking account of differences in identity and language;</p> <p>(B75) function effectively within a framework of multiple accountability (for example, to courts, agencies, the public, service users and others);</p> <p>(B76) promote the interests of service users and carers to others, by assisting others to understand users and carers needs, circumstances, strengths, expectations, preferred options and limitations.</p>	<p>(C65) the integrated arrangements for the provision of health and social services in Northern Ireland and their impact on social work as a profession;</p> <p>(C66) relationships between agency policies, legal and regulatory requirements and professional boundaries in shaping the nature of services provided in inter-disciplinary and inter-agency contexts;</p> <p>(C67) issues including the potential for conflict associated with working within and across professional and agency boundaries and with different disciplines;</p> <p>(C68) factors and processes that facilitate effective service integration and inter-agency collaboration and partnership;</p> <p>(C69) social work practice across national and international jurisdictions with particular reference to the Republic of Ireland and the wider United Kingdom context.</p>	<p>(D66) develop and maintain effective working relationships;</p> <p>(D67) contribute to identifying, agreeing and evaluating the effectiveness of the goals, objectives and lifespan of the team, network or system;</p> <p>(D68) contribute to evaluating the effectiveness of professional work groups;</p> <p>(D69) deal constructively with disagreements and conflict within work relationships.</p>



<b>6: Demonstrate and be responsible for professional competence in social work practice</b>			
<b>Practice Focus</b>	<b><i>To achieve the honours degree, social work students need to be able to:</i></b>	<b><i>To achieve the honours degree, social work students need to have knowledge of and critical understanding of:</i></b>	<b><i>In order to successfully complete the honours degree, students must demonstrate competence to:</i></b>
<p><b>(A18) Research, analyse, evaluate, and use up-to-date knowledge of best social work practice</b></p>	<p>(B77) critically evaluate contrasting theories, explanations, research, policies, procedures and methods of intervention;</p> <p>(B78) apply understanding of human behaviour at societal, organisational, community and inter- and intra-personal levels;</p> <p>(B79) evaluate and learn from: own practice, including case notes; current and emerging research and expertise and experience of others;</p> <p>(B80) undertake critical enquiry and review relevant literature, drawing evidenced conclusions from the data;</p>	<p>(C70) the characteristics of social work practice in a range of community-based and organisational settings including primary and secondary care, group-care, education and justice;</p> <p>(C71) factors influencing changes in practice within statutory, voluntary and private sector services;</p> <p>(C72) relevant social research and evaluation methodologies;</p> <p>(C73) the place of theoretical perspectives and evidence from international research in assessment and decision-making processes in social work practice;</p>	<p>(D70) review and regularly update own knowledge of relevant legislation, policy, procedural frameworks and research;</p> <p>(D71) articulate the basis for own practice using up-to-date knowledge;</p> <p>(D72) use professional and organisational supervision and support to research, critically analyse, and review the knowledge and evidence base of own practice;</p> <p>(D73) implement a range of social work models, methods and programmes which are knowledge and/or evidence based to develop and improve own practice;</p>

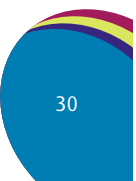




<b>6: Demonstrate and be responsible for professional competence in social work practice</b>			
<b>(A19) Work to agreed standards of social work practice and ensure own professional development</b>	<p>(B81) identify standards applicable to social work practice and service delivery, including NISCC Code of Practice for Social Care Workers;</p> <p>(B82) recognise the standards of other professional groupings and inter-professional factors involved;</p> <p>(B83) recognise and work with the wider social, legal, economic, political and cultural context of people's lives;</p> <p>(B84) integrate the values of social work into own practice while understanding own personal value system;</p> <p>(B85) take responsibility for own further and continuing acquisition of knowledge and skills to ensure that practice meets required standards;</p>	<p>(C74) the nature, historical evolution and application of social work values;</p> <p>(C75) the processes of reflection and evaluation, including familiarity with the range of approaches for evaluating welfare outcomes, and their significance for the development of practice and the practitioner;</p> <p>(C76) the significance of legislative and legal frameworks and service standards, including the nature of legal authority, the application of legislation in practice, statutory accountability and tensions between statute, policy and practice;</p> <p>(C77) own personal value system;</p>	<p>(D74) exercise and justify professional judgement;</p> <p>(D75) use professional assertiveness in justifying decisions and uphold professional social work practice values;</p> <p>(D76) work within the ethical principles and standards underpinning social work practice;</p> <p>(D77) critically reflect upon own practice and performance;</p> <p>(D78) use supervision, consultancy and professional support, and take action to meet continuing professional development needs;</p> <p>(D79) meet relevant standards of practice and work in a lawful, safe and effective way;</p>



<b>6: Demonstrate and be responsible for professional competence in social work practice</b>			
<p><b>(A20) Manage complex ethical issues, dilemmas and conflicts</b></p>	<p>(B86) understand and analyse the impact of injustice, social inequalities and oppressive social relations in work with people in particular contexts and problem situations;</p> <p>(B87) identify individual, institutional and structural discrimination and where appropriate challenge it in constructive ways;</p> <p>(B88) analyse and handle ethical dilemmas and conflicts to produce justifiable outcomes;</p> <p>(B89) promote, protect and balance the rights and interests of service users insofar as these are compatible with their own or others' safety, well-being and rights;</p> <p>(B90) review ethical decisions and reflect accurately on factors influencing decision-making;</p>	<p>(C78) aspects of philosophical ethics relevant to the understanding and resolution of value dilemmas and conflicts in both inter-personal and professional contexts;</p> <p>(C79) knowledge of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory legislation and policy;</p> <p>(C80) factors influencing the effectiveness of conflict resolution in different settings;</p> <p>(C81) dilemmas inherent in the distribution of limited resources to people in need;</p> <p>(C82) the social worker's responsibility to identify and challenge discrimination;</p> <p>(C83) the concepts of social justice, citizenship, human rights and equality and their relevance to social work practice and values;</p>	<p>(D80) identify and assess issues, dilemmas and conflicts affecting own practice;</p> <p>(D81) devise effective strategies to deal with ethical issues, dilemmas and conflicts;</p> <p>(D82) act in circumstances of uncertainty and ambiguity and critically reflect on, and learn from, the outcomes;</p>
<p><b>(A21) Contribute to the promotion of best social work practice</b></p>	<p>(B91) recognise changing situations and manage response in a flexible manner;</p> <p>(B92) identify and report unprofessional and unsafe practice in a responsible manner;</p> <p>(B93) adapt own approach and practice to developments in policy, legislation, organisational expectation and service delivery contexts;</p> <p>(B94) manage information including health and social care informatics.</p>	<p>(C84) conceptual links between different codes defining ethical practice and the regulation of professional conduct;</p> <p>(C85) the location of contemporary social work within both historical and comparative perspectives, including the United Kingdom, European and international contexts;</p> <p>(C86) the management of and how to access information, including the use of information technology.</p>	<p>(D83) contribute knowledge of best practice within own team, organisation and other networks to inform policy review and development;</p> <p>(D84) use supervision, together with other organisational, professional and information systems, to inform courses of action including where practice falls below required standards and to promote best practice;</p> <p>(D85) work with colleagues in related professions and contribute to team and service developments.</p>





## 5 VALUES AND ETHICS

- 5.1** It is essential because of the responsibilities social workers carry, the ethical problems and dilemmas they face and the potential influence and impact they may have on the lives of people that their practice is founded on, informed by and capable of being judged against a clear value base.
- 5.2** Values are not just ideals. They are a set of practical criteria to inform and guide actions, decision-making, and the relationship between the social worker and others. Values are determinants of behaviour and should be integral to social work practice.
- 5.3** National and international professional social work organisations have produced guidance on values to underpin social work practice. These may be a useful reference for both course providers and students.
- 5.4** To be competent against the standards contained in the Framework Specification, social work students must demonstrate that they have achieved the competences whilst adhering to and demonstrating the values and principles stated within the NISCC Code of Practice for Social Care Workers (See 5.5 below), and the Statement of Expectations from individuals, families, carers, groups and communities who use services and those who care for them (see 5.6 below).

### **5.5 NISCC Code of Practice for Social Care Workers**

#### **5.5.1 As a social care worker, you must protect the rights and promote the interests of service users and carers.**

*This includes:*

- *treating each person as an individual;*
- *respecting and, where appropriate, promoting the individual views and wishes of both service users and carers;*
- *supporting service users' rights to control their lives and make informed choices about the services they receive;*
- *respecting and maintaining the dignity and privacy of service users;*
- *promoting equal opportunities for service users and carers; and*
- *respecting diversity and different cultures and values.*



**5.5.2 As a social care worker, you must strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of service users and carers.**

*This includes:*

- *being honest and trustworthy;*
- *communicating in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way;*
- *respecting confidential information and clearly explaining agency policies about confidentiality to service users and carers;*
- *being reliable and dependable;*
- *honouring work commitments, agreements and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explaining why to service users and carers;*
- *declaring issues that might create conflicts of interest and making sure that they do not influence your judgement or practice; and*
- *adhering to policies and procedures about accepting gifts and money from service users and carers.*

**5.5.3 As a social care worker, you must promote the independence of service users while protecting them as far as possible from danger or harm.**

*This includes:*

- *promoting the independence of service users and assisting them to understand and exercise their rights;*
- *using established processes and procedures to challenge and report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative behaviour and practice;*
- *following practice and procedures designed to keep you and other people safe from violent and abusive behaviour at work;*
- *bringing to the attention of your employer or the appropriate authority resource or operational difficulties that might get in the way of the delivery of safe care;*
- *informing your employer or an appropriate authority where the practice of colleagues may be unsafe or adversely affecting standards of care;*



- *complying with employers' health and safety policies, including those relating to substance abuse;*
- *helping service users and carers to make complaints, taking complaints seriously and responding to them or passing them to the appropriate person; and*
- *recognising and using responsibly the power that comes from your work with service users and carers.*

**5.5.4 As a social care worker, you must respect the rights of service users while seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people.**

*This includes:*

- *recognising that service users have the right to take risks and helping them to identify and manage potential and actual risks to themselves and others;*
- *following risk assessment policies and procedures to assess whether the behaviour of service users presents a risk of harm to themselves or others;*
- *taking necessary steps to minimise the risks of service users from doing actual or potential harm to themselves or other people; and*
- *ensuring that relevant colleagues and agencies are informed about the outcomes and implications of risk assessments.*

**5.5.5 As a social care worker, you must uphold public trust and confidence in social care services.**

*In particular **you must not:***

- *abuse, neglect or harm service users, carers or colleagues;*
- *exploit service users, carers or colleagues in any way;*
- *abuse the trust of service users and carers or the access you have to personal information about them or to their property, home or workplace;*
- *form inappropriate personal relationships with service users;*
- *discriminate unlawfully or unjustifiably against service users, carers or colleagues;*



- *condone any unlawful or unjustifiable discrimination by service users, carers or colleagues;*
- *put yourself or other people at unnecessary risk; or*
- *behave in a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question your suitability to work in social care services.*

**5.5.6 As a social care worker, you must be accountable for the quality of your work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving your knowledge and skills.**

*This includes:*

- *meeting relevant standards of practice and working in a lawful, safe and effective way;*
- *maintaining clear and accurate records as required by procedures established for your work;*
- *informing your employer or the appropriate authority about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to do your job competently and safely;*
- *seeking assistance from your employer or the appropriate authority if you do not feel able or adequately prepared to carry out any aspect of your work, or you are not sure about how to proceed in a work matter;*
- *working openly and co-operatively with colleagues and treating them with respect;*
- *recognising that you remain responsible for the work that you have delegated to other workers;*
- *recognising and respecting the roles and expertise of workers from other agencies and working in partnership with them; and*
- *undertaking relevant training to maintain and improve your knowledge and skills and contributing to the learning and development of others.*



## **5.6 Statement of Expectations from those who use services, and carers**

As part of the development of the NOS for Social Work, consultations took place with those who use services, their carers and their organisations. The statements below summarise their expectations of social workers. To be competent against the standards contained in the Framework Specification social work students must demonstrate that they meet these expectations in their practice.

### **5.6.1 Communication skills and information sharing**

*Social workers must:*

- *explain their:*

  - *role and the purpose of contact;*
  - *their powers, including legal powers in a way that can be understood by all involved;*

- *inform users and carers about what steps they are going to take;*
- *give information to users and carers about their rights and entitlements;*
- *be open and honest about what they can and cannot do;*
- *be honest if they cannot offer the resources needed;*
- *inform users and carers about what is available, beyond the brief of their organisation;*
- *listen actively to what users and carers have to say;*
- *talk to those requiring and using services, and their carers, with due respect for their age, ethnicity, culture, understanding and needs;*
- *involve users and carers in decision making;*
- *offer users and carers choices and options;*
- *share records with users and carers;*
- *build honest relationships based on clear communication.*



### **5.6.2 Good social work practice**

*Social workers must:*

- *be good at time keeping;*
- *be good at starting, continuing and closing relationships;*
- *respect confidentiality, and explain when there is a need to share information with others;*
- *recognise the expertise of users and carers about their own situation and have regard for their wishes;*
- *involve users and carers in all meetings which may affect them;*
- *give users and carers sufficient time to work with them properly;*
- *ensure that contact is maintained;*
- *assess needs properly:*
  - *making sure that all options are explored properly before deciding on a plan;*
  - *looking for options when the services needed are not available;*
  - *being creative;*
  - *involving users and carers:*
    - \* *in setting goals;*
    - \* *when developing a care plan, and being honest about the limitations of choice and the options;*
    - \* *when reviewing and changing plans;*
- *help users and carers access benefits and services;*
- *assess risk and support risk taking when appropriate;*



- *work with users and carers to develop and/or maintain independence;*
- *link users and carers to support groups and networks and support them to extend involvement with groups and networks;*
- *be accountable to users and carers for their practice.*

### **5.6.3 Advocacy**

*Social workers must:*

- *be able to:*
  - *lobby on behalf of users and carers to access services;*
  - *challenge their own organisations on behalf of users and carers;*
  - *challenge injustice and lack of access to services;*
  - *challenge poor practice;*
  - *advise users and carers about independent advocacy that can best meet their needs;*
- *enable users and carers to be empowered to represent their views;*
- *help users and carers to represent their views in all meetings affecting them;*
- *involve independent advocates, where appropriate.*

### **5.6.4 Working with other professionals**

*Social workers must:*

- *be honest, clear and make sure all involved understand:*
  - *what happens to the information users and carers give to the social worker;*
  - *how it is kept;*
  - *who it is shared with, and why;*
  - *how it might be used;*



- *understand what information other organisations can offer and share with users and carers;*
- *work effectively with others to improve services offered to users and carers.*

### **5.6.5 Knowledge**

*Social workers must:*

- *have knowledge of:*
  - *services relevant to users' and carers' needs and circumstances (not just those offered by their organisation) and how to access other relevant services;*
  - *benefits and direct payments;*
  - *legislation;*
- *have in-depth knowledge of the users and carers group they are working with;*
- *keep themselves up to date with:*
  - *all relevant knowledge and information;*
  - *the rights of users and carers.*

### **5.6.6 Values**

*Social workers must:*

- *have respect for:*
  - *users and carers, regardless of their age, ethnicity, culture, level of understanding and need;*
  - *the expertise and knowledge users and carers have about their own situation;*
- *empower users and carers in decisions affecting them;*



- *be honest about:*
  - *the power invested in them, including legal powers;*
  - *their role and resources available to meet need;*
- *respect confidentiality, and inform users and carers when information needs to be shared with others;*
- *be able to:*
  - *challenge discriminatory images and practices affecting users and carers and put users and carers first;*
  - *put individuals, families, carers, groups and communities first.*







# Northern Ireland Framework Specification for the Degree in Social Work

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