University of Suffolk

DEFINITIVE COURSE RECORD

Course Title	**MA Social Work**
Awarding Bodies	**University of Suffolk**
Level of Award[1]	**FHEQ Level 7**
Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies Recognition	**Social Work England**
Credit Structure[2]	**180 Credits at level 7**
Mode of Attendance	**Full Time**
Standard Length of Course[3]	**2 years full-time**
Intended Award	**MA Social Work**
Named Exit Awards	**Post-Graduate Certificate in Social Studies** **Post Graduate Diploma in Social Studies**
Entry Requirements[4]	**GSCE grade C/4 or equivalent** **First degree in any subject, 2:2 or above** **Satisfactory DBs and health check**
Delivering Institution	**University of Suffolk**

This definitive record sets out the essential features and characteristics of the Master of Arts in Social Work. The information provided is accurate for students entering level 7 in the 2027-2028 academic year[5].

The MA Social Work. course is designed to prepare students for the constantly changing and challenging environment of social work and social care practice. Underpinned by a strong commitment to social justice, the programme combines a clear academic focus on the theoretical underpinnings of social work with careful attention to practice skills, knowledge, values and personal and professional development. Relevant knowledge and theory for practice includes psychological and sociological theories applied to a range of practice contexts, approaches to research and evidence informed practice, knowledge and understanding of law and policy. Employers in statutory and private, voluntary and independent sectors provide practice-learning opportunities in years 1 and 2 of the programme. In addition, skills development is supported through practice workshops with people with lived experience (service participants) and practitioners, focusing on, for example, communication, direct and specialist work, and inter-professional practice. Study time is built into the programme for students to pursue their own increasingly independent learning and a the beginning of year 1, into year 2 students are expected to develop this to produce a dissertation with individual supervision.

[1] For an explanation of the levels of higher education study, see the QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2024)
[2] All academic credit awarded as a result of study at the University adheres to the Higher education credit framework for England.
[3] Where the course is delivered both full-time and part-time, the standard length of course is provided for the full-time mode of attendance only. The length of the part-time course is variable and dependent upon the intensity of study. Further information about mode of study and maximum registration periods can be found in the Framework and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards.
[4] Details of standard entry requirements can be found in the Admissions Policy and further details about Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS) can be found on the University's DBS webpage.
[5] The University reserves the right to make changes to course content, structure, teaching and assessment as outlined in the Admissions Policy.

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Course Aims

The aims of the MA Social Work degree course are:

1. At the point of completion of the course, produce social work graduates who meet all six SWE (2019) Professional Standards, nine domains of the Professional Capabilities Framework (BASW 2018) at qualifying level, and who are therefore eligible to apply for professional registration as social workers with SWE.

2. To deliver a coherent curriculum that is relevant to contemporary social work practice, which is evidence-informed including by up-to-date research, theory, knowledge, social work values and practice developments.

3. To utilise diverse teaching, learning and assessment methods which support the development of competent, thoughtful and reflective practitioners, committed to personal and professional development with a sound ethical base, in line with: the Subject Benchmark Statement for Social Work (QAA, 2019); the Professional Standards (SWE, 2019), the Professional Capabilities Framework (BASW, 2018), the curriculum guides (TCSW/Higher Education Academy, 2012), and the Education and Training Standards (SWE, 2021).

4. To work closely with key partners (external examiners, employers, social work managers and practitioners, people who use social work services, students and other professionals) to ensure that the course is informed by their views and responsive to their knowledge and experiences in order to ensure the relevance of the course for contemporary social work practice and to promote graduates' employability.

5. Deliver the prescribed curriculum for the degree based upon documentation provided by Social Work England and the Quality Assurance Agency's benchmark statement for social work (QAA, 2019), the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (SHEQ), SWE Professional Standards (2019) and the Professional Capabilities Framework, managed by BASW (2018). Modules are also mapped against the Knowledge Skills Statements (KSS) for children and families and adults.

6. Provide students with an opportunity to develop a broad range of practice skills, knowledge and understanding of key subject areas and acquire a clear sense of social work values.

Course Learning Outcomes

The following statements define what students graduating from the MA Social Work course will have been judged to have demonstrated in order to achieve the award. These statements, known as learning outcomes, have been formally approved as aligned with the generic qualification descriptor for level 7 awards as set out by the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) [6] and are mapped against Social Work England Professional Standards and the Professional Capabilities Framework (BASW).

1. Critically appraise and synthesise the regulatory and ethical frameworks of Social Work England, demonstrating advanced professional judgement, accountability, and ethical integrity in navigating complex, ambiguous, or contested practice contexts.

2. Apply and critically evaluate advanced cognitive, analytical, and reflective processes to design, implement, and justify assessment and risk management strategies, demonstrating professional autonomy and ethical responsiveness to indicators of abuse, neglect, and safeguarding concerns.

3. Critically synthesise subject-specific knowledge, including legal and policy frameworks, to inform sound, evidence-based social work practice in complex and unpredictable environments.

4. Practise in a critically reflective, values-led manner, consistent with the BASW (2018) Professional Capabilities Framework and the Social Work England (2019) Professional Standards.

5. Critically evaluate and integrate advanced strategies for managing professional boundaries, challenges, and change in order to sustain fitness to practise.

6. Apply and critically evaluate a positive, professional approach that reflects high standards of competence and capability within demanding social work contexts.

7. Exercise autonomy and professional judgement in assessment, decision-making, and recommendations, integrating multiple knowledge sources in uncertain and complex situations.

8. Evaluate and exercise advanced awareness of cultural factors, equality, and diversity to practise in an anti-discriminatory way that promotes social justice, inclusion, and equity.

9. Critically evaluate and synthesise advanced knowledge of information-sharing processes, demonstrating the ability to apply informed professional judgement to ensure that decisions and actions align with complex legal, ethical, and professional boundaries in practice.

Course Design
The design of this course has been guided by the following QAA Subject Benchmark Statement, SWE Professional Standards and BASW Professional Capabilities Framework:

QAA Benchmarks:

- Social Work (2019)

- Professional Standards:
  - Social Work England (SWE) Professional Standards (2019)
  - Social Work England (SWE) Qualifying Education and Training Standards (2021)
  - British Association of Social Workers (BASW) Professional Capabilities Framework (2018)
  - British Association of Social Workers (BASW) Code of Ethics for Social Workers (2014).

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Course Structure

The MA Social Work comprises modules at level 7.

Module Specifications for each of these modules is included within the course handbook, available to students on-line at the beginning of each academic year.

	Module	Credits	Module Type[6]
Level 7			
Year 1	Fundamentals of Social work (Preparation for Practice)	30	M
Year 1	Introduction to Law and Social Policy	15	M
Year 1	Human Behaviour and Lifespan Development	15	M
Year 1	Assessed Practice Learning (70 days)	0	M
Year 2	Social work with children and Families: Law, Policy and Practice	30	M
Year 2	Social work with Adults: Law, policy and Practice	30	M
Year 2	Social work Dissertation	60	M
Year 2	Assessed Practice Learning (100 days)	0	M

Awards

On successful completion of the course, students will be awarded a MA Social Work. Students who leave the course early may be eligible for a postgraduate certificate in Social Studies on successful completion of 60 credits, or a postgraduate diploma in Social Studies on successful completion of 120 credits.

Please note only the full MA Social work will lead to eligibility to register with Social Work England

Course Delivery

The course is delivered at Ipswich campus and various placement locations across Suffolk, Essex and Norfolk. Students studying full-time on MA Social Work are likely to have approximately 6 hours contact hours per week. The contact hours will be a mix of lectures, seminars, workshops and tutorials. Students will also be required to participate in 170 days of work placement). Placements will be arranged by the University. Students will normally be expected to undertake 20 hours of independent study in an average week but should be prepared for this to vary based on assignment deadlines and class exercises.

Course Assessment

A variety of assessments will be used on the course to enable students to experience and adapt to different assessment styles. The assessment methods used will be appropriate to assess each module's intended learning outcomes. Assessment on the course overall will be prominently coursework (including essays, reports, presentations, group work, reflective learning journals and research projects) and practical assessments.

[6] Modules are designated as either mandatory (M), requisite (R) or optional (O). For definitions, see the Framework and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards

Special Features
On successful completion of the MA Social work, students are eligible to register with Social work England as a registered social workers

Course Team
The academic staff delivering this course are drawn from a team that includes teaching specialists and current practitioners. All staff are qualified in their subjects with their own specialist knowledge to contribute [and are registered with Social Work England

Course Costs
Students undertaking MA Social Work will be charged ***annually***, the tuition fees as detailed below.

Student Group	Tuition Fees
Full-time UK/EU	£10,260
Part-time UK/EU	Not applicable
Full-time International	£16,500
Part-time International	Not applicable

Payment of tuition fees is due at the time of enrolment and is managed in accordance with the Tuition Fee Policy.

More information on tuition fees and funding options can be found on our website.

Academic Framework and Regulations
This course is delivered according to the Framework and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards and other academic policies and procedures of the University and published on the website.