

Lancaster
University



Social Work
Undergraduate Degree
2025



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Welcome

We are proud of our standing as one of the best places to study Social Work in the UK, highly rated for the quality of our teaching, our outstanding track record for graduate employment, and for the impact of our research and engagement. We are also proud to have been commended by Social Work England for our personal and collaborative approach to working with students on placement, such as individual contact with students to discuss how they felt about their placement and experience.

Whilst providing an exceptional student experience is our priority, we also have a very real involvement in influencing policy and practice. Our aim is to inspire a new generation of qualified professionals to engage with and steer future social policy and practice.

Underpinning everything we do is our founding principle of valuing people, and promoting human rights and social justice.

At Lancaster, you will learn alongside enthusiastic lecturers, practitioners, the users of social work services and carers. We aim to enable you to develop a critical but reflective approach to understanding social work in contemporary society, and your practice learning placements are an excellent way of getting to know the role of a social worker and gaining hands-on experience.

We look forward to welcoming you to the positive environment that we provide at Lancaster, and supporting you in achieving your career goals.



Professor Clare Stone
 Director of Social Work

Changing lives



“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge; social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.”

International Federation of Social Workers, 2021



A Social Work degree that is reflective and critical

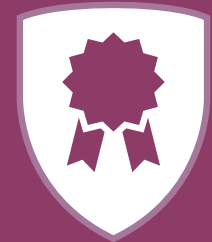
Whether you are looking to become a social worker, or want to be engaged in continuing professional development after working in the field, we support you in developing and using your professional judgment in the complex situations that social workers face.



for Social Work
*Complete University
Guide 2025*



for Social Work
Graduate Prospects
*Times Good University
Guide 2024*



Approved by
Social Work England,
the specialist
regulatory body



Entry requirements

Degree title	Duration	UCAS code	Typical offer	Apply
BA (Hons) Social Work	3 years, full time	L500	A level BBB BTEC DDM	Via UCAS



In addition to the academic entry requirements listed above, all applicants should have some direct experience of social care; there is no minimum required number of hours but it is important to explain what you have learned from your experience and how this has shaped your decision to apply for a degree in social work.

Applicants are welcome to join us at one of the Open Days hosted by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, where there will be an opportunity to meet some of our friendly staff and current students.

Students meeting the entry requirements are invited for an interview. During the interview day, you will have the opportunity to learn about our friendly department and chat to current students.

Qualifying programme

Our programme is approved by Social Work England, the social work regulator, which means that our graduates are eligible to apply to join the professional social work register.

Visit our website for more information on degree options, entry requirements and scholarships
www.lancaster.ac.uk

Learning from lived experience



Dan Patterson BA Hons Social Work, Year 3

The course values the importance of hearing from those with lived experience to deepen our learning.

We learnt concepts and theories in lectures, and talked about them between us. When people (with lived experience) come in and say, 'this is what I've been through', talking about the actual specifics of that experience, you're watching real people. It makes it real, you actually see the impact. It makes it easier to grasp the knowledge because it's real people. It's up to you to take that on board and bring that to your practice.

For example, as a care leaver, I know about things that other people wouldn't. I've got my own lived experience, my own stories, not so far from what those three lads (in one of the sessions with guest speakers) were saying.

Having practitioners from different areas of work come in to talk about what they did, and hearing how passionate they were, was inspiring, and helped us to think about areas of work we didn't know about.

We get new perspectives, when people come in talking about their specialised area, as practitioners or people with lived experience, and what it's like for them. That's really helpful.

When you've been in care, because of your experiences, when you're younger, you can think that you can't do anything with your life. Now I say to myself, you can do it. Being a care leaver, has made me who I am, is a part of me, and helps me.

Teaching and assessment

The programme is full time, and comprises time spent in lectures, seminars and workshops, as well as independent study, and time on placement, where you will be expected to work the agency's hours.



Our programme uses a range of teaching and assessment including:

- + Lectures
- + Seminars
- + Group work
- + Action learning
- + Skills development workshops
- + Practitioner-led sessions
- + Social work placements
- + Independent research study
- + Written assignments (essays/ blogs/ case studies)
- + Compilation of a practice portfolio
- + Presentations
- + Exams
- + Practice assessment

What is your ideal social worker?

This photograph captures some of the vibrant representations that were developed in a session designed to stimulate thinking and reflection about 'the ideal social worker'. The session was fun and creative but encouraged important considerations about the values, skills and knowledge needed to be an effective and ethical social work practitioner.



Practice learning placements



Practice learning is at the heart of social work education. At Lancaster, we provide 170 days of placement experience and 30 skills days, to enable you to integrate your knowledge, skills and values in a real-world practice-setting.

We have very positive relationships with a variety of placement providers both in the statutory and private sector, primarily within Cumbria and Lancashire. Statutory placements are organised with Lancashire County Council, Blackpool, Blackburn and Darwen and Westmorland and Furness Council. Our Practice Learning Team are committed to developing and maintaining those relationships and have entered into partnership agreements with all of our placement providers to help this process.

Placements are supported by placement tutors, and during practice by qualified social work practitioners, who have undertaken additional training to become practice educators.

The Practice Learning Team make every effort to ensure there is a good supply of placements and do offer students the opportunity to state an area of their interest for practice. Although this can never be guaranteed, we do make every effort to try and accommodate where we can. All students will have the opportunity to meet the requirements of the Professional Capabilities Framework, the Professional Standards of Social Work England and the Knowledge and Skills Statements, in addition to undertaking some statutory social work practice in either their first or final placement.



Ria's placement



My first placement was at a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), where I worked with children between the ages of 11-16 who were attending the PRU as they required more direct support in meeting their educational, emotional, and behavioural needs. This placement involved lots of direct work with young people, especially providing emotional support. I had the chance to develop my own skills, such as emotional resilience and managing challenging behaviour. I gained a lot of knowledge about the responsibilities of educational providers, and the different ways that looked-after children can be supported in education.

The final placement for my degree was working in the Children in Our Care Team for Lancashire County Council. I was co-allocated a case load, working with children who are currently under a full Care Order and were being looked-after by the Local Authority. My placement tasks were varied and interesting – I completed assessments, updated care plans and also got to visit the children, to complete direct work such as life story work.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my placements at both provisions and am now looking forward to starting my career as a Children's Social Worker.

Ria Muhamad
BA (Hons) Social Work

Amber's placement



The placements that I have been matched with were tailored to my own developmental needs and career progression. I have truly loved the organisations that I have worked within, and felt part of the team.

The work has been dynamic and, at times, unforeseeable; representing the unique persons that we encounter in social work. My practice educators have been outstanding – I could not fault the level of support I have been offered and

consider it a privilege to have learnt important skills from them.

Moreover, the University team provided exceptional assistance and support, specifically when I reached out over a concern. Overall, I have found my personalised learning opportunities incomparable, and leave placement as a much more competent and confident practitioner.

Amber Greenhalgh
BA (Hons) Social Work

Degree structure

BA (Hons) Social Work, Full Time

This degree is the route into professional social work for applicants without a first degree. It is both an academic undergraduate degree and a professional qualification in social work, awarded by Lancaster University.

Year 1

Contemporary Social Problems

Explores broad historical and contemporary responses to social problems. In particular, you will seek to understand how contemporary social problems reflect and reproduce economic and social inequalities, and how these inequalities are constructed through different welfare ideologies and approaches.

+

Social Work Practice 1

Introduces you to a variety of social work settings and areas of practice with individuals, families, groups and communities, and familiarises you with established and innovative social work processes.

+

Minor Subject Module

You will be able to choose one module from a choice of subjects that are complementary to Social Work. After you register for your degree we will confirm which minor subject modules are available and how to register for your preferred option.



Year 2

Social Work Practice 2

Introduces you to key methods and theories of social work, and the use of self, reflexivity and critical thinking.

+

Contemporary Social Work

Enables you to further develop understanding of the social work professional role in generating social change and promoting principles of social justice.

+

Social Work with Children and Families

Introduces you to childcare law, policy and statutory guidance, and exposes you to the latest research and analysis of serious case reviews.

Social Work and Young People

Discusses contemporary challenges facing young people in the UK today, and introduces theories of adolescence that encourage critical thinking about the reasons why young people are referred to agencies that offer support and safeguarding.

+

Social Work in Adult Social Care

Develops your understanding of the contribution that social work can make to the lives of disabled and older people who use adult social care services.

+

Practice Learning 1

This is a 70 day placement complemented by three additional days focusing on skills development.

Year 3

Mental Distress and Health

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

+

Social Work Practice 3

Underpinning transitions work is acknowledgement that at times we all experience uncertainty. You will explore your transition as a student into the profession of social work and reflect on how that learning will enable you to support others going through transitions.

Dissertation

You will explore in some depth a social work related topic of your choice by undertaking a coherent and logical review of relevant literature.

+

Practice Learning 2

This 100 day statutory placement prepares you for the statutory aspect of the social work role, and gives you the opportunity to gain practical insight into the legal context of social work.

Meet our staff

Lancaster University is a leading research intensive university. As a Social Work student you will benefit from being taught by academic staff who are leaders in their chosen fields.

From the study of child protection, through to mental distress, substance use, disability, poverty and migration; academics are shaping policy and practice nationally and internationally. The work of our staff can be accessed through books, articles, government reports and is regularly covered in the media. As well as undertaking teaching and research, many members of staff also serve as expert advisors within government departments, the courts, leading charities and service user organisations.



Cath Hill, Lecturer in Social Work

I trained to become a social worker at Lancaster University and was employed by the Local Authority, where I had completed my final placement. I worked in Children's Services, specialising in child protection and youth justice, and found my passion for working with young people who have experienced trauma. I feel privileged to have now returned to the University as part of the teaching team, where I'm able to draw on my practice experience.

My research focuses on support services for children and young people after disasters, with a particular focus on young survivors of terrorism. I lead on the Bee the Difference Project in partnership with the National Emergencies Trust, which advocates for consistent, trauma informed services for young people. Young peoples' opinions and lived experience can be overlooked when developing services – I am determined to ensure that their voices are heard and that they are able to shape and contribute to future policies.



Shehzad Malik, Lecturer in Social Work

I am a registered social worker and counsellor with over 35 years of experience with adults and young people. I worked with problem substance users in the NHS and voluntary sector for 15 years. Before joining the team here at Lancaster, I was a therapist in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team at another university.

I have a lifelong interest in mindfulness; as part of my Masters in Mindfulness Based Approaches, I researched its use with problem substance users. This dovetails with my passion for wellbeing and resilience, and feeds into my teaching and therapeutic work.

I currently teach the Social Work Practice 1 module which runs through the first year. This provides foundation skills in preparation for first placement. I consider self-care and resilience as essential professional and employability skills and embed these throughout my teaching.

I passionately believe in bringing heart into the classroom and into our work. This is consonant with our commitment to relationship based and trauma informed practice.



Keeping vulnerable people safe

As a former registered social worker, I am dedicated to research that makes a difference to the way in which vulnerable children and adults can keep safe. I have conducted research aimed at improving children's participation in services designed to safeguard them and informed policy development on young people and gambling in the UK.

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

I bring my research expertise to my teaching. I also supervise undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations as well as PhD students.

Corinne May-Chahal
Professor in Social Work

Alison's career inspiration

Wow! My first placement in a children's setting was a massive learning opportunity and leap into the unknown. The best part was meeting children (from newborn babies right through to older teenagers). This placement was a profound experience which I will never forget.

My practice tutor was an absolute blessing. He took time to visit me, and was a great support, keeping in touch and being easy to contact.

My placement opportunity allowed me to see some of the lectures and theories in action. I knew well before the end of the placement that I wanted to be a children's social worker and it was great to get the team manager's feedback that she would be happy to have me on her team in the future.

Alison Hetherington
Former student,
BA (Hons) Social Work



Your career in social work

Modern social work is a fast-paced, dynamic profession that encompasses many different organisational and practice contexts, including:

- + Statutory and non-statutory practice
- + Independent, charitable and voluntary sector work
- + Children and families intervention
- + Child protection
- + Adult and older adult social care
- + Criminal justice and youth offending
- + Mental health and safeguarding adults
- + Substance use
- + Work with refugee, asylum seekers and immigrant communities

Additional opportunities are available for social workers in broader contexts including:

- + Management
- + Fundraising
- + Campaigning and advocacy
- + Policy development and analysis
- + International development and aid
- + Research and teaching



Entering the profession

Most of our graduates go on to careers in social work; some undertaking the The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) in adults or children's social work and some specialise in areas such as mental health.

A head start

The benefit of completing your degree after your final placement is that you'll be undertaking statutory work and managing a case load whilst you're applying for jobs. This works as a great boost for your confidence, competence and employability.

Professional accreditation

Our Social Work degree is approved by the regulatory body, Social Work England.

Specialist careers support

Each year we typically hold a social work careers event for final year students. This is a great opportunity to meet with local employers and alumni, who can help you prepare for applying for jobs and commencing your careers.

Our research: engaging, influencing, leading

The Centre for Child and Family Justice Research

The Centre for Child and Family Justice Research (CFJ) is led jointly by the Department for Sociology and the Lancaster Law School. Professor Karen Broadhurst, former social worker and social scientist, is Co-Director within the Department of Sociology.

All activities of the Centre aim to shape thinking, debate and practice, with a focus on improving the experience of children, youth and families within public services. The Centre is at the forefront of knowledge creation, which means that the social work curriculum at Lancaster is enriched by research that makes a measurable difference to the lives of families. By conducting research, academics have a keen understanding of the challenges facing everyone involved with public services, but can also inform and steer positive change. The Centre is nationally and globally prominent, with colleagues collaborating with other academics, and policy and practice partners in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the US and Canada.

Members of the Centre carry out data-intensive research in the context of a rapid growth in digital data about the operation of care, health and justice systems, but equally demonstrate best practice in qualitative research and co-production. The Centre's research is regularly featured in national broadcast and print media, and members serve on advisory boards for the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Education, The Department of Health and the Home Office.

The Centre is home to PhD students, a number of whom are current or former practitioners and overseas visitors. Social work students are encouraged to get involved with the Centre by joining in events, and attending public lectures, workshops and seminars.



Important information

The information in this publication relates primarily to 2025–26 entry to the University and every effort has been taken to ensure the information is correct at the time of printing (June 2024). The University will use all reasonable effort to deliver the courses as described but the University reserves the right to make changes after going to print. In exceptional circumstances that are beyond the University's reasonable control (Force Majeure Events), we may need to amend the programmes and provision advertised. However, in this event, the University will take reasonable steps to minimise the disruption to your studies. You are advised to consult our website at www.lancaster.ac.uk/study for up-to-date information before you submit your application. More information on limits to the University's liability can be found in the Student Contract at www.lancaster.ac.uk/terms. Further legal information may be found at: www.lancaster.ac.uk/compliance/legalnotice



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