

Programme Specification

A Programme Specification provides a concise summary of the main features of a programme and its intended learning outcomes. It is intended to be used by prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers.

Programme Title:	
BSc (Hons) Social Work	
Programme (AOS) Code(s):	BS3SWK1
UCAS Code:	L504
Name of Final Award:	Bachelor of Science with Honours, BSc (Hons)
Level of Qualification:	Level 6
Regime of Delivery:	Attendance
Mode(s) of Delivery:	Full Time
Typical Length of Study (Years):	3 years
Professional Body Recognition / Accreditation (including specific requirements where applicable):	Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

Brief Description of the Programme

This award is for students who wish to gain an honours degree in social work and thus be eligible to apply for registration with the social work regulator, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

The course is aimed at candidates over 18-years of age who possess the correct balance of academic ability, analytical and practical skills, and relevant personal qualities such as maturity, resilience and empathy needed to be a professional social worker.

Social work in the current context is a challenging yet rewarding profession which operates in an environment where professionals from a range of professions work together with some of the most vulnerable groups in society whether children and families or adults. Social workers aim to empower vulnerable people to not only meet their basic needs but to be able to participate fully in the community and society that they belong to.

Consequently, this programme is aimed at developing future social workers who have the knowledge, skills and values required to practice in a challenging environment. Students will be helped to appreciate the complexity and uncertainty of the social profession through classroom teaching and practice learning through placement. The programme is therefore designed to provide students a good theoretical basis and the basic skills and values required to practice social work. Students are required to undertake placement at Level 5 and Level 6 where their knowledge, skills and values are further developed to help them be adequately prepared to enter the world of social work.

The programme is delivered by academic staff all of whom have vast experience in social work practice, social work practitioners and service users so students have a well-rounded training.

This programme will be delivered separately at two sites – High Wycombe and Uxbridge and both cohorts will be taught separately.

The programme is designed to help students develop both personally and professionally. The programme has been developed to meet the expectations of the profession via the Standards for Education and Training of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), the QAA Benchmarking Statements for Social Work, the Professional Capabilities Framework and the Knowledge and Skills Statements.

Programme Aims

- 1 Develop within students a sound knowledge of contemporary social work practice in different settings and organisations and the changing trends in current social work practice particularly within legislation and policy.
- 2 Enable students to be critically self-aware reflexive practitioners, self-motivated learners interested in continual professional development by encouraging students to be critically reflective and analytical thinkers who possess skill in collecting, analysing and integrating appropriate theory and research evidence into their practice.
- 3 Foster within students a strengthened commitment to work anti-oppressively and with the inherent strengths of diverse individuals, families, groups and communities.
- 4 Provide an inter-professional learning environment necessary to develop students who are confident when working in interdisciplinary, inter-professional and multi-agency contexts.
- 5 Develop confident and competent social work professionals who are committed to the values and principles of social work, and uphold the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) professional standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Programme Learning Outcomes

The Bucks Graduate Attributes focus on the development of innovative leaders in professional and creative capacities, who are equipped to operate in the 21st Century labour market and make a positive impact as global citizens. The attributes are developed through the programme.

ID	Learning Outcome
On successful completion of the programme a graduate will be able to:	
Graduate Attribute: Knowledge and its application (K)	
K1	Demonstrate sound knowledge of the nature of social work practice across the range of settings with an ability to critically apply knowledge of the social sciences, law, research evidence and social work theory to practice.
K2	Understand social work services and its impact on service users. This includes the social processes that lead to marginalisation, isolation and exclusion.
K3	Understand service delivery within social work with an understanding of changing demography and including the historical, comparative and global perspectives.
K4	Critically discuss the ethical and legal issues that have implications for social work practice.
K5	Critically evaluate social work theory and its application in practice.
Graduate Attribute: Creativity (C)	

C1	Use Communication and Information Technology (C & IT) and numerical skills effectively, including the use of C & IT for communication, information retrieval, searching and analysing data.
C2	Develop problem solving skills which includes managing problem solving activities, gathering information, assessment, analysing and synthesis, intervention and evaluation, planning, decision making, meeting deadlines, monitoring and reviewing.
C3	Demonstrate and apply skills in research in terms of collecting, analysing, synthesising and interpreting relevant information.
C4	Intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support, and safeguard their health and wellbeing.
C5	Reflect on and review practice with a view to quality assuring it by using skills of reflection in action and reflection on action and to develop their learning from reflection on their knowledge, values and skills.
Graduate Attribute: Social and ethical awareness and responsibility (S)	
S1	Use critical reflection, analysis and evaluation to inform and provide a rationale for ethical decision making.
S2	Critically evaluate and apply social work ethical principles and values in practice.
S3	Practice within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession through use of skills such as effective advocacy, negotiation and mediation.
S4	Articulate the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice and be able to practise in an anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive manner.
S5	Promote social justice, economic wellbeing and the Human Rights of service users and carers.
Graduate Attribute: Leadership and self-development (L)	
L1	Critically evaluate and apply skills in personal and professional development including reflection on behaviour, personal and professional boundaries, managing change, stress, conflict and challenge, and responsibility for continuous learning.
L2	Develop communication skills which includes effective contact with individuals and organisations, negotiating boundaries, presenting accurate written and verbal communication across potential barriers to create effective partnerships with individuals, groups and organisations.
L3	Demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the concept of continuous professional development and an acceptance of the responsibility for their continuing development.
L4	Practice as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement by developing skills in supporting the development of others, time-management and prioritisation and demonstrate professional behaviour in regards to effective communication, time management and self-management skills.
L5	Operate competently within multi-agency and inter-professional settings.

Programme Structure

Programmes are structured in stages. The number of stages will vary depending on the mode (e.g. full-time, part-time), duration and location of study which will be detailed in the Programme Handbook.

Modules are set at a specific academic level and listed as either core (compulsory) or optional. The level indicates the relative academic difficulty which will increase through the programme. Passing modules will reward you with academic credit. The amount of credits will depend on the complexity of the module and the level of effort required, which is measured in 'notional learning hours'.

Our [Academic Advice webpages](#) provide more information on the structure of taught awards offered by the University.

Level Four

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
SW420	Lifespan Development	15	C	No
SW421	Society and Social Work	15	C	No
SW422	The Context of Social Work	15	C	No
SW423	Preparation for Practice	30	C	No
SW424	Ethics and Values	15	C	No
SW425	Social Policy and Social Work	15	C	No
SW426	Developing Skills for Social Work Practice	15	C	No
SW006	Advanced Skills for Professional Development L4 20	N/A	C	N/A

Level Five

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
SW520	Social Work Law	15	C	No
SW521	Social Work Theory and Processes	15	C	No
SW525	Practice Learning 1	45	C	No
SW526	Practitioner Researcher	15	C	No
SW527	Service User Groups	30	C	No
SW007	Advanced Skills for Professional Development L5 5	N/A	C	N/A

Level Six

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
SW620	Practice Learning 2	60	C	No
SW621	Organisations, Management and Change	15	C	No
SW622	Inter Professional Practice	15	C	No
SW623	Dissertation	30	C	No
SW008	Advanced Skills for Professional Development L6 5	N/A	C	N/A

Learning and Teaching Activities

Please see the [Academic Advice pages](#) for a description of learning and teaching activities that are recognised by the University. Detailed information on this specific programme is outlined below:

Taught sessions will be used to maximise students' prior experience and learning. A main theme of the teaching and learning is the integration of theory to practice. Lectures and seminars used to impart knowledge will be supported by workshops and more experiential methods where knowledge gained will be used to underpin practice experiences.

The emphasis at Level 4 is on preparation for practice, students developing academic ability, understanding the context in which social work operates and developing ethical awareness of self as well as personal learning skills, participating in class discussions and listening to others with respect. Level 5 builds on this foundation while introducing more challenging intellectual subjects such as social work law; theories and processes and research methods. At this level, students' move from simple acceptance of professional values to a demonstrable commitment to them through their own behaviour while also resolving conflicts between competing values. Students also complete their first practice placement during Level 5 in a private, voluntary or charitable agency. Level 6 expands this knowledge and modules here include inter-professional practice, a dissertation and the final placement where students will be involved in statutory legal interventions. At this stage students are expected to show a professional commitment to ethical practice on a daily basis.

The acquisition and development of the required knowledge and skills laid down by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) will be combined with the ability to transfer these elements to new practice situations. The transferability of skills forms the underlying rationale in this generic programme. The overall assessment strategy has been designed to complement learning in practice with learning within the University. Thus, academic modules are fully integrated with practice learning to consolidate learning on placement.

Furthermore, the learning and teaching mechanisms by which the learning outcomes of the BSc (Hons) Social Work programme are achieved are designed to be consistent with the values of the profession for which the students are being prepared. This is achieved by independent learning and taking increasing responsibility for own learning which mirrors the progressive nature of the curriculum. Students are encouraged to reflect and draw on their own experiences and to view tutors as facilitators to their learning which encourages students to become active in their own learning.

Teaching and learning sessions are conducted through a mix of workshops, discussion, experiential experiences, case-studies, simulations, group work, presentations, tutorials by external experts / internal specialists and guided independent study. The course blends academic and practice learning in an effort to integrate theory and practice. There is an emphasis on interaction, dialogue and debate and in this students are encouraged to make full use of our Virtual Learning Environment 'Blackboard' through which module information, discussion boards and lectures are made available to students.

Practice Learning is an extremely important and significant part of the programme, Students are required to complete a total of 170 days on placement and 30 days of skills workshops to complete the course. Details of placement are found in a separate document – The Practice Curriculum.

Additional Course Costs

There are costs associated with all studies, additional to the tuition fee, which require consideration, when planning and budgeting for expenditure. Costs are indicative and for the total length of the course shown unless otherwise stated and will increase with inflation; depending on the programme they may include equipment, printing, project materials, study trips, placement activities, DBS and/or other security checks.

Students will be expected to fund their travel to and from the placement site.
Most course material will be provided via the VLE. Printing material from the VLE is optional.
The library is well equipped with e-books and e journals that students can access off site.
Professional Body membership (optional) - approx. £40.

Contact Hours

1 unit of credit is the equivalent of 10 notional learning hours. Full time undergraduate students study 120 credits (1200 hours) and full-time postgraduate students study 180 credits (1800 hours) per year or 'stage' of the course.

The notional hours are over the recommended hours due to mandatory placement hours required at Level 5 and 6 of the course.

Course Stage	Scheduled Activities (Hours)	Guided Independent Study (Hours)	Placement / Study Abroad / Work Based Learning (Hours)
Year One	374	818	21
Year Two	229.5	654.5	488.5
Year Three	134.5	618	713.5

Assessment Methods

The [Assessment and Examination webpages](#) provide further information on how assignments are marked and moderated, including a description of assessment activities. These also include further information about how feedback on assessed work is provided to students, including our commitment to ensure this is provided to students within 15 working days (the 'three-week turnaround').

The following assessment activities are used on this programme:

- Essays
- Exam
- Portfolios

Assessment of all modules is via assignments that test whether the learning outcomes have been learnt. These ensure that the theoretical concepts are understood and can be related to practice. A variety of strategies are employed to test learning including portfolio, essay, presentation and an exam. Students will be required to research and evidence topics before applying it to practice. Skills modules learning and teaching will occur throughout the course in the dedicated skills development sessions and also whilst on placement. This is supported by presentations, courtroom skills, and simulations where service users and carers work with us to design and present realistic practice scenarios and the development of practice learning portfolios. There are

a number of formative assessment opportunities for students to receive feed-back on their development before submitting summative work.

Students are required to attend **30 days of skills development** and produce satisfactory portfolios by the end of the programme in order to achieve their award. These days are as follows:

- Level 4 - 20 days within SW426 Developing Social Work Skills for Practice
- Level 5 (5 days) and Level 6 (5 days) within the Advanced Skills for Professional Development programmes.

Students who have not attended the 30 days of skills development by the end of the course will not be able to achieve the award.

Readiness for Practice

Students will not be permitted to progress to the first Practice Learning Placement unless they have achieved a pass in the following modules:

SW422 The Context of Social Work

SW423 Preparation for Practice

SW426 Developing Social Work Skills for Practice

Standard reassessment opportunities for the above modules will apply but must be completed prior to commencement of the first Practice Learning Placement.

Students must also have undergone an Occupational Health Assessment and achieved clearance, alongside satisfying DBS checks (an admissions requirement).

Progression to any year of study will be subject to a self-declaration form being completed by the student.

80% minimum attendance is required within the programme and is monitored in line with the Attendance and Engagement Policy.

Classification

Calculation of final award:

Level 5 - 33% / Level 6 – 67%

For full details of assessment regulations for all taught programmes please refer to our [Results webpages](#). These include the criteria for degree classification.

Admissions Requirements

Please see the [Application webpages](#) for more information on how to apply, including a statement on how we support students from a variety of backgrounds. Please also see our [general entry requirements](#) for taught programmes. Applicants who do not meet our published entry requirements are encouraged to contact our admissions team for further advice and guidance.

Typical applicant profile and any programme-specific entry requirements

To gain entry candidates must:

- Satisfy disclosure and barring service checks which includes criminal conviction checks
- Satisfy health checks by self-declaration, and
- Hold a minimum of GCSE Grade C (key skills 2 or equivalent) in Maths
- Hold a minimum of GCSE Grade C (key skills 2 or equivalent) in English
- Attain a minimum of 96 UCAS Tariff points; or

- Hold a relevant 60 credit Access Diploma (minimum 45 Level 3 credits at merit or 15 credits at distinction; and 15 credits at level 2)

These criteria are assessed during a four-stage recruitment process: 1) Screening of personal statement; 2) Social work written test 3) Group interview, and 4) Individual interview. The recruitment strategies used have been mapped against The British Association of Social Work Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) at entry level. Candidates must show through interview how their life experiences to date has equipped them for the challenge of studying to be a social worker and make clear what they learnt from these experiences. They must be proficient in English language (overseas applicants need to meet IELTS 7.0 or equivalent) and be proficient in basic IT skills.

Do applicants required a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check?

Yes

Opportunities for students on successful completion of the programme

When a student completes this award they will receive a professional qualification which will make them eligible to apply for registration with the Health and Care Professions Council to become a qualified social worker in the UK. This award will equip students with the necessary skills, knowledge and aptitudes that employer's value such as team working skills, high level communication skills, problem-solving skills as well as analytic and evaluative skills. The expertise of the staff group together with services users, carers and employers combine to produce independent critical thinkers skilled in working with some of the most vulnerable people in society. The qualification is also recognised in many other countries and thus can lead to employment internationally.

At Buckinghamshire New University we place great importance on employability and in equipping students with transferable skills and knowledge that prepare them for a career in social work but which are also useful for a range of other related employment opportunities. Once qualified, our students have gone on to practice in a range of settings including local authorities, hospitals, voluntary services for drug and alcohol users or youth justice services. Students have also gone on to work with agencies like the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). There is a wide range of career options for suitably qualified people. Students can also change the group they work with as their career progresses as this is a generic course which equips students with skills that are transferrable across service user groups.

Progression to higher level study via a Masters or CPD programmes is available to graduates.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Previous study, professional and / or vocational experiences may be recognised as the equivalent learning experience and permit exemption from studying certain modules. Please refer to our [Credit Accumulation webpages](#) for further guidance. APL does not apply to Practice Learning and Dissertation modules on this programme.

Student Support

During the course of their studies, students will be supported in the following ways:

- At the start of their studies all students will receive a full **induction** to the programme which will include introduction to the staff responsible for delivering the course, and access to library and IT facilities
- The **Programme Handbook** will outline the exact nature of the course and how it is structured, including the availability of option modules
- Each student will be allocated a **Personal Tutor** who will support their academic development, be able to advise and guide them with their studies and, where necessary, give advice on study options
- Students will be able to access our full range of **support services**, including the Learning Development Unit for skills and study support, the Library, the Careers and Employability Team, Student Finance Team, Accommodation and Counselling Services

Appendices

Quality Assurance

Awarding Body:	Buckinghamshire New University
Language of Study:	English
QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s):	Social Work (October 2016)
Assessment Regulations:	<i>Academic Assessment Regulations</i> , accessible via the Academic Advice webpages (https://bucks.ac.uk/students/academicadvice) Exceptions for this programme: Readiness for Practice (detail on page 7)
Does the Fitness to Practise procedure apply to this programme?	Yes
Ethics Sub-committee	Social Work
Date Published / Updated:	September 2019
Date programme re-approval required:	2024-25

Other awards available on programme (Exit Qualifications)

Please refer to the *Academic Qualifications Framework* for Exit Qualifications recognised by the University and credit and module requirements.

Students awarded an exit qualification will not be eligible to apply for Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registration.

Name of Exit Qualification:	Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	<i>Certificate of Higher Education in Social Studies</i>
Credits requirements:	120 Credits
Module requirements:	ALL 120 Credits at Level 4
Learning Outcome	
Explain the ethical and value base of social work and be able to apply ethical principles in practice	
Demonstrate effective communication skills for social work practice	
Demonstrate professional behaviour in regard to effective communication, time management and self- management skills	
Discuss the importance of sociology, psychology and social policy on professional social work as an eclectic and generic field of study	

Name of Exit Qualification:	Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)
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Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	<i>Diploma of Higher Education in Social Studies</i>
Credits requirements:	240 Credits
Module requirements:	ALL 120 Credits at Level 4 ALL 120 Credits at Level 5
Learning Outcome	
Analyse different service user groups and the social processes that lead to marginalisation, isolation and exclusion and promote social justice, economic well-being and the human rights of individuals.	
Work effectively with others through collaboration with service users and organisations within a practice learning setting	
Undertake evidence based research and apply this to the quality assurance of the social work profession	
Analyse legal and policy frameworks and theoretical models and apply social work law to practice.	

Name of Exit Qualification:	Ordinary Degree
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	Bachelor of Science in Social Studies
Credits requirements:	300 Credits
Module requirements:	ALL 120 Credits at Level 4 ALL 120 Credits at Level 5 PLUS any 60 credits at Level 6 (excluding the Dissertation or equivalent)
Learning Outcome	
Critically evaluate social work theory and the application in practice within changing economic, demographic and organisational perspectives.	
Critically assess and apply skills in personal and professional development through academic and practice based learning and take responsibility for continuous learning	
Intervene with individuals, families and organisations to promote independence and safeguard health and well-being in a practice based setting	
Critically evaluate inter-professional practice and an understanding of codes of professional conduct and practice within a culture of collaborative, multi-disciplinary working	