



Module Specification

Best Interest Assessment

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Contents

Module Specification	1
Part 1: Information	2
Part 2: Description	2
Part 3: Teaching and learning methods	5
Part 4: Assessment.....	6
Part 5: Contributes towards	7

Part 1: Information

Module title: Best Interest Assessment

Module code: UZVSBP-30-3

Level: Level 6

For implementation from: 2025-26

UWE credit rating: 30

ECTS credit rating: 15

College: College of Health, Science & Society

School: CHSS School of Health and Social Wellbeing

Partner institutions: None

Field: Health, Community and Policy Studies

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: Yes

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: This is a 30 credit Level 6 (final year of undergraduate degree) Best Interests Assessor (BIA) qualifying module (taught alongside Level 7, Masters). It is designed to prepare qualified, registered and experienced health and social care professionals for qualified practice as BIAs, as set out in the BIA regulations for the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (2009) amendment to the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Features: Module Entry Requirements:

Students must

Have evidence of the completion of a relevant professional qualification as social worker, nurse, occupational therapist or psychologist

Have current relevant professional registration as set out in regulations for the Best Interests Assessor (BIA) role within the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) (2009) amendment to the Mental Capacity Act 2005

Have evidence on application for the module that they will be supported by a local authority DoLS supervisory body in England or Wales to observe qualified BIA assessment practice

Educational aims: This module aims to equip experienced health and social care professionals with the skills and knowledge required for ethical human rights based, mental capacity practice within the statutory role of the Best Interests Assessor (BIA).

The module learning outcomes are mapped to the Social Work England 6 BIA capabilities to evidence they will ensure those qualifying will have the knowledge and skills required to practice as a qualified BIA.

Outline syllabus: This module enables students to develop the knowledge and skills required to meet the 6 BIA capabilities required for BIA practice, as evidenced in the module learning outcomes mapping. This module has been redeveloped to ensure it to meet the requirements of the Social Work England BIA education standards from summer 2025 for an accredited BIA qualifying module. This will enable local authorities, in their role as supervisory bodies within the DoLS legal framework, to ensure they have sufficient professional staff qualified in this essential legal safeguarding role.

The teaching on the module is split into two blocks. The first block focusses on mental capacity, deprivation of liberty and human rights law and is followed by an online law exam. This will allow students to have feedback on their progress during the module. The second block of teaching focusses on applying that law to practice

and is followed by a reflection on practice and academic assignment where students will critique their experiences of observing a qualified BIA in practice.

Overall, students learn about the challenges and complexities of applying mental capacity and human rights law and policy to practice in the health and social care context with input from experienced practitioners. These may include BIAs, social workers, Approved Mental Health Professionals, advocates, supervisory body leads and people with lived experience. Ethical and values informed approaches to contested professional decision-making in the context of restrictive care that may necessitate depriving the person of their Article 5 human right to liberty will be explored in large and small group discussions, using case examples drawn from practice and key case law.

Students will draw on their professional practice backgrounds and experience to develop their understanding of safeguarding the human rights of those who lack mental capacity in the complex interprofessional health and social care institutional settings relevant to BIA practice. Students will draw on relevant theory and research related to ethics and rights to gain critical expertise in the assessment, decision-making, communication and recording required for the BIA role. They will explore how to ensure people with limited mental capacity can be centred in assessment and decision making about their rights and what is necessary and proportionate to safeguard them from the risk of harm.

A key element of the module involves students observing and reflecting on the professional practice of those conducting the BIA role with adults subject to DoLS and using these experiences for critical reflection in the assignment. This element relies on the support of local authority supervisory bodies to offer these opportunities which must be verified by students on application for the module. Students will also participate in a small group formative learning experience involving a case study DoLS assessment on standard documentation to practice making BIA decisions and recording them effectively. They will receive feedback from experienced practitioners which offers the opportunity for peer learning and critical reflection on practice.

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: A variety of approaches will be used including formal lectures, interactive workshops including case study activities, small group discussions and peer-led applied learning building to a presentation with expert feedback. Teaching is solely online, reflecting the challenging context for ongoing professional learning and offering accessibility of this learning to students across England and Wales.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Evaluate the statutory and professional requirements and challenges of applying the Mental Capacity Act 2005, as amended in 2009, other relevant legal frameworks and case law to practice as a Best Interests Assessor (BIA).

MO2 Apply the theoretical and research evidence base for professional practice to the BIA role, including promoting the voice of the assessed person, acknowledging other professional perspectives and advocacy in contested decision-making on risk in ethical practice.

MO3 Explore relevant interpersonal strategies for BIA practice, including engaging people with communication and capacity issues, informing the assessed adult and other lay people of the nature of the BIA role and promoting the assessed person's rights in person-centred practice.

MO4 Identify how discrimination and oppression affects decision-making with diverse people who may lack mental capacity and need restrictive care to keep themselves safe, and explore strategies to ensure the principles of best interests and less restrictive decision making remain at the heart of BIA practice.

MO5 Explore the application of professional autonomy to develop evidence-informed arguments in BIA decision-making and recording, supporting the formation of an appropriately assertive BIA identity, at personal, professional and organisational levels.

Hours to be allocated: 300

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 228 hours

Face-to-face learning = 72 hours

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/0AF309B8-0CF7-3425-45AA-2142CAA5EDC8.html?lang=en-GB&login=1) via the following link <https://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/0AF309B8-0CF7-3425-45AA-2142CAA5EDC8.html?lang=en-GB&login=1>

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: Assessment Task 1:

A 2 hour open book law exam that students will have 24 hours to complete online. Knowledge of the statute and case law related to BIA practice is essential for competent practice so this is designed for students to evidence their essential legal literacy. This assessment will take place at the end of the first block of module teaching and offers a feedback point for students so they are aware of their progression to that point.

Assessment Task 2 is a 3000 word critically reflective assignment. The assignment comprises a) 1000 word reflective, anonymised account of one observed BIA assessment and b) 2000 word analysis of the ethical and professional challenges of BIA practice based on the same BIA observation. This assessment will give students the opportunity to offer their critically informed insight into how BIAs apply the law, make ethical, human rights-informed decisions about risk and explore any professional practice challenges.

By linking the assessments to both the teaching and observed practice, students will have the opportunity to evidence their ability to apply their knowledge of the law to an example of BIA practice and receive detailed academic feedback.

Formative assessment includes in-class feedback and peer, qualified BIA and tutor feedback on a group case study presentation.

Assessment tasks:

Examination (Online) (First Sit)

Description: A 2 hour open book law exam that students will have 24 hours to complete online

Weighting: 40 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1

Written Assignment (First Sit)

Description: Maximum 3000 word written assignment.

Weighting: 60 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5

Examination (Online) (Resit)

Description: A 2 hour open book law exam that students will have 24 hours to complete online

Weighting: 40 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1

Written Assignment (Resit)

Description: Maximum 3000 word written assignment.

Weighting: 60 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study: