

MA Social Work Programme Specification

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/social-work/>

Academic Year:	2024/25
Degree Awarding Body:	University of Bradford
Final and interim awards at Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) level 7:	Master of Arts in Social Work Postgraduate Diploma Social Care Postgraduate Certificate Social Care
Programme accredited by:	Social Work England
Programme duration:	2 years full-time
QAA Subject benchmark statement:	Social Work
Date last confirmed by Faculty Board:	June 2022, September 2020

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.

Introduction

The aim of our MA programme in Social Work is to provide students with a professional work qualification at Master level if they already hold a first degree. The programme therefore offers both academic and professional outcomes. Academic outcomes available are the Postgraduate Certificate in Social Care, Postgraduate Diploma in Social Care and Masters in Social Work. The professional status of social worker is conferred by Social Work England and successful graduates of the MA Social Work award alone are eligible to register with the Social Work England as a qualified social worker.

We offer a well-established programme with a national reputation for producing high calibre workers. A large proportion of our students are in employment within three months of graduation, and many go on to become leaders within the field of social care. Our programme is designed, managed and delivered by a Programme Management Board that includes practice placement agencies, students, lecturers and practitioners. Stakeholder involvement ensures that our programme maintains a dynamic, outward-looking approach towards social work education with a clear focus on the needs of People with lived experience. The following groups and organisations play an active part in the life of the programme:

- **Employers:** We have long standing, productive working relationships with local and voluntary organisations.
- **People with lived experience:** User involvement is vital to the life of our programme and is an area we are committed to expanding. At the present time

users are employed as module teachers and guest speakers; are involved in local action-based research; co-run local and national conferences; and provide advice on programme design, delivery and assessment.

- **Students:** We seek feedback on every aspect of the programme including placement provision; module content and teaching; programme management and design.
- **Lecturers:** The majority of lecturers are qualified social workers with substantial practice experience. We work within a strong team ethos that ensures all lecturers are involved in the management and running of the programme.
- **Practitioners:** Social Work Practitioners are involved in: teaching and assessment of practice placements; teaching within the academic setting; monitoring placement standards and interviewing programme applicants.

Programme Aims

The programme is intended to:

- Develop the ability to understand and manage the professional role and responsibilities of social work within legal and policy frameworks.
- Develop a critical ability to consider relevant issues from different perspectives including life stage development, social and societal influences and political, economic and cultural aspects.
- Develop effective skills in professional practice including assessment, decision-making and risk management with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities.
- Develop knowledge and skills to engage and communicate with People with lived experience, carers, professionals and communities effectively.
- Develop the confidence to challenge and address inequalities by applying principles of social justice, human rights and upholding social work values.
- Develop the skills of critical reflection and analysis as part of ongoing personal and professional development.

Programme Learning Outcomes

To be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Certificate at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:

1. Conduct themselves according to social work values and principles.
2. Work in partnership with People with lived experience taking into account their needs, views and rights within relevant legislation.
3. Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and a critical understanding of factors that shape identity.

4. Apply social work skills and methods in response to the diverse needs of people using critical evaluation of the available evidence.
5. Use initiative, judgement and authority to communicate, assess, engage and intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support and prevent harm, neglect and abuse.
6. Share and communicate oral and written information appropriately and within relevant timescales.

Additionally, to be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Diploma at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:

7. Manage their time and workload effectively with support through supervision.
8. Identify and apply in practice the principles of social justice, inclusion and equality.
9. Understand how legislation and guidance serves to advance or constrain people's rights.
10. Apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision-making by being able to identify, distinguish, evaluate and integrate multiple sources of knowledge and evidence.
11. Engage with, inform and adapt to changing economic, social, political and organisational contexts.

Additionally, to be eligible for the award of Degree of Master at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:

12. Demonstrate professional commitment by taking responsibility for their own conduct, safe practice and learning as a qualified social worker.
13. Recognise, reflect on and work with competing values and ethical dilemmas.
14. Take into account and challenge discrimination and oppression on a personal and institutional level.
15. Operate effectively within multi-agency and inter-professional partnerships and settings within diverse organisations and contribute to the development of appropriate culturally sensitive services and organisations.

Curriculum

Year 1

Year 1 provides students with knowledge and understanding of the context of social work practice and equips them with the required practice skills to undertake their first social work placement.

The academic work provides an understanding of historical perspectives and contemporary issues within social work; social policy underpinning social work practice;

values and ethics; communication skills; skills in assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation; social work theories and methods and the law in relation to social work practice. The first social work placement takes place during Year 1 of the programme.

At the end of Year 1, students will be assessed in terms of their readiness for direct practice. Students are required to attend at least 20 skills sessions delivered by people who use social work services, practitioners, students, and the academic team. Passing the assessment of readiness for direct practice is a requirement to proceed to the placements.

FHEQ Level	Module Title	Core/ Option/ Elective	Credits	Study Period	Module Code
7	Readiness for Direct Social Work Practice	CORE	0	ACYR	SOW7024-Z
7	Ethics, Professionalism and Reflective Practice	CORE	10	SEM 1	SOW7011-A
7	Interviewing and Communication Skills	CORE	10	SEM 1	SOW7012-A
7	Social Work Theories and Methods	CORE	20	SEM 1	SOW7009-B
7	Law for Social Work	CORE	20	SEM 2	SOW7006-B
7	Social Work with Adults	CORE	20	SEM 2	SOW7007-B
7	Social Work with Children and Families	CORE	20	SEM 2	SOW7008-B
7	Practice Placement Learning I	CORE	20	SEM 3	SOW7013-B

Postgraduate Certificate

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.

THIS AWARD DOES NOT CONFER ELIGIBILITY TO REGISTER WITH SOCIAL WORK ENGLAND.

Postgraduate Diploma

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.

THIS AWARD DOES NOT CONFER ELIGIBILITY TO REGISTER WITH SOCIAL WORK ENGLAND.

Year 2

Year 2 builds upon this foundation and focuses upon the development of specialist skills with particular People with lived experience groups. At this stage there is an emphasis on the importance of autonomous learning and the acquisition of evidence-based practice.

Students' academic work provides an understanding of social work skills in relation to mental health, child care, disability and work with older people skills; multidisciplinary and interagency work; research and evaluation; and reflective practice. The second practice placement takes place during Year 2 of the programme.

FHEQ Level	Module Title	Core/ Option/ Elective	Credits	Study Period	Module Code
7	Mental Distress Across the Life Course	CORE	20	SEM 1	SOW7022-B
7	Research Methods for Social Workers	CORE	20	SEM 1	SOW7001-B
7	Practice Placement Learning II	CORE	20	SEM 3	SOW7014-B

Degree of Master

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

Our programme is built around Social Work England's requirements for practice placements, coupled with a clear system of curriculum development as students' progress through the stages of the programme. Students will undertake two assessed practice placements: the first placement in year one and the final placement in year two. The placements will be with different People with lived experience groups and with a minimum of one placement that will allow students to undertake statutory interventions. These placements, along with the 30 days skills preparation and the teaching and learning strategies outlined below, will enable students to critically analyse and reflect on their practice and learning and to progress through their programme.

Our proven skills in teaching rest upon a commitment to clear learning outcomes, a structured system of progression, imaginative assessments and the provision of safe, stimulating learning environments. Our lecturers have a variety of specialist practice, academic and research skills as well as a commitment to providing high quality teaching and learning.

Assessment Strategy

All assessments test skills in critical analysis and reflective practice in the integration of the practice and theory of social work. Prior to starting each placement students will be assessed on their readiness to practice' and suitability for social work training and student must pass this module to proceed to placement. Students will be expected to pass their placement at the required level. If students fail the practice element of the course, then normally they will not be allowed another placement opportunity and will not be able to progress to complete the award of MA Social Work. If students fail the practice learning assignments, which are the assessed academic component of the placement, they will have one further opportunity to resubmit the revised piece of work. In Year 1, students are required to pass the non-credit bearing 'Readiness for Direct Social Work Practice' module (a PSRB requirement) before they can progress to their professional placements.

Other forms of assessment include:

- essays
- individual and group presentations and exercises
- video and taped practice submissions and participation in 'virtual learning' exercises

Both components of the Practice Learning I module must be passed in order to proceed to Practice learning II. Teaching on the Practice Learning modules must be undertaken in tandem with the placement element.

Assessment Regulations

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

However, there are three exception(s) to these regulations as listed below:

- Students must achieve at least a pass/40% in all modules to be eligible for the MA in Social Work. If they do not achieve this but do meet University progression requirements, they will be eligible for the award of MA in Social Care.
- If students do not complete the MA in Social Work but achieve at least 40% in modules amounting to 40 credits and at least 35% in units amounting to the other 20 credits they will be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Social Care.
- If students do not complete the MA in Social Work but achieve at least 40% in modules amounting to 100 credits and at least 35% in units amounting to the other 20 credits they will be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Diploma in Social Care.

Only the full award of MA in Social Work will provide eligibility to apply to the Social Work England to register as a qualified Social Worker in England.

Admission Requirements

We take into consideration a number of factors when assessing your application. It's not just about your grades; we take the time to understand your personal circumstances and make decisions based on your potential to thrive at university and beyond. Consideration of applications will be based on a combination of formal academic qualifications and other relevant experience.

The standard entry requirements for the programme are as follows:

- Students are required to have substantial and relevant experience as a social care or health worker and to normally possess a relevant honours degree at 2:1 or higher or an honours degree and a postgraduate qualification which will provide them with current underpinning knowledge from psychology, sociology and social policy.
- Students work experience must amount to the equivalent of at least 6 months full-time work and include experience obtained during the past two years and with vulnerable groups in Britain.
- In addition, students will be able to demonstrate an adequate level of literacy and numeracy. This would normally be GCSE English, and Maths grade 4 (national grade C) or equivalent and must also possess beginner level IT skills.
- Students will need to demonstrate a commitment to social work as a career and provide evidence that they can be entrusted to work with vulnerable children and adults. We will also take into consideration any factors which indicate students may be unsuitable to become a social worker. Examples include certain previous criminal convictions and episodes within their health record.

Disabled students' admissions are treated on the same grounds as all students. To discuss any specific needs or talk about reasonable adjustments you may require in confidence, you can contact our Disability Service by visiting www.bradford.ac.uk/disability/before.

Applications are welcome from students with non-standard qualifications or with significant relevant experience. Students should talk to us if they do not fit the standard pattern of entry qualifications.

Minor Modification Schedule

Version Number	Brief description of Modification	Date of Approval (Faculty Board)
1	Change PSRB to Social Work England	March 2020
2	Specification made accessible.	November 2020
3	Specification reformatted	April 2021
4	Annual changes for 2021 academic year	June 2021
5	Added Readiness for Direct Social Work Practice	June 2022
6	Annual review, minor wording update.	March 2024
7	Annual changes for 2024 academic year	April 2024