

Template C4



Programme Specification

Title of Course: *MSW Master of Social Work*

Date first produced	20/02/2013
Date last revised	11/08/2025
Date of implementation of current version	01/09/2025
Version number	13
Faculty	Faculty of Health, Science, Social Care & Education
Cross-disciplinary	
School	School of Education, Midwifery and Social Work
Department	Department of Social Work and Social Care
Delivery Institution	Kingston University London

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes and content of each modules can be found in the course VLE site and in individual Module Descriptors.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Award(s) and Title(s):	MSW Master of Social Work
Exit Award(s) and Title(s):	Master of Arts in Applied Social Care Studies PG Certificate in Applied Social Care Studies PG Diploma in Applied Social Care Studies PG Diploma in Social Work (Qualifying MSW Exit Award)
Course Code <i>For each pathway and mode of delivery</i>	ppswk1swk01 pfswk1swk02
UCAS code <i>For each pathway</i>	L508: full-time L510: part-time

Awarding Institution:	Kingston University
Teaching Institution:	Kingston University London
Location:	Kingston Hill Campus
Language of Delivery:	English
Delivery mode:	
Learning mode(s):	Part-time Full-time
Minimum period of registration:	Part-time - 3 Full-time - 2
Maximum period of registration:	Part-time - 5 Full-time - 4
Entry requirements	Kingston University typically uses a range of entry requirements to assess an applicant's suitability for our courses. Most postgraduate taught course requirements are based on having been awarded a relevant undergraduate degree and are normally coupled with minimum grades expectation of 2:2, specific courses in certain areas may have a stricter grade requirement. We may also use interview, portfolio and performance pieces to assess a person's suitability for some courses. We recognise that every person's journey to a postgraduate taught education is different and unique and in some cases we may take into account work experience and other non-standard pathways onto University level study. Additionally, all non-UK applicants must meet our English language requirements.

	Please see our course pages on the Kingston University website for the most up to date entry requirements.
Regulated by	The University and its courses are regulated by the Office for Students
Programme Accredited by:	Social Work England (SWE) Home - Social Work England
Approved Variants:	<p>The Masters of Social Work (MSW) is a qualifying degree programme, required for a professional registration with Social Work England, the Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work is ONLY available as an Exit Award.</p> <p>Given the professional standing of the programme, the following options are NOT available to the Programme Assessment Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award Master of Social Work (MSW) or Post Graduate Diploma (PG Dip) in Social Work Exit Award by Aegrotat (where the student is too unwell) to attempt a relevant assessment of practice elements of the course or fulfil the mandatory attendance requirement. • Compensation for failure in any element of the programme of study leading to the award of MSW or PG Dip in Social Work Exit Award.
Is this Higher or Degree Apprenticeship course?	No

SECTION 2: THE COURSE

A. Aims of the Course

The Master of Social Work (MSW) programme offers the education and training necessary for professional social work qualification. It is accredited by Social Work England (SWE), a professional social work regulator in England. Professional social work qualifications are linked to a specific level of academic achievement. SWE regulates the practice of social workers in England and approves qualifying social work programmes that meet SWE Education and Training Standards (2021). The 'social worker' is a protected title in the UK, and anyone using the title is expected to be registered with the relevant regulatory body.

The MSW programme is typically delivered as a full-time programme (2 years) or a part-time programme (3 years). Social work students who are successful in completing all elements of approved courses are eligible to apply to join the social work register (subject to the SWE application and verification process).

Aims of the Course

1. To produce graduates who are both intellectually well-equipped and professionally competent to take their place in the workforce as qualified social workers who meet the requirements and Professional Standards (2019) for social workers set out by Social Work England.
2. To provide students with a thorough grounding in social work as an academic and professional discipline, enabling them to integrate learning through critical thinking, reflective practice, and research while preparing them to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of current problems and changes in response to the social, political and economic challenges.
3. To promote students' ability to make sound judgements, where necessary, without complete data, drawing on a comprehensive analysis informed by social and human sciences and evidence from research and subject-specific knowledge, informed by SWE Professional Standards and relevant ethical frameworks.
4. To provide a range of opportunities (including digital competency) for students to communicate their conclusions to people with lived experience of social work, professionals and peers, with empathy, clarity and credibility.
5. To foster a questioning mindset, professional curiosity and adaptability by facilitating opportunities for students to debate, question and critically evaluate new knowledge derived from research and practice while drawing on skills and techniques developed through students' independent research and scholarship aimed at autonomous, effective practice and innovative practice development.
6. To promote collaboration, inclusion, and a student-led approach to developing a proactive, self-evaluative stance by offering opportunities for students to work as part of the team and in interdisciplinary contexts and enable students to take responsibility for their conduct and ethical practice while recognising power imbalance, sphere of influence, and boundaries in professional social work.
7. To foster positive, collaborative relationships with students, employers, and people with lived experience of social work to establish foundations for students' continued professional development as an integral element of professional practice.

B. Programme Learning Outcomes

The programme learning outcomes are the high-level learning outcomes that will have been achieved by all students receiving this award. They have been aligned to the levels set out in 'Sector Recognised Standards in England' (OFS 2022).

Programme Learning Outcomes					
	Knowledge and Understanding On completion of the course students will be able to:		Intellectual Skills On completion of the course students will be able to		Subject Practical Skills On completion of the course students will be able to
A1	The social and human sciences relating to social work	B1	Gather information, critically evaluate and synthesise it and form coherent plans based on that evaluation	C1	Communicate with and establish effective working relationships with people with lived experience of services, partner agencies, community groups and multi-disciplinary agencies
A2	Social work models and methods of assessment and intervention	B2	Apply knowledge to problem-solve and to develop coherent plans in complex situations	C2	Assess complex situations, make decisions and formulate plans; both record and report coherently
A3	Law, social policy and organisational studies relevant to social work	B3	Use knowledge to address ethical problems and dilemmas	C3	Evaluate risk, and assess needs to create increased safety and wellbeing
A4	Ethical theory, value concepts and principles governing equality, anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice	B4	Use supervision and critical reflection to learn from practice experiences and to manage personal responses	C4	Collaborate and negotiate with relevant parties and advocate effectively and appropriately

C. Future Skills Graduate Attributes

In addition to the programme learning outcomes, the programme of study defined in this programme specification will engage students in developing their Future Skills Graduate Attributes:

1. Creative Problem Solving
2. Digital Competency
3. Enterprise
4. Questioning Mindset
5. Adaptability
6. Empathy
7. Collaboration
8. Resilience
9. Self-Awareness

D. Outline Programme Structure

Full details of each module will be provided in module descriptors via the student Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Master of Social Work (Full-Time (FT))

MSW Year 1 FT (September to August)

SW7004: Legal, Ethical and Policy Frameworks for Social Work Practice (30 academic credits) **September to November**

SW4001: Readiness for Direct Practice (RDP) (30 academic credits) **September to February**

SW7002: Human Development in the Social Environment (30 academic credits) **November to January**

SW7001: Assessment and Intervention (30 academic credits) **January to February**

SW7003: Applied Social Work Practice (30 academic credits) **February to April**

SW5001: First Practice Placement: **70 days** (30 academic credits) **May to August**

MSW Year 2 FT (September to July)

SW7005: Special Interests Practice (30 academic credits) **September to November**

SW7007: Capstone Project (30 academic credits) **November to January**

SW6008: Final Practice Placement: **100 days** (30 academic credits) **January to July**

Master of Social Work (Part-Time (PT))

MSW Year 1 PT (November to February)

SW7002: Human Development in the Social Environment (30 academic credits) **November to January**

SW7001: Assessment and Intervention (30 academic credits) **January to February**

MSW Year 2 PT (September to August)

SW7004: Legal, Ethical and Policy Frameworks for Social Work Practice (30 academic credits) **September to November**

SW4001: Readiness for Direct Practice (RDP) (30 academic credits) **September to February**

SW7003: Applied Social Work Practice (30 academic credits) **February to April**

SW5001: First Practice Placement: **70 days** (30 academic credits) **May to August**

MSW Year 3 PT (September to July)

SW7005: Special Interests Practice (30 academic credits) **September to November**

SW7007: Capstone Project (30 academic credits) **November to January**

SW6008: Final Practice Placement: **100 days** (30 academic credits) **January to July**

The Master of Social Work degree (both full-time or part-time modes of studying) requires 180 credits at Level 7 and 90 credits of practice learning modules: SW4001, SW5001, and SW6008. Students who exit with 180 credits at Level 7 but with insufficient credits in practice learning (SW4001, SW5001, and SW6008) are eligible for the Master of Arts (MA) in Applied Social Care Studies award. Students exiting the programme with 120 level 7 credits but with insufficient credits in practice learning (SW4001; SW5001; SW6008) are eligible for the award of a Post Graduate Diploma (PG Dip) in Applied Social Care Studies. Students exiting the programme with 60 level 7 credits qualify for the Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert) in Applied Social Care Studies.

Progression points:

Modules SW4001, SW5001, and SW6008 are taken sequentially. Students taking a social work degree must pass SW4001 (RDP) before progressing to SW5001 (First Practice Placement). Students must be successful in SW5001 before progressing to SW6008 (Final Practice Placement).

Professional expectations and standards

This is a regulated professional course and it is expected that students demonstrate and maintain high levels of professionalism in their conduct, behaviours, attendance and response to support and advice.

Full attendance is required in line with the University's Student Attendance and Engagement Policy (AP15). Where there is a cause for concern in relation to the student's attendance, a progression plan will be created. If this does not lead to the required improvement in attendance, the student's registration may be terminated in accordance with the University General Regulations 1: General Student Regulations (30-35).

Other issues relating to professional conduct and behaviours will be considered in accordance with the appropriate University regulations and policies.

MSW Master of Social Work

Level 4
MSW Master of Social Work

Core modules	Module code	Credit Value	Level	Teaching Block	Pre-requisites	Full Time	Part Time
Readiness for Direct Practice	SW4001	30	4	1 and 2		1	2

Exit Awards at Level 4

Students ought to be successful in completing SW4001_B Readiness for Direct Practice (RDP) by achieving 30 academic credits in this practice module, while meeting other academic requirements to progress to the SW5001_B the First Practice Placement (MSW).

Level 5							
MSW Master of Social Work							
Core modules	Module code	Credit Value	Level	Teaching Block	Pre-requisites	Full Time	Part Time
First Placement (Social Work)	SW5001	30	5	2	SW4001_B Readiness for Direct Practice (MSW)	1	2

Exit Awards at Level 5

Students ought to be successful in completing SW5001_B the MSW First Practice Placement by achieving 30 academic credits in this practice module, while meeting other academic requirements to progress to the SW6008_B the MSW Final Practice Placement.

Level 6							
MSW Master of Social Work							
Core modules	Module code	Credit Value	Level	Teaching Block	Pre-requisites	Full Time	Part Time
FINAL PRACTICE PLACEMENT (Social Work)	SW6008	30	6	2	SW5001_B	2	3

Exit Awards at Level 6

MSW progression points:

Modules SW4001; SW5001 and SW6008 are taken sequentially. Students taking a qualifying social work degree are required to pass SW4001_B (Readiness for Direct Practice) before progressing to SW5001_B (MSW First Practice Placement). Students are required to pass SW5001_B (First Practice Placement) before progressing to SW6008_B MSW Final Practice Placement. This practice module requires from students to successfully

complete a 100 days Final Practice Placement and meet requirements described by the BASW PCF at the End of Final Placement practice level descriptor.

Level 7							
MSW Master of Social Work							
Core modules	Module code	Credit Value	Level	Teaching Block	Pre-requisites	Full Time	Part Time
Applied Social Work Practice	SW7003	30	7	2		1	2
ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION	SW7001	30	7	2		1	1
CAPSTONE PROJECT	SW7007	30	7	1		2	3
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT	SW7002	30	7	1		1	2
LEGAL, ETHICAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE	SW7004	30	7	1		1	1
SPECIALIST PRACTICE INTEREST	SW7005	30	7	1		2	3

Exit Awards at Level 7

Master of Social Work degree requires 180 credits at Level 7 and 90 credits of practice learning modules: SW4001; SW5001; SW6008)

Students who exit with 180 credits at level 7 but with insufficient credits in practice learning (SW4001; SW5001; SW6008) are eligible for the award of **Master of Arts (MA) in Applied Social Care Studies**.

Students exiting the programme with 120 level 7 credits but with insufficient credits in practice learning (SW4001; SW5001; SW6008) are eligible for the award of **Post Graduate Diploma (PGDip) in Applied Social Care Studies**.

Students exiting the programme with 60 level 7 credits are eligible for the award of **Post Graduate Certificate (PG Cert) in Applied Social Care Studies**.

E. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The design of the programme is informed by Kingston University's Inclusive Curriculum Framework, drawing also on the Universal Design Principles. Social Work sector-wide best practices, including BASW Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and the Social Work England Professional Standards (SWEPS), further informed by the relevant Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS), play an integral role in shaping the course content and teaching strategies. The QAA Code of Practice (Quality Code) is used alongside regular consultations with students, alumni, People with Lived Experience of Social Services (PLE) and partner organisations to provide regular input and course development. The curriculum is designed to provide students with holistic and developmental learning opportunities to gain progressively the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attributes of successful social workers. Academic skills at this level are developed incrementally with a research strand embedded in all modules. The programme promotes independent learning and thinking, creativity and innovation and learning from critically reflective practice.

The learning and teaching strategy for the course aims to promote full student participation in learning experiences, which develops their knowledge, skills and appraisal of best practices in social work while stimulating curiosity and self-directed learning. Teaching and learning methods are carefully chosen to suit the content and the learning outcomes of the modules and to be responsive to students' needs as learners. The overall design plots a logical and progressive path towards qualification in professional social work, enabling students to develop incrementally towards meeting the standards required at the qualification level (end of final placement) in the BASW Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF). This is also used to ensure that learning covers all ages and the majority of service user groups. The learning and teaching strategy recognises that students engaging in academic study at this level appreciate and benefit from a wide variety of learning opportunities that include, for example, research-informed exploration of theoretical and practice issues (delivered through lectures, seminars and via online resources), individual and group-based research and enquiry learning, formative presentations with feedback from tutors and peers, individual tutorials and structured critical analysis of current professional practice experience. Social work practitioners and PLE contribute to teaching all modules, enhancing the quality of the student learning experience.

Active learning, critical reflection, and analysis are promoted to underpin all learning in the programme. Individual and group tutorials are provided throughout the course to enhance the professional nature of social work and model value-laden approaches. Personal tutorials and linked support also promote students' abilities to understand their learning preferences, monitor and reflect on their developmental journey, and identify areas for continuing professional development for their practice. The Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas) is used in various ways alongside Technology Enhanced Learning in all modules of the programme to develop students' skills, foster learning communities and personalise the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on developing group work skills, written and oral communication and presentation skills, analysis and independent learning. This provides the basis for students to develop their future practice objectives, whether related to further research and training, lifelong learning or personal and professional career plans.

Practice skills development is an important element of the programme, with 30 Skills Days dedicated to practising skills in the Skills Lab through workshops, simulations, and role plays to enable students to engage in practice actively. Students record and review their practice videos in and after learning sessions to evaluate and develop their skills. The practice placement modules support transferring theory, knowledge and skills, integrated values, ethics and research to the practice environment. Practice placement aims to enable students to meet expected professional capabilities. Students must

complete the 30 days of practice skills development and two practice learning placements of 70 and 100 days in contrasting settings to meet the expectation of the professional qualification in social work. Attendance at practice skills development days and practice placements is mandatory and is monitored. The 30 days of practice skills development includes 14 days undertaken as part of the *Readiness for Direct Practice* module (SW4001), and 16 days of practice skills development undertaken as workshops days during the programme on topics such as skills development in working positively with diversity and ethics and values in practice; mediation skills; social work intervention skills, court skills, group work skills and research skills and experience undertaken in the special interest module. Practice placements are taken in approved and quality-assured practice learning settings within local partner agencies. Practice educators are responsible for managing, teaching and assessing students on practice placements. Students are supported in meeting the BASW PCF at relevant level descriptors, further mapped against the Social Work England Professional Standards (SWEPS). Students are supported in preparing to apply for employment and undertake the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

The overall assessment strategy is designed to help students learn and to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes of modules and the programme. It aims to help them build knowledge and skills progressively through the course. All modules provide explicit formative opportunities, developmental feedback and 'feed-forward' guidance designed to support students reach their full potential in summative assessment. The contribution of the individual assessments to the module total and the requirements to pass each module are detailed in the course and module syllabus published in the course Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Canvas. Assessment methods include portfolios, reflective analyses of practice, individual and group presentations, essays, and written reports, including a limited literature review as part of the Capstone research project. Academic staff work collaboratively with PLE and partner organisations to ensure, wherever possible, that students are safe to practice throughout the course. This is enabled by collaborative assessment processes (such as in the *Readiness for Direct Practice* module and the placements modules).

The assessment of practice in each of the Practice Placements is based upon a portfolio approach, compiling direct evidence, supported by reflective professional development plans, evaluation by PLE and the Practice Educator's report. The evidence in the portfolio demonstrates the achievement of the BASW Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), Social Work England Professional Standards (SWEPS) and the Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) for Child and Family Social Work and Social Workers in Adult Services. Students must demonstrate that they are safe and ready to practice in an approved practice learning setting. This assessment is confirmed by the Practice Assessment Panel (constituted of representatives of PLE and carers, employers and members of academic staff) and the Programme Assessment Board. It must be satisfactorily attained before undertaking practice placements. On placements, students are assessed by a practice educator responsible for teaching and learning on the placement. Assessment includes observation of direct work with service users and carers, service user and carer feedback on their practice, application of theory to practice through reflective writing and by relating their practice to modules undertaken within the university, compilation of a practice portfolio of evidence.

F. Support for Students and their Learning

In this programme, teaching is frontloaded in stage one. During this period, there is a strong emphasis placed on student support. On placements, students are supported by practice educators. These arrangements for support reflect social work values and the tradition of supervision within the profession. Students are supported by:

- Regular Individual and group tutorials with a personal tutor assist students in planning their course of study, considering career development options, and developing and achieving their personal and professional development plans. Wherever possible, students retain the same tutor throughout the duration of the programme, building up a supportive working relationship. Tutors also visit their tutees when undertaking practice placements and help students trace and enhance their personal and professional development.
- Dedicated tutors support those undertaking the MSW part-time in the first two years of study.
- Graduates of the programme: Students may be networked with former graduates, and this often provides students with support in accessing practice opportunities and career guidance; and support in managing the demands of academic study
- Employers work in partnership with the course. Some employer partners offer competitive internships for which students may apply from the programme
- Email contact with module leaders and the course leader
- Service user and carer representatives working with the course team
- Information advisors in the Learning Resource Centre, who offer individual help sessions for students
- Professional Support Staff and the Faculty Pre-Qualifying Programmes Office
- Student Achievement Officer
- Technical support to advise students on IT use of software and database searching
- Formative assessment throughout each module
- VLE Canvas – a versatile online interactive intranet and learning environment
- Department monthly research seminars during the period October to May
- Student voice committee and opportunities to undertake a range of representative roles to put forward student views.
- The student union

Kingston University offers a wide range of student services, which can be accessed through the Student Hub. Services include dyslexia and disability support. Details can be found at: <https://mykingston.kingston.ac.uk/mysupport/Pages/StudentHUB.aspx>

G. Ensuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Course

The University has several methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of its provision. These include:

- External Examiners
- Student Voice and Course Representatives
- Boards of Studies
- Annual Monitoring and Enhancement, including Course Enhancement Plans (CEP)
- Periodic review undertaken at the subject and course level within the course teaching team
- Student evaluation, including Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs), course-level surveys and the National Student Survey (NSS)
- Moderation processes and policies

- Feedback from People with Lived Experience in social services and partner organisations

H. External Reference Points

External reference points which have informed the design of the course:

- PSRB standards
- QAA Subject benchmarks
- Apprenticeship standards
- Other subject or industry standards

Please delete or edit as required, for example if the course is not an Apprenticeship then delete 'Apprenticeship standards'.

I. Development of Course Learning Outcomes in Modules

This table maps where programme learning outcomes are **summatively** assessed across the **core** modules for this course. It provides an aid to academic staff in understanding how individual modules contribute to the course aims, a means to help students monitor their own learning, personal and professional development as the course progresses and a checklist for quality assurance purposes.

Module Code		Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7					
		SW4001	SW5001	SW6008	SW7007	SW7003	SW7001	SW7005	SW7002	SW7004
Knowledge & Understanding	A1	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
	A2	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
	A3	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
	A4	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Intellectual Skills	B1	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
	B2	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
	B3	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S

	B 4	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Practical Skills	C 1	S	S	S				S		
	C 2	S	S	S				S		
	C 3	S	S	S				S		
	C 4	S	S	S				S		

Students will be provided with formative assessment opportunities throughout the course to practise and develop their proficiency in the range of assessment methods utilised.

Additional Information