

MA/PGD in Advanced Social Work Studies

Awarding Institution:
Teaching Institution:
Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences
Programme length:

The University of Reading
The University of Reading

12 months full-time; up to 60 months
part-time

For students entering in 2004

Date of specification: February 2004

Programme Director: Ann Quinn

Board of Studies: Modular Masters Board

Accreditation: Advanced Award in Social Work (approved by Thames Valley Post-qualifying
Education and Training Consortium)

Summary of programme aims

The programme draws upon students' own work experience to develop critical reflection on social work and social care practice, policy and service provision and to enable research minded practice. Students extend their knowledge of the theories and assumptions that inform social care work in relation to ethical issues and standards of practice.

The programme promotes continuing professional development within an inter professional learning environment. Students study in comparatively small groups alongside other health and social care professionals and improve their own knowledge and skills while contributing to the learning of others.

Transferable skills

Students will develop the capacity:

- to critically analyse complex social work and social care issues;
- to define and sustain the values of social work;
- to respond to service users' perspectives;
- to promote inter professional collaboration;
- to analyse and undertake research;
- to learn independently and maintain continuing professional development.

Programme content

There are two routes to the Masters degree:

Route A: 6 taught modules (the equivalent of 120 M level credits), plus a dissertation (HCMB20) of 15,000 to 20,000 words (the equivalent of 60 M level credits);

Route B: 4 taught modules (the equivalent of 80 M level credits), plus a dissertation (HCMB21) of 25,000 to 30,000 words (the equivalent of 100 M level credits).

Route B can only be taken with the permission of the programme director.

On both routes, students take two compulsory modules - HCMB01 Research Methods (Health and Social Care) and HCMA04 Ethical Issues in Health and Social Care - and two additional modules chosen from the MA in Advanced Social Work Studies programme. On Route A, students chose a further two optional modules which may be drawn from the other MA programmes within the School of Health and Social Care.

The following profile lists the modules available for students to select from within the programme:

Compulsory modules

		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
HCMB01	Research Methods (Health and Social Care)	20	M
HCMA04	Ethical Issues in Health and Social Care	20	M

Optional modules

		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
HCMB02	Working with the Mentally Disordered Offender in the Community	20	M
HCMB03	Working with Sex Offenders	20	M
HCMB04	Working with Families	20	M
HCMB05	Working with Domestic Violence	20	M
HCMB06	Bereavement, Loss and Grief	20	M
HCMB07	Working with Dying people and their Families	20	M
HCMB08	Evaluation, Quality and Users	20	M
HCMB09	Introduction to Play Therapy	20	M
HCMB10	Working with Vulnerable Adults	20	M
HCMB11	Comparative Studies in Health and Social Care	20	M
HCMB12	Policy and Practice of Community Care	20	M
HCMB13	Developing Women Managers	20	M
HCMB14	Groupwork for Health and Social Care Professionals	20	M
HCMB15	Counselling for Health & Social Care Professionals	20	M
HCMB16	Working Directly with Children and Young People	20	M
HCMB17	Working with Parents and those with Parental Responsibilities	20	M
HCMB18	Working with the Family and the Wider Environment	20	M

Students may select modules from other MA programmes within the School, including the MA in Healthcare Leadership and Practice and the MA in Education, Health and Social Care.

Examples of optional modules from the MA in Healthcare Leadership and Practice:

		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
HCMA01	Leadership in Healthcare Practice	20	M
HCMA03	Public Health	20	M
HCMA05	Healthcare Practice in a Legal framework	20	M

Examples of optional modules from the MA in Education, Health and Social Care:

		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
HCMJ01	Adult Learning	20	M
HCMJ02	Methods/Styles of Teaching	20	M
HCMJ05	Assessment and Evaluation	20	M

For the MA in Advanced Social Work Studies

Either

HCMB20	MA in Advanced Social Work Studies Dissertation (Route A)	60	M
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Or

HCMB21	MA in Advanced Social Work Studies Dissertation (Route B)	100	M
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Part-time/Modular arrangements

This is a flexible programme, and most students undertake it on a part-time basis. Most modules comprise 10 three-hour sessions, spread weekly throughout an academic term; there is usually an assignment that is submitted six weeks after the module teaching is completed.

For part-time students following Route A, the six modules must be completed within 48 months of registration, and the dissertation within a further 12 month period. For part-time students following Route B, the four modules must be completed within 36 months of registration, and the dissertation completed within a further 24 month period. On both routes, part-time students may have a break of up to 36 months between completing the taught modular stage and commencing the dissertation.

Progression requirements

For those students undertaking Route A, six modules must be successfully completed in order to proceed to the dissertation stage; for those undertaking Route B, four modules need to be successfully completed.

It is possible to exit earlier from the course, and still receive an academic award. On successful completion of 6 modules, students are eligible to receive the Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Social Work Studies; on successful completion of 3 modules students are eligible to receive the Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Social Work Studies.

Summary of teaching and assessment

Teaching throughout the School's MA programmes is student-centred, and the professional knowledge and life experience contributed by students is valued and used to facilitate new learning. Teaching styles will normally be interactive encouraging discussion and reflection. Teaching sessions typically comprise both lectures and seminar discussions, with an emphasis on case studies and experiential learning. There is a focus on shared learning; because the MA is part of a wider modular programme, students benefit from studying alongside other health and social care professionals.

All assessed work is related to the individual student's area of practice, thus supporting the application of theory to practice.

Mark

70 – 100%

60 – 69%

50 – 59%

Interpretation

Distinction

Merit

Good standard (Pass)

Failing categories:

40 – 49%

0 – 39%

Work below threshold standard

Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degrees

To pass the MA students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation *and have no mark below 40*. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 40 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 70 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and having no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

For PG Diplomas

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more *and have no mark below 40*. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must be less than 40 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and having no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

For PG Certificate

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more *and have no mark below 40*.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained a first degree; those who are not graduates but who can demonstrate their ability to work at Masters level may also be offered a place.

Applicants should be qualified social workers, normally with a minimum of two years experience post-qualification, or experienced social care workers.

All postgraduate programmes within the School of Health and Social Care have the flexibility to allow admission with advanced standing through accreditation of prior learning (APL) and accreditation of prior experiential learning (AP(E)L). In order for credit gained elsewhere to count towards this MA award, it must be relevant and at an appropriate level. The length of time since completing the prior learning will be considered; it should normally have been within the last five years. Applicants must produce certificated evidence of APL credits; prior experiential learning must be demonstrated in a personal portfolio.

Applicants may also obtain credit for post qualifying study, if completed within the past 5 years. Those who have obtained their Practice Teaching Award are entitled to exemption from one optional module. Those who have successfully passed the 3 taught modules of the Thames Valley Post Qualifying Child Care Award at Masters level can claim advanced standing for 3 modules.

Admissions Tutor: Ann Quinn

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

Career prospects

The majority of students registering for this course are employed by public, voluntary or independent providers of social care. This course will enhance their potential for career development and promotion.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

Not applicable.

Educational aims of the programme

The programme aims to promote continuing professional development for social workers and social care workers within an interprofessional learning environment. This environment facilitates shared learning amongst a range of health and social care professionals from diverse agency settings. Students will be encouraged to draw on their own work experience to critically analyse social work and social care practice, policy and service provision and to enable research minded practice. They will develop an understanding of social research, and be able to evaluate the evidence base informing social care work. They will also be able to extend their knowledge of the theories and assumptions that inform social care work in relation to ethical issues and standards of practice.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:	Teaching/learning methods and strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislation, policy and the theoretical models providing the framework for social work and social care practice• Ethical issues, professional values, and the nature of social care work in a diverse society• Empowerment, anti-discriminatory practice and user involvement.• Research, evidence based practice and the evaluation of social work interventions.• Strategies to involve users in the development, delivery and evaluation of services• The contribution, perspectives and constraints of other health and social care professionals	<p>A variety of teaching methods, including lectures, seminars, small group discussion and workshops will be utilised. The emphasis will be on experiential learning – participative methods that encourage reflection and the application of theory to practice.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Assessment will be by coursework, predominantly essays or case studies. Further detail is provided within each module specification.</p>

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to:

- Systematically analyse a wide range of complex issues that influence the provision of social care
- Understand the perspectives of service users and carers
- Justify the selection of a particular method of practice
- Make informed judgments in the absence of complete data, and make decisions which minimize the risk of unintended outcomes
- Critically analyse current social problems and evaluate proposed interventions
- Evaluate the research base for practice, and critique research studies
- Propose research questions with a sound rationale, and draw on appropriate research methods for their investigation..

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

As stated before, a variety of teaching methods, including lectures, seminars, small group discussion and workshops will be utilised, with an emphasis on experiential learning. Students will be supported to use the library effectively, and to search information databases.

Assessment

Coursework, as above, demonstrating skills of analysis in all module assignments and the dissertation

C. Practical skills – able to:

- Reflect on their practice and demonstrate self awareness
- Share their knowledge with other health and social care professionals, via discussion and more formal presentations
- Give constructive feedback to other students
- Communicate their conclusions clearly, both verbally and in written formats
- Use information technology to develop and inform research projects and the communication of knowledge.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

As stated before, a variety of teaching methods, including lectures, seminars, small group discussion and workshops will be utilised, with an emphasis on experiential learning. Students will be supported to use the library effectively, and to search information databases.

Assessment

Within all coursework through the demonstration of writing and presentation skills, and IT skills

D. Transferable skills – able to:

- Learn independently, in order to facilitate continuing professional development
- Exercise initiative and personal responsibility
- Make decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances
- Learn and problem solve within an interprofessional environment

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

As above.

Students are supported by their personal tutor to devise their own pathway through the programme modules.

The interprofessional learning environment facilitates shared learning and information exchange amongst a range of health and social care professionals from diverse agency settings.

Assessment

Within all coursework, with its focus on the students' own area of practice.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably expect to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in module and programme handbooks.