

Programme Specification for Postgraduate Award in Professional Development Social Work Practice Education

This document applies to Academic Year 2025/26 onwards

Table 1 Programme Specification for Postgraduate Award in Professional Development: Social Work Practice Education

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	University of Worcester
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award or awards	Postgraduate Award in Professional Development
5.	Programme title	Social Work Practice Education
6.	Pathways available	N/A
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	University of Worcester and employer. Blended learning incorporating full day teaching and regular online seminars.
8.	Mode of attendance and duration	Part time over 2 years
9.	UCAS Code	N/A
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	Social Work England (2019) Continuing Professional Development Guidance for Social Workers British Association of Social Workers' (2022) Practice Educator Professional Standards for Social Work (PEPS) British Association of Social Workers' (2018) Professional Capabilities Framework
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	December 2020. August 2021 AQU amendments. August 2022 AQU amendments July 2023 – annual updates September 2024 – weblink updates

12. Educational aims of the programme

The aim of the programme is to enable social workers to achieve the 4 domains and values defined in the [Practice Educator Professional Standards for Social Work](#) in order to provide effective practice learning opportunities for student social workers. The programme also aims to support social workers' development in relation to the Professional Capabilities Framework.

The programme is for experienced social workers who wish to mentor and assess pre-qualifying social work learners through their practice placements. In order that students taking this programme have the appropriate experience and capability and in order to meet the Practice Educator Standards for Social Work (PEPS) this programme requires 2 years post qualifying practice experience upon entry. In addition, those accessing the programme must be supporting and assessing at least two different social work learners, at least one of which must be at pre-qualification level, including primary responsibility for at least one before completion.

The aims of the programme are:

- To provide an opportunity to reflect and learn whilst in practice in line with regulator standards
- To support the development of effective practice education in social work
- To offer innovative and responsive learning which meets the needs of social workers working with in complex and challenging contexts
- To develop critically reflective practitioners, with the ability to utilise contemporary knowledge, theory, research and evidence to underpin professional practice

- To develop social work practitioners who are committed to lifelong learning and continuing professional development

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

Table 2 knowledge and understanding outcomes and which module/code they relate to

Knowledge and Understanding		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Critically appraise and apply adult learner theories and research	SOWK4201 SOWK4202
2.	Critically explore social work supervision and apply theory and research to practice	SOWK4201

Table 3 cognitive and intellectual skills outcomes for module code/s

Cognitive and Intellectual skills		
3.	Critically reflect on development as a practice educator within social work practice	SOWK4201 SOWK4202
4.	Undertake holistic assessment, drawing on evidence which is relevant, valid, reliable and sufficient from a range of sources to support the learner's professional development	SOWK4202

Table 4 learning skills and capabilities related to employability outcomes for module code/s

Skills and capabilities related to employability		
5.	Utilising communication skills and managing power dynamics, develop effective collaborative relationships with learners and colleagues in order to provide an effective and challenging learning environment	SOWK4202
6.	Demonstrate application of the Statement of Values in order to promote anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practices	SOWK4201 SOWK4202

Learning, teaching and assessment

A **constructivist** approach to learning and teaching and assessment (Biggs, 2002; Murphy, 1997) underpins the programme and will enables students to *construct meaning* through an integrated system of learning which represents the complexity of the real world and supports higher-level learning (Jonassen, 1994).

The programme team acknowledges that social work is a practice-based, academic and professional discipline and therefore the integration of theory and practice are central to all aspects of the curriculum. The course recognises students' diversity in relation to learning style and rates and acknowledges that consistent and timely guidance, accompanied by a variety of learning and teaching methods will facilitate effective learning.

Teaching

A blended learning approach will be adopted, using both face to face teaching and online seminars. Online learning will be provided via Blackboard, using [Collaborate](#), an interactive learning tool, [Camtasia](#) pre-recorded video lectures and discussion boards. Modules will include lectures, seminars and tutorials that are intended to enable the application of learning through discussion and small group activities. Students will have the opportunity to learn in partnership with people with lived experience through the University's [IMPACT](#) group. All students will be allocated a named Personal Academic Tutor.

The University places emphasis on enabling students to develop the independent learning capabilities that will equip them for continued professional learning and development and future employment, as well as academic achievement. A mixture of independent study, teaching and academic support from Student Services and Library Services, and also the Personal Academic Tutoring system enables students to reflect on progress and build up a profile of skills, achievements and experiences that will help them to flourish and be successful.

Students will be assessed by way of essays and portfolios ([Pebblepad](#)) which provide the opportunity for the demonstration of learning in practice.

Contact time

Typically, class contact time will be structured around:

- 4 full day classroom-based sessions per module
- 12 x 1-hour online seminars where students will have an opportunity to gain peer and tutor support in relation to placement issues, apply theory to practice and gain support with assignments

Independent self-study

In addition to the contact time, students are expected to undertake around 6 hours of personal self-study per week for the 12 weeks of the module. Typically, this will involve guided independent learning delivered via Blackboard and guided reading.

Independent learning is supported by a range of excellent learning facilities, including the Hive and library resources, the virtual learning environment, and extensive electronic learning resources.

Teaching staff

Students will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the modules on the course. The team includes Senior Lecturers and service users and carers. In addition, students will receive mentoring and support in practice by someone who is a [Practice Educator Professional \(PEPS 2\)](#).

Teaching is informed by research and consultancy, and 100% of university lecturers on the course have a higher education teaching qualification or are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy.

Assessment

The course provides opportunities to test understanding and learning informally through the completion of practice or 'formative' assignments.

For both modules the course learning outcomes are achieved through the production of a Pebblepad portfolio which is assessed on a pass/fail basis and an essay which is graded.

Recognising that this programme assesses students' development alongside their practice, Pebblepad portfolios are one form of assessment used. Pebblepad portfolios will be assessed by a suitably qualified and experienced social worker as defined in the [Practice Educator Professional Standards](#). Tasks completed within the Pebblepad

portfolio give you the opportunity to demonstrate your competencies with the Practice Educator Professional PEPS domains. Tasks may include uploading supervision notes, devising induction programmes and reflecting on direct observations. In addition, modules will be assessed by means of reflective essays.

A student must have taught, supervised and assessed at least two different social work learners, at least one of which must be at pre-qualification level, including primary responsibility for at least one before completing PEPS 2.

14. Assessment strategy

The overall approach is based upon the course's key feature of application of theory to practice and therefore assessment reflects the practical application and utility of knowledge alongside the understanding students gain from the range of learning opportunities. Students and teaching teams are partners in the learning, feedback and assessment processes and engagement in a dialogue about these processes is essential. During each module, support is provided to emphasise the critical assessment and analysis necessary to develop thinking and academic writing at Master's level.

The formative and summative assessments allow students to build level 7 skills and increase their knowledge in order to support the completion of the summative assessments and support them in applying the Learning Outcomes.

Assessment is planned across the course and is designed to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their core subject knowledge, complex skills and values. All summative assessments are constructively aligned to the module learning outcomes. A student focused range of assessment strategies are used to facilitate the integration of theory with practice. Assessment is designed to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate they have fully met the [Practice Educator Professional Standards for Social Work \(PEPS\)](#).

15. Programme structures and requirements

Table 6 award map

Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M)
SOWK4201	Practice Educator Professional Standards Stage 1 (PEPS 1)	15	M
SOWK4202	Practice Educator Professional Standards Stage 2 (PEPS 2)	15	M

16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

This award is located at Level 7 of the [OfS sector recognised standards](#).. and the following sources have been used throughout the programme.

[QAA \(2020\) Master's Degree Characteristics](#) (Whole Programme)

[QAA \(2024\) the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications UK Awarding Bodies](#) (Whole Programme)

Social Work England (2020) [Continuing Professional Development Guidance for Social Workers](#)

British Association of Social Workers' (2022) [Practice Educator Professional Standards for Social Work \(PEPS\)](#)

British Association of Social Workers' (2018) [Professional Capabilities Framework](#)

17. Support for students

There is extensive course information on UW Webpages, Blackboard VLE, in module outlines, and in the course handbook.

Your Module leader will offer personal academic tutoring support and will provide a high level of individual academic support and encouragement to students. The team are always aware of the competing pressures on students and the difficulties of returning to study alongside a busy job and family and who may be new or returning to level 7 study. Tutorial support is personal, flexible, and proactive; it is tailored to the needs of students utilising all means of communication such as online tutorials which can enable support alongside practice.

Students will in addition have a practice assessor and/or mentor identified by their employer who will provide an additional level of support in practice.

University based support is available from:

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/index.htm>
<https://www2.worc.ac.uk/disabilityanddyslexia>

18. Admissions

Admissions policy

The University aims to provide fair and equal access to university education to all those who have the potential to succeed or benefit from it.

The Postgraduate Award in Professional Development: Social Work Practice Education seeks to recruit experienced social work practitioners who are committed to supporting qualifying students.

Entry requirements

Applicants need to be registered social workers with 2 full years post qualifying experience in social work prior to the start of the course and demonstrate that they are practising at BASW (2018) PCF [Experienced Social Worker level](#)

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements

None.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Students with relevant previous study or with extensive experience may be considered eligible for recognition of prior learning. Please contact the Registry Admissions Office for further information or guidance on 01905 855111.

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at
<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm>

Admissions procedures

- All applications will be via email to the admissions tutor
- The admissions tutor will ensure entry requirements are met by review of the application form, if necessary asking for supplementary information
- Applicants will require a reference, usually from their employer, and will need to have full responsibility for supporting, supervising and assessing 2 students throughout the full award.

Admissions/selection criteria

The applicant will be offered a place when a member of the course team confirm they meet all the criteria for entry and they have arrangements to support, supervise and assess a student.

19. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's Taught Courses Regulatory Framework

Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module,
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 7 days (one week) of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 7 days (one week) will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

Retrieval of failure

- A student is entitled to re-sit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- A student has the right to one assessment.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module; the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
- A student who fails 30 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.
- A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with any reassessments.

Requirements for Awards

Table 7 requirements for awards

Award	Requirement
PG Award in Professional Development: Social Work Practice Education	Passed a minimum of 30 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map

This award is unclassified.

The maximum registration period for the Postgraduate Award in Professional Development: Social Work Practice Education is 2 years

20. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

All students are already in employment therefore their aim is to develop their existing roles, develop into new roles within their area of practice and progress into innovative and autonomous roles. Students may be eligible to progress on to the PG Cert in Advanced Social Work Practice.

Student employability

Students who achieve this award are able to support, supervise and assess qualifying students in practice. These are specific, focused skills desirable to both local employers, but also in the wider health and social care community.

Links with employers

The course leader and course team work closely with partners in the local authorities and are an active member of the [West Midlands Teaching Partnership](#).

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 be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he 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 associated course documentation e.g. course handbooks, module outlines and module specifications.