

Quality Assurance

Programme Specification

Masters in Social Work



This programme specification applies to students starting the programme from September 2019 onwards.

Information for students: the programme specification is the definitive document summarising the structure and content of your degree programme. It is reviewed and updated every year as part of Keele's Curriculum Annual Review and Development process. The document aims to clarify to potential and current students what you can expect from the study of the subject over the course of your programme.

Names of programme(s) and award title(s)	MA in Social Work
Mode of study	Full time
Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award	7
Duration:	Two years full time

Introduction

This document provides a summary of the main features of the postgraduate taught Masters. It explains what a student can expect from studying Social Work at Masters' level at Keele University, and includes information about what a student will be able to do if s/he takes full advantage of the opportunities provided during the course of this programme.

The MA in Social Work is a two years Masters programme designed to comply with University requirements, QAA guidelines at Masters level, and with the requirements of the professional regulatory body. For the Masters award, all other assessment, i.e. other than practice, will be at advanced level in line with QAA guidance; this includes essays and case studies, examinations, and the submission of a substantial dissertation (60 credits) in the second year of the programme.

Details of professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) (If appropriate):

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/professionalstatutoryregulatorybodies/>

Health and Care Profession Council (HCPC) <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/>

External Examiner(s): Further information can be found at:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminers/currentexternalexaminers/>

1. What is the philosophy of the Programme?

The principle philosophy of the programme is to create a community of learners that are committed to developing a reflexive approach to their own personal and professional development.

Based on scholarship, professionalism and ethical practice, the programme will enable participants to critically examine a wide range of contemporary social work issues and those that relate more directly to their own practice as social workers.

The aims of the programme therefore are to develop the students' capacity for systematic understanding of key aspects of their field; an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within the discipline of social work; to achieve a level of conceptual understanding that enables them to devise and sustain arguments, and/or solve problems and to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship in social work.

The programme will also aim to ensure that students develop an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge and research and the ability to manage their own learning and make use of scholarly reviews and primary learning materials appropriate to social work.

The broad aims of the programme are to:

- provide an educational experience which ensures that all students are able to address and critically engage with the formal knowledge base underpinning Social Work practice;
- provide the basic professional training in Social Work to meet the requirements for Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) set by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC);
- develop the knowledge, skills and values required for effective anti-discriminatory practice in a diverse society;
- develop students' personal and intellectual qualities so that they are able to respond effectively to changes in society and Social Work practice;
- prepare students for employment and lay the foundations for continuing professional development.

More specifically, all Social Work students will learn and be assessed on: the law as it relates to Social Work; partnership working; communication skills; assessment, planning, intervention and review; human growth and development; understanding and application of Social Work values.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the programme students will have met the requirements for Social Work training in relation to:

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency (SOPs)

- Be able to practice safely and effectively within their scope of practice (SOP 1)
- Be able to practice within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession (SOP 2)
- Be able to maintain fitness to practise (SOP 3)
- Be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement (SOP 4)
- Be aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice (SOP 5)
- Be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner (SOP 6)
- Understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality (SOP 7)
- Be able to communicate effectively (SOP 8)
- Be able to work appropriately with others (SOP 9)
- Be able to maintain records appropriately (SOP 10)
- Be able to reflect on and review practice (SOP 11)
- Be able to assure the quality of their practice (SOP 12)
- Understand the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to their profession (SOP 13)
- Be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills to inform practice. (SOP 14)
- Understand the need to establish and maintain a safe practice environment (SOP 15)

[HCPC Standards of Proficiency](#)

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) Professional Capability Framework (PCF)

PCF - Entry Level Capabilities

The capabilities should be read in conjunction with the level descriptor below – the details of the capability statement at each level are intended to be used diagnostically to help identify strengths and areas for development, rather than as a list of areas for which evidence must be produced. The nine domains are interactive – they work together to describe the knowledge, skills and values that social workers need to practise effectively. At the entry level of the PCF, they describe what those interviewing for social work education should be looking for in people to demonstrate that they have the capability of becoming effective social workers.

Level Descriptor

By the point of entry to Social Work qualifying programmes, prospective students/candidates should demonstrate awareness of social context for social work practice, awareness of self, ability to develop rapport and potential to develop relevant knowledge, skills and values through professional training.

1. Professionalism: Identify and behave as a professional social worker, committed to professional development
2. Values and Ethics: Apply social work ethical principles and values to guide professional practice
3. Diversity and Equality: Recognise diversity and apply anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in practices
4. Rights, Justice and Economic Wellbeing: Advance human rights and promote social justice and economic well-being
5. Knowledge: Develop and apply relevant knowledge from social work practice and research, social sciences, law, other professional and relevant fields, and from the experience of people who use services
6. Critical Reflection and Analysis - Apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision-making
7. Skills and Interventions: Use judgement, knowledge and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support, prevent harm and enable progress
8. Contexts and Organisations: Engage with, inform, and adapt to changing organisational contexts, and the social and policy environments that shape practice. Operate effectively within and contribute to the development of organisations and services, including multi-agency and inter-professional settings. Professional Leadership: Promote the profession and good social work practice. Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others. Develop personal influence and be part of the collective leadership and impact of the profession.

[BASW Professional Capabilities Framework](#)

The QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Social Work:

Subject Benchmark Statements form part of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) which sets out the Expectations that all providers of UK higher education reviewed by QAA are required to meet.

Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas, and in respect of particular qualifications. They provide a picture of what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their programme of study.

[QAA Subject Benchmark Statement Social Work October 2016](#)

Service Users and Carers

Service users and carers are an integral part of the MA in Social Work programme. The Keele Service User and Carer Group participate in selection days, and contribute to learning and teaching on the Programme. Meetings are convened between service users and carers and the academic member of staff responsible for service user and carer development to plan and evaluate service user input into the programme. Service user and carer feedback is also sought when students are undertaking practice learning.

Keele Graduate Attributes

Engagement with this programme will enable you to further develop your intellectual, personal and professional capabilities. At Keele, we call these our ten Graduate Attributes and they include independent thinking, synthesizing information, creative problem solving, communicating clearly, and appreciating the social, environmental and global implications of your studies and activities. Whilst you will undoubtedly have already developed these skills and abilities to varying degrees, such existing capabilities can always be deepened and enriched. Our educational programme and learning environment is designed to help you to develop further as a well-rounded postgraduate who is capable of making a positive and valued contribution in a complex and rapidly changing world, whichever spheres of life you engage in during and after your studies at Keele.

Please refer to the programme webpages for a statement of how you can achieve the Keele Graduate Attributes through full engagement in the programme and other educational opportunities at Keele. Further information about the Keele Graduate Attributes can be found here: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/journey/>

2. How is the Programme taught?

Learning and teaching methods used on the programme vary according to the subject matter and level of the module. They include the following:

- **Lectures:** in which the lecturer provides students with a framework for reading and independent study, and summaries of current social work knowledge; there may be occasional use of audio or video presentations. Some lectures may feature guest speakers, particularly with those with experience of professional social work practice or the experience of using social work services.
- **Guest and specialist workshops:** provide extended opportunities for students to develop their knowledge of current practice or particular issues of relevance to Social Work practice.
- **Interactive learning:** which comprises activities such as group exercises role play and simulation exercises and discussions. These various forms of interactive learning provide opportunities for students to express their own opinions, discuss their own knowledge and experience, to engage in the exploration and application of ideas and knowledge, the development of professional skills and to interact with the lecturer.
- **Seminars:** comprise groups of up to about 15 students, during which issues can be discussed in depth. Students are expected to play a full part in the discussion and on occasion lead the discussion. Some seminars may consist largely of student presentations. Seminars frequently provide the opportunity for students to explore in detail particular issues about social work practice.
- **Independent study:** based on directed reading from text books, research monographs, academic journals; official government publications; professional guidance and various types of media.
- **Skills Workshops:** 30 days of the programme are devoted to skills workshops that provide students with the opportunity to develop and rehearse a substantial repertoire of basic and advanced underpinning skills. Skills workshops are organised and delivered by members of the academic staff, registered social workers, practice educators and people who use services.
- **Practice Placement:** 170 days of the programme are devoted to supervised practice in a range of social work and health and social care agencies, where students learn and are assessed through observation, rehearsal and performance. Supervision on practice placements provides the opportunity to learn from discussion, reflection and guidance from experienced practitioners and practice educators.
- **Dissertation:** in the final year provides students with the opportunity to undertake a piece of independent library based research, supervised and supported by a member of academic staff, through which students are enabled to integrate academic knowledge about social work with and understanding of professional practice.
- **E-Learning:** using the Keele Learning Environment (KLE). The KLE is an online learning environment used to give students easy access to a wide range of resources and research tools, and as a platform for online discussions, announcements and blogs.

Apart from these formal activities, students are also provided with regular opportunities to talk through particular areas of difficulty, and any special learning needs they may have, with their personal tutors or module lecturers on a one-to-one basis.

These learning and teaching methods enable students to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme in a variety of ways. For example:

- Lectures and independent study allow students to gain a systematic understanding of social work ideals and how they may be used to analyse a variety of contemporary social problems;
- Seminars, tutorials and online discussions provide opportunities for students to ask questions about, and suggest answers to, social work problems in a responsible way, and to present their own ideas to members of staff and other students using an appropriate medium of communication;
- Interactive lectures, seminars, tutorials and web-based activities encourage students to reflect on their own learning and take responsibility for its development by addressing areas of difficulty, perhaps by discussing them with their fellow students or by getting additional help from a member of staff;
- Undertaking a dissertation with the support of an experienced and active researcher Skills workshops allow students to develop and rehearse a substantial repertoire of basic and advanced social work skills;
- Placements allow students to develop their professional skills as social workers through guided and supervised and assessed practice.

3. What is the Structure of the Programme?

Year One introduces students to the general principles of Social Work and core social work skills. The year focuses on the development of social science knowledge, the development of social work skills and critical appreciation of social work theories and models. This enables students to further develop systematic knowledge, critical awareness, new insights and skills in relation to: the social context of social work; social work values and ethics; the legal system; the life course; social work with adults; social work with children and families; inter-personal communication and professional practice.

Subject to satisfactory completion of the Readiness for Practice assessment, students will undertake 70 days of assessed practice learning in a social work setting.

Year Two provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate research skills and an appreciation of the role of research in social work practice. Analytical, research and evaluation skills will be developed in relation to reflective practice, social work research, social work with adults, social work with children and families and social work practice. Students will develop knowledge of research methodologies, be able to critique those methodologies and where appropriate, propose new hypotheses. In order to demonstrate understanding of the complexity of Social Work practice and advanced scholarship, students are required to complete a dissertation of 15,000 words.

Students will undertake 100 days of assessed practice learning in a social work setting.

More specifically, all students will learn and be assessed on the law as it relates to Social Work, partnership working, communication skills, assessment, planning, intervention and review, human growth and development, and mental health and disability.

Year 1		
Module No	Title	Credits
SWK-40014	Social Work Theory and Methods 1	10
SWK-40015	Power and Discrimination	10
SWK-40017	Life Course Development	10
SWK-40016	Introduction to Legal Processes	10
SWK-40018	Area of Practice 1 – Working with Children and Families	15
SWK-40019	Area of Practice 1 – Working with Adults	15
SWK-40035	Pre-Placement Skills	0
SWK-40037	70 Day Placement	0
Total Credits for the year		70
Year 2		
SWK-40021	Social Work Theory and Methods 2 - A Broader Vision	10
SWK-40022	Area of Practice 2 – Working with Adults	15
SWK-40023	Area of Practice 2 – Working with Children and Families	15
SWK-40020 *	Social Work Research (Delivered in Year 1)	10
SWK-40013	Dissertation	60
SWK-40039	100 day placement	0
Total Credits for the year		110

* Please note that this module is taught at the end of year one and assessed at the beginning of year two.

The tables below set out what students learn in each year of the programme, the modules in which that learning takes place, and the main ways in which students are assessed on their learning.

Learning Outcomes

MA Year One

Level Outcome	Module in which this is delivered	Principal forms of assessment (of the Level Outcome) used
<p>Year One - Readiness for Practice Capabilities (end of first semester) and End of First Placement Level Capabilities (end of second semester)</p>	<p><u>Semester 1</u></p> <p>Social Work Theory and Methods (1)</p> <p>Introduction to Legal Processes</p> <p>Area of Practice: Social Work with Adults</p> <p>Area of Practice: Social Work with Children & Families</p> <p>Pre-placement skills</p> <p><u>Semester 2</u></p> <p>70 day placement</p>	<p>Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar Exercises, Skills Portfolio and Practice Portfolio.</p> <p>Readiness for practice role play/task assessment.</p>
<p>PCF 2 Values and Ethics: Apply Social Work ethical principles and values to guide professional practice</p>	<p><u>Semester 1</u></p> <p>Social Work Theory and Methods (1)</p> <p>Introduction to Legal Processes</p> <p>Area of Practice: Adults</p> <p>Area of Practice: Children & Families</p> <p>Pre-placement skills</p> <p><u>Semester 2</u></p> <p>70 day placement</p> <p>Power and Discrimination</p>	<p>Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar Exercises, Skills Portfolio and Practice Portfolio.</p>

<p>PCF 3 Diversity and Equality: Recognise diversity and apply anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in practice</p>	<p><u>Semester 1</u></p> <p>Introduction to Legal Processes</p> <p>Area of Practice: Adults</p> <p>Area of Practice: Children & Families</p> <p>Social Work Theory and Methods (1)</p> <p>Life Course Development</p> <p>Pre-Placement Skills</p> <p><u>Semester 2</u></p> <p>70 Day Placement</p> <p>Power and Discrimination</p>	<p>Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar Exercises, Skills Portfolio and Practice Portfolio.</p>
<p>PCF 4 Rights, Justice and Economic Wellbeing: Advance human rights and promote social justice and economic well-being</p>	<p><u>Semester 1</u></p> <p>Introduction to Legal Processes</p> <p>Area of Practice: Adults</p> <p>Area of Practice: Children & Families</p> <p>Pre-Placement Skills</p> <p><u>Semester 2</u></p> <p>70 Day Placement</p> <p>Power and Discrimination</p>	<p>Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar Exercises, Skills Portfolio and Practice Portfolio.</p>
<p>PCF 5 Knowledge: Develop and apply relevant knowledge from social work practice and research, social sciences, law, other professional and relevant fields, and from the experience of people who use services</p>	<p><u>Semester 1</u></p> <p>Introduction to Legal Processes</p> <p>Area of Practice: Adults</p> <p>Area of Practice: Children & Families</p> <p>Social Work Theory and Methods (1)</p> <p>Life Course Development</p> <p>Pre-Placement Skills</p> <p><u>Semester 2</u></p>	<p>Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar Exercises, Skills Portfolio and Practice Portfolio.</p>

	70 Day Placement	
PCF 6 Critical reflection and Analysis – Apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision-making	<u>Semester 1</u> Social Work Theory and Methods (1) Introduction to Legal Processes Area of Practice: Social Work with Adults Area of Practice: Social Work with Children & Families Pre-Placement Skills <u>Semester 2</u> 70 Day Placement	Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar Exercises, Skills Portfolio and Practice Portfolio.
PCF 7 Skills and Interventions: : Use judgement, knowledge and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support, prevent harm and enable progress	<u>Semester 1</u> Introduction to Legal Processes Area of Practice: Social Work with Adults Area of Practice: Social Work with Children & Families Social Work Theory and Methods (1) Life Course Development Pre-Placement Skills <u>Semester 2</u> 70 Day Placement	Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar Exercises, Skills Portfolio and Practice Portfolio.
PCF 8 Contexts and organisations: Engage with, inform, and adapt to changing organisational contexts, and the social and policy environments that shape practice. Operate effectively within and contribute to the development of organisations and services, including multi-agency and inter-professional settings.	<u>Semester 1</u> Social Work Theory and Methods (1) Introduction to Legal Processes Area of Practice: Social Work with Adults Area of Practice: Social Work with Children & Families Pre-Placement Skills	Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar Exercises, Skills Portfolio and Practice Portfolio.

	<u>Semester 2</u> 70 Day Placement	
PCF 9 Professional Leadership: Promote the profession and good social work practice. Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others. Develop personal influence and be part of the collective leadership and impact of the profession.	<u>Semester 1</u> <u>Semester 2</u> 70 Day Placement	Portfolio

MA Year Two

Level Outcome	Module in which this is delivered	Principal forms of assessment (of the Level Outcome) used
Year Two: End of last placement/completion of qualifying course Level Capabilities.		
PCF 1 Professionalism :- Identify and behave as a professional Social Worker, committed to professional development	Area of Practice: Social Work with Children & Families Area of Practice: Social Work with Adults 100 Day Placement Dissertation	Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar exercises, Skills Portfolio, Examinations (seen and unseen), Practice Portfolio and Dissertation.
PCF 2 Values and Ethics: Apply Social Work ethical principles and values to guide professional practice	100 Day Placement Dissertation Area of Practice: Social Work with Adults Area of Practice: Social Work with Children & Families Social Work Research	Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar exercises, Skills Portfolio, Examinations (seen and unseen), Practice Portfolio, Dissertation and Research Proposal.
PCF 3 Diversity and Equality: Recognise diversity and apply anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in practice	100 Day Placement Dissertation Area of Practice: Social Work with Adults Area of Practice: Social Work with Children & Families	Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar exercises, Skills Portfolio, Examinations (seen and unseen), Practice Portfolio, Dissertation and Research Proposal

	Social Work Research	
PCF 4 Rights, Justice and Economic Wellbeing: Advance human rights and promote social justice and economic well-being	100 Day Placement Dissertation Area of Practice: Social Work with Adults Area of Practice: Social Work with Children & Families Social Work Research	Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar exercises, Skills Portfolio, Examinations (seen and unseen), Practice Portfolio, Dissertation and Research Proposal.
PCF 5 Knowledge: Develop and apply relevant knowledge from social work practice and research, social sciences, law, other professional and relevant fields, and from the experience of people who use services	100 Day Placement Dissertation Area of Practice: Social Work with Adults Area of Practice: Social Work with Children & Families Social Work Research Social Work Theory & Methods (2)	Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar exercises, Skills Portfolio, Examinations (seen and unseen), Practice Portfolio, Dissertation and Research Proposal.
PCF 6 Critical Reflection and Analysis – Apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision-making	Dissertation Area of Practice: Social Work with Children & Families Area of Practice: Social Work with adults Social Work Research Social Work Theory & Methods (2)	Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar exercises, Skills Portfolio, Examinations (seen and unseen), Dissertation and Research Proposal.
PCF 7 Skills and Interventions Use judgement, knowledge and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support, prevent harm and enable progress	Area of Practice: Social Work with Adults Area of Practice: Social Work with Children & Families 100 Day Placement Dissertation	Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar exercises, Skills Portfolio, Examinations (seen and unseen), Dissertation and Practice Portfolio.
PCF 8 Contexts and organisations: Engage with, inform, and adapt to changing organisational contexts, and the social and policy environments that shape practice. Operate effectively within and contribute to	100 Day Placement Area of Practice: Social Work with Adults Area of Practice: Social Work with	Essays, Case Studies, Projects, Group presentations, Seminar exercises, Skills Portfolio, Examinations (seen and unseen), Practice Portfolio and Research

the development of organisations and services, including multi-agency and inter-professional settings	Children & Families Social Work Research	Proposal.
PCF 9 Professional Leadership: Promote the profession and good social work practice. Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others. Develop personal influence and be part of the collective leadership and impact of the profession.	100 Day Placement Social Work Research Dissertation	Practice Portfolio, Dissertation and Research Proposal.

4. Final and Intermediate Awards

MA Social Work	180 credits	You will require at least 180 credits at level 7 Graduates are eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC and on successful registration are entitled to practice Social Work in England.
MA Human Services	180 credits	You will require at least 180 credits at level 7 including the 60 credit dissertation module. If you are unable to achieve 300 credits within the Masters in Social Work Programme but achieve a minimum of 180 credits (equivalent) at Level 7, you will be eligible for the award of MA in Human Services. NB: This award does not confer eligibility to apply for registration with the HCPC and recipients are not entitled to practice Social Work.
Postgraduate Diploma in Human Services	120 credits	You will require at least 120 credits at level 7. NB: This award does not confer eligibility to apply for registration with the HCPC and recipients are not entitled to practice Social Work.
Postgraduate Certificate in Human Services	60 credits	You will require at least 60 credits at level 7. NB: This award does not confer eligibility to apply for registration with the HCPC and recipients are not entitled to practice Social Work.

5. How is the Programme assessed?

The wide variety of assessment methods used within Social Work at Keele reflects the broad range of knowledge and skills that are developed as you progress through the Masters programme. Teaching staff pay particular

attention to specifying clear assessment criteria and providing timely, regular and constructive feedback that helps to clarify things you did not understand and helps you to improve your performance. The following list is representative of the variety of assessment methods used within Social Work:

- **Examinations** in different formats test students' knowledge of educational theories and the findings of educational research and their ability to apply that knowledge to a range of educational and social problems. Examinations may be 'seen', where the essay questions are seen in advance of the examination, or 'unseen' where questions are drawn from module themes but the students do not know the questions in advance of the examination.
- **Essays** also test the quality and application of subject knowledge. In addition, they allow students to demonstrate their ability to carry out basic bibliographic research and to communicate their ideas effectively in writing in an appropriate scholarly style using the Harvard system of referencing.
- **Reviews** of other scholars' work or policy initiatives test students' ability to identify and summarise the key points of a text and to evaluate the quality of arguments and the evidence used to support them.
- **Dissertation** enables students to demonstrate their ability to undertake supervised library based research. **Oral presentations and reports** assess students' subject knowledge and understanding. They also test their ability to manage their learning and work effectively to communicate what they know orally and visually, and to reflect on these processes as part of their own personal development.
- **Portfolios** may consist of a range of different pieces of work but routinely include a requirement that students provide some evidence of critical reflection on the development of their own learning.

Marks are awarded for summative assessments designed to assess your achievement of learning outcomes. You will also be assessed formatively to enable you to monitor your own progress and to assist staff in identifying and addressing any specific learning needs. Feedback, including guidance on how you can improve the quality of your work, is also provided on all summative assessments within three working weeks of submission, unless there are compelling circumstances that make this impossible, and more informally in the course of tutorial and seminar discussions.

When undertaking practice learning, students receive ongoing feedback and support from a suitably qualified practice educator and/or work-based supervisor. The practice educator provides a written report at the end of each practice learning opportunity, evaluating the work the student has undertaken and makes recommendations for future learning needs.

6. What are the typical admission requirements for the programme?

All students who are accepted onto the course will have completed a first degree and achieved a grade of 2:1 or above. A professional/postgraduate qualification may be considered as an equivalent if the candidate can also demonstrate relevant experience in a social care setting. In addition to the academic level required by the University, there is a professional requirement that all students on Social Work courses have qualifications in English and Maths at GCSE Grade C or Level 2 Functional Skills in Maths and English. In addition to meeting academic requirements, all offers are conditional on candidates obtaining a satisfactory, enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) check.

Applicants for whom English is not a first language must provide evidence of a recognised qualification in English language. Due to Professional Body requirements the minimum score for entry to the Programme is Academic IELTS 7.0 (with no element below 6.5) or equivalent.

Please note: All non-native English speaking students are required to undertake a diagnostic English language assessment on arrival at Keele, to determine whether English language support may help them succeed with their studies. An English language module may be compulsory for some students during their first year at Keele.

Our selection process is as follows:

- **Paper Selection:** Application forms are read by a member of academic staff and the following considered: personal statement; academic qualifications (or projections); previous experience/work history; and references.
- **Selection Day:** Candidates whose application forms meet the screening criteria are invited to a Selection Day. All candidates are required to complete a written declaration of their suitability to undertake social work training in relation to the following: health status; previous criminal convictions, including cautions; disciplinary record; and if self or member of household are subject to a Child Protection Plan. During the morning candidates will undertake a written task and a group discussion. In the afternoon, a panel comprising a member of the academic staff, a social work practitioner and a service user interviews candidates. Using feedback from the written task, group discussion and the interview, one of the following decisions is then made: offer a conditional place; request further information (such as further references, more information in relation to health); no place offered. Candidates are advised of the outcome of the selection day process via UCAS within a month from the date of attending interview at Keele.

All students apply via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) www.ucas.ac.uk

7. How are students supported on the programme?

Each student is allocated a personal tutor. The personal tutor's responsibilities are:

- To provide individual tutorials for advice and guidance. In the early stages of the programme, these will be at specific, scheduled times. However, subsequent to this, personal tutorials are arranged by appointment with your tutor. The easiest way to do this is via email.
- To co-ordinate group tutorials. These provide opportunities for sharing and reviewing learning and where appropriate, identifying and dealing with areas of concern.
- In Years 1 and 2 of the MA in Social Work, tutors undertake placement meetings. There will usually be two 'three-way' meetings (i.e. involving tutor, student and practice educator) - one prior to commencement of the placement and one at the mid-way stage. The tutor's role is to facilitate learning and he or she is not responsible for overseeing the practice educator.
- To oversee the student's learning and take appropriate steps to maximise opportunities for learning and help to remove barriers to learning.
- To direct the student to other sources of help or support when needed.
- To provide references for the student when he/she is seeking employment.
- Additional help with University level study skills is available from Student Services.

8. Learning Resources

The learning resources available to students on the Programme include:

- An extensive collection of materials in the University Library, which contains books, journals, case reports and government publications. Much of this material is also accessible online to Keele students from anywhere in the world with a University username and password.
- The Keele Learning Environment (KLE) is used by Keele to provide every member of staff and student with a personal web-based teaching and learning workspace. It gives students access to information, activities and resources associated with the modules they are studying. These might include, for example, lecture notes and slide sets, pictures and other material together with interactive features such as discussion groups.
- The service has been developed to include a 'portfolio' for each student where they can store work that might be useful in 'showcasing' their achievements and where they can develop and record Personal Development Plans (PDP).
- A dedicated skills lab is available for students to practice their social work skills in a safe and supported environment. Recording facilities enable students to use their practice sessions for personal reflection and development.

9. Other learning opportunities

Placements

Keele Social Work programmes ensure that all students' undertake 170 days of practice learning. The University ensures that all students will experience working in at least two practice settings and that at least one of these will be in a service where they will gain experience of statutory interventions.

Prior to the commencement of the first period of assessed practice, students will undertake a period of preparation. During this time, students will be required to complete a written profile of their own learning needs whilst on placement (taking account of their own backgrounds and previous experiences) and to begin to compile a file of information (including agency equal opportunities policies and other codes of practice) relating to their placement setting and service user group. The profile will be used in the formal pre-placement meeting between the student, University tutor and practice educator, to help draw up the placement agreement. Before embarking on practice learning students must demonstrate 'fitness to practise' for training and our course procedures enable this to take place at an interim examination board at the end of Semester 1.

10. Quality management and enhancement

The MA in Social Work is monitored and evaluated as part of School and University requirements. In addition, Practice Learning Portfolios are monitored and evaluated by a Practice Assessment Panel, comprising experienced Social Workers, practice educators and Social Work academics.

West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership (WMSWTP) provides the majority of placements which give students the opportunity for supervised experience of social work practice. Keele University and WMSWTP jointly collaborate to assure the quality of practice learning. Practice placements are also quality assured via the Quality Assurance in Practice Learning Process (QAPL).

Staff regularly review their teaching in line with new professional requirements and research development. For example:

- All modules are planned and discussed in programme board meetings and module proposal forms are submitted for confirmation to the Programme Director. These are considered at the School Education Committee to ensure that they meet professional standards and university requirements.
- All modules are evaluated each time they run using feedback forms from students. These are passed through the School monitoring procedure which includes review by the Programme Director, annual module reports completed by the tutor responsible for individual modules and discussed at the annual team away day.
- These processes are subject to scrutiny by the School's Education Committee to which the Social Work programme board reports on a regular basis. The Student Voice Committee also reports to the SEC.

Meetings between elected Student Voice representatives from each year group and the Year Tutor/staff take place each semester. There are regular informal meetings between staff and all students, as well as ad hoc meetings when requested for particular issues and concerns. Student Voice representatives from all cohorts are also invited to participate in Social Work programme board meetings.

Assessments are scrutinised and regulated using a variety of mechanisms, in accordance with School and University policy.

- A number of strategies to ensure consistency and fairness are used by the programme staff:
 - All work is submitted anonymously (excepting the practice learning portfolio and dissertation).
 - All work at all levels is subject to moderation or double marking. At all levels double marking is used to moderate a sample within University recommendations.
 - Extra-time and computer allowance for students with particular learning needs (Learning Support)
 - Exceptional circumstances may be considered by the Director of Social Work Programmes and Personal Tutor who will then report of the Examination Board. In keeping with University policy we do not ordinarily award extensions to agreed hand in dates unless there are exceptional circumstances which are in line with University policy <http://www.keele.ac.uk/ec/>

Feedback on all assessments is given to students via TURNITIN: written feedback for assignments; verbal/written feedback for exams should students wish it; verbal or written feedback for formative assessments.

The quality and standards of learning in Social Work are subject to a continuous process of monitoring, review and enhancement.

- The Education Committee of the School of Primary, Community and Social Care is responsible for reviewing and monitoring quality management and enhancement procedures and activities across the School.
- Individual modules and the Social Work Programme as a whole are reviewed and enhanced every year in the annual programme review which takes place at the end of the academic year and as part of the University's Annual Programme Review process.
- The programmes are run in accordance with the University's Quality Assurance procedures and are subject to periodic reviews under the Internal Quality Audit (IQA) process.

Student evaluation of, and feedback on, the quality of learning on every Social Work module takes place every year using a variety of different methods:

- The results of student evaluations of all modules are reported to module leaders and reviewed by the Programme Committee as part of the Annual Programme Review process.
- Findings related to the Social Work Programmes from the annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) - and from regular surveys of the student experience conducted by the University, are subjected to careful analysis and a planned response at programme and School level.
- Feedback received from representatives of students in all three years of the Social Work Programme is considered and acted on at regular meetings of the Student Staff Voice Committee.

The University appoints senior members of academic staff from other universities to act as external examiners on all programmes. They are responsible for:

- Approving examination questions
- Confirming all marks which contribute to a student's degree
- Reviewing and giving advice on the structure and content of the programme and assessment procedures

Information about current external examiner(s) can be found here:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminers/currentexternalexaminers/>

11. The principles of programme design

The MA in Social Work programme was approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) in May 2015. In 2019 the HCPC is due to be replaced as the regulator for the Social Work profession. Social Work England will become the specialist regulator for all child, family and adult social workers in England in the near future.

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) provides guidance for Social Work students on conduct and ethics. See the following link: [HCPC Guidance on conduct and ethics for students](#)

The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) is an overarching professional standards framework, developed by the Social Work Reform Board, which sets out consistent expectations of social workers at every stage in their career. Link: [Professional Capabilities Framework \(PCF\)](#)

The Social Work Programme described in this document has been drawn up with reference to, and in accordance with the guidance set out in, the following documents:

- a. UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>
- b. QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Social Work (2016) http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/sbs-social-work-16.pdf?sfvrsn=1d95f781_8
- c. Keele University Regulations and Guidance for Students and Staff: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations>

12. Programme Version History

Version History	Date	CHANGES / NOTES
Date first created		
Revision history	09/05/18	Changes made re the PCFs, SOPS, and benchmark statements. New course specific regulations added
	November 2019	Changes made to credits in placement modules
Date approved by SLTC		
Date approved by FLTC	May 2018	

Course Specific Regulations for MA Social Work Programme

These regulations supplement the relevant University Academic Regulations which are to be found on the University website and in the University Calendar. In the event of a contradiction or discrepancy between these regulations and University Academic Regulations, the University Regulations shall be authoritative, unless approval has been given by Senate for a variation from the University Academic Regulations.

MA Social Work is validated by the Health and Care Professions Council (the regulator will change to Social Work England shortly) as a provider of Social Work education.

In addition to the University taught course regulations this course must comply with the requirements of the regulator and ensure that the following are met

Standards of Proficiency (HCPC/SWE)

Standards of Education and Training (HCPC/SWE)

Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (HCPC/SWE)

Professional Capabilities Framework (British Association of Social Work)

QAA Benchmark statements for Social Work (Quality Assurance Agency)

The curriculum design reflects and enhances the professional nature of social work education and the need to develop confident and critical practitioners who possess both generic social work skills and specialist knowledge of social work and social work practice.

University regulations can be found on the website, the below are those regulations which are required to differ from University regulations due to the professional nature of the course.

1. Admission to the course

1a Specific entrance requirements

In addition to the University's standard entrance requirements for a course at this level, as a provider of social work training the programme will only admit candidates who:

- (i) Satisfy the programme that they have the capability to meet the required standards by the end of their training and that they possess appropriate personal skills and intellectual qualities to be social workers.
- (ii) Ordinarily have a minimum 2.1 honours degree. A professional/postgraduate relevant qualification may be considered as an equivalent if the candidate can demonstrate relevant experience in a social care setting;
- (iii) Have English Language and Mathematics GCSE Grade C and above or at least Functional Skills level 2 in English and Mathematics (this would normally be equivalent to grade C in the GCSE examination in English and Mathematics).
- (iv) Satisfy the programme that they can understand and make use of written material and are able to communicate clearly and accurately in spoken and written English. Where English is not the student's

first language they must evidence English language skills at least IELTS 7.0.

- (v) All applicants must confirm prior to interview/offer decision making that they have the ability to use basic IT facilities, including word processing, internet browsing and the use of email.
- (vi) Students should be able to demonstrate a commitment to engaging with the demands of a social work course and/or demonstrate relevant voluntary, personal or paid experience.
- (vii) Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend a group exercise/discussion of a topic relevant to social work. Candidates will also have to complete a written task and attend an individual interview, which will consider the applicant's attributes, motivation and suitability for social work. The interview follows an equal opportunities format in which all candidates are asked the same question. The programme ensures that representatives of stakeholders, particularly service users and employers, are involved in the selection process. Therefore in selecting candidates through interview, the programme ensures that all entrants:
 - Are literate and numerate;
 - Express a commitment to the values of social work; and
 - Have the potential to develop high-quality professional knowledge and skills that are essential to practice as a social worker.
- (viii) Have completed satisfactory health checks and Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) disclosures (enhanced level). Students who accept a place will be required to complete the Disclosure and Barring Enhanced Disclosure application form during their induction.
- (ix) Candidates will be required to reimburse the University for the current DBS fee (see Appendix 2, *'Information for Candidates: Disclosure & Barring Service Disclosures'* and Appendix 3 *'Declaration of Fitness to Practise'*)

1b Advanced Standing

There is no capacity for advanced standing for Social Work courses. No admission is possible beyond the normal point of commencement of the course

2. Assessment

2a Modules with more than one form of assessment

Condonement/compensation is not permitted in Social Work modules. Where modules contain more than one form of summative assessment they will be combined to obtain the overall module mark, with weighting as specified in the module outlines. All elements must however have been marked at 50% or above before being aggregated.

2b Assessment requirements

Assessment requirements for each module are set out in the assessment booklets.

For the final award, students are required to successfully complete all modules.

2c Pre-requisites:

- (i) Prior to the first period of practice learning all students must undergo a period of skill based learning culminating in a readiness for practice assessment to ensure they are ready to undertake practice learning in a service delivery setting. This preparation must include the opportunity to develop a greater understanding of working with service users and the opportunity to shadow an experienced social worker.

- (ii) The programme may also require that the student be subject to a further Disclosure & Barring Service enhanced disclosure prior to any period of assessed practice. Students will also be asked to complete a Declaration of their Fitness to Practise at the commencement of year two.

3. Progression

The MA Social Work programme is designed to support and encourage incremental learning and to develop abilities in integrating theory and knowledge to practice in a coherent manner to support personal and professional development.

Year 1

Prior to the first practice placement, an assessment of readiness to practice will be made. Students who fail the assessment will have a further opportunity to re-take the assessment.

In order to progress to Year 2, you are required to pass all academic modules and undertake a successful placement. You will normally have the opportunity resubmit up to two MA modules only once each for reassessment.

If you fail the practice component of PPD, that is your placement, you will not normally be given the opportunity to undertake a further 70 days practice placement and will be required to leave the course. In exceptional circumstances, the Examination Board has the discretion to allow the opportunity to undertake a further 70 day practice placement. In such circumstances, the Examination Board will consider the student's overall performance other than PPD.

Concerns about a student's Fitness to Practise will be referred to the Social Work Health and Conduct Committee. A recommendation to terminate a student's place on the grounds of Fitness to Practise will be referred to the Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee.

If a student is not meeting the standards of practice as defined by the appropriate level of the Professional Capabilities Framework, then they may be referred to an independent practice educator for assessment of their practice and for recommendations to be made as to their suitability for social work.

If you pass the placement but fail the written contribution to the portfolio you will have the opportunity to resubmit once for reassessment.

If you fail a resubmitted assessment you will normally be required to leave the course; you will be provided with documentation that acknowledges the credits you have achieved.

Resubmission can only achieve a pass grade of 50%.

Year 2

In order to successfully complete Year 2, you are required to complete all modules.

You will normally have the opportunity to resubmit one standard MA module only once for reassessment.

If you fail your dissertation, you will be allowed one opportunity to resubmit for reassessment.

If you fail the practice component of PPD, that is your placement, you will not normally be given the opportunity to undertake a further 100 days practice placement and will normally be required to leave the course. In exceptional circumstances, the Examination Board has the discretion to allow the opportunity to undertake a further 100-day practice placement. In such circumstances, the Examination Board will consider the student's overall performance other than PPD.

Concerns about a student's Fitness to Practise will be referred to the Social Work Health and Conduct Committee. A recommendation to terminate a student's place on the grounds of Fitness to Practise will be referred to the Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee.

If a student is not meeting the standards of practice as defined by the appropriate level of the Professional Capabilities Framework, then they may be referred to an independent practice educator for assessment of their practice and for recommendations to be made as to their suitability for social work.

If you pass the placement but fail the written contribution to the portfolio you will have the opportunity to resubmit once for reassessment.

If you fail resubmitted assessment, you will normally be required to leave the course without achieving your MA in Social Work qualification. Tutorial support will be provided throughout the process.

Resubmission can only achieve a pass grade of 50%. Please note that for SWK-40022 and SWK-40023 which comprise two elements of assessment, failure and subsequent passing of one element will mean that the module is capped at 50%.

For the final award, students are required to complete and pass ALL modules and to have demonstrated social work practice to an appropriate level as defined by the Professional Capabilities Framework (TCSW, 2012).

4. Final Award

4a For the final award, students are required to complete and pass **ALL** modules and to have demonstrated social work practice to an appropriate level as defined by the Professional Capabilities Framework (BASW 2018). Successful completion of ALL elements of the award means that a student is eligible to apply for registration with the protected title of 'Social Worker'.

Students who do not gain 180 credits, including passing all placement modules are **not** able to join the professional register and cannot use the title Social Worker. Their award will **not** be in Social Work.

4b Where an award is made under Ordinance IV (Aegrotat award) that award will be an unclassified degree in Social Care. Aegrotat awards will not include the term 'Social Work'. Candidates who obtain an aegrotat degree will not be eligible to apply for registration with the Health and Care Professions Council/ Social Work England.

5. Attendance requirements

The programme expects full attendance from all students. As an HCPC approved provider of social work training, the programme requires that all students spend a minimum of 1200 hours in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator and spend at least 170 days gaining required experience and learning in practice settings.

Attendance and absence will be monitored as part of University policy and practice. Students who are unwell must complete a self-certificated absence form for up to five consecutive days' absence and thereafter, to provide a Doctor's certificate. In cases where programme staff consider that a student has been absent from a significant number of sessions, the student may, at the discretion of the Programme Director, be required to complete additional work to demonstrate that their learning has not been detrimentally affected.

Persistent non-attendance may result in a referral to the Social Work Health and Conduct Committee and a written warning from the University which could ultimately lead to withdrawal from the programme.

6. Placements

As a HCPC approved provider of social work training the programme requires that all social work students spend 170 days gaining required experience and learning in practice settings. Each student will gain experience:

- In two practice settings
- Of statutory social work tasks involving the fulfilment of duties and obligations defined by relevant legislation
- Of providing services to at least two user groups (e.g. child care and mental health)

6a Disclosure and Barring

As stated in 1a above students who accept a place will be required to complete the Disclosure and Barring Enhanced Disclosure application form during their induction.

Students may also be subject to a further Disclosure & Barring Service enhanced disclosure prior to any period of assessed practice learning. Practice learning agencies will require the student to produce their copy of their most recent DBS disclosure prior to the commencement of any practice learning placement.

6b Complaints in the practice setting

Prior to commencing a period of practice learning, students will be provided with copies of the practice learning agency's complaints and grievance procedures and will be expected to follow these procedures in raising complaints or issues within the agency during their practice-learning placement.

6c Whistleblowing

The programme's policy on whistleblowing is attached (appendix 1) and will be included in the current course handbook.

6d Demonstrating progress

Students must demonstrate in an holistic assessment of their practice that they are making satisfactory progress in learning the skills of social work practice and integrating formal knowledge and theory into their practice (as defined by the Professional Capabilities Framework) (BASW 2018).

6e Fitness to Practice

Students on professional courses are expected to operate within ethical guidelines laid down by their relevant professional association(s), as well as within University regulations. Students on social work training programmes are expected to abide by the HCPC's Standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

The Programme expects all students to conduct themselves whilst on a practice learning placement in a professional manner. Behaviour or conduct which may be prejudicial to professional practice will be referred to the Social Work Health and Conduct Committee. Any conduct viewed to be unprofessional or dangerous may result in a practice learning placement being withdrawn and the student being suspended from the placement (subject to a right of appeal) while an investigation takes place.

The decision by an agency to suspend a student from a practice learning placement should, wherever possible, be taken in consultation with the Social Work Health and Conduct Committee. A recommendation by the Social Work Health and Conduct Committee to suspend the student from the University will be referred to the Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee pending further investigation.

Students who are making unsatisfactory progress in developing the knowledge and skills commensurate with the appropriate level as defined in the Professional Capabilities Framework may, after efforts have been made to address the concerns, be referred to an independent practice educator for an independent assessment of their practice and suitability for social work. The recommendation of the independent assessment will be made to the Health and Conduct Committee.

University disciplinary procedures will be carried out independently of those of any external body and University recommendations will not be prejudiced by the outcome of any external investigation.

A student who withdraws from a practice learning placement without the agreement of the agency and the Programme Director will be viewed as having withdrawn from the Programme and their training will be terminated.

Appendices:

Appendix 1

Whistleblowing Procedures for Students

Introduction

Keele University is committed to the principles of academic freedom embodied in its Charter and Statutes and is committed to the highest standards of probity and accountability in all of its activities. The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998* requires all public bodies to have a whistle blowing procedure to allow concerns about financial and professional malpractice to be raised. The University has developed a procedure for its staff, entitled the *Disclosure of Alleged Malpractice*.

This procedure does not supplant the normal disciplinary and complaint procedures of the University, but is intended for situations where the position of the person or persons about whom concerns are to be raised make it difficult to use the normal channels and where members of staff feel that their own position might be jeopardised if they were to do so.

The University recognises that social work students undertaking practice based learning have a professional obligation to adhere to the standards set out in the HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (2008) with regards to conduct and that all practice should conform to this. Thus, there is an expectation and a duty placed upon you to respond to improper, abusive, dangerous and discriminatory practice whether this takes place within the University or in practice based learning. Furthermore, the Keele Social Work programme has a whistle blowing procedure for students. As far as possible, the procedure for students will mirror that provided for staff and will be underpinned by the same principles of confidentiality, responsiveness and proportionality. However, the University recognises that there may be circumstances where its own powers to investigate an allegation are limited, and therefore, the investigation and resolution of allegations will be dependent upon the co-operation of other organisations. In such circumstances, the University will endeavour to undertake its duty of care to students in the initial process of reporting malpractice and subsequently, by providing advice, support, advocacy and representation.

The following information indicates the scope of the whistle blowing procedure and outlines the procedures to be followed. This procedure does not replace the existing arrangements for complaint, representation, appeal and discipline detailed in the University's Student Handbook and in the Programme Handbook and it should not be used in circumstances where these procedures would be more appropriately employed. However, this procedure may be used if the substance of the allegation involves malpractice in the operation of these other arrangements.

Concerns may be raised about the conduct of:

- other students
- university staff
- practice assessors and supervisors
- other employees of practice agencies
- employees from other agencies

Procedure for allegations of malpractice by University staff

1. If you wish to report an allegation of malpractice you report your concerns to the Programme Director, or if the issue involves the Programme Director's conduct, to the Head of School.
2. The Programme Director, or Head of School, will advise you about the procedure to be followed and the time scale for the University's initial response. The first step will be the preparation by you of a written statement setting out the area of concern.

- a. The Programme Director, or Head of School, may discuss the allegation and may ask for or provide additional information, but it is not their role to draft the statement nor to counsel for or against its submission.
 - b. You will be advised on the boundaries of confidentiality, namely that anonymity cannot always be protected if the investigation is likely to lead to disciplinary, professional, or legal action, and be advised that you should refrain from public comment until the preliminary investigation has taken place.
3. The Programme Director, or Head of School, will submit the statement to the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct who will invoke the internal staff procedures noted in the Introduction. Specifically:
- a. The Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct will formally record the receipt of the statement and will make a decision as to whether a preliminary investigation should proceed within two weeks of the complaint being received. If this is not possible the complainant should receive a written explanation of the reasons for the delay. The investigation should not be carried out by the person who may ultimately have to make a decision on the report.
 - b. Where an allegation is made and an investigation carried out, the person or persons against whom the allegation is made must be told of the allegation, the evidence supporting it, and be allowed to comment before the investigation is concluded and a report made.
 - c. The Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct should consider, investigate, report and respond to any allegation as expeditiously as possible.
 - d. The student making the allegation should receive a written account of the outcome of the report and any subsequent action.
 - e. In some instances, the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct may consider that an investigation would be inappropriate because there is no substantive case, or that the issue is trivial, or that the normal formal channels should be used to raise the issue. Where no investigation is carried out and the allegation is effectively dismissed, the person making the allegations shall be informed and given the opportunity to remake the allegation to some other person or authority within the university such as the Director of Academic Affairs or the Vice Chancellor. No further opportunity need be offered in cases where an allegation is dismissed after investigation.
 - f. Knowledge of the fact and substance of an allegation shall be restricted solely to the Programme Director, or Head of School, and the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct until a preliminary investigation is launched. Thereafter, the identity of the student making the allegation may, if requested, be kept confidential unless this is incompatible with a fair investigation, or there is some other overriding reason for disclosure (for example, police involvement). In such instances, you should be consulted and informed of the decision to identify them to another person or organisation.

Procedure for allegations of malpractice by external persons or organisations

4. Students on placement should normally first raise issues of concern with their practice assessor, workplace supervisor or team leader. However, there may be circumstances in which you are unwilling to do this, or where it is inappropriate given the nature or gravity of the allegation, such as when the assessor or supervisor is the subject of the allegation of malpractice. In cases where issues of concern have not been satisfactorily resolved OR where you feel unable to raise concerns with your practice assessor, workplace supervisor or team leader, you must then report the matter to the Programme Director who will undertake to carry forward the complaint.
5. The Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct will then report the allegation to the named person in the relevant organisation. At this stage, the University will only reveal the name of the student to the external organisation with her/his permission. However, the University acknowledges that given the likely circumstances from which an allegation of malpractice might originate, in many cases, the statement will contain facts that compromise this undertaking.

- a. The University will seek undertakings from all partner agencies to provide a procedure for the investigation of malpractice and to identify a named person to whom such allegations may be referred.
- b. The University will expect other organisations to provide a written account of any decision not to investigate and in the case of an investigation, an account of the findings and any subsequent action/s. This shall be communicated to the original student complainant.
- c. The University reserves the right to further report any allegations or investigatory findings to any relevant and appropriate body, such as the police.
- d. A record of the outcome of any investigations will be kept by the Programme Director and should be reported to the Stakeholders Group meeting.
- e. At the end of this procedure, students who are dissatisfied with the investigation or the outcome, may write to the Care Quality Commission.
- f. These procedures shall be reviewed and amended from time to time as necessary.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Disclosure & Barring Service Checks

All social work training providers are required by the Health & Care Professions Council to make a judgement about the suitability of candidates. This judgement is intended to go further than simply considering the academic suitability and the practical experience of candidates and is intended to focus upon the character and conduct of candidates in so far as these are relevant to preparation for professional practice. Accordingly, the Keele MA/BA Social Work programmes require that all candidates make a declaration about themselves (“Declaration of Suitability/Fitness to Practice for Social Work”) when they attend for interview.

Information provided by candidates about any criminal convictions must be verified prior to the commencement of the programme by the completion of a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced disclosure. All candidates who are invited for interview are asked to bring documents required by the DBS as proof of identity on the day. Details of what you need to provide are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/documents-the-applicant-must-provide->

For candidates offered a conditional place on the Programme, these documents will then be checked by the Programme's DBS Countersignatory and photocopies of the documents placed on the applicant's file. Application forms and accompanying guidance notes will be sent out in July/August prior to the start of the course in September. It is important that the form is completed accurately and returned to the Programme Manager for processing along with the fee of £44 as soon as possible.

IT IS, THEREFORE, IMPORTANT THAT CANDIDATES INFORM THE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR (IN WRITING) OF ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION THAT WAS NOT INCLUDED ON THEIR SUITABILITY DECLARATION, INCLUDING ANY SUBSEQUENT CONVICTIONS.

Detailed information about the Disclosure service is available on the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check>

FAQs

Is there a charge for the check?

The current fee for an enhanced DBS disclosure is £44. The NHS Business Services Authority bursary does not cover this cost and candidates will therefore be required to provide the Programme with payment when the completed form is returned.

I have never lived in the UK, what should I do?

An Enhanced Disclosure is not applicable, although you may be able to apply to your home police force for a certificate of good conduct (not available in Eire). Checks can be made of applicants from Eire who have trained or

lived in the UK for some years. If you are not eligible to apply for a DBS check, please contact the Programme Manager or the Programme Director as soon as possible to discuss your situation.

How will I be judged as suitable?

It is the responsibility of the social work training provider to decide whether to accept a candidate onto a course in the light of any criminal record the person may have. As all candidates are required to complete the programme's "Declaration of Suitability/Fitness to Practice for Social Work" form before an offer of a place is made, the programme will only review its decision if the DBS Disclosure contains additional or contradictory information

How can I be sure that the information held within the disclosure is handled appropriately and not divulged in any form to anyone outside the MA/BA Social Work Programmes/University (except the DBS)?

Organisations using the Disclosure service must comply with the DBS Code of Practice. Under the provisions of the Code, sensitive information must be handled and stored appropriately and must be kept for only as long as is necessary.

Can I challenge the information in my Disclosure if it is incorrect?

Yes. If you think the information contained in your Disclosure is incorrect, you should contact the DBS immediately. You should also advise the Programme Manager that you are taking this action.

How long is a Disclosure valid for?

Each Disclosure will show the date on which it was printed. Although there will not be an expiry date on the Disclosure, the information it provides will become less reliable over time. The programme may therefore require further DBS Disclosure checks to be made prior to practice placements. If further checks are required, payment for these will be made by the practice placement agency.

It is worth noting that the DBS have implemented an Update Service which will allow individuals (if they choose to subscribe and pay £13 per year) to apply for a criminal record check once and then, if they need a similar sort of check again, to reuse their existing certificate, with their organisation checking online to see if it is still up-to-date. This will avoid many unnecessary repeat applications and we strongly recommend that you subscribe to this service.

Please note that, before every placement, students are required to complete a "Declaration of Fitness to Practice" form to confirm that there have been no changes in their circumstances that could affect suitability to undertake practice learning.

School of Primary, Community and Social Care

Social Work

Declaration of Suitability/Fitness to Practise for Social Work

Name:

*(Please print your **full name** here)*

When you have completed this form, please check the details, sign and date it, and bring a copy with you when you attend for interview in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL - Social Work Suitability/Fitness to Practise Declaration' Please also keep a copy for yourself as it contains information that you may need to refer to in the future.

1. Introduction

The Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) is the regulator for Social Workers in England and their standards of education and training state that education providers must apply selection and entry criteria, including:

- “criminal conviction checks”, by way of a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) enhanced disclosure, including adult and children barring lists;
- “compliance with health requirements”, via a health check, usually by means of a self-declaration, but with an additional statement from a GP or consultant where necessary.

In addition to these requirements, we may seek other relevant information to help us to make a well-informed judgement about an applicant’s suitability to enter social work training.

Social Work at Keele wishes to preserve entry to a wide range of people from diverse backgrounds and does not wish to automatically exclude students who have a criminal or disciplinary record, or have previously experienced poor health, or have had contact with social service departments. We recognise that in many instances, there is no simple criterion of suitability and thus, each case will be assessed individually. You will be informed if your declaration is thought to require further consideration, and in the event that this results in your offer being withdrawn, you will be informed of the general reason (subject to any restrictions on passing on confidential information contained within the Data Protection Act 1998).

Further information is available via the following links to the HCPC website

www.hcpc-uk.org.uk :

[Guidance on health and character](#)

[Guidance on conduct and ethics for students](#)

Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

Please read and complete the following sections carefully. The information that you provide will be treated as confidential within the organisational boundaries of the Keele Social Work programmes, but may be shared with the Health & Care Professions Council, or other relevant bodies. Please note, that if you refuse to provide additional relevant information or otherwise assist in this process, the offer of a place on the programme may be withdrawn. Failure to disclose relevant information which is subsequently discovered could lead to a suitability investigation and your exclusion from training.

1. Criminal convictions

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to an application to train as a social worker. This means that you must declare any convictions or police cautions that you have received, even if they are 'spent' under that Act, other than a protected caution¹ or protected conviction².

A caution or conviction will NOT be protected if it is for a 'listed offence' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. Listed offences include serious violent and sexual offences and offences which are of specific relevance to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. A caution or conviction for a listed offence must always be disclosed.

Further guidance on listed offences may be found on the Disclosure and Barring Service website via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-list-of-offences-that-will-never-be-filtered-from-a-criminal-record-check>

A conviction does not automatically debar a student and we may seek further information about the circumstances to make an informed and considered judgement about a candidate's suitability in such instances. You can make further representations in writing and you may be invited to discuss your application directly with the programme director.

Please note that the University may need to review its decision if the DBS Disclosure contains additional or contradictory information to that provided on this form.

	Yes	No
Have you been convicted of a criminal offence or received a police caution (other than a protected caution or protected conviction)?		
Have you been disciplined by a professional or regulatory body or your employer?		
Have you had civil proceedings (other than a divorce / dissolution of marriage or civil partnership) brought against you?		
Are you or have you ever been barred under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and / or the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 from working with children?		
Are you or have you ever been barred under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and / or the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 from working with vulnerable adults?		

¹ A caution is protected from disclosure six years after it was accepted. If the offender was under 18 when the caution was accepted then that period is reduced to two years.

² A conviction is protected from disclosure after 11 years. If the offender was under 18 when convicted then that period is reduced to five and a half years. In either case a conviction will only be protected if the offender received a noncustodial sentence and has no other convictions.

If you have answered 'yes' to any of these questions, please give full details on the next page.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for providing detailed answers to questions. The box occupies most of the page's vertical space.

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Information provided by candidates about any criminal convictions must be verified prior to the commencement of the programme by the completion of a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced disclosure covering both Child and Adult workforces.

Candidates who are invited for interview are asked to bring documents required by the DBS as proof of identity on the day. Details of what you need to provide are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/documents-the-applicant-must-provide->

For candidates offered a place on the programme, these documents will be checked by a member of staff and photocopies of the documents placed on the applicant's file. Application forms and accompanying guidance notes will be sent out in July/August prior to the start of the course in September. The current fee for an enhanced DBS disclosure is £44. The NHS Business Services Authority bursary does not cover this cost and candidates will therefore be required to provide the University with payment when the completed form is returned.

Detailed information about the Disclosure service is available on the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check>

It is worth noting that the DBS have implemented an Update Service which will allow individuals (if they choose to subscribe each year) to apply for a criminal record check once and then, if they need a similar sort of check again, to reuse their existing certificate, with their organisation checking online to see if it is still up-to-date. This will avoid many unnecessary repeat applications and we strongly recommend that you subscribe to this service. Further information available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>

Organisations using the Disclosure service must comply with the DBS Code of Practice. Under the provisions of the Code, sensitive information must be handled and stored appropriately and must be kept for only as long as is necessary.

2. Disciplinary record and unprofessional conduct

Social service agencies and members of the public who receive services are entitled to expect the highest standards of reliability and integrity from social workers and it is imperative that the qualifying award is held only by those whose personal and professional conduct merits this trust. The Keele Social Work programmes require that you make a declaration in this regard.

Please answer the following questions carefully. If you answer 'YES' to any of the questions, you will be contacted by the programme director who will seek further information about your circumstances and may make other relevant inquiries to colleges and former employers to enable an informed decision to be made about your application. At this stage, you can make further representations in writing and you may be invited to discuss your application directly with the programme director.

Please tick yes or no for each question

	Yes	No
Are you currently the subject of any disciplinary investigation?		
Have you ever had a disciplinary finding against you?		
Have you ever had your employment terminated for unprofessional behaviour or misconduct?		
Have you ever been suspended or disqualified from any professional training programme?		

Have you ever been suspended or deregistered for professional misconduct by any other professional register?		
Have you previously enrolled upon a social work training programme?		

If you have answered 'yes' to any of these questions, please give full details (outcome, date, employer, course, college, reason for non-completion, etc.)

3. Health and personal circumstances

Social Work is a demanding and sometimes stressful occupation and successful completion of a Social Work programme requires full participation at university and practice placements. Furthermore, the practice of social work is often undertaken with people who are vulnerable, at risk, or whose capacity to manage their own affairs is temporarily or permanently impaired. Accordingly, the programme seeks to ensure that all students are capable of enduring the stresses and strains of training and do not present any threat to the safety of service users, or to themselves. 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. However, chronic poor physical or mental health may make it difficult or impossible for you to complete the course and may also place clients at risk. In the event of health problems arising during the course, the programme will, within its rules and regulations, respond sympathetically and try to ensure that a student is able to complete in due course.

We need to know whether you have had children in your personal care made subject to a child protection plan, or have lived in a household where children have been subject to a child protection plan (previously known as the Child Protection Register), or placed in care. These circumstances do not automatically debar you from entry to the programme, but we need to make an informed judgement about what risks, if any, they may pose for you and for other people. This information may also have a bearing upon the range of practice placements available to you.

If you answer 'YES' to either of the questions below, you will be contacted by the programme director who will seek further information about your circumstances, and may make other inquiries, via our Occupational Health Department, to enable an informed decision to be made about your application. At this stage, you can make further representations in writing, and you may be invited to discuss your application directly with the physician in Occupational Health. In the case of medical conditions, with your consent, further information may be sought from your doctor, or a medical consultant.

Please tick yes or no for each question

	Yes	No
Have any children in your care, or the household in which you live/d, been subject to a child protection plan (formerly known as the child protection register) or placed in care?		
Do you have any physical or mental health condition that would impair your fitness to practise as a social worker?		

If you have answered 'yes' to either of these questions, please give full details overleaf.

4. Disability

Disability need not be a barrier to training and qualification and in accordance with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) the University will make 'reasonable adjustments' to meet your personal requirements. Please note that for the purposes of this declaration you do not need to make any statement about your disability. The University believes that you should have a choice about when, and whether, you wish to declare a disability. If you do wish to discuss what adjustments might be required, you may do this informally prior to interview, or may wait until after the results of your interview have been communicated to you. Once you have been offered a place we will meet with you to discuss your requirements, and will formally record what adjustments and arrangements will be made. The needs of students with disabilities will be prioritised in the allocation of practice placements. If you have any further enquiries or concerns in regard to disability please contact the Programme Director.

Please see the HCPC publication below:

[A disabled person's guide to becoming a health professional](#)

5. Your declaration

I understand that the information that I have provided will be checked against my Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service disclosure and that my signature affirms that this is full and accurate declaration.

I understand that if I refuse to provide additional relevant information or otherwise assist in this suitability process that the offer of a place on the programme may be withdrawn.

I also understand that failure to disclose relevant information is regarded as a serious matter and that if it is discovered after I have been accepted upon the programme, it could result in a suitability investigation which may lead to exclusion from training.

I give my agreement for the programme to make a referral to the Occupational Health Department if necessary and understand that I will be invited to agree to a referral being made if necessary.

I agree that the information that I give may be used to assess my suitability for social work training and that, subject to the principles outlined in the Data Protection Act (1988) and the provisions of the Care Standards Act (2000) it may be shared with the Health & Care Professions Council and other relevant bodies.

Signature _____ Date _____

School of Primary, Community and Social Care

Social Work Undergraduate and Postgraduate Health and Conduct Committee

Terms of Reference

Membership:	Programme Director Social Work (in the Chair)
	Academic Standards Officer
	Practice Learning Development Officer
	Independent School representative
	Student Experience Officer

(On a case-by-case basis, members of the Social Work Group or other contributors may be co-opted)

Quoracy:	As a minimum, the Chair and at least two other members of the committee have to be in attendance for the meeting to be quorate.
Frequency:	Meetings will be held monthly, prior to the Social Work Programme Board. Meetings will be firmly diarised and cancelled if there is insufficient/no business.
Administered by:	Social Work Programme Manager
Reports to:	Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee; Programme Board Social Work

Social Work Health and Conduct Committee Terms of Reference

1. Terms of Reference

1.1 Social work students must demonstrate their Fitness to Practise as part of achieving the requirements of the Health and Care Professions Council requirements identified in the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (HCPC, 2008) and Standards of Proficiency for Social Work (HCPC, 2012). The purpose of the Social Work Conduct and Health Committee is to monitor and address issues regarding student conduct and health that cause concern regarding students' Fitness to Practise and their potential to be able to achieve and maintain the standards required of them as social work students and ultimately as qualified Social Workers registered by the Health and Care Professions Council

<http://www.hcpc-uk.org.uk/aboutregistration/standards/>

1.2 The Social Work Conduct and Health Committee may consider:

- Fitness / suitability for a social work candidate who has indicated s/he has a criminal record, is subject to a disciplinary procedure or who has health concerns which may impact on their ability to engage with the programme and ultimately, practice social work;
- Evidence of unsatisfactory engagement with the course; unprofessional behaviour on practice placements and/or in participation on the programme; persistent non-attendance; failure to engage with the learning opportunities provided on the course; academic misconduct;

- Health issues which may adversely affect a student's suitability for the Social Work profession (health issues which may adversely affect a student's fitness to study will be dealt with outside the committee as per Regulation 10: student health and leave of absence).

1.3 Examples of matters that can be considered:

- Concerns in relation to the student's Fitness to Practise including unsatisfactory attendance and participation in the programme; unsatisfactory performance in practice; concerns about a student's suitability for social work practice.
- Unsatisfactory or inappropriate practice while on placement which is of sufficient concern to make an immediate referral OR unsatisfactory or inappropriate practice while on placement which has not been improved by appropriate goal planning to address identified concerns
- Inappropriate, intimidating or oppressive behaviour
- Allegations of misconduct including conduct on practice placements.
- Unsatisfactory attendance or participation in any aspect of the programme
- Conviction of a criminal offence including cautions (and Fixed Penalty points)
- Inappropriate alcohol or drug use including reporting for practice or participating in the programme in an intoxicated state
- Exploitative or unprofessional behaviour towards people who use services.
- To consider the recommendations made by an independent practice educator following their assessment of the student's progress on placement
- Proven cases of academic misconduct e.g. plagiarism (as defined by University Regulation 8.12.)
- Failure to satisfy the requirements for the development of professional capability (as defined by the College of Social Work) or demonstrate satisfactory progression
- Concerns in relation to Fitness to Practise on the grounds of health.

(these examples do not constitute an exhaustive list of matters which may be considered).

1.4 If a matter is considered to be so serious that the alleged behaviour or incident constitutes dangerous practice or any risk to service users, colleagues or the student concerned, referral may be made by the School directly to the Head of School under Regulation 18.3 for immediate suspension of the student from the programme pending investigation. Any concerns or evidence concerning dangerous practice or practice which constitutes any risk to service users, colleagues or the student while on placement may result in the student being immediately suspended from the placement.

2. Referral

It may be necessary to request the participation of other members of staff dependent upon the nature of the referral. Request for participation will ordinarily involve producing a written report in response to the referral, or being co-opted to the Committee to present information in person.

2.1 Concerns with regard to students Fitness to Practise on the grounds of health will ordinarily involve:

- Tutors
- Year tutor (as appropriate)
- Programme Director
- Referrals may be made to Occupational Health for assessment of a student's health in relation to their Fitness to Practise

2.2 Concerns regarding a student's behaviour on the programme will ordinarily involve:

- Module Leaders
- Personal Tutor

- Year Tutor (as appropriate)
- External speakers (as appropriate)
- Programme Director

2.3 Concerns regarding a student's behaviour on placement (which cannot be resolved with a goal setting process via training team) will ordinarily involve input from:

- Practice Development coordinator
- Programme Director
- PAP Chair / Independent practice educator/ work based supervisor
- Personal tutor

2.4 Concerns regarding proven academic misconduct will ordinarily involve input from:

- School Academic Conduct Officer (ACO)
- Academic standards officer
- Personal Tutor
- Module tutor
- Programme Director
- Year tutor (as appropriate)

3. After a referral has been made

3.1 Students will be communicated with about all aspects of the Social Work Conduct and Health Committee process via their Student e-mail account

- Students will be informed in writing about the referral of their case to the Committee giving reasons for the referral and a date when the case will be reviewed by the Committee;
- Students are entitled to attend the meeting but must confirm their attendance in writing. It is not compulsory for a student to attend, but if they do not attend the meeting, the referral will be dealt with in their absence
- If the student is unable to attend or fails to attend then they may forward information about mitigating circumstances, including appropriate documentary evidence
- A student may attend on their own or they bring a supporter for moral support, for example from ASK or a friend who must be a member of the University
- Information about the student's progress to-date will be available to the Committee
- The Committee would generally meet in private first to discuss the referral, student progress and any evidence offered in mitigation. If the student is in attendance s/he will then be invited into the meeting for further discussion about the issue. Other representatives may also be invited for further discussion (e.g. practice educator on placement; work based supervisor)
- When the matter has been appropriately reviewed, the Committee will agree a decision in private which will be communicated to the student in writing within 5 working days.
- The recommendation of the Committee will be forwarded, where appropriate, to the Social Work Programme Board and Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee

3.2 Recommendations may include one or more of the following:

- Dismiss the case with no further action
- No further action but the matter is recorded on the student's record
- Permit the student to continue with the programme with appropriate guidance and advice (to be specified in writing including those named to provide specific guidance and advice)

- Permit the student to continue with a practice placement with appropriate guidance and under supervision specifically to monitor progress on identified issues of concern
- Permit the student to continue with the course with a written warning
- Suspend the studies of the student until criteria for re-admission has been achieved
- Suspend the studies (including practice placement) of the student and refer to the Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee
- Refer student to the Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee
- Report matters of grave concern regarding Fitness to Practise to the Health and Care Professions Council in collaboration with the Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee.

4. Communicating the outcome

4.1 The Chair will inform the student of the decision at the meeting and this decision will be confirmed in writing within five working days of the meeting. Should the student wish to contest the outcome of the hearing and submits this in writing to the School within 10 calendar days following the official notification of the outcome, the case will be referred to the Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee.

5. Review and Governance

5.1 The work of the Committee and its Terms of Reference will be reviewed by the Chair and membership of the Committee on an annual basis. A written report will be forwarded to the Chair of the Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee and will be shared with the BA and MA External Examiners as well as the Partnership Consultative Board.