



Education and training: approved mental health professions (AMHP) guidance

Last updated 12 February 2020

Contents

Introduction	3
Part 1: education providers	6
Part 2: approved mental health professionals	11
Appendix 1: Mapping AMHP criteria to the education and training standards.....	15

Introduction

This document sets out the approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) courses.

The purpose of these criteria is to set out the level of training necessary to provide safe and effective AMHP practice. They are the threshold criteria we consider necessary to protect members of the public. To do so they:

- set out the processes and procedures that an education provider delivering AMHP training must have in place in order to deliver training safely and effectively; and
- set out the knowledge, understanding and skills that an individual must have when they complete their AMHP training.

About AMHP practice

AMHPs exercise functions under the Mental Health Act 1983. Those functions relate to decisions made about individuals with mental disorders, including the decision to apply for compulsory admission to hospital.

Social workers, mental health and learning disabilities nurses, occupational therapists and practitioner psychologists, registered with their respective regulator, may train to become an AMHP.

Successful completion of an approved course only makes an individual eligible to be approved to act as an AMHP. Only those who have completed approved training and have been approved to act as an AMHP by a local social services authority in England may perform the functions of an AMHP.

Our expectations of education providers

We will approve and monitor AMHP education and training courses against the criteria set out in this document. Our education quality assurance team is responsible for conducting approval visits to AMHP education providers to ensure their courses have the processes and procedures in place as outlined in part 1 of this guidance, and are delivering the knowledge, understanding and skills outlined in part 2. If a course meets the criteria, we grant approval, subject to ongoing monitoring and reapproval.

We have set threshold criteria which ensure the outcomes of education and training and do not dictate how education providers should meet the criteria. This is because there is normally more than 1 way in which the criteria can be met and the way in which they are met may change over time because of improvements in technology or changes to practice.

However, we have produced a mapping document which maps the criteria in this document to our existing education and training standards guidance. This provides more information as to how the criteria could be implemented in practice and is available at appendix 1 of this document.

There is further information for education providers on our [website](#) about preparing for an approval visit, completing annual monitoring submissions, or making significant changes to courses.

Our expectations of individual AMHPs

These criteria do not replace other standards that either we, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) or the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) set, and AMHPs will need to draw on these other standards to support their wider practice.

We expect social workers to keep to our professional standards including standards for [continuing professional development](#). For example, nurses will also be expected to keep to the standards that the NMC set.

Given that the AMHP role applies to multiple professions who practice in different environments, we do not stipulate how individuals completing AMHP courses must be able to demonstrate the competencies set out in part 2 of the criteria after training.

As autonomous professionals, individuals completing approved AMHP courses will need to make informed and reasoned decisions about their practice to ensure that they meet the criteria that apply to them. This includes seeking advice and support from education providers, employers, colleagues, professional bodies, unions and others to ensure that the wellbeing of people with lived experience of social work is safeguarded at all times.

A professional is likely to meet our criteria where they can demonstrate that they have sought, considered and acted upon advice from an appropriate range of such sources. Individuals completing approved mental health professional or best interests assessor (BIA) training, can request to have it added to our online register as an annotation.

This means that if someone searches for that person on the register, they will also see that they have this additional specialism. More information about this can be found on the [website](#).

Language

We recognise that the use of terminology can be a sensitive issue, particularly around issues about mental health. We have decided that it is appropriate for us to use the language of mental health legislation and refer to 'mental disorder' in the criteria.

The criteria use phrases such as 'understand' and 'be able to apply'. This is so that they are applicable to those completing AMHP courses that have not yet started practising as an AMHP.

Part 1: education providers

This section sets out criteria around how an education provider must design and deliver an AMHP course.

1. Course admissions

- 1.1: The admissions procedures must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a course.
- 1.2: The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and professional entry standards.
- 1.3: The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.
- 1.4: The admissions procedures must ensure that the education provider has equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

2. Course management and resources

- 2.1: The course must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.
- 2.2: The course must be effectively managed.
- 2.3: The course must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.
- 2.4: There must be a named person who has overall professional responsibility for the course who must be appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other

arrangements are agreed, be on the relevant part of an appropriate professional register.

- 2.5: There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified, experienced and, where required, registered staff in place to deliver an effective course.
- 2.6: Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.
- 2.7: A course for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.
- 2.8: The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.
- 2.9: The resources to support student learning in all settings must effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the course.
- 2.10: The learning resources, including IT facilities, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.
- 2.11: There must be adequate and accessible facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of students in all settings.
- 2.12: There must be a system of academic and pastoral student support in place.
- 2.13: There must be a student complaints process in place.
- 2.14: Throughout the duration of the course, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.
- 2.15: People with lived experience of social work and carers must be involved in the course.

3. Curriculum

- 3.1: The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the course meet the criteria in part 2 of these standards.
- 3.2: The course must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.
- 3.3: Integration of theory and practice must be central to the curriculum.
- 3.4: The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.
- 3.5: The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of Social Work England's professional standards and/or the NMC's code: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives on their practice as an AMHP.
- 3.6: The delivery of the course must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.
- 3.7: The delivery of the course must encourage evidence-based practice.
- 3.8: The range of learning and teaching approaches used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum.

4. Practice placements

- 4.1: Practice placements must be integral to the course.
- 4.2: The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the course and the achievement of the learning outcomes.
- 4.3: The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment.

- 4.4: The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.
- 4.5: The placement providers must have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.
- 4.6: There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified, experienced and, where required, registered staff at the practice placement setting.
- 4.7: Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.
- 4.8: Practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.
- 4.9: Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.
- 4.10: There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider.
- 4.11: Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement, which will include information about an understanding of:
 - the learning outcomes to be achieved;
 - the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;
 - expectations of professional conduct;
- the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and
- communication and lines of responsibility.
- 4.12: Learning, teaching and supervision must encourage safe and effective practice, independent learning and professional conduct.

- 4.13: A range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of people with lived experience of social work and colleagues must be in place throughout practice placements.

5. Assessment

- 5.1: The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the course has met the competencies set out in part 2 of the standards criteria.
- 5.2: All assessments must provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external-reference frameworks can be measured.
- 5.3: Professional aspects of practice must be integral to the assessment procedures in both the education setting and practice placement setting.
- 5.4: Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes.
- 5.5: The measurement of student performance must be objective and ensure safe and effective practice as an AMHP.
- 5.6: There must be effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment.
- 5.7: Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the course.
- 5.8: Assessment regulations must clearly specify that any requirements for an aegrotat award which may be made will not lead to eligibility to be approved as an AMHP.
- 5.9: Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for a procedure for the right of appeal for students.
- 5.10: Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least 1 external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified

and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of an appropriate professional register.

Part 2: approved mental health professionals

Education providers must make sure that professionals who complete their AMHP training can meet the criteria set out in this section. We have based these criteria on Schedule 2 to the Mental Health (Approved Mental Health Professionals) (Approval) (England) Regulations 2008.

A. Knowledge

- A1: Understand legislation, related codes of practice, and national and local policy and guidance applicable to the role of an AMHP and be able to apply this in practice.
- A2: Understand the legal position and accountability of AMHPs, employers, and the authority the AMHP is acting for in relation to the Mental Health Act 1983.
- A3: Understand a range of models of mental disorder and be able to apply them in practice.
- A4: Understand the contribution and impact of social, physical and development factors on mental health, and be able to apply this in practice.
- A5: Understand the social perspective on mental disorders and mental health needs in working with people with lived experience of social work, their relatives, carers and other professionals, and be able to apply this in practice.
- A6: Understand the implications of mental disorders for people with lived experience of social work, their relatives, carers and other professionals, and be able to apply this in practice.

- A7: Understand the implications of a range of treatments and interventions for people with lived experience of social work, their relatives and carers, and be able to apply this in practice.
- A8: Understand child and adult protection procedures in relation to AMHP practice.
- A9: Understand the needs of children and young people and their families, and the impact those needs have on AMHP practice.

B. Autonomous practice

- B1: Be able to exercise appropriate use of independence, authority and autonomy in the AMHP role.
- B2: Be able to recognise, assess and manage the risks related to the AMHP role effectively.
- B3: Be able to manage anxiety, risk and conflict, and understand its impact on AMHP practice.

C. Informed decision making

- C1: Be able to evaluate critically local and national policy to inform AMHP practice.
- C2: Be able to draw on, and evaluate critically, a range of research relevant to evidence based AMHP practice.
- C3 : Be able to gather, analyse and share information appropriately.

D. Equality and diversity

- D1: Be able to demonstrate sensitivity to factors such as race, gender, age, sexuality, disability, culture, religion and belief in AMHP practice.
- D2: Be able to identify, challenge and redress discrimination and inequality in AMHP practice.
- D3: Understand and respect people with lived experience of social work's qualities, abilities and diverse backgrounds.
- D4: Be able to promote the rights, dignity and self-determination of people with lived experience of social work consistent with their own needs and wishes to enable them to contribute to the decisions made affecting their quality of life and liberty.
- D5: Be able to demonstrate sensitivity to a person with lived experience of social work's needs for personal respect, confidentiality, choice, dignity and privacy.

E. Communication

- E1: Be able to communicate effectively with people with lived experience of social work, relatives and carers when undertaking the AMHP role.
- E2: Be able to communicate advice, instruction, information and professional opinion, including providing verbal and written reports.
- E3: Be able to present a case at a legal hearing.
- E4: Be able to balance and manage the competing requirements of confidentiality and effective information sharing to the benefit of the person with lived experience of social work and other persons concerned with their care.

F. Collaborative working

- F1: Be able to work with people with lived experience of social work, carers and others to evaluate the outcomes of interventions and identify any unmet needs.
- F2: Be able to build and sustain effective professional relationships with people with lived experience of social work, relatives and carers when undertaking the AMHP role.
- F3: Be able to work as an AMHP in partnership with others, including interagency and interprofessional working.
- F4: Understand the roles and responsibilities of other professionals involved in statutory mental health work.
- F5: Be able to use networks and community groups to influence collaborative working with people with lived experience of social work, agencies and advocates.

G. Assessment and intervention

- G1: Be able to make appropriate decisions that are sensitive to the needs of the person with lived experience of social work.
- G2: Be able to assess the feasibility of, and contribute effectively to, planning and implementing options for care of the person with lived experience of social work.
- G3: Be able to plan, negotiate and manage compulsory admission to hospital or arrangements for supervised community treatment.
- G4: Be able to manage and coordinate effectively the relevant legal and practical processes, including the involvement of other professionals, as well as people with lived experience of social work, relatives and carers.
- G5: Be able to complete statutory documentation, including an application for admission, and written records in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines.

Appendix 1: Mapping AMHP criteria to the education and training standards

The purpose of this document is to provide a useful reference of the criteria in part 1 to the education and training standards.

View the [education and training standards guidance](#).

Programme admissions

AMHP criteria for course providers	Education and training standards
<p>1.1 The admissions procedures must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a course.</p>	<p>2.1 The admissions process will give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a course.</p>
<p>1.2 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and professional entry standards.</p>	<p>2.2 The selection and entry criteria will include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.</p>
<p>1.3 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.</p>	<p>2.6 There will be an appropriate and effective process for assessing applicants' prior learning and experience.</p>
<p>1.4 The admissions procedures must ensure that the education provider has equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.</p>	<p>2.7 The education provider will ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.</p>

Programme management and resources

AMHP criteria for course providers	Education and training standards
2.1 The course must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.	3.1 The course will be sustainable and fit for purpose.
2.2 The course must be effectively managed.	3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.
2.3 The course must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.	3.4 The course will have regular and effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place.
2.4 There must be a named person who has overall professional responsibility for the course who must be appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be on the relevant part of an appropriate professional register.	3.3 The education provider will ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the course is appropriately qualified and experienced and on the register.
2.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified, experienced and, where required, registered staff in place to deliver an effective course.	3.9 There will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective course.
2.6 Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.	3.10 Subject areas will be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expert.

AMHP criteria for course providers	Education and training standards
2.7 A course for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.	3.11 An effective course will be in place to ensure the continuing professional and academic development of educators, appropriate to their role in the course.
2.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.	3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings will be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the course and will be accessible to all students and educators.
2.9 The resources to support student learning in all settings must effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the course.	3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings will be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the course and will be accessible to all students and educators.
2.10 The learning resources, including IT facilities, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.	3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings will be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the course and will be accessible to all students and educators.
2.11 There must be adequate and accessible facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of students in all settings.	3.13 There will be effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the wellbeing and learning needs of students in all settings.
2.12 There must be a system of academic and pastoral student support in place.	3.13 There will be effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the wellbeing and learning needs of students in all settings.

AMHP criteria for course providers	Education and training standards
2.13 There must be a student complaints process in place.	3.15 There will be a thorough and effective process in place for receiving and responding to student complaints.
2.14 Throughout the duration of the course, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.	4.11 The education provider will identify and communicate to students the parts of the course where attendance is mandatory and will have associated monitoring processes in place.
2.15 People with lived experience of social work and carers must be involved in the course.	3.7 People with lived experience of social work will be involved in the course.

Curriculum

AMHP criteria for course providers	Education and training standards
3.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the course meet the criteria in part 2.	
3.2 The course must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.	4.3 The course will reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.
3.3 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the curriculum.	4.5 Integration of theory and practice will be central to the course.
3.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.	4.4 The curriculum will remain relevant to current practice.
3.5 The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of Social Work England’s professional standards and / or the NMC’s code: <i>Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives</i> on their practice as an AMHP.	4.2 The learning outcomes will ensure that students understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour.
3.6 The delivery of the course must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.	4.7 The delivery of the course will support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.

AMHP criteria for course providers	Education and training standards
3.7 The delivery of the course must encourage evidence-based practice.	4.8 The delivery of the course will support and develop evidence-based practice.
3.8 The range of learning and teaching approaches used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum.	4.6 The learning and teaching methods used will be appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.

Practice placements

AMHP criteria for course providers	Education and training standards
4.1 Practice placements must be integral to the course.	5.1 Practice based learning will be integral to the course.
4.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the course and the achievement of the learning outcomes.	5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice based learning will support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the professional standards.
4.3 The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment.	5.4 Practice based learning will take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for students and people with lived experience of social work.
4.4 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.	5.3 The education provider will maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice based learning.
4.5 The placement providers must have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.	<p>5.3 The education provider will maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice based learning.</p> <p>3.14 The course will implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to students.</p>

AMHP criteria for course providers	Education and training standards
4.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified, experienced and, where required, registered staff at the practice placement setting.	5.5 There will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice based learning.
4.7 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.	5.6 Practice educators will have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, will be on the register.
4.8 Practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.	5.7 Practice educators will undertake regular training, which is appropriate to their role, students' needs, and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the course.
4.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.	5.6 Practice educators will have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, will be on the register.
4.10 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider.	5.4 Practice based learning will take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for students and people with lived experience of social work.

AMHP criteria for course providers	Education and training standards
<p>4.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the learning outcomes to be achieved; • the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained; • expectations of professional conduct; • the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and • communication and lines of responsibility. 	<p>5.8 Students and practice educators will have the information they need in a timely manner in order to be prepared for practice based learning.</p>
<p>4.12 Learning, teaching and supervision must encourage safe and effective practice, independent learning and professional conduct.</p>	<p>5.4 Practice based learning will take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for students and people with lived experience of social work.</p>

AMHP criteria for course providers	Education and training standards
	5.5 There will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice based learning.
4.13 A range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of people with lived experience of social work and colleagues must be in place throughout practice placements.	<p>5.4 Practice based learning will take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for students and people with lived experience of social work.</p> <p>5.5 There will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice based learning.</p> <p>5.6 Practice educators will have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, will be on the register.</p>

Assessment

AMHP criteria for course providers	Education and training standards
5.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the course has met the competencies set out in part 2 of the criteria.	6.1 The assessment strategy and design will ensure that those who successfully complete the course meet Social Work England’s professional standards.
5.2 All assessments must provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external reference frameworks can be measured.	6.1 The assessment strategy and design will ensure that those who successfully complete the course meet Social Work England’s professional standards.
5.3 Professional aspects of practice must be integral to the assessment procedures in both the education setting and practice placement setting.	6.1 The assessment strategy and design will ensure that those who successfully complete the course meet Social Work England’s professional standards.
5.4 Assessment methods must be employed that measures the learning outcomes.	6.5 The assessment methods used will be appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes.
5.5 The measurement of student performance must be objective and ensure safe and effective practice as an AMHP.	6.3 Assessments will provide an objective, fair and reliable measure of students’ progression and achievement.

AMHP criteria for course providers	Education and training standards
<p>5.6 There must be effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment.</p>	<p>6.4 Assessment policies will clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the course.</p> <p>6.5 The assessment methods used will be appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes.</p>
<p>5.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the course.</p>	<p>6.4 Assessment policies will clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the course.</p>
<p>5.8 Assessment regulations must clearly specify that any requirements for an aegrotat award which may be made will not lead to eligibility to be approved as an AMHP.</p>	
<p>5.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for a procedure for the right of appeal for students.</p>	<p>6.4 Assessment policies will clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the course.</p>

5.10 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least 1 external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of an appropriate professional register.

6.6 The education provider will ensure that at least 1 external examiner for the course is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the register.