Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health + Social Care Professionals

Social Workers Registration Board

Criteria and Standards of Proficiency Education and Training Programmes

Contents

Background

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005(as amended) (HSCP Act,2005) provides for the establishment of a Social Workers Registration Board, whose functions include establishing and maintaining a Social Workers Register. Registration will allow a person to use the title Social Worker.

Statutory registration is fundamental to the delivery of quality and accountability in the provision of social work and will ensure that members of the public are guided, protected and informed, so that they can be confident that social workers providing services are properly regulated and qualified for the job.

This system of statutory regulation is designed to ensure professional conduct and the maintenance of high standards of professional education and training among social workers, regardless of whether they work in the public or private sector or are self-employed.

The object of the Social Workers Registration Board is to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among social work registrants (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 27(1)). To this end the Act makes provision for:

1. the approval of education and training programmes (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 48)

2. the monitoring of continuing suitability of education and training programmes (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 49)

The Social Workers Registration Board sets out the requirements for approval of social work programmes (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 48). An approved programme means that the programme has satisfied the SWRB's criteria for approval and that students who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the profession and as a result are eligible to apply to join the Register.

Higher education institutions (HEI) in the Republic of Ireland that offer programmes leading to qualifications recognised for the purpose of registration of social workers will be eligible to apply to the Social Workers Registration Board for approval of these programmes. Approved programmes are subject to monitoring on an on-going basis.

Full details about the approval and monitoring of programmes can be found in the document Approval and Monitoring Process.

About this document

This document sets out the criteria for the approval of social work programmes and the standards of proficiency required of graduates for the safe and effective practice of the profession. These are the criteria and standards of proficiency against which a programme will be assessed.

The Social Workers Registration Board is responsible for conducting approval visits to education providers to ensure that their programmes meet the criteria and standards of proficiency. If a programme meets the required standards it will be granted approval, subject to on-going monitoring and review.

Section 2 sets out the criteria for the approval of a programme under eight headings. Each criterion is accompanied by a number of indicators which are used to evaluate if the criterion is being met by the provider.

Section 3 sets out the standards of proficiency for the profession. The standards explain the key obligations and are accompanied by specific indicators which are used in the evaluation process.

Supporting CORU documentation

The following documents are to be read in conjunction with each other:

- Criteria and Standards of Proficiency for Education and Training Programmes – Guidance for Education Providers

- Approval and Monitoring Process

- The Social Workers Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics

Guiding principles

The principles that underpin the work of the Social Workers Registration Board in relation to the approval and subsequent monitoring of programmes for the purpose of registration include:

a) The interests of the public need to be safeguarded by fostering high standards of professional education, training and competence in the social work profession.

b) Providers of programmes have primary responsibility for the quality of their programmes and its assurance.

c) Institutional autonomy should be respected.

d) Use should be made, wherever possible, of the outcomes of institutions' own internal and external quality assurance processes.

e) Transparency and the use of external expertise in the approval and monitoring of programmes are important.

f) The criteria and standards of proficiency have been developed in consultation with stakeholders.

g) Processes should be fit for purpose and not place an unnecessary burden on institutions.

h) The principle underpinning the approval process is based on self-evaluation by providers.

i) Processes should not stifle diversity and innovation.

Criteria for approval of education and training programmes

The role of the Social Workers Registration Board in relation to the approval of programmes is distinct from academic accreditation, which programmes already undergo. Academic accreditation is based on the suitability of a programme for the award of a qualification. Professional accreditation/approval is a judgement as to whether a programme prepares the graduate for entry into that profession. The latter is distinguished by the existence of criteria that are specific to that profession, these having been defined in consultation with members of that profession and other relevant parties.

The criteria for approval of education and training programmes for the purpose of registration of social workers are set out in this document under eight headings. They will be explained in more detail in the following pages.

In addition to the eight criteria, a number of indicators are provided to identify for the provider the evidence that will be required to show that the programme meets the criteria for approval.

The eight headings are:

1   Level of qualifications for entry to the Social Workers Register

2   Admission onto a programme

3   Programme management and resources

4   Learning resources and student support mechanisms

5   Policy and procedures for quality assurance

6   Curriculum design and development

7   The assessment process

8   Practice placements

The document **Criteria and Standards of Proficiency for the Approval of Education and Training Programmes – Guidance for Education Providers** is available to support providers when preparing for their first approval visit and subsequent monitoring of programmes.

1. Level of qualifications for entry to the Social Workers Register

Criterion

This criterion is concerned with the academic qualifications that applicants will be required to hold in order to apply to register with the Social Workers Registration Board.

The Social Workers Registration Board requires that the entry route to the register will be the following:

- **Social Work (Honours) Bachelors Degree**   **NFQ Level 8**

    - Undergraduate programmes combine an academic social science degree with social work training. They are full-time courses of four years duration.

- **Social Work Masters Degree**   **NFQ Level 9**

- **Social Work Postgraduate Diploma**   **NFQ Level 9**

    - Entry to postgraduate professional courses requires a three-year social science degree or equivalent and relevant work experience.

2.   Admission on to a programme

Criterion

There should be explicit information regarding the requirements for admission onto a programme, setting out minimum entry requirements and application and selection procedures.

Indicators

a) Clear and comprehensive information for prospective students about the programme and procedures for admission to the programme, including direct applications, is available as web-based material and in hard copy.

b) The mechanism for student admissions to the programme ensures that the stated entry requirements are met.

c) Clarity in relation to entry requirements.

d) Procedures for recognition of prior learning (RPL), if applicable.

e) Institutional policy on equal opportunities in relation to applicants and students.

f) Information documenting the collection, analysis and use of relevant information on admissions to the programme.

3.   Programme management and resources

Criterion

Programmes should be well organised, have clear management and operational structures, adequate and appropriate staffing and the physical and monetary resources to support the teaching and learning activities, research activity, professional development, etc.

Indicators

a)   Confirmation of the long-term security of the programme within an institution.

b)   Commitment to adequate financial support for the programme for the five-year approval period.

c)   The named person with direct responsibility for the programme has an appropriate social work qualification and experience.

d)   The organisational and staffing structure supporting the management of the programme is explicit.

e)   Structures are in place to facilitate the participation of staff and students in relevant deliberation and decision-making processes.

f)   The staff involved with teaching the students have appropriate qualifications, full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching and the skills and experience to transmit their knowledge effectively to students in a range of teaching contexts and have access to feedback on their own performance.

g)   The following groups, involved with teaching the students, are required to be Registered Social Workers:

1. Programme Directors

2. Core Social Work Programme Team

3. Practice Teachers

4. Practice Tutors

Education Providers will be required to provide details of the core social work programme team which will include members of staff responsible for teaching social work theory and practice *(effective academic year 2014)*.

h)   A mechanism for staff development that prepares staff to deliver the educational programme is declared.

i)   Appropriate and adequate resources/facilities to meet the teaching and learning needs of the students are available.

j)   The process of monitoring student attendance is declared, together with the implications of non-attendance.

k)   The institution keeps appropriate records, which should include records of the conferment of academic awards and details of students who exit the programme before completion.

4. Learning resources and student support mechanisms

Criterion

Resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for the programme.

Indicators

a) Adequate and appropriate learning resources are available and accessible to students.

b) Support mechanisms are available for students, designed with their needs in mind and responsive to feedback from those who use the services.

c) A formal complaints procedure is in place for students.

d) Institutions routinely monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of the support services available to students.

5. Policy and procedures for quality assurance

Criterion

Providers should explicitly commit themselves to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality assurance and quality improvement. The strategy, policy and procedures should have formal status within the institution and be publicly available and they should include a role for students and other stakeholders.

Indicators

a) The existence and availability of reviews of the programme, for example, internal quality assurance reports, external quality audits, academic review by accrediting bodies, professional body reviews, external examiners' reports, student feedback and reviews by former students and employers.

b) An appropriate policy on the provider's internal quality assurance system.

c) Grievance and appeals procedures are in place for students.

6.   Curriculum design and development

Criterion

Curriculum design should reflect current, evidence-informed and research-based educational theory and social work practice. The curriculum model chosen should be dynamic and flexible to allow for changes in the social work profession, health and social care delivery and the developments in evidence-informed practice.

Indicators

a)   The curriculum is designed to meet the standards of proficiency (as outlined in Section 3) agreed by the Social Workers Registration Board.

b)   Curriculum design and development are guided by professional knowledge of the subject that is evidence-informed.

c)   The curriculum development team is informed by social work practitioners and social work employers. Other stakeholders who may bring a broader perspective to the development of the curriculum should be consulted, for example, service users, researchers and policy makers.

d)   The curriculum utilises a range of teaching and learning strategies to assist in the development of knowledgeable, competent, reflective practitioners who are willing to accept personal and professional accountability for evidence-informed practice, and who are equipped with life-long skills for problem-solving and self-directed learning.

e)   The curriculum design reflects a variety of methods of teaching and learning and provides a balance between lectures, tutorials, workshops, small group interactions, demonstrations, practical work and self-directed learning.

f)   The curriculum design reflects evidence of inter-professional education and inter-disciplinary co-operation designed to lead to improved collaborative practice between health and social care professionals working together to achieve better outcomes for service users.

g)   The curriculum is planned to demonstrate a balanced distribution and integration of theory and practice to achieve the standards of proficiency (as outlined in Section 3).

h)   The module descriptors/course outlines identify the aims, learning outcomes, syllabus content, student contact hours, student effort/self-directed learning hours and the assessment strategies.

i)   The curriculum articulates how the student is enabled to achieve the expected learning outcomes of the programme.

7. The assessment strategy

Criterion

Assessment of learning is a continuous process and demonstrates a balanced and integrated distribution throughout the programme. Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

Indicators

a) The assessment strategy and design ensures that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the intended learning outcomes of the programme and the standards of proficiency set out for the profession.

b) Assessment techniques are appropriate for their purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative.

c) Assessment techniques have clear and published criteria for marking.

d) Assessments are undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the progression of students towards the achievement of the knowledge, skills and proficiencies associated with their intended qualification.

e) Assessments do not rely on the judgements of single examiners.

f) There are policies covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances.

g) Examinations and assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures.

h) Assessments are subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures.

i) Students are fully informed about the assessment strategy being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.

j) Information is provided on the procedures for obtaining results, viewing scripts, getting feedback from lecturers, making an appeal and supplementary examinations.

8.   Practice placements

Criterion:

Practice placement learning enables students to acquire the standards of proficiency for the social work profession and become safe, competent practitioners willing to accept personal and professional accountability for their work. Learning initially developed within the academic component of social work programmes must be integrated into practice through the experience and supervision offered by structured placements within social work settings. A partnership approach between the education provider and the practice placement provider is essential. Practice placement education is an integral component of social work education and training programmes.

Indicators

a)   Students must spend at least 1,000 hours in practice placements, 350 hours of which must be in one block and full-time.

b)   As the majority of social workers in Ireland are employed by statutory agencies, it is recommended that, where possible, each social work student should have at least one placement in a statutory setting.

c)   The selection of practice placements provided by the education provider, in conjunction with service agencies, reflects the scope of social work practice settings in which the social worker normally operates.

d)   The education provider will have a set of requirements for the selection of placements to ensure quality learning environments for students and will make a formal agreement with the practice placement provider that clearly sets out the responsibilities of both parties on an annual basis.

e)   On-going reviews of practice placements will ensure that placements provide a safe and supportive environment, high-quality professional practice and opportunities for the student to experience direct contact with service users. Students, practice teachers and placement providers will have a role in this review process.

f)   The placement should provide the student with a minimum number of hours of supervision by a practice teacher each week.

g)   Students, placement providers and practice teachers will be fully informed and prepared for the practice placements.

h)   While on placements, contact should be maintained with the student by the programme providers. To this end, a minimum of two meetings should be held between the programme tutor, the practice teacher and the student on placement.

i) Practice teachers will have relevant social work qualifications, at least two years' relevant practice experience and competence, and be in their current post for a minimum of one year where possible. Practice teachers should be fully informed of the expectations, organisation and arrangements for the placements. In addition, they will have undertaken appropriate training to enable them to carry out their role effectively and efficiently and will normally be located in the same practice setting as the practice students.

j) Support and educational opportunities will be available to practice teachers to develop their practice education skills in relation to facilitating students on placement.

k) There should be a minimum of two placements during the programme of training for each student and at least one of these should be full-time. At least fifty per cent of placement time should be spent in this country.

l) A varied range of appropriate placements must be available so that students are exposed to different areas of social work and given the opportunity to practise a range of approaches. This might include a mix of placements in a variety of areas of potential employment, such as acute and community services, disability, mental health, older persons' services, children and family services, the Probation Service and local authorities, to reflect the distribution of placements offered on a consistent and annual basis.

m) Student allocation to practice placements is based on the need to integrate theory and practice and to facilitate the progressive development of knowledge, skills and competencies. The knowledge, skills and competencies learnt in this way should be transferable between situations, contexts and agencies.

n) Pre-placement requirements, such as Garda vetting and appropriate health and safety measures, are in place.

o) Policies and procedures are in place for the assessment of students on practice placements, including appeal mechanisms for failed placements. Placement reports should be jointly signed by the practice teacher and the student.

p) A code of conduct for students whilst on placement should be in place.

Standards of proficiency

This section sets out the standards of proficiency. These are the standards required of graduates for the safe and effective practice of social work. They are the minimum standards necessary to protect the public.

The standards of proficiency are the key obligations and are accompanied by specific indicators, which provide more detail about the standards of proficiency for providers.

The standards of proficiency should not be interpreted by providers as being detailed programme specifications. They do not specify the courses of study a learner must take. Rather, they should be seen as a reference for the development of programmes and a framework for the elaboration of intended learning outcomes. A diverse range of potential programmes and programme learning outcomes is compatible with these standards.

The standards of proficiency will in the first case be used by providers when preparing an application to the Social Workers Registration Board for approval of a programme. These same standards will be used by the assessment team during the approval process and they will also be used in the on-going monitoring of programmes to ensure that a programme continues to meet the required standards.

The standards of proficiency are grouped under six domains:

Domain 1:   Professional autonomy and accountability

Domain 2:   Interpersonal and professional relationships

Domain 3:   Effective communication

Domain 4:   Personal and professional development

Domain 5:   Provision of quality services

Domain 6:   Knowledge, understanding and skills

Domain 1: Professional autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

1. **Practice within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession to the highest standard.**

    a) Act in the best interest of service users at all times and within the boundaries of their profession.

    b) Respect and, so far as possible, uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user, including their role in the diagnostic, therapeutic and social care process.

    c) Provide and articulate professional and ethical practice.

    d) Practise in accordance with current legislation applicable to the work of their profession.

    e) Contribute to the development of effective, ethical and equitable policy and practice, regarding issues addressed by their profession.

    f) Understand the implications of duty of care for service users and professionals.

    g) Understand the principles of professional regulation and the provisions of the *Social Workers Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics*.

    h) Manage themselves, their practice and that of others in accordance with the *Social Workers Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics*.

Domain 1:   Professional autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

2. **Practice in an anti-discriminatory way.**

    a) Acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups.

    b) Promote equality and mutual respect, without prejudice, in a culturally competent, anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive manner.

    c) Assist in the promotion of policies and systems to protect the health, safety, welfare, equality and dignity of staff, volunteers and service users.

    d) Demonstrate a commitment to human rights and social justice.

    e) Recognise the moral and legal rights of individuals to the promotion of wellbeing and protection, if at risk of abuse, exploitation and violence from others or themselves.

3. **Understand the importance of, and be able to maintain, confidentiality.**

    a) Respect the confidentiality of service users and use information only for the purpose for which it was given.

    b) Understand confidentiality within a team setting.

    c) Understand the limits of confidentiality, particularly in relation to child protection and elder abuse.

    d) Be aware of data protection, freedom of information and other relevant legislation.

    e) Understand the potential conflict that can arise between confidentiality and whistle-blowing.

Domain 1:   Professional autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

4.   **Understand the importance of, and be able to obtain, informed consent.**

   a)   Demonstrate competence in gaining informed consent to carry out assessments or provide interventions.

   b)   Understand the issues associated with incapacity and how to deal with service users who are not capable of giving consent.

   c)   Maintain accurate records relating to consent.

   d)   Respect the rights of the service user.

5.   **Be able to exercise a professional duty of care.**

   a)   Recognise personal responsibility for one's actions and be able to justify reasons for professional decisions made.

   b)   Understand the need to maintain the highest standards of personal/professional conduct.

6.   **Be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement.**

   a)   Know the limits of their practice and know when to seek advice or refer to another professional.

   b)   Recognise the need for consultation and supervision.

   c)   Be able to assess a situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the situation.

   d)   Be able to initiate appropriate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative.

   e)   Recognise that they are personally responsible for, and must be able to justify, their decisions.

Domain 1:   Professional autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

7.   Recognise the need for effective self-management of workload and resources and be able to practice accordingly.

    a)   Understand the demands that are placed on the professional practitioner in a given field and the skills required to practise effectively with the workload and available resources.

    b)   Be aware of responsibility to bring to the attention of management situations where unrealistic/unachievable demands are made of staff.

8.   Understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise.

    a)   Understand the need to practise safely and competently within their scope of practice.

    b)   Understand the importance of maintaining their physical and mental health.

    c)   Understand the importance of keeping skills and knowledge up to date over a lifetime of practice.

Domain 2:   Interpersonal and professional relationships

Graduates will:

1. **Work in partnership with service users and their relatives/supporters, groups and communities and other professionals.**

   a) Demonstrate capacity to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team.

   b) Demonstrate capacity to engage service users and carers in the assessment process, and planning and evaluating interventions to meet their needs and goals.

   c) Recognise and understand the concepts of power and authority in relationships with service users.

   d) Be able to make appropriate referrals.

2. **Contribute effectively to work undertaken as a member of a team
   (be it multi-disciplinary; interprofessional; multi-service or inter-agency).**

   a) Understand the role of professional collaboration, consultation and decision making in multi-disciplinary, inter-professional, multi-service and/or inter-agency teams.

   b) Demonstrate an understanding that relationships with professional colleagues can impact on service delivery and therefore should be based on mutual respect and trust.

Domain 3:   Effective communication

Graduates will:

1. **Demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, listening, giving advice, instruction and professional opinion.**

   a) Understand how communication skills affect the assessment of service users and clients and how the means and channels of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status.

   b) Demonstrate the ability to produce clear, concise, jargon-free written communications.

   c) Demonstrate the skill of writing reports, articulating the situation and drawing appropriate conclusions.

   d) Be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication, including listening skills, with service users and others.

   e) Demonstrate an appropriate level of skill in the use of information technology relevant to social work.

   f) Understand the importance of, and demonstrate effective communication with, other colleagues (inter-disciplinary communication) and management.

   g) Be aware of the characteristics and consequences of non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by, for example, culture, age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status.

   h) Understand the need to provide service users (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions.

   i) Understand the need to use an appropriate interpreter to assist patients/clients/service users with language and communication difficulties.

2. **Understand the need for effective communication throughout the care of the service user.**

   a) Recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to facilitate the active participation of service users.

   b) Show effectiveness in communication with involuntary service users and an ability to manage conflict and resistance.

   c) Demonstrate competence in presenting professional judgements and information in a variety of settings.

Domain 4: Personal and professional development

Graduates will:

1. **Understand the role of reflective practice in relation to personal and professional development.**

   a) Understand the importance of self-awareness and self-reflection.

   b) Be able to reflect critically on personal practice in order to be able to improve it.

   c) Be aware of the relationship between personal life experiences and personal value systems, and the impact these can have on one's decision-making or actions.

   d) Understand the role, purpose and function of supervision and the importance of seeking supervision to practice.

   e) Actively avail of opportunities for feedback, mentoring and support from senior colleagues in order to continuously improve personal practice.

   f) Take responsibility for personal and professional development.

   g) Develop and critically review a personal development plan which takes account of personal and professional needs.

   h) Identify and avail of opportunities to promote professional development of self, colleagues and teams and the broader development of disciplines.

   i) Understand the role of performance management as part of on-going professional development.

   j) Understand the role of continuing professional development and demonstrate commitment to life-long learning.

   k) Recognise the need to contribute to policy development.

   l) Recognise the contribution and value of research in developing evidence-informed practice.

Domain 5:   Provision of quality services

Graduates will:

1. **Be able to identify and assess service users' needs.**

   a) Be able to gather appropriate information.

   b) Fully engage service users in the assessment process.

   c) Undertake or arrange investigations as appropriate.

   d) Analyse and critically evaluate the information collected.

2. **Formulate and deliver plans and strategies to meet identified needs of service users.**

   a) Develop and deliver appropriate plans and strategies, according to best available evidence, agreed national guidelines, protocols and pathways, where available, in consultation with service users where appropriate.

   b) Identify needs and advocate for the resources required to meet the needs.

3. **Use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate action.**

   a) Recognise the value of research to the systematic evaluation of practice.

   b) Engage in evidence-informed practice, evaluate practice systematically, and participate in audit and review procedures.

   c) Be aware of a range of research and evaluative methodologies, including evidence-informed research.

   d) Demonstrate sound professional practice decision-making, which can be justified even when made on the basis of limited information.

   e) Demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem-solving.

4. **Draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements.**

   a) Understand the need to adjust/adapt their practice as needed to take account of new developments in knowledge and skills.

   b) Demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to social work.

Domain 5:   Provision of quality services

Graduates will:

5. **Formulate specific and appropriate management plans, including the setting of timescales.**

    a) Understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors.

6. **Use of safe work practices at all times in the interest of service users and staff.**

    a) Understand the need to maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care.

    b) Empower service users to manage their wellbeing and recognise the need to take responsibility for meeting their own needs with the support of professionals.

7. **Implement best practice in records management.**

    a) Keep accurate, legible and timely records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines.

    b) Understand the need to use accepted terminology in making records.

8. **Monitor and review on-going effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly.**

    a) Gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data that help to evaluate the responses of service users to their intervention.

    b) Evaluate intervention plans using tools and recognised performance/outcome measures. Revise the plans as necessary and, where appropriate, in conjunction with the service user.

    c) Recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement of programmes.

    d) Recognise important human factors and risk management measures, learn from adverse events and communicate learning.

    e) Under supervision, make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease interventions/techniques/courses of action and record the decisions and reasoning.

Domain 5:   Provision of quality services

Graduates will:

f)   Understand that outcomes may not always conform to expectations.

g)   Be aware of risk indicator measures in place in the workplace.

9. **Be able to evaluate audit and review practice.**

a)   Understand the principles of quality assurance and quality improvement.

b)   Be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including the use of appropriate outcome measures.

c)   Monitor and evaluate performance by conducting regular reviews in accordance with national guidelines/best practice and implement improvements based on the findings of these reviews.

d)   Participate in quality assurance programmes where appropriate.

e)   Understand the value of reflective practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection.

f)   Recognise the value of different methods of review.

Domain 6:   Knowledge, understanding and skills

Graduates will:

1. **Know and understand the essential knowledge areas relevant to social work.**

    a) Demonstrate a critical understanding of social work theory, methods and skills, social policy, sociology, psychology, social research, law and the legal system, economics, political science and other related social sciences.

    b) Demonstrate an understanding of the theories of individual and social development across the life span and within different cultures.

    c) Know and understand the principles and applications of social research, including the evaluation of intervention efficacy, the research process and evidence-informed practice.

    d) Demonstrate an understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to social work practice.

    e) Understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment/ diagnosis and intervention.

    f) Understand interpersonal and social structural influences on the individual, group and community, including marginalisation, stigma, discrimination and oppression.

    g) Have knowledge of economic perspectives on human interaction and social structures.

    h) Understand the rationale for government intervention (social, demographic, political and economic) and the impact on individuals, groups, communities and service delivery. Understand the political process and the process of public administration within Ireland at local and national level.

    i) Have knowledge of the roles of other professions in health and social care.

Domain 6:   Knowledge, understanding and skills

Graduates will:

2. **Have knowledge of how professional principles are expressed and translated into action through a number of different approaches to meet the needs of individuals, groups or communities.**

    a) Understand issues and trends in Irish public and social policy development which influence social work practice.

    b) Have knowledge of relevant legislation, regulations, national guidelines and standards, findings of inquiries, investigations and associated reports influencing social work practice with the full range of social work clients.

    c) Understand the concepts and frameworks underpinning theories of social work.

    d) Possess a rights-based and evidence-informed understanding of a range of social work methods in order to apply them to practice, which will provide a foundation for continuous professional development.

    e) Understand the role of interpersonal exchanges in identifying, releasing and appropriately managing the expression of emotions, enhanced by an understanding of the importance of self-awareness.

3. **Be able to understand, explain and apply generic skills and methods appropriate to delivering a range of social work interventions to meet different needs within a variety of settings.**

    a) Demonstrate assessment and intervention skills with an understanding of the process of social work intervention with individuals and groups.

    b) Demonstrate intervention skills of planning, implementation, evaluation and closure, contracting, negotiating and formulating plans with service users and providers.

    c) Demonstrate the theoretical knowledge and practice skills required to work therapeutically with individuals, children, families and groups, using a range of interventions appropriate to the needs of the service user.

    d) Have knowledge of the concepts and explanatory frameworks that underpin a range of individual counselling theory and practice; theory and practice of working with children and families; community work theory and practice and group work theory and practice.

    e) Demonstrate skills in advocacy on behalf of service users.

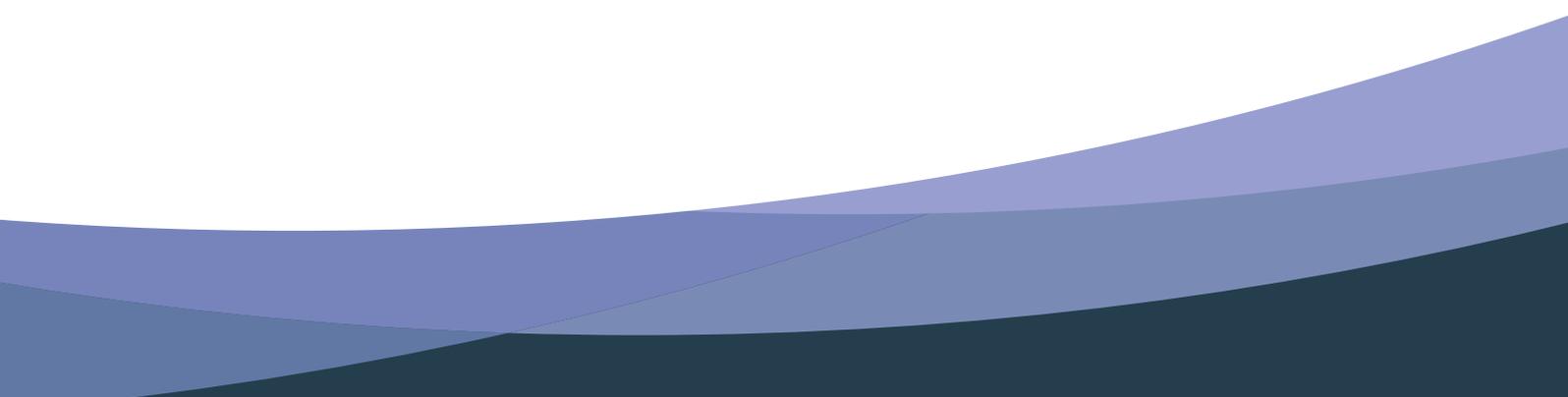# Domain 6:   Knowledge, understanding and skills

Graduates will:

4. **Have knowledge and understanding of the skills and elements required to maintain service user, self and staff safety.**

    a) Understand the importance of organisational systems and their impact on service user care.

    b) Understand risk assessment and risk management in relation to service users.

    c) Understand how to identify, prevent and manage risk and adverse events and demonstrate an openness to learn from errors.

    d) Understand the importance of communication with service users and staff.

    e) Be aware of applicable legislation, for example, health and safety legislation, employment legislation and relevant national guidelines.

    f) Recognise the need for safe environments for practice, which minimises risks to service users, those responsible for them, and others, including the use of hazard control and infection control.

    g) Undertake appropriate health and safety training.

Glossary of terms

Act	The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005.
Appeal	An application for reconsideration of a decision regarding approval of a programme.
Approval	The status granted to a programme that meets the criteria set by the relevant Registration Board for approval of education and training programmes.
Approval process	The process that leads to a decision as to whether a programme meets the criteria set for approval of education and training programmes.
Assessment Team	An assessment team, selected from the Panel of Assessors, to carry out the approval process for an education and training programme.
Award	An award conferred or granted by an awarding body which records that a learner has acquired a standard of knowledge, skills or competence.
Biennial monitoring	A biennial process where a provider confirms that the approved programme continues to meet the criteria for approval.
Code of professional ethics	A statement of the standards that registrants sign up to conduct and agree to abide by in order to remain on the Register.
Council	The Health and Social Care Professionals Council, established under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005.
Criterion	A principle or standard that an education and training programme is judged by.
Curriculum	A structured plan to provide specific learning to support students' knowledge, skills, behaviours and associated learning experiences. The learning plan is generally organised as a sequence of modules. The curriculum includes the syllabus, teaching guides, an assessment plan and necessary learning resources.
Designated profession	A health or social care profession that is designated under Section 4(1) or Section 4(2) of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005.
Education provider (Provider)	The institution that provides, organises and delivers an education and training programme.

Framework	The broad structure within which registration boards will operate in relation to the approval and monitoring of education and training programmes.
Indicators	The means by which a provider shows how a programme satisfies the criteria for approval.
Major change	A change to a programme of study that significantly alters the way the programme meets the criteria for approval of education and training programmes and therefore how the students will attain the standards of proficiency. Not all changes to a programme are major changes.
Mapping document	Template document to be completed by the education provider.
Monitoring	The process of ensuring the continuing suitability of approved education and training programmes.
National Framework of Qualifications	The single, nationally and internationally accepted, entity through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between all education and training awards.
Panel of Assessors	A panel appointed by a Registration Board comprising academics, practitioners, employers and service users.
Practice placement	A period of clinical or practical experience that forms part of an approved programme.
Practice placement educator	A person who is responsible for a student's education. during the period of clinical or practical placement.
Practice placement provider	The organisation that provides a period of clinical or practical experience for a student.
Profession-specific proficiencies	Proficiencies added by a registration board related to a named profession.
Programme	The academic teaching, practice placements, assessment, qualification and other services provided by the education provider, which together form the programme for approval purposes.
Quality assurance procedures	Formal procedures that are in place in an institution for the purpose of further improving and maintaining the quality of education and training provided by the institution.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	Refers to recognition of learning that has taken place prior to entering a programme. Such prior learning may have been acquired through formal, non-formal or informal routes.
Register	A register established and maintained under Section 36 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005.
Registrant	In relation to a designated profession, this means an individual whose name is currently on the register of members for that profession.
Registration Board	A board established under Section 26 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005.
Self-study	The process whereby a provider of a programme examines and documents to a registration board how that programme meets the criteria for approval of programmes.
Service user	Anyone who uses or is affected by the services of registrants or students.
Site visit	A site visit refers to the visit of an assessment team to an education provider for the purpose of approval or review of a programme.
Standards of proficiency	These are the standards required of graduates for the safe and effective practice of the professions regulated by the Council. They are the minimum standards necessary to protect the public.
Tutor	Member of staff of the provider assigned to a student while the student is on practice placement.