

Mental Health Practice PGD/MA Programme Specification

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/mental-health-practice/>

Academic Year:	2024/25
Degree Awarding Body:	The University of Bradford
Target Awards:	Degree of Master of Arts (MA) Mental Health Practice; Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) Mental Health Practice [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level 7]
Interim/exit award:	Postgraduate Certificate (PGC) Mental Health Studies [FHEQ Level 7]
Programme Admission:	September
Programme Modes of Study:	12-18 months part-time (towards PGD award) 18-36 months part-time (towards MA award)

This programme is accredited by Social Work England (SWE).

Please note: This programme specification has been published in advance of the academic year to which it applies. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate at the time of publication, but changes may occur given the interval between publishing and commencement of teaching. Any change which impacts the terms and conditions of an applicant's offer will be communicated to them. Upon commencement of the programme, students will receive further detail about their course and any minor changes will be discussed and/or communicated at this point.

Minor Modification Schedule

1. March 2020: PSRB changed to Social Work England
2. December 2020: Specification reformatted and made accessible
3. June 2021: Annual changes for 2021 academic year
4. October 2022: Annual changes for 2022 academic year confirmed
5. April 2024: Annual update for 2024 academic year

Introduction

The aim of this programme is to meet the continuing professional development needs of mental health professionals and, in particular to offer training for Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHPs) in accordance with the Approval Criteria for Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) programmes issued by Social Work England the programme therefore offers both academic and professional outcomes.

Academic outcomes are available at Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Masters level. The professional status of AMHP is conferred by the relevant local authority on those designated professionals who have successfully completed a Social Work England approved training and education programme. On successful completion of AMHP training students will therefore be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Diploma in Mental Health Practice and eligible for approval as an AMHP by the relevant local authority. After

completing the Postgraduate Diploma students will also have the option of continuing their studies to achieve the MA Mental Health Practice.

All students who intend to achieve AMHP status will register for the Postgraduate Diploma in Mental Health Practice. In the event that a student enrolled for the Postgraduate Diploma successfully completes 3 x 20 credit modules but is unable to complete the Practice module, they will be eligible for the Postgraduate Certificate in Mental Health Studies but will not be eligible for approval as an AMHP by the relevant local authority.

Only those students who successfully complete all the modules associated with the Postgraduate Diploma will be eligible for approval as an AMHP. Any student who is awarded an aegrotat award will not be eligible for AMHP approval.

AMHPs have a legal role in the assessment and compulsory detention of individuals in hospital, ensuring that the Mental Health Act (1983) and its Code of Practice are correctly applied. Local authorities have the responsibility to approve suitably experienced and trained people as AMHPs. Suitably qualified and experienced social workers, occupational therapists, nurses and psychologists are eligible to undertake AMHP training and upon successful completion of the training may be approved by a local authority as an AMHP. Any student wishing to achieve AMHP status will require the formal support of their employer in advance of the programme.

The programme is designed to produce confident and competent AMHPs and is designed, managed, supported and delivered by a range of partner agencies and stakeholders, including service users and carers, working closely with the University. Agencies and stakeholders are represented on a Programme Management Board that ensures that the programme is able to prepare practitioners for the challenges of the AMHP role.

The following groups and organisations are actively involved in the programme:

- **Employers:** There is a long history of effective partnership with Bradford Adult Services including involvement from Kirklees, Calderdale, Wakefield and North Yorkshire Adult Services as well as other local and regional voluntary organisations including Mind, Bradford and Airedale Mental Health Advocacy group (BAMHAG).
- **Service users and carers:** Service user and carer involvement is central to the programme with involvement from individuals and groups in programme design and management, student selection, delivery of teaching and practice development. Service users and carers are also involved in the Division of Social Work's service user and carer group. This group provides support and training for service users and carers who are interested in becoming involved. Service users and carers have been recruited through working with relevant organisations in health and social care.
- **Students:** Student representatives are involved in the meetings of the Programme Management Board and all students are encouraged to offer feedback on every aspect of the programme, including module content and teaching, programme management and design and practice placements.
- **Lecturers:** All lecturers teaching the programme are registered social workers, with substantial practice experience in mental health. Additionally, associate

lecturers include experienced AMHPs and other professionals as well as service users and carers.

- **Practitioners:** Experienced AMHPs are involved in the teaching and assessment of practice placements, and in teaching within the academic setting.

Programme Aims

Study towards the Postgraduate Diploma is intended to enable students to:

- A1. Understand contemporary issues in mental health legislation, policy and practice.
- A2. Develop a critical and reflective approach to the understanding of concepts and theories relating to mental health and distress with a particular emphasis on a social perspective.
- A3. Apply relevant concepts and principles to mental health practice or other relevant contexts.
- A4. Work in partnership with a range of professionals, service users and carers, and agencies to promote a holistic approach to mental health difficulties.
- A5. Develop and apply critical understanding of risk and decision-making in complex situations.
- A6. Work collaboratively with others, including service users and carers, to promote human rights and dignity of people who may be at risk.
- A7. Critically evaluate their own practice and contribute to the further development of practice within their organisation.
- A8. Develop the necessary competence to carry out the statutory responsibilities of an AMHP under the Mental Health Act (1983), as set out in part 2 of the AMHP guidelines set out by Social Work England (2020)

Further study towards the Master of Arts Degree is intended to enable students to:

- A9. Critically appraise relevant research and evidence in mental health to promote the development of practice.
- A10. Develop skills in scholarship and research and the capacity to work autonomously and independently in managing a small-scale research project.

Programme Learning Outcomes

To be eligible for the FHEQ Level 7 Postgraduate Certificate award (Mental Health Studies) students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a systematic understanding of contemporary issues in mental health legislation, policy and practice.

2. Demonstrate a critical and reflective approach to the understanding of concepts and theories relating to mental health and distress with a particular emphasis on a social perspective.
3. Demonstrate the independent application of relevant concepts and principles to resolve complex situations in mental health practice or other relevant contexts.
4. Demonstrate the potential capacity to work in partnership with a range of professionals, service users and carers, and agencies to promote a holistic approach to mental health difficulties.

Additionally, to be eligible for the FHEQ Level 7 Postgraduate Diploma award (Mental Health Practice), students will be able to:

5. Provide evidence of the critical understanding of risk and decision-making in complex situations.
6. Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively and to collaborate with others, including service users and carers, to promote human rights and dignity of people who may be at risk.
7. Show critical reflection and analysis in the evaluation of their own practice and in contributing to the further continuing development of practice within their organisation.
8. Demonstrate and evidence the necessary competences to meet the requirements of Social Work England to carry out the statutory responsibilities of an AMHP under the Mental Health Act (1983), its Code of Practice, and related legislation.
9. Demonstrate the ability to critically appraise relevant research and evidence in mental health to promote the development of practice.

Additionally, to be eligible for the FHEQ Level 7 Degree award of Master (Mental Health Practice), students will be able to:

10. Demonstrate skills in independent scholarship and research through the completion of a small-scale research project.

Curriculum

The programme consists of 180 credits in total which can be completed towards a Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma or Degree of Master. Completion of the 120 credit Diploma in Mental Health Practice denotes eligibility to register as an AMHP with Social Work England. Modules containing multiples of 20 credits are studied in periods equivalent to three thirds of a year for full-time students and in sequence through the programme. All modules are core to the programme.

The curriculum for this programme has been designed to engage students in developing their understanding of relevant legislation, theory, empirical work and conceptual material,

and apply this to practice, recognizing students as adult learners who bring extensive professional experiences to their studies. The development of critical and analytical thinking forms a thread from the very start of the programme, ultimately leading to the enhanced application of learning from within the classroom to AMHP practice. The curriculum is also informed by, and reflects, at a postgraduate level, the themes of the University of Bradford Undergraduate Curriculum Framework in its emphasis on an Inclusive Curriculum, Making Knowledge Work and a Research-Informed Curriculum. Student engagement is at the heart of the programme, recognizing the contribution that can be made by students who are committed to their continuing professional development and who wish to take responsibility for their learning, both individually and collectively.

Postgraduate Certificate

The Postgraduate Certificate will usually be completed in one semester / year. Modules will be delivered in parallel, with a series of day workshops incorporating lecture input, case material and group discussions. Please refer to the teaching and learning strategy (below) for more details. These will be supported by directed independent study. To be awarded the Postgraduate Certificate students must successfully complete the following three modules or two of the following modules and the Risk: evidence-based decision-making and communication module that is delivered in the second study period.

Study Period 1 Core Modules (PGC Mental Health Studies)

Code	Title	Credits	Level
SOW7019-B	Collaborative Practice in Mental Health	20	FHEQ 7
SOW7018-B	Critical Perspectives in Mental Health	20	FHEQ 7
SOW7002-B	Law, policies and procedures (and AMHP role)	20	FHEQ 7

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Certificate if they have successfully completed 60 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes.

THE AWARD OF MENTAL HEALTH STUDIES DOES NOT CONFER ELIGIBILITY TO REGISTER WITH SOCIAL WORK ENGLAND AS AN APPROVED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL (AMHP).

Postgraduate Diploma

Students who are sponsored by their employers to undertake AMHP training will register for the Postgraduate Diploma. This will normally be completed within 12 - 18 months.

Students will need to complete the modules SOW7002-B, SOW7018-B and SOW7019-B above and then take modules SOW7003-B and SOW7020-D. This will include an intensive block delivery of the module (SOW7003-B): Risk: evidence-based decision-making and communication, incorporating lecture input, case material and group discussions. Please refer to the teaching and learning strategy (below) for more details. Students will also complete a 40-day placement as part of the AMHP practice module (SOW7020-D) and will

be required to produce a practice portfolio that will demonstrate their competence to be approved as an AMHP.

The placement will also be supported by a series of practice workshops. Each student will have a named practice educator who will support their learning and practice in placement. The timing of the placement may be flexible in order to meet the requirements of the employer. It is possible, therefore, that placements may extend over a longer period on a part-time basis. However, the normal expectation will be that the placement module and all other work for the postgraduate diploma will be completed either at the end of semester 2 or by the end of semester 1 the following year.

Study Period 2 Core Modules (PGD Mental Health Practice/AMHP)

Code	Title	Credits	Level
SOW7020-B	Approved Mental Health Professional Practice	40	FHEQ 7
SOW7003-B	Risk: evidence-based decision-making and communication	20	FHEQ 7

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Diploma if they have successfully completed at least 120 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes.

The award of Mental Health Practice confers eligibility to register for approval as an Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP). Successful students are then nominated by their employer/local authority for approval and acceptance/confirmation by SWE.

Degree of Master

Students who have completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Mental Health Practice will be eligible to progress to the MA Mental Health Practice.

The dissertation module will be tailored to the needs of individual students and each student will allocated a research supervisor to support their work, including the development of an individual project or study.

Study Period 3 Core Modules (MA Mental Health Practice)

Code	Title	Credits	Level
SOW7004-E	Mental Health: MA Dissertation	60	FHEQ 7

Students will be eligible for the award of Degree of Master if they have successfully completed at least 180 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes.

Learning and Teaching Strategy

Teaching is focused on meeting clear learning outcomes for each module whilst maintaining an overall holistic approach to mental health and mental health practice. A commitment to a Social Perspective is a clear thread throughout the programme. Small

student numbers facilitate the creation of a safe and stimulating environment in which the students can learn, recognising and building on the rich contribution that students bring from their own professional experience. Small student numbers on the programme will also mean that, wherever safe and possible to do so (in combination with relevant social distancing procedures), teaching and learning will be delivered face-face across all modules on the programme (including induction). Where face-face delivery is not appropriate (some of the workshops in semester two for example), then a blended approach will be adopted and a synchronous, online delivery will be utilised.

In terms of the utilisation of electronic material to support learning and teaching, the programme has prior experience of supporting our students to the fullest. We appreciate that our students are often mature learners with families, and who often live some distance from the University Campus. We continue to respond to this by making a broad range of materials available online (via Canvas), by utilising electronic library resources, and by an overall commitment to signposting and the engagement of electronic resources.

An induction programme will provide an introduction to adult learning with an emphasis on developing critical analysis and reflection accompanied by guidance on what is expected of postgraduate level study by the university. As above, the induction programme will be delivered face-face, unless this is contraindicated. In this case a blended approach will be adopted, and a synchronous, online delivery will be utilised. A dedicated introduction to the library will also be provided, and the details of this will be advised by the library.

Support for students personally and in their course of study, will also be provided both by the University and the Programme Team. Students will be allocated a personal tutor who is someone with whom they will be able to talk about any academic or personal concerns. A blended approach to meetings and tutorials will be bespoke and negotiated between staff and students. The Faculty will ensure that there is someone available with whom they feel comfortable to help and support them. Students will be provided with a comprehensive series of handbooks that they can consult on a range of learning issues and their programme leader will be available to consult on subject specific queries.

Learning will be directed and supported using a range of methods and approaches, combining a mix of direct teaching / lecture input with small group discussion, case studies and examples from practice. The use of appropriate audio-visual resources will be used to enhance learning in addition to the contribution of service users and carers / experts-by-experience. Guest speakers and associate lecturers will also provide relevant input based on their own expertise and specialist knowledge. Collaborative learning and discussion with peers will reflect the emphasis in advanced professional practice where peer consultation and supervision are recognised as good practice. Whilst face-face methods and approaches will be privileged, the programme will respect the preference of guest speakers and associate lecturers at all times.

Each 20-credit module represents approximately 200 hours study time including time spent on assessment and directed study. Students will be provided with access to resources, including the virtual learning environment, as part of independent directed study and guidance will be offered regarding the use of appropriate and relevant social media and websites etc. Informal group presentations will be used as part of a range of formative assessment opportunities. This will include the examination of reports, inquiries

and case examples. Once in placement, students will be actively involved in presenting their own experiences and case studies, including sessions involving other AMHPs, practice educators and service users and carers. Workshop-style sessions will also be used to foster the critical application of theory to practice. Please see the blended learning approach to workshops above.

The 40-day practice module will prepare students for AMHP practice under the guidance of an experienced AMHP practice educator who will support and assess their learning in practice. Placements are identified in the organisation in which students are employed through a process of negotiation between the university and the employer. All placements are subject to initial and ongoing review using the Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) process and this is reviewed regularly by the Placement team. Ultimately however, the availabilities of placements and the protocols to be observed whilst undertaking placement will sit with the respective local authority agency. Students will also be provided with a Placement handbook that provides further information.

If students are intending to become an AMHP, they will be sponsored by their employer to undertake the Postgraduate Diploma in Mental Health Practice and their employer will make appropriate arrangements for them to be released from work in order to attend teaching sessions and to study independently. This arrangement is ratified in the agreement between the University and the employer partners and reviewed regularly by the Programme Management Board.

Please see individual module handbooks for further details.

Assessment Strategy

Module learning outcomes will be assessed using a range of approaches, both formative and summative, including written assignments, assessed group work and presentations, a practice portfolio including the application of theory to case examples and a reflective account. The practice portfolio will be constructed and submitted wholly electronically. This was first delivered in April 2020 and received well by students and assessors alike.

Learning outcomes 1 – 4 are focused on the acquisition of knowledge and understanding and the development of critical analysis. They are assessed using a range of written assignments and presentations including a written response to case material.

Learning Outcomes 5 – 8 specifically address the development of skills in practice and the integration of theory and practice, emphasising critical reflection on students developing competence. In addition to a written assignment based on a case study for the AMHP Practice module will be assessed through the provision of evidence of the student meeting the Social Work England competences. This will be gathered in a practice portfolio containing case studies and a reflective account of their development.

Learning outcome 9 will be assessed throughout in terms of students considered use of theory and concepts, policy and legislation. Students will also submit an in-depth case study in the portfolio to demonstrate the application of research evidence to practice to assess the Risk: evidence-based decision-making and communication module.

Both learning outcomes 9 and 10 will be assessed in the final project undertaken to meet the requirements of the Dissertation module.

Attendance for all taught modules is compulsory and a minimum attendance of 80% must be achieved in order to pass each module.

Please see individual module handbooks for further details.

Assessment Regulations

This Programme conforms to the standard University Undergraduate Assessment Regulations which are available at the link: <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/regulations/>

However, exceptions to the above regulations for this programme, due to the requirements of the professional body, Social Work England, are as follows:

- For those students who are training as AMHPs, they must achieve at least 40% in all academic assignments and additionally must pass the practice module with a mark of at least 40%. This must include evidence that the student has demonstrated each of the competences required by Social Work England. Additionally, they must also have a passing report from their practice educator.
- Attendance is compulsory and students must achieve an 80% attendance record where specified for academic modules. If students fail to achieve this they will be deemed to have failed the module(s) for which they do not have evidence of 80% attendance and they will be required to retake the whole module(s).

Admission Requirements

The University welcomes applications from all potential students regardless of their previous academic experience and offers are made following detailed consideration of each individual application. Most important in the decision to offer a place is our assessment of a candidate's potential to benefit from their studies and of their ability to succeed on this particular programme.

Entrance requirements for each programme will vary but consideration of a student's application will be based on a combination of their formal academic qualifications and other relevant experience. The admissions selection process will involve employers, mental health service users and/or carers and University academics.

Postgraduate Certificate

Applicants who wish to apply for only the Postgraduate Certificate in Mental Health Studies or individual modules that form this, as part of their continuing professional development will need to demonstrate significant prior experience in mental health through employment, voluntary work or as service users or carers. Additionally, they will need to demonstrate their capacity to study at postgraduate level normally either through previous undergraduate study or professional training.

Postgraduate Diploma/Degree of Master

Applicants for the Postgraduate Diploma / MA in Mental Health Practice can only be registered social workers, mental health or learning disability nurses, registered occupational therapists or chartered psychologists who can be working in either the statutory or voluntary and independent sector. For more details on this eligibility, please consult The Mental Health (Approved Mental Health Professionals) (Approval) (England) Regulations 2008.

Typically, eligible applicants will have a minimum of two years post-qualifying experience in mental health but some applicants may be working in adult care or other settings with experience in mental health work.

There are two additional admissions criteria: employer nomination and academic attainment. Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- **Employer nomination:** All applicants must be nominated by a local authority or other employer. Employer nomination will normally be based on the length and range of the student's post-qualifying experience, and the potential suitability of the student to be approved as an AMHP. The process of employer nomination takes place prior to the university selection process and successful employer nomination does not guarantee the offer of a place by the University.
- **Academic requirements:** Usually applicants will have a good (minimum 2.2) first degree. In exceptional cases candidates without a first degree may submit evidence of their ability to study at postgraduate level – the Programme Director will assess this for suitability.

Access and Recognition of Prior Learning

Applicants whose first language is not English will also be expected to possess a University of Bradford approved English Language qualification such as IELTS at 7.5 or equivalent.

If you do not meet the IELTS requirement, you can take a pre-sessional English course with us: www.brad.ac.uk/courses/other/pre-sessional-english-language-programme/

For further information on English Language requirements please see the dedicated webpage: <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/international/entry-requirements/>

The University of Bradford has always welcomed applications from disabled students. To discuss adjustments or to find out more about support and access, you may wish to contact the Disability Service before you apply: www.bradford.ac.uk/disability/before/

Applications are welcome from students with non-standard qualifications or mature students (those over 25 years of age on entry) with significant relevant experience. Students should talk to us if they do not fit the standard pattern of entry qualifications by emailing fss-prog-admin@bradford.ac.uk for advice before they apply.

If applicants have prior certificated learning or professional experience which may be equivalent to parts of this programme, the University has procedures to evaluate and

recognise this learning in order to provide applicants with exemptions from specified modules or parts of the programme. For more details about our Recognition of Prior Learning procedures visit the website: www.brad.ac.uk/teaching-quality/prior-learning

Applications for RPL and RPEL will be considered by the Programme Management Board on an individual basis in line with the University policy on Recognition of Prior Learning.
