Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information

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Awarding Institution: Nottingham Trent University
 School/Campus: School of Social Science / City

3. Final Award, Course Title and BA (Hons) Social Work

Modes of Study: Full time
Normal Duration: 3 years
UCAS Code: L500

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

The BA (Honours) Social Work is the national award which the University has delivered since its introduction in 2003. The award is a professional qualification which will enable you to apply for registration as a Social Worker with the Social Work Regulatory body on successful completion. It also provides you access to many of the Assessed Year in Employment (ASYE) opportunities that are available to newly qualified social workers. From 2013 the course has been redesigned to meet Social Work Reform Board requirements ensuring that you qualify as per the requirements of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF). Nottingham Trent University has a strong history and great expertise in educating social work students at qualifying and post-qualifying levels and we are proud to supply high calibre graduates for the jobs market.

Choosing to train as a social worker is a positive step towards a rewarding and challenging career. Social work can be both demanding and complex and requires skilled and knowledgeable professionals who have a strong belief in human rights and social justice. Social work is also rewarding because you are contributing to improving the lives of children, adults, families and communities. When you are training you need to feel that you are in safe hands where you will be supported to learn and to try out different ideas before you are given the responsibility of working alone.

A key feature of the course is the integration of academic and practice modules. You will undertake block placements to gain valuable work experience of current practice in different workplace settings. These are substantial periods of time (80 working days in level five and 90 working days in level six) in which you operate as a student under the guidance of a qualified practice educator. NTU is part of an East Midlands wide teaching partnership called the "D2N2 Academy of Social Work Excellence". This is a cooperative fusion of local employers, educators and service-user organisations that not only formalise the active learning community that you are part of but also acts to improve the standards of pre and post qualification social workers. It means you are in close contact with those people who are most likely to employ you from day one, with their input into your training from the very start and the obvious opportunities that will bring you in terms of your career.

In addition, at each level in the degree we have professional practice modules which focus on the skills and qualities necessary to undertake the social work role and meet the requirements of the Professional Capabilities Framework.

You must be assessed as being ready for direct practice before you embark on the first placement. In the university, you will learn about why people need to use social work services, how to deliver a professional service, the underpinning knowledge about child and adult development and the legislative background that enables social workers to assess and intervene. You will learn about different assessment frameworks and models of intervention and begin to examine evidence for why it might be better practice to follow one approach rather than another. The two placements provide the opportunity to put your theoretical knowledge into practice and start seeing what a difference social work can make to people's lives.

The course provision addresses the complementary agendas of professional and regulatory bodies by offering a curriculum that meets:

- The Regulatory Standards of Proficiency (SoP) for Social Workers at the point of registration.
- The subject benchmark statements for social work and the graduate attributes of the University.

This is reflected in the course aims which are to:

- 1. Foster student's application of the core values of social work as defined by the Regulatory body.
- 2. Develop students' knowledge and skills as defined by the professional and regulatory bodies.
- 3. Provide opportunities for students to integrate academic and placement learning to become critical and reflective practitioners.
- 4. Enable students to develop the graduate attributes and demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning and continuing professional development.

The curriculum will enable you to develop the important transferable skills required for social work practice in such areas as interpersonal and communication skills. You will learn how to draw from a wide range of relevant theory and knowledge in order to assess, plan and evaluate interventions. Social workers work with groups of people who are often marginalised and socially excluded, and your capacity to work in an empowering anti-discriminatory way with service users and carers will be at the core of the practice skills you develop.

The award is 'generic' which means you will be qualified to work in a variety of social work / social care agencies in both the statutory (local authority sector) or in the voluntary or independent sectors. You are required to complete 170 days in supervised professional practice and 30 days practice skills on the course which is structured as follows:

Full time students

- 1. 1st Year Level 4: 30 days practice skills incorporated into the course including the Preparing for Professional Social Work Practice (PPSWP) module Readiness to Practice Interview and practice skill days in local agencies. This module is crucial in preparing you for your first placement at level 5.
- 2. 2nd Year Level 5: 80 day placement in either a statutory or 'voluntary' agency. You will carry responsibility for a range of work in order to demonstrate meeting the required learning outcomes according to the Regulatory body and Standards of Proficiency. A Practice Educator will provide supervision, support and assess you during your placement. You will also receive support from a Personal Tutor allocated by the University.
- 3. **3rd Year Level 6:** 90 day placement as above but this placement must include a focus on statutory tasks. A Practice Educator will provide regular supervision and support to enable professional development and assess your practice according to the Standards of Proficiency and Professional Capabilities Framework. The same Personal Tutor you had at level 5 will also provide you with support.

The course has been planned, delivered and assessed in partnership with service users and local social work agencies: Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Derbyshire local authorities, Framework Housing Association and Service-user Empowerment and Advocacy (SEA). Students have also been involved in planning and design of the curriculum.

You will be allocated a personal tutor before induction and they will be available to support and advise you throughout the first year of the course. On entry, your learning support needs will be assessed and appropriate support services provided as far as possible within the university and by partner agencies on placement.

7. Course outcomes

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

Each outcome relates to the Professional Capabilities Framework ("PCF") (BASW, 2018) and core professional values; as well as the current regulatory Standards of Proficiency (HCPC, 2017).

Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- 1. Demonstrate a critical understanding of social work ethical principles and values and their implications for professional practice with a range of service user groups;
- 2. Describe and evaluate the knowledge base relating to the nature and causation of social problems that require a social work response;
- 3. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the application to social work of research, theory, and knowledge from, its core disciples;
- 4. Critically analyse social and economic processes and their implications in a diverse society for people needing social work services and a

- professional social work response which challenges discrimination and oppression;
- 5. Demonstrate analytical knowledge of the range of theories and models for social work assessment and intervention s and the methods derived from them;
- 6. Demonstrate analytical knowledge of the legal and policy contexts of social work practice;
- 7. Critically reflect upon the implications of being accountable to the professional body, the social work agency and service users.

Skills, qualities and attributes

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to engage and communicate effectively (both orally and in writing) with professionals and service users of diverse backgrounds in a range of settings;
- 2. Synthesise and record relevant information to inform social work assessments;
- Demonstrate the ability to make evidence and value based decisions, to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, prevent harm, and address discrimination and oppression;
- 4. Present an evidence and value based professional opinion by communicating this clearly accurately and precisely to individuals and groups in a range of situations;
- 5. Demonstrate an independent and reflective approach to the delivery and evaluation of social work services;
- 6. Demonstrate the ability to reflect on and learn from your social work practice resolving conflicts between personal and professional standards and values;
- 7. Demonstrate the ability to work effectively within the changing contexts that shape social work practice including multi-agency and inter-professional settings;
- 8. Take responsibility for your own safety, wellbeing and continuous learning and development through supervision, mentoring and relevant training;
- 9. Contribute to the development of the social work profession through leadership and supporting the learning of others.

8. Learning and teaching methods

The teaching and learning strategy of the course aims to promote independent learning from Level 4 through the use of direct, guided and independent learning methods. There is a gradual progression over the 3 levels of study with the aim of making you as responsible and enthusiastic about your own learning and continuing professional development.

You will be taught by academics that have a background in social work or health, are professionally qualified and maintain registration with the HCPC

through continuous professional development. We are also lucky enough to have considerable professorial input on the social work course. The staff team hold teaching qualifications or are working towards one if newly appointed, as the University places a high value on lecturers providing good teaching for students.

The university-based teaching includes on-line and classroom learning which may take the form of formal lectures, seminars, workshops, tutorials and individual activities. All modules will be supported by the Nottingham Online Workspace (NOW) which will allow engagement in online discussion, access to course materials and assessments and other linked resources via www.ntu.ac.uk You will work independently as well as in large and small groups.

Current social work practitioners and service users contribute to the teaching and assessment on the course in order to enhance its contemporary currency for practice.

9. Assessment methods

All elements and sub-elements are marked according to the University's undergraduate grade based assessment scheme (located in its <u>Academic Standards and Quality Handbook</u>). In line with the regulatory Standards of Education and Training, at least one of the external examiners appointed to the programme will be professionally registered as a social worker. As a professional course it is vital that students pass all the modules and placements.

All elements of assessment must therefore achieve a pass mark within each module and every module must be passed to achieve the awards of BA in Social Work.

As placements are a precious resource, students will NOT be automatically allowed to retake a placement if the placement has been failed. All failures will be put to the Practice Assurance Committee who will make a recommendation as to whether the student will or will not be offered another placement.

- 1st class honours
- 2nd class honours upper division
- 2nd class honours lower division
- 3rd class honours division

The range of assignments is designed to reflect the type of work you will undertake in practice. All assessments are electronic submissions and will be in English.

- **Essays** these enable you to demonstrate, in your own time, your ability to focus on a particular problem and to explore its parameters in a balanced fashion. You are expected to cite and reference according to the Harvard system (guidance will be given). A variety of word lengths are included to enable you to demonstrate ability to provide shorter and longer justifications for your arguments.
- Reports these reflect the professional requirement for you to produce concise, logical, structured reports
- Interview Techniques –you are expected to develop skills in conversing with and ascertaining information from service users, their family and networks and other professionals. These skills can be assessed in simulated and recorded interviews.
- Case study analysis related to practice examples, this activity assesses your capacity to analyse extensive case study material, to apply theoretical frameworks to the material, and to summarise salient points
- Professional Practice and Placement Reports you must demonstrate an understanding of the parameters of practice and adherence to the profession's code of ethical conduct and practice. You will show incremental learning through both placements and be able to operate effectively with supervision by the time you finish your final placement. You will be able to apply your knowledge and skills in practice and make judgements based on evidence. Your Practice Educator will assess your practice and your Learning Adviser will assess your reflective written work.
- Reflective log designed to ascertain the unfolding of your thoughts, experience and learning over a specific time period and develop critical thinking and appraisal that will central to safe, effective and enjoyable professional practice. These include verbal, written and video journals
- **Self-Assessment** self-awareness is the key to self-development. Students will demonstrate they have the ability to critically reflect on their own performance and give others feedback on theirs.
- Presentations (individual and group) these assess your ability (individually and collectively) to deliver arguments and information using a range of presentation skills.
- Examinations (seen and unseen) these assess your ability to marshal clear and concise arguments, to operate effectively under pressure, and to recall significant information (such as Legal Knowledge)
- Research Project At Level 6, you will be expected to undertake research into a specialist social work topic of your choice related to an area of social work practice. The Project requires you to think about, research, analyse and critically reflect on an area of challenging practice or a critical incident. The research project assesses your capacity to review literature and to undertake research. Full and active engagement will enable you to acquire skills that you can take forward into practice and that will equip you to become a research-minded practitioner.

10. Course structure and curriculum

The course is delivered on a full time or employment-based basis. The emphasis is on academic work supporting practice. As a course leading to a specific profession, it is essential that practice and theory are well integrated throughout the curriculum. The course structure is as follows:

Level 4

Preparing for Professional Social Work Practice -including 30 days practice skills (40 credits)

The aim of this module is to equip students with the basic skills and capabilities in preparation for their first assessed placement at Level 5. The module will be predominantly experiential in nature and will include the 30 days skills training as required by the regulatory body. It will include 10 days shadowing/observation experience within an agency context. The module will culminate in a Readiness to Practice interview and portfolio of evidence to reflect skill acquisition as outcomes. Reflective practice, social work values, interpersonal and communication skills will feature highly in this module.

Reflective Assessment and Intervention Strategies (40 credits)

The module aims to assist you to develop a comprehensive understanding and knowledge base of the critical elements of social work practice. There is particular emphasis on the theoretical rationale, evidence bases and frameworks that guide much of the assessment, and intervention processes in social work.

Life Course Development in Social Context (40 credits)

The aim of this module is to present a life course perspective to the study of human growth and development within a social work context. You will develop the knowledge to critically appraise and analyse the way individuals develop, influenced by psychological, physiological, social, economic, environmental and political factors. You will be introduced to competing theories and models for understanding child and adult development, ageing, disability, substance misuse, mental health and wellbeing. You will develop an appreciation of the diversity of human growth and development and good practice in promoting inclusion and equality utilising legislation and policy and agency procedures. Skills days are included within this module with regard to the child observation you are required to undertake.

Level 5

Engaging with Professional Social Work Practice (20 credits)

This module builds upon the knowledge and skills students acquire at level 4 and is closely linked with practice learning. It will develop students' ability to adopt an enquiring and analytical approach to knowledge in social work, and build their skills for systematic enquiry research and critical thinking in practice. It will also develop students' personal skills and aptitude to engage with practice settings and meet the personal challenges these present. Building emotional resilience, practice wisdom and adapting to change, time management and continuing professional development will all feature in the

content of this module. This module aims to bring a greater integration of the skills and knowledge required for practice to the curriculum at level 6.

Legal and Statutory Responsibilities (40 credits)

Social work practice is underpinned by law and social policy to provide assessment and services. There are ethical and value-based dilemmas in practice that result from balancing the need to protect and safeguard on one hand and enable autonomy and personal choice on the other. The module will focus on the powers and duties that social workers will be expected to exercise in qualified practice. There will be skill based content with focus on practice interventions, as well as preparing and presenting reports to formal statutory panels in addition to observing a local Crown or Magistrate's court in session. Students are prepared to work in court room settings by using moot law rooms in a process of formative assessment. There will be an emphasis on the statutory role of social work within Safeguarding Adults, Children and Families, Fostering and Adoption, Mental Health and Youth Justice Settings.

Social Policy in the Context of Social Work (20 credits)

It is important for social workers to understand contemporary social issues, welfare provision and socio-economic factors contributing to the social problems encountered by service users and their families. This module studies social policy from the perspective of social work practice. It aims to introduce students to the concepts of justice, human needs and well-being, whilst enriching their knowledge about available services, and enhancing their understanding of the impact of social policies on deprived groups.

This module includes three main areas. Firstly, it examines some basic social policy concepts and welfare approaches. Secondly, it introduces the main types and structures of social services and discusses how these relate to inequality, deprivation and exclusion. Thirdly, it studies the conditions of several disadvantaged groups and discusses relevant welfare initiatives to address their problems. Students will develop a recognition of personal and organisational discrimination and oppression and identify ways of challenging these barriers. This module builds on themes currently taught in the life course development module at level four, so that students engage more deeply with these issues of social work in the UK. Internationalisation will be enhanced within this module by way of a comparison with social work / welfare in other countries.

Practice Placement 1 - 80 day work placement (40 credits)

The aim of this module is provide students with an opportunity to apply their learning from taught modules in a placement agency for 80 days. Prior to commencing placement, students must pass the readiness to practice process at Level 4, in the Preparing for Professional Social Work Practice module. On placement students will be required to undergo formal observations of their practice and complete an e-portfolio to pass the module.

Level 6

Practice Placement 2 - 90 day work placement (60 credits)

This module involves students undertaking a 90 day placement in an approved work based setting with social work context supervised by a qualified Practice Educator. Prior to commencing placement, students must pass the Readiness to practice process at Level 4, in the Preparing for Professional Practice module. On placement students will be required to undergo formal observations of their practice and complete an e-portfolio to pass. Practice modules have been designed to enable students to meet the requirements of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) for social work. Students are expected to undertake responsibility for their own learning and engage in the full placement process in order to demonstrate meeting the PCF. In accordance with the PCF, students will be assessed holistically. The practice placement will be supported with a briefing session and recall day organised at the University. Students will have half-a-day a week, or alternatively one-day-a-fortnight study time. This study time cannot be accumulated.

Delivering Professional Social Work Practice (20 credits)

This module builds upon the aims and objectives of the module Engaging with Professional Social Work Practice services at level 5. It considers the practical and ethical dilemmas and the associated skills required when delivering modern social work practice. It explores the application of social work skills in the workplace and the requirement to have an ability to lead and develop as a social worker in line with the PCF and Standards of Practice both pre and post qualification. Key themes in this module include inter-professional working, understanding and managing stress, leadership, supervision and continuing professional development.

Students will be encouraged, by means of maintaining a reflective journal, to critically reflect on their social work practice as appropriate for a final year student preceding and in preparation for the Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) for initially qualified social workers.

Working with Individuals, Groups and Families (40 credits)

This module consolidates practice and academic based learning at Level 6. It provides the opportunity to apply a more in-depth and critical social work perspective when working with people across the age range, in different service contexts and facing different challenges. There is an emphasis on holistic interventions, systemic thinking and the impact of dynamic factors such as internationalisation and shifting policy frameworks. The module has a holistic focus on social work with children, families and adults with support needs beyond distinct service categories. Whilst maintaining a holistic focus students will select an optional (Adult *or* Children and Family) pathway within which to specialise.

The module will cultivate strengths' based perspectives to enable students to work in anti-oppressive ways with children and adults who require the professional support of a social worker.

The module provides a specific link with the final placement, as an area of challenging practice or critical incident will be evaluated in depth and form the basis of final year study. This summative assessment is designed to provide a coherent overview and pinnacle of achievement befitting a final year student. The assessment task will allow for an in-depth exploration of a which students will have to investigate to cultivate research mindedness and self-directed learning as well as contribute to the knowledge base of the placing agency.

All modules including placements are compulsory. There are no optional modules, however; you will be able to follow your own interests within some of the learning and assessment opportunities. The Department of Social Work will routinely be running research seminars, conferences and supplementary learning events with practitioners and partner agencies that you will be encouraged to attend to extend your learning beyond the curriculum.

The two placements will normally be different to each other in their setting, service-user group, age range or practice ethos. The final placement will offer the opportunity to undertake formal assessment of risk and be a setting where statutory social work tasks take place. You will be expected to use legal frameworks to make decisions, work in a high-pressure environment and present outcomes of assessments in formal meetings.

11. Admission to the course

Entry requirements.

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the 'Applying' tab on the NTU course information web page.

12. Support for learning

You are responsible for your own learning and you are expected to take on more responsibility each year throughout the three levels of study. However, in order to support you in your learning, the following is available throughout the course:

Induction for full-time students

Once on the course, you will have an induction with the following objectives:

- a) Introduction to the course structure and timetable;
- b) To establish a feeling of belonging to the group and to begin the formation of supportive, co-operative networks and friendships. It is essential that group members feel comfortable with each other as they

- will be working in groups throughout the course in a range of activities including role plays, presentations and discussions;
- c) To identify important learning resources including meeting the allocated Personal Tutor, who will play a key co-ordinating and supportive role throughout academic studies in the University and whilst on placement. An important tool that will be utilised from the start of the course is the Personal Development Planner. This contains a range of activities to enable you to identify learning needs as well as to explore aspects of oneself as a person and as a prospective employee;
- d) Introduction to the University wide learning provisions including the library, the NOW workspace, Student Support Services for those with particular learning needs, as well as School-based Student Support for academic writing.

Roles of Staff

You will have a network of staff to support you whilst on the course. Support for both the practice and the academic curriculum is provided.

Identified Learning Needs

Wherever possible any identified learning needs will be assessed in conjunction with Student Support Services prior to the commencement of the course in order that any necessary services can be put in place from the start. A nominated Disability Support link person from within the academic team provides the necessary liaison between academic, practice and student support services.

Support in Practice Placements

Members of the University Practice Development Team work closely with the agency partners in the arranging and planning of all the professional placements. This process seeks to ensure that each placement will provide a good learning experience and a suitably qualified Practice Educator who is responsible for assessing your capability at meeting the professional requirements. Whilst on placement you are supported and assessed by people who meet the Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPs).

The practice development team aim to ensure that any specific learning support needs are met. This will include, for example, ensuring that black and ethnic minority students can attend.

Support Across the Course

At the beginning of the course, you are allocated a personal tutor who remains with you for the duration of the course. Personal tutors are experienced professionally qualified workers employed within the social work academic team and are consequently in an excellent position to support and guide students through their studies and practice placements. The Personal Tutor writes your reference at the end of course when applying for jobs.

Academic Support

Each level of the course has a year-tutor who helps to co-ordinate the teaching and learning process and liaises with the relevant course leader and

teaching team. Issues such as timetabling, moderation and attendance monitoring are undertaken by year tutors.

A member of social work teaching staff plays a key link role with the library to ensure texts and resources are updated and current. This is in addition to the role of each module leader who ensures, with the liaison library staff, that the module is appropriately resourced and current.

13. Graduate destinations/employability

The professional social work courses at Nottingham Trent University have a good national as well as local reputation and there is a high success rate for graduates gaining full-time employment. In 2017, 92% of Social Work graduates were available for employment and had secured graduate-level employment or graduate-level further study (DLHE 15-16); an increase from 83% in 14-15. The generic nature of the award means that all completing students are qualified to apply for jobs in a variety of settings. However, the course seeks to place you for your final practice placement, in the setting in which you hope to gain employment on graduation.

The course was developed and is managed and jointly delivered by a partnership of local social work agencies. These include Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Derbyshire Local Authorities, voluntary and independent organisations. These agencies recruit many of our social work graduates. On completing the undergraduate degree you may start in an Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) where you will have a protected case load and additional supervision, learning opportunities and assessment. The evolving nature of social work and care services means that new posts will be available to our graduates in a wide variety of settings including statutory authorities as well as voluntary and independent agencies and health related settings.

Preparation for Employment

You will be encouraged to use Personal Development Planning to record your achievements and how to fill in application forms. The course works closely with the Employability team at NTU and local partnerships to ensure that our students' employment prospects are at a premium. First year students will be encouraged to undertake volunteering work opportunities available via the University to enhance their work experience credentials.

14. Course standards and quality

The Quality Assurance of the course fully accords with the University's Quality Assurance Standards and Quality enhancement arrangements. Management of standards and quality happens through two formally constituted committees – The Course Committee and the Board of Examiners (BoE) – and these, together with regular meetings of the course team, along with systems of student and placement feedback are designed to ensure the effective management of the course and monitoring of its standards and quality.

Student feedback systems form an important part of the quality assurance framework. You will be expected and encouraged to evaluate modules through the 'Evasys' process and placements through the Quality Assurance Monitoring Placement ('QAMP') process. Auditing and feedback on placements via Quality Assurance and Monitoring Process (QAMP) helps to ensure that a high quality of placement provision is maintained. Student representatives meet regularly with the year tutors and are members of the Course Committee.

As a professional and vocational course, we have specific social work Fitness to Practice (FtP) and concerns procedures in addition to the University regulations relating to Student Code of Behaviour (SCOB). The Fitness to Practice procedures govern admissions to the course and current students.

15. **Assessment regulations**

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:

Academic Modules

As a professionally approved course it is vital that you pass all the modules to qualify as a social worker. Students who pass the academic work but do not pass or do not complete the placements may still be able to qualify for an academic award but it cannot carry the 'social work' title or acquire eligibility to register with the Social Work Regulatory body The exit award is called BA Social Welfare.

Placement Modules

As placements are a precious resource, you will NOT automatically be allowed to retake a placement. You are expected to complete the full number of days and be assessed at the each placement. In exceptional circumstances the placement days may be extended to allow further assessment opportunities to inform a final decision regarding your capability rather than embarking on a new placement. Each failed or disrupted placement will be assessed on an individual basis with regard to the possibility of a repeat opportunity.

Stages of Assessment

In accordance with standard undergraduate courses, the Social Work degree is divided into three academic levels, each comprising 120 credits.

Degree Classification

For the BA (Honours) Social Work award, the degree classification will be calculated on the following basis:

- Level 4 credits form 0% of the final grade;
- Level 5 credits form 20% of the final grade;
- Level 6 credits form 80% of the final grade.

Course Specific Awards: Course Prizes

The Course awards one prize:

The In-depth Project Prize, sponsored by the Division of Social Work and Professional Practice: awarded for the highest mark in the in-depth project at level 6.

Additional information 16.

Collaborative partner(s): None

Course referenced to national (QAA) Social Work

Benchmark Statements:

Benchmark Statement for Social

Course recognised by:

Health Care Professions Council NTIC progression route(s):

The QAA (October 2016) Subject

Work.

Date this course specification

approved:

June 2018

Any additional information:

A bursary from NHS bursaries is currently available for eligible students on this course at level 4 and 5.