Welcome

We are proud of our standing as one of the best places to study Social Work in the UK, highly rated for the quality of our teaching, our outstanding track record for graduate employment, and for the impact of our research.

Whilst providing an exceptional student experience is our priority, we also have a very real involvement in influencing policy and practice. Our aim is to inspire a new generation of qualified professionals to engage with and steer future social policy and practice. Underpinning everything we do is our founding principle of valuing people, human rights and social justice.

At Lancaster, you will learn alongside enthusiastic lecturers, practitioners, service users and carers. We aim to enable you to develop a critical but reflective approach to understanding social work in contemporary society, and your practice placements are an excellent way of getting to know the role of a social worker and gaining hands-on experience.

We look forward to welcoming you to the positive environment that we provide at Lancaster, and supporting you in achieving your career goals.
Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life changes and enhance wellbeing.

International Federation of Social Work, 2014

Changing lives

Everything you want from your Social Work degree

#2

2nd for Social Work
(Complete University Guide 2021)

100%
of our graduates are in a professional or managerial job within six months of graduating
(Discover Uni April 2020)

Accredited by
Social Work England
Attending university has encouraged me to read more, which is something I wouldn’t have previously dedicated my time to. I now know things about legislation, agency policy and theory that will influence my work when I qualify and move on to practice social work.

The placements are massively beneficial as they give you real, hands-on experience of what social work is actually like. You learn important skills from basic things like making appointments, to carrying out assessments, and developing a plan based on these assessments (all with support), these plans impact on the lives of service users.

Overall, my experience has been very positive and I would recommend it to anyone with the aspiration of working in social work.

Lee Robertson
BA (Hons) Social Work

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In addition to the academic entry requirements listed above, all applicants must have some direct experience of social care; there is no minimum or maximum required number of hours. It is more important to explain what you have learned from your experience and how this has shaped your decision to apply for a degree in social work.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to take part in a recruitment event.

During the event you will participate in a number of activities, including an individual interview. The recruitment event is a great opportunity to get to know our friendly Department and chat to our current students.

Qualifying programme

Our programme is approved by the social work regulator, which means that our social work graduates are eligible to apply to join the professional social work register.

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For information on fees, scholarships and any additional costs you might need to consider, please see our website: www.lancaster.ac.uk/study

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Gaining real experience

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Teaching and assessment

The programme is full time, and comprises time spent in lectures, seminars and workshops, as well as independent study, and time on placement, where students are expected to work the agency’s hours.

Lancaster University has been awarded the highest possible score in the UK government’s 2017 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) ratings. Our TEF Gold rating is based on high quality teaching, excellent teaching facilities and the good careers our graduates go into.

Our programme takes a blended approach to teaching and assessment including:

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Group work
- Action learning
- Skills development workshops
- Practitioner-led sessions
- Social work placements
- Independent research study
- Written assignments (essays/blogs/case studies)
- Compilation of a practice portfolio
- Presentations
- Exams
- Practice assessment

What is your ideal social worker?

This photograph captures some of the vibrant representations that were developed in a session designed to stimulate thinking and reflection about “the ideal social worker”. The session was fun and creative but encouraged important considerations about the values, skills and knowledge needed to be an effective and ethical social work practitioner.

Practice learning placements

Practice learning is at the heart of social work education. At Lancaster, we provide 170 days of placement experience, to enable you to integrate your knowledge, skills and values in a real-world practice-setting.

We have very positive relationships with a variety of placement providers both in the statutory and private sector, primarily within Cumbria and Lancashire as well as the two unitary authorities in those areas. Previous placements have been with organisations such as Barnados, Age Concern and My Positive Future. The Practice Learning Team at Lancaster work very hard on developing and maintaining those relationships and have entered into partnership agreements with all of our placement providers to help this process.

Placements are supported by placement tutors in the department, and during practice by qualified social work practitioners, who have undertaken additional training to become practice educators.

The Practice Learning Team make every effort to ensure there is a good supply of placements and do offer students the opportunity to state an area of their interest for practice. Although this can never be guaranteed, we do make every effort to try and accommodate where we can. All students will have the opportunity to meet the requirements of the Professional Capabilities Framework, and Knowledge and Skills Statements, in addition to undertaking some statutory social work practice.
Western’s placement experience

I was fortunate to be placed in the Cumbria County Council teaching partnership with Lancaster University. This placement provided me with the opportunity to undertake practice learning and continue my professional development. It involved working with a learning disability team whose ethos was team work and development. The friendly and welcoming atmosphere within the team made it easy for me to adhere to, adapt and advance its values and ethos. Without doubt, the supportive nature of the placement increased my confidence, as well as the determination to achieve my goal – the goal of becoming a qualified social worker. Whilst this has been a challenging and demanding journey for me, it would not have been possible without the support and care of the social work staff at Lancaster University.

Western Chapanduka
BA (Hons) Social Work
Graduated 2018

Our students make a difference

Jamie Murphy,
Young People’s Worker,
Lancashire County Council

All the Lancaster students I have mentored have shown great dedication and become real team assets. Holding caseloads, working independently, supporting colleagues and demonstrating positive and profound learning, they provide a real breath of fresh air to our team and make a real difference to the families they have been involved with.

Andy Cross
Former Student

I am so glad I studied BA Social Work at Lancaster University. As a mature student, I thought I understood myself as an individual; however, this degree not only challenged my own value base, but changed me as a person. Through the vast and incredibly in-depth knowledge of the lecturers, I gained a fantastic foundation for a career in the field of substance misuse. The lecture groups were small which enabled an in-depth dialogue, even when topics were ethically complex. As a care co-ordinator within the statutory drug and alcohol service, I am faced with particularly complex situations on a daily basis. I feel that the University’s rights-based and ethically-minded approach to social care has come to underpin the practitioner I am today.
BA (Hons)
Social Work, Full Time

This degree is the route into professional social work for applicants without a first degree. It is both an academic undergraduate degree and a professional qualification in social work, awarded by Lancaster University.

Please note that all course structure and module information is subject to change, for example, due to staffing changes, and in response to the Social Work regulatory body. Check out our website for the most up to date details www.lancaster.ac.uk/study/.

Year 1

Contemporary Social Problems
Exploring broad historical and contemporary responses to social problems. In particular, you will seek to understand how contemporary social problems reflect and reproduce economic and social inequalities, and how these inequalities are constructed through different welfare ideologies and approaches.

Social Work Practice Learning 1
Introduces you to a variety of social work settings and areas of practice with individuals, families, groups and communities, and familiarises you with established and innovative social work processes.

Minor Subject Module
You will be able to choose one module from a choice of subjects that are complementary to Social Work. After you register for your degree we will confirm which minor subject modules are available and how to register for your preferred option.

Year 2

Social Work Practice Learning 2
Introduces you to key methods and theories of social work, and the use of self, reflexivity and critical thinking.

The Research-minded Practitioner
Enables you to demonstrate the value of research evidence for practice, critically appraise different forms of evidence and interpret complex findings.

Social Work with Children and Families
Introduces you to child care law, policy and statutory guidance, and exposes you to the latest research and analysis of serious case reviews.

Social Work and Young People
Discusses contemporary challenges facing young people in the UK today, and introduces theories of adolescent that encourage critical thinking about the reasons why young people are referred to agencies that offer support and safeguarding.

Social Work in Adult Social Care
Develops your understanding of the contribution that social work can make to the lives of disabled and older people who use adult social care services.

Placement 1
This 70 day placement in the private, voluntary or independent sector provides professional learning, personal development and assessment, complemented by three additional days focussed on skills development.

Year 3

Mental Distress and Health
Enables you to develop a critical understanding of the nature of contemporary mental health services and the associated legislative, policy and practice context.

Dissertation
You will explore in some depth a social work related topic of your choice by undertaking a coherent and logical review of relevant literature.

Social Work Practice 3
Underpinning transitions work is acknowledgement that at times we all experience uncertainty. You will explore your transition as a student into the profession of social work and reflect on how that learning will enable you to support others going through transitions.

Placement 2
This 100 day statutory placement prepares you for the statutory aspect of the social work role, and gives you the opportunity to gain practical insight into the legal context of social work.

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As a registered social worker, I am dedicated to research that makes a difference to the way in which vulnerable children and adults can keep safe. I have conducted research aimed at improving children’s participation in services designed to safeguard them and informed policy development on young people and gambling in the UK.

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I bring my research expertise to my teaching, especially in ‘The Research-minded Practitioner’ module in which you will explore how to integrate research in social work practice and become a ‘research informed practitioner’. I also supervise undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations as well as PhD students.

Professor Corinne May-Cahal
A profound learning opportunity for Alison

Wow! My first placement in a children’s setting was a massive learning opportunity and leap into the unknown. The best part was meeting children (from newborn babies right through to older teenagers). This placement was a profound experience which I will never forget. My practice tutor was an absolute blessing. He took time to visit me, and was a great support, keeping in touch and being easy to contact.

My placement opportunity allowed me to see some of the lectures and theories in action. I knew well before the end of the placement that I wanted to be a children’s social worker and it was great to get the team manager’s feedback that she would be happy to have me on her team in the future.

Alison Hetherington
Former student

Your career in social work

Modern social work is a fast-paced, dynamic profession that encompasses many different organisational and practice contexts, including:

+ Statutory and non-statutory practice
+ Independent, charitable and voluntary sector work
+ Children and families intervention
+ Child protection
+ Adult and older adult social care
+ Criminal justice and youth offending
+ Mental health and safeguarding adults
+ Substance use
+ Work with refugee, asylum seekers and immigrant communities

Additional opportunities are available for social workers in broader contexts including:

+ Management
+ Fundraising
+ Campaigning and advocacy
+ Policy development and analysis
+ International development and aid
+ Research and teaching

Entering the profession

The most recent Destination of Leavers from Higher Education data (2016/17) shows that most of our graduates go on to careers in Social Work; some undertaking the The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) in adults or children’s social work and some specialising in areas such as mental health.

A head start

The benefit of completing your degree after your final placement is that you’ll be undertaking statutory work and managing a case load whilst you’re applying for jobs. This works as a great boost for your confidence, competence and employability.

Professional accreditation

All our programmes are approved by the social work regulator.

Specialist careers support

Each year we hold a social work careers event for final year students. This is a great opportunity to meet with local employers and alumni, who can help you prepare for applying for jobs and commencing your careers.
According to Discover Uni (April 2020) in relation to BA (Hons) Social Work at Lancaster University

100% of our students go on to work or further study

= 80% are employed as welfare professionals

& 20% are welfare and associate professionals or professionals in teaching, education, business, research or administration.

£28,000 is the average salary for Lancaster’s BA (Hons) Social Work graduates

Engaging Influencing Leading

The Centre for Child and Family Justice Research

Members of this group share a common interest in state intervention and questions of social justice. A major programme of work currently focuses on the impact of the family courts on the lives of children and their families.

Members of staff are engaged in testing alternative court models, such as the Family Drug and Alcohol Court, as well as designing and evaluating new initiatives to help parents whose children have been removed from their care through court-order.

From the study of legal advice given to pregnant women in prisons in England, through to the study of migrant populations in Europe; the centre provides a rich and lively space for academic research and debate.

Annual flagship events, together with quarterly seminars, provide social work students with direct access to cutting-edge research which is regularly featured in the media and has a direct influence on national and international policy and practice.

The Centre for Disability Research (CeDR)

This Centre provides a network for teaching and research staff across the University concerned with disability and disablism. It hosts a biennial international disability studies conference that brings together over 250 academics, researchers, policy makers and activists from around the world; to share and debate research, ideas and developments in disability studies. Together they consider the ways in which disability studies is practised in the academy and as activism, the formation of disability policy and the impact of this on disabled people’s lives and professional practice. A central theme is interrogating the role social work can play in promoting the human rights of disabled people.

Important Information

The information in this publication relates primarily to 2021/22 entry to the University and every effort has been taken to ensure the information is correct at the time of printing in (May 2020). The University will use all reasonable effort to deliver the courses as described but the University reserves the right to make changes after going to print.

You are advised to consult our website at www.lancaster.ac.uk/study for up-to-date information before you submit your application. Further legal information may be found at www.lancaster.ac.uk/compliance/legalnotice.