

## Think Ahead - How do we assess an applicant's suitability for the Think Ahead Programme?

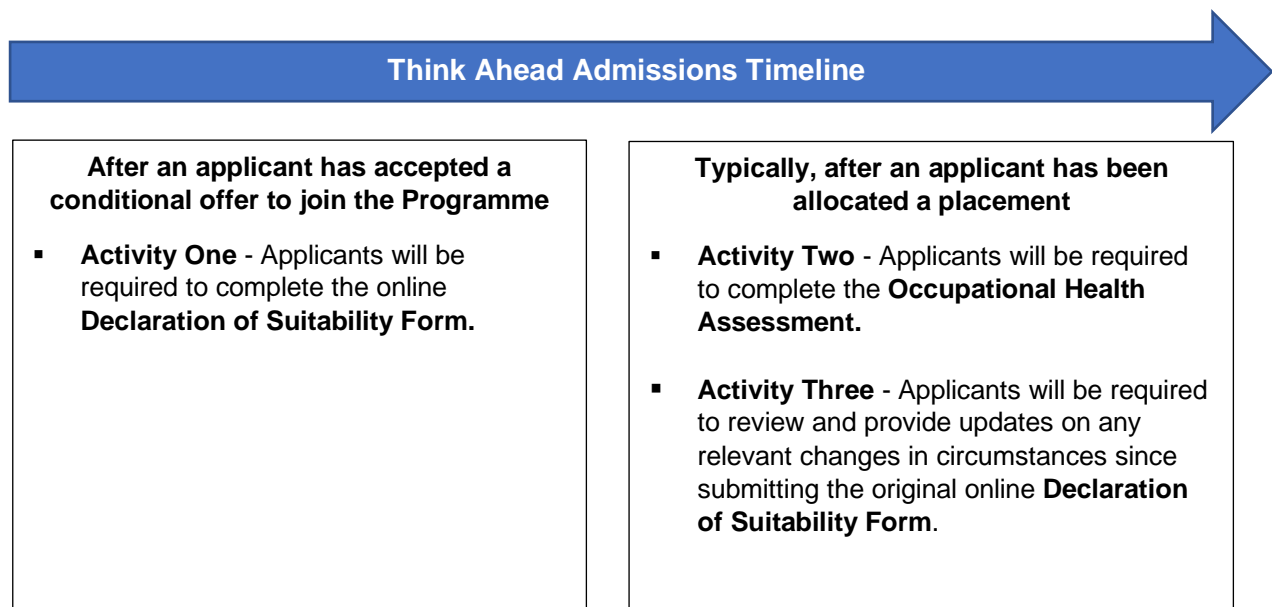
### Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline the process Think Ahead and Middlesex University admission teams undertake to assess whether an applicant is suitable to enter social work training on the Think Ahead programme as per the Qualifying Education and Training Standards set by the professional regulator Social Work England (SWE). This includes an assessment of the applicant's health, conduct and character. We recognise however that in many instances there is no simple criterion of suitability and thus each case will be assessed individually using our professional judgment.

The Think Ahead programme is inclusive and welcomes applications from a wide range of people from diverse backgrounds. It does not wish to exclude applicants on the basis of their current or previous criminal or disciplinary records, health and well-being status, or history with social service departments. Where an applicant's additional learning and / or support needs are identified through this process, Think Ahead and Middlesex University will aim to make reasonable adjustments and provide support accordingly.

### What are the types of activities used to assess an applicant's suitability?

Across the Think Ahead Admissions timeline, there are several key activities relating to the assessment of suitability each applicant will be required to undertake. These are summarised below:



Please note, if any issues / support needs are identified throughout the above assessment process, you will need to undertake a separate and additional assessment with each relevant organisation (i.e. Middlesex University or the Host Organisation) prior to the start of the programme to ensure that reasonable adjustments and support are put in place at University and on placement.

This may mean that the information and supporting evidence provided elsewhere in the assessment process may need to be provided again. Where possible, we will share information with each organisation to minimise duplication, but this is unfortunately unavoidable.

## **What does each activity involve – and how are issues raised and assessed?**

### **What does the Declaration of Suitability Form involve? (Activity One and Three)**

Applicants will be required to complete the online Declaration of Suitability Form. The purpose of the form is to enable applicants to declare and provide further information to Think Ahead and Middlesex University about the status and history of the following factors (where applicable):

- Any pre-existing physical health or mental health conditions that may impact on your ability to study including in a practice-based learning environment;
- Any pre-existing disabilities;
- Any current and previous criminal convictions, cautions and disciplinary issues;
- Any current and previous involvement with social service departments;
- Any previous work experience in a regulated profession;
- Any current additional learning / accessibility adjustments needed for support on the programme.

**Please note that you are not required to make a declaration about health problems that do not impinge upon your capacity to study or practice, or that in the normal course of your social work duties, would not present a risk to others.**

### **What happens if an issue relating to an applicant's suitability, or conduct is identified in the Declaration of Suitability Form?**

#### **a) Referral to the Admissions Review panel**

In the first instance, the case will be referred to a review panel of Middlesex and Think Ahead staff, which will comprise at least two of the following staff members;

- Think Ahead Programme Director.
- Think Ahead Lead Practice Specialist.
- Middlesex University Director of Programmes.
- Middlesex University Programme Leader.

Relevant aspects of the case may be discussed consultation with the following parties (where applicable):

- The applicant.
- Middlesex University Head of Department.
- Middlesex University Chair of Fitness to Practice / Student Health and Wellbeing.
- Operational Lead from Host Organisation

#### **b) Review by the Admissions review panel**

The review panel will convene every two weeks. Each case will be considered individually by each panel member and assessed in consultation with the above parties where applicable and in line with guidance from [SWE's Qualifying Education and Training Standards](#) and Middlesex University's Admissions adherence to [The British Association of Social Workers \(BASW\) point of entry guidance](#).

Key considerations for the review may include the following factors, but are by no means an exhaustive list:

- Whether the applicant has been previously barred/disciplined from a regulated profession.
- Whether the nature of any disciplinary / criminal convictions were violent or bring trustworthiness into disrepute.
- The time since any disciplinary / criminal convictions have been spent.



To help the panel make a final decision the applicant may be asked to provide further information at this stage.

### **c) Decision by the Admissions review panel**

The review panel will make a decision to either approve or reject a case following its referral to the panel.

If a case is approved, the applicant will proceed through the admissions process as planned. Applicants may be asked to have a further conversation with their Practice Specialist and with the Think Ahead Programme Health and Wellbeing Associate to ensure that all support needs are fully understood. They may also be referred to Middlesex University and / or Host Organisation for an additional assessment to be undertaken where applicable.

If a case is rejected, the applicant will be informed of the outcome and the reasons why and advised whether a future application will be considered.

### **What does the Occupational Health Assessment involve? (Activity Two)**

Applicants will be required to complete an Occupational Health Assessment. The purpose of the Assessment is to assess the following factors:

- What level of impact any pre-existing physical health or mental health conditions may have on an applicant's ability to study, including in a practice-based environment;
- What level of impact any pre-existing disabilities on an applicant's participation on the programme;
- Whether there are any other current additional learning / accessibility or other reasonable adjustments that can be put in place to support a participant to successfully complete the programme.

### **What happens after the Occupational Health Assessment?**

**If you are cleared to start the placement with no reasonable adjustments identified or with minor reasonable adjustments identified, then this information will be passed to Middlesex University and to your Host Organisation.**

**However, if significant reasonable adjustments are identified or you are not cleared for placement, you will be referred to the Admissions Review Panel.**

#### **a) Referral to the Admissions Review panel**

In the first instance, the case will be referred to a review panel of Middlesex and Think Ahead staff, which will comprise at least two of the following staff members;

- Think Ahead Programme Director.
- Think Ahead Lead Practice Specialist.
- Middlesex University Director of Studies.
- Middlesex University Programme Leader.

Relevant aspects of the case may be discussed consultation with the following parties (where applicable):

- The applicant
- Middlesex University Head of Department.
- Middlesex University Chair of Fitness to Practice / Student Health and Wellbeing.



#### **b) Review by the Admissions review panel**

The review panel will convene every two weeks. Each case will be considered individually by each panel member and assessed in consultation with the above parties where applicable and in line with guidance from SWE's Qualifying Education and Training Standards and Middlesex University's Admissions adherence to [The British Association of Social Workers \(BASW\) point of entry guidance](#).

Key considerations for the review may include the following factors, but are by no means an exhaustive list:

- Whether Middlesex University and / or the Host Organisation can provide reasonable adjustments / support to meet identified needs.
- Whether the applicant's personal health, safety and well-being may be significantly impacted through participation on the Programme.

#### **c) Decision by the Admissions review panel**

The review panel will make a decision to either approve or reject a case following its referral to the panel.

If a case is approved, the applicant will proceed through the admissions process as planned. Applicants may be asked to have a further conversation with their Practice Specialist and with the Think Ahead Programme Health and Wellbeing Associate to ensure that all support needs are fully understood. They may also be referred to Middlesex University and / or Host Organisation for an additional assessment to be undertaken where applicable.

If a case is rejected, the applicant will be informed of the outcome and the reasons why and advised whether a future application will be considered.