Qualifying Social Work Degrees 2020

The place for the Social Worker

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Get in touch

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A place for you

We are proud of our standing as one of the best Social Work departments 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

Everything you want from your Social Work degree

#1

1st for Social Work (Guardian University Guide 2019)

100%

of our graduates are in a professional or managerial job within six months of graduating (Unistats 2018)

Accredited by the Health and Care Professions Council

Changing lives
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 with social work are massively beneficial as it gives 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) that 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
Teaching and assessment

All programmes are full time, and comprise 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 programmes take 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.

Here at Lancaster 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 within the Social Work department by placement tutors and in 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.
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

Our students make a difference

Feedback from placement providers

Jamie Murphy,
Young People’s Worker, Wellbeing Prevention and Early Help Service 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. I would highly recommend them.

Robert Mee
Managing Director, LGB&T Out in the Bay, Lancaster

Having Lancaster social work students with us on placement has enhanced our levels of service. It has enabled service users to meet energetic new people who are kind, caring and considerate. For us, it allows service users to have time spent with them that otherwise would be unavailable. It allows students to learn from service users, which then educates them on the skills they need to further their careers.

LGB&T are a Lancaster-based charity who work with LGB&T people including young adults; who misuse drugs and alcohol and those living with long-term sexual health conditions.
Undergraduate Study
BA (Hons) Social Work, Full Time

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

**Year 1**

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.

- **Contemporary Social Problems**
  Explores 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 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.

- **Flexible Subject Option**
  You will be able to choose one module from a choice of subjects that are complementary to Social Work and are recommended by your Department. After you apply for your degree we will confirm which optional modules are available and how to register for your preferred option.

**Year 2**

- **Social Work Practice 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 childcare 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 adolescence 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 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.

**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.

- **Transitions in Social Work**
  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.

- **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.

- **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.

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

lancaster.ac.uk/social-work
Postgraduate Study
MA Social work, Full Time

The Social Work MA at Lancaster is a qualifying, entry-level, pathway degree into the social work profession; so it is both a postgraduate academic degree and a professional qualification. The teaching emphasis throughout this MA is on issues relevant to social work practice in contemporary Britain, and explores the ways in which sociology, law, social policy and psychology inform and enhance professional social work.

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

**Year 1**

**Policy and Legal Contexts of Social Work**
Focusses upon key theories and concepts in social policy as a means of understanding ways of approaching, and organising reactions to social problems.

**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.

**Preparation for Practice 1**
Enables you to develop basic social work knowledge, values and skills, together with an ability to engage with service users and reflect on what you bring to practice.

**Social Divisions and Social Diversity**
Draws on major critical theories and empirical case studies to consider how social constructions of difference are established and sustained, and how they operate in social work practice.

**Social Work with Children and Families**
Introduces you to childcare 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 adolescence 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.

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

**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 2**

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

**Transitions in Social Work**
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.

**Dissertation**
Enables you to explore in some depth a social work related topic of your choice by undertaking a coherent and logical review of relevant literature.

**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.
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.

More recently my research has focussed on online safety, including projects on how to utilise new forms of social media to empower children and young people and an analysis of internet-facilitated child abuse and exploitation.

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

As the Director of Social Work you will see me right at the beginning of your degree and throughout your studies. Part of my role is to ensure that students have a good experience when studying social work at Lancaster and I welcome feedback at any time.

I am a registered social worker with experience as a child and family social worker in Manchester. During my time as a practising social worker I developed an interest in child trafficking. I have worked nationally and internationally on anti-child trafficking initiatives.

You are likely to see me in modules about child and family social work as well as social work with young people. My classes are interactive with a focus on developing good communication skills, which I believe are a key to respectful but effective practice!

Emma Palmer
Director of Social Work

My research is currently focused on the experiences of disabled people in health and social care services exploring, for example, why men with learning disabilities self-harm; how social work can make sure people with learning disabilities live the lives they want to and aren’t inappropriately incarcerated; and how services can better meet the needs of disabled women who experience violence and abuse. Recently completed work includes evaluating the impact of the modernisation of adult social care day services and the relationship between sight loss and substance use. I have the great pleasure of supervising doctoral research students in disability studies and of working in partnership with disabled people’s organisations and local authorities to co-produce.

Hannah Morgan
Senior Lecturer in Disability Studies

Lancaster University is a leading research intensive university. As a Social Work student you will benefit from being taught by academic staff who are leaders in their chosen fields. From the study of child protection, through to mental distress, substance use, disability, poverty and migration; academics are shaping policy and practice nationally and internationally. The work of the staff group can be accessed through books, articles, government reports and is regularly covered in the media. As well as undertaking teaching and research, many members of staff also serve as expert advisors within government departments, the courts, leading charities and service user organisations.
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, Chris Sherrington, 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
BA (Hons) Social Work

Social Work at Lancaster University is involved with teaching partnerships funded by the Department for Education. These partnerships include Local Authority Social Work teams and allied organisations from the private, voluntary and independent sectors with the aim of strengthening practice. Our two partnerships are with Cumbria County Council and in the Greater Lancashire area with colleagues from the University of Central Lancashire, Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen, and Blackpool Borough Councils.

Social Work teaching partnerships mean those involved work closely together on an ambitious programme of innovation and change to further develop our excellence in social work education. The successful forming of two teaching partnerships is evidence of the government’s continued support for Lancaster University as a centre for high quality social work education. The benefits are clear for student social workers and we are excited about including students in the shaping of our partnerships.

A profound learning opportunity for Alison

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Alison Hetherington
BA (Hons) 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 & 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 (2015/16) 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.

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100%
6 months after finishing the course
100% of our students go on to work or further study

Of this 100%:
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

According to Unistats 2018 in relation to BA (Hons) Social Work at Lancaster University
Hear from our alumni

Julie Price
Senior Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Practitioner / Social Worker

I took my MA in Social Work at Lancaster University and grew academically and emotionally. The time seems to have gone so quickly! The programme itself provided me with a wealth of theoretical and practical knowledge. I loved the degree (especially the independent writing). However, placements allowed me to use my knowledge of theory in practice and provide interventions - I was lucky to work with some amazing people (both in statutory and non-statutory services). Since leaving Lancaster I gained a role in Adult Social Care when I applied for my dream role in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). I can't imagine working anywhere else at the moment – but Social Work has so many possibilities so who knows where the journey will lead me!

Andy Cross
Recovery Coordinator / Social Worker

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.

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 that 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.