



Edge Hill University

CAREERS CENTRE

How to become a Social Worker

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Inclusive Learning

It is Edge Hill's aim to make our services and provision accessible to all our users. If you need us to present our information in a different format (eg: electronic copy, large print), or need any other modifications to this publication, please contact The Careers Centre and we will do our best to accommodate your requirements.

Edge Hill Careers Centre
Contact Details: Tel: 01695 584866

Website; www.edgehill.ac.uk/careers

Opening hours:

Term-time: Monday – Thursday	9.00 am – 4.45 pm
Friday	9.00 am – 4.00 pm

Vacation periods: Mon – Fri 9.00 am – 4.00 pm
(closed for lunch 12.30 pm – 1.30 pm)

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Social Work

Introduction:

The Social Work website defines the career as:

“Social work is all about people.

Social workers form relationships with people. As adviser, advocate, counsellor or listener, a social worker helps people to live more successfully within their local communities by helping them find solutions to their problems. Social work also involves engaging not only with clients themselves but their families and friends as well as working closely with other organisations including the police, NHS, schools and probation service.”

Service users are often people experiencing crisis or forms of social exclusion – for example, people with mental health problems; young offenders; non-school attenders; people with disabilities; and the elderly. They must maintain professional relationships with service users, acting as a guide, advocate or as a critical friend with the aim of offering the support that will enable the user to help themselves.

Social workers work in a variety of settings within a framework of relevant legislation and procedures, supporting individuals, families and groups within the community. Settings include service users' homes, schools, hospitals and other public sector and voluntary organisations where they liaise and work with other relevant professionals.

Their work typically involves:

- undertaking and writing up professional assessments often to tight deadlines;
- conducting interviews with service users and their families;
- assessing and reviewing service users changing circumstances;
- offering information and counselling support to service users and their families;
- organising and managing packages of support as appropriate to the service user's needs;
- recommending and sometimes making decisions about the best course of action for a particular service user;
- liaising with, and making referrals to, other agencies;
- participating in multidisciplinary teams and meetings;
- maintaining accurate records and preparing reports for legal action;
- preparing and giving professional evidence in court;
- participating in training, supervision and team meetings.

Entry & training:

Social Work requires a professional qualification, usually a three-year undergraduate degree leading to an honours degree in Social Work. Entry is open to people of all ages, from school-leavers onwards, although universities do look for previous experience of work or volunteering in social care.

Graduates of other disciplines can follow a two year postgraduate qualification that is approved by the General Social Care Council and leads to a Postgraduate Diploma or Masters in Social Work.

Applicants usually require a 2.2 or above in a relevant subject area – social sciences or a related field. They are also required to have prior experience in a social welfare/care field. This can be paid or voluntary and institutions are generally looking for at least the equivalent of one year's practical experience, although it may not be full time.

The entry requirements of different institutions can vary and they may consider applications from students without a relevant degree but able to offer appropriate experience and satisfactory knowledge of the field. It is important to be able to show the relevance of the experience and qualifications held but as interpretation can vary it is advisable to contact institutions to discuss particular circumstances.

IT skills are expected and most institutions expect applicants to hold or to be working towards or to be able to display the competencies of the European Computer Driving Licence.

Applications are via UCAS (see website for details) and in practice applications should be made at latest by mid December of the year preceding entry. Applications should be made through the UCAS system even when applications are being made to a single institution, failure to do this can affect funding eligibility.

Institutions require two references usually one academic and one from work/voluntary experience. These should be from people who know you well enough to be able to comment on your work and your potential to achieve the appropriate standard. UCAS ask for one reference and their information states:

“The only real rules are that you cannot use a family member or someone who is only a friend. If you are on a college course, your tutor will provide the reference. If you are currently outside education, you are looking for someone who is able to talk professionally about your application and potential, such as an employer or training officer. Your reference does not have to come from an academic source.”

You may supply either an academic reference or one from an appropriate employer via UCAS but generally the institution will ask for a second reference at interview and this will usually be from the other area of your experience – i.e. either work/academic depending upon the one supplied via UCAS. Always check with the specific institution regarding their requirements.

To check the availability of postgraduate social work courses on the UCAS website www.ucas.ac.uk go to the search page for the year of study and use the drop down menu from the course type box – “Social Work – postgraduate entry”. You will then find a list of all institutions who provide this course.

Bursaries are available to those that meet the eligibility criteria and are handled by the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA). You can call them on 08456 10 11 22, or visit the NHSBSA social work bursary website www.ppa.org.uk/swb

Postgraduate Course Providers in the Northwest:

University of Central Lancashire Preston, Lancs PR1 2HE
Tel: 01772 201201 **email:** uadmissions@uclan.ac.uk **website:**
www.uclan.ac.uk
Contact: Admissions Office

MA Social Work offered 2 years full-time or three years part-time (work based route).

Course Outline (Quoted from UCLAN website)

In September 2002, the School of Social Work was accredited, by the General Social Care Council (GSCC), to validate a postgraduate qualification to begin in September 2004. It was last revalidated in June 2008. The MA Social Work prepares students for careers in social work and those who successfully complete the course will be eligible to register with the GSCC as social workers. The course will equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills and values to practice as a newly qualified social worker. The programme is supported by key agency stakeholders, including Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool Social Service Departments and a range of voluntary sector agencies. Health and social care service users and carers are involved in the design and development of the programme.

Lancaster University, The University, Lancaster, Lancashire LA1 4YW
Tel: 01524 592029, **email:** ugadmissions@lancaster.ac.uk, **website:**
www.lancs.ac.uk
Contact: Undergraduate Admissions Officer

Course Outline: (Quoted from Lancaster University website)

This programme, which offers both an academic award and a professional qualification in Social Work, prepares students for careers in a broad range of social work agencies and settings. The emphasis in teaching is on issues relevant to the practice of social work in contemporary Britain. The social science teaching is therefore set within the context of practice, with a consistent stress on the ways in which sociology, law, social policy and psychology can inform and enhance professional social work. All teaching is founded upon promoting equality and social justice.

All students take the following courses: policy and legal contexts of social work, social divisions and social diversity, social work with young people, social work with children and families, social work and drug use, social work and mental health, disability and the life course, the reflexive practitioner, and preparation for practice.

Teaching is by lecture/discussion and seminars, with an emphasis on participative styles of education.

The course is provided by the Department which works in partnership with local stakeholders, including the main statutory and voluntary social work agencies in the North West. It is accredited by the General Social Care Council.

Liverpool John Moores University Roscoe Court, 4 Rodney Street,
Liverpool L1 2TZ

Tel: 0151 231 5090 **email:** recruitment@ljmu.ac.uk **website:** www.ljmu.ac.uk

Contact: Recruitment Team

Course Outline: (Quoted from JMU website)

The two-year course leads to a MA in Social Work and is approved by the General Social Care Council.

You will study a range of academic subjects to Masters level. These will be directly linked to social work practice through both their content and practice placements so that the academic and the practice elements of the course are integrated. There is a variety of assessments including presentations, written assignments, portfolio and project work, culminating in a final year dissertation.

Placements account for fifty per cent of the total programme. There are two block placements, of 100 days in each year. There is a wide variety of practice placements to enhance your learning experience.

The University of Manchester Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL
Tel: 0161 275 2077 **email:** ug-admissions@manchester.ac.uk
website: www.manchester.ac.uk
Contact: Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions Office

Course Outline: (Quoted from the University of Manchester website)

This two-year full-time MA programme enables registration with the General Social Care Council as competent to practice social work in a variety of statutory and voluntary agency settings.

Compulsory course units meet the requirements of the Department of Health. To achieve the award(s) of PG Diploma or MA in Social Work, you must pass all course unit assessed work (including practice), and in the case of the MA, a dissertation of 12,000-15,000 words. Assessments include essays, portfolios (based on practice learning experience) and group presentations. Essays for some course units are based on case studies. There are no unseen examinations for this programme.

The first year includes learning about social policy and social divisions, law and ethical conduct, the life course, communication skills and the needs of different service user groups. In the second year you learn about research methods, theories of social work intervention, working across organisational boundaries, and you will choose a particular area of interest for in-depth learning. You have 100 days of practice learning in each of Years 1 and 2. You are also expected to complete the European Computer Driving Licence or to demonstrate equivalent competence in IT.

The Manchester Metropolitan University Admissions Office, All Saints Building, All Saints, Manchester M15 6BH **Tel:** 0161 247 2000 **website:** www.mmu.ac.uk
Contact: Admissions

Course Outline: (Quoted from the Manchester Metropolitan University website)

Two years full-time course which includes the General Social Care Council-validated Diploma in Social Work, the standard professional qualification for social work.

The curriculum is delivered in accordance with the National Occupational Standards in Social Work and the prescribed Benchmarks. Modules include law, professional social work studies, human development, communication and interdisciplinary working. Additional elective units enable you to develop

knowledge and skills in areas relevant to your future career, including: youth offending; critical perspectives; mental health work; language and culture of deaf people; working with older people; personalisation; leadership and management; looked after children; youth offending; and inter-professional studies.

Professional practice placements cover a variety of workbased settings in statutory, voluntary, independent and private sectors. A dissertation in Year 2 completes the MA in Social Work in addition to the professional qualification.

The University of Salford Salford, M5 4WT

Tel: 0161 295 4545, **email:** ugadmissions-exrel@salford.ac.uk, **website:** www.salford.ac.uk

Contact: The Admissions Officer

Course Outline: (Quoted from the University of Salford website)

The two-year full-time / 3 years part-time Masters in Social Work programme provides the professional social work qualification which enables graduates to work in any area of social work practice in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors.

You will undertake two 100 day placements, learning in a social work/care agency, thereby enabling the integration of knowledge, skills, research, theory and evidence based practice. Each practice learning opportunity will be clearly structured, supported and assessed.

The range of teaching and assessment methods are varied. They include assignments, projects, workbooks, portfolios and one open book exam. Each module is assessed and you must pass each module before progressing to the second year.

Useful websites:

General Social Care Council: <http://www.gsc.org.uk/Home/>

Social Work Careers: <http://www.socialworkandcare.co.uk/socialwork/>

UCAS: <http://www.ucas.ac.uk/>

Prospects.ac.uk: www.prospects.ac.uk/links/occupations

*Updated by Sue Norris
Careers Information Officer
September 2009*



GET THE EDGE WITH VOLUNTEERING IN SOCIAL CARE

Employers recognise volunteering as a significant component of a potential employee's CV, as it illustrates commitment and initiative, helps develop work-related and transferable skills, and provides you with a reference.

To enter a career in social work, relevant experience (either paid or unpaid) is essential. Therefore, whilst studying, you would benefit from undertaking voluntary work. The Careers Centre works with a large number of local organisations, offering a wide range of opportunities.

EXAMPLES OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Lancashire County Council: Adult and Community Service.

Formally Social Services, this adult befriending scheme enables volunteers to work with individuals with disabilities, mental health issues, or the elderly. CRB checks and training are provided. Great access to paid employment.

Advocacy West Lancs.

Provide advocacy for groups or individuals who may be vulnerable as a result of age, physical or mental illness, disability or frailty. Enabling individuals to have more control and involvement in their own lives. CRB checks and training are provided.

Youth Offenders Team (West Lancashire)

There is a YOT in every local authority in England and Wales. They are made up of representatives from the police, Probation Service, social services, health, education, drugs and alcohol misuse and housing officers. Working with young people to reduce crime.

For details of more opportunities, contact the Volunteering Co-ordinator in the Careers Centre.

Tel: 01695 584322 or email : volunteer@edgehill.ac.uk

A full list can be viewed on the Careers Website.

EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME

If you are not awarded an Entrance Scholarship prior to starting a course at Edge Hill University, there are still opportunities for first and second year students to apply for **On-Course Scholarships** worth up to **£1000**. One of the scholarships is offered for **Excellence through Volunteering**.

For more information, drop into the Careers Centre. Or you can contact Scholarships on 01695 584171.

www.edgehill.ac.uk/scholarship

USEFUL WEBSITES:

www.do-it.org OR www.volunteering.org