

Programme Specification: Social Work BA (Hons)

Academic Entry Year:	2026/2027
Degree Awarding Body:	The University of Bradford
Main Location:	City Campus
Delivery Support Partners:	Bradford Social Work Teaching Partnership
Subject Benchmarks:	Social Work (QAA 2019)
Qualifications Framework:	Framework for HE Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies (FHEQ: QAA 2014)
Target Degree Award:	Bachelor of Arts with Honours (BA Hons) Social Work [FHEQ Level 6]
Intermediate/exit awards:	BA (Hons) Social Care [FHEQ Level 6]
	Ordinary Degree of Bachelor (BA) Social Care [FHEQ Level 6]
	Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) Social Care [FHEQ Level 5]
	Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) Social Care [FHEQ Level 4]
Programme Admissions:	UK and international students
Programme Start Date(s):	September
Programme Modes of Study:	(UCAS code L500) 3 years full-time

The professional status of Social Worker is conferred in England by [Social Work England \(SWE\)](#). Successful graduates are eligible to register with SWE as a qualified social worker in England. Graduates may also be eligible to register with professional bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to practice in those countries subject to meeting any additional national requirements.

Please note: The University has a set of terms and conditions for all students accepting an offer to study on a course here at Bradford. This is called the Student Contract. This document sets out the Terms and Conditions which apply when you accept an offer of a place on a programme of study at the University of Bradford. [View our Student Contract for further details](#). Information about this programme and its modules has been published in advance of the academic year to which it applies. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate at the time of publication, but changes may occur given the interval between publishing and commencement of teaching. Any change which impacts the terms and conditions of an applicant's offer will be communicated to them.

Recent changes

1. April 2024: Annual changes for 2024 academic year.
2. May 2025: Annual Changes for 2025 academic year including new academic regulations. Replaced SOW5002-B with SOW5025-B. Replaced SOW6014-B with SOW6020-B.
3. October 2025: Confirmed variance to academic regulations. Reformatted specification to improve accessibility.
4. April 2026: Annual changes for 2026 academic year; fixed typos; inline links; updated access statement.

Introduction

The aim of our BA (Hons) Social Work is to produce confident, competent, qualified social work practitioners. The programme therefore offers both academic and professional outcomes. Academic outcomes are available at Certificate of Higher Education in Social Care, Diploma of Higher Education in Social Care, and the BA (Hons) in Social Work levels.

We offer a well-established programme with a national reputation for producing high calibre workers. Our programme is designed, managed, and delivered by a Programme Management Board that includes practice placement agencies, students, lecturers, and practitioners. Stakeholder involvement ensures that our programme maintains a dynamic, outward-looking approach towards social work education with a clear focus on the needs of people with lived experience of social work. The following groups and organisations play an active part in the life of the programme:

- **Employers:** We are part of the Bradford Social Work Teaching Partnership with Bradford Council and Bradford College. The partnership works to provide good quality placements with the local authority. We also have a number of partnerships with third sector organisations.
- **People who use services:** User involvement is vital to the life of our programme and is an area we are committed to expanding. People with lived experience of social work are employed as module teachers and guest speakers. They are also involved in local action-based research, and they co-run local and national conferences and provide advice on programme design.
- **Students:** We seek feedback from students on every aspect of the programme, including placement provision, module content and teaching, and programme management and design.
- **Lecturers:** The majority of lecturers teaching the programme are qualified social workers, with substantial practice experience. We work within a strong team ethos that ensures all lecturers are involved in the management and running of the programme.
- **Practitioners:** Social Work Practitioners are involved in the teaching and assessment of practice placements, and in teaching within the academic setting. They also monitor placement standards and interview programme applicants.

The professional status of social worker is conferred by [Social Work England](#) (SWE) and successful graduates are eligible to apply for registration with Social Work England as a qualified social worker.

Programme Aims

The programme is intended to:

- Provide knowledge of social work services and people with lived experience of social work, the service delivery context, values and ethics in social work, theories and methods of social work, and the nature of social work practice.

- Develop skills in assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation with individuals, families, carers, groups, and communities.
- Develop the ability of students to support individuals to represent their needs, views and circumstances, with an emphasis upon human rights, social justice and co-production.
- Improve student awareness of the management of risk to people with lived experience of social work, self and colleagues.
- Build transferable skills in workload management and accountability, self-reflective practice and professional competence, communication and information technology and numerical skills, problem solving skills, information gathering, analysis and synthesis, intervention and evaluation, communication skills, skills in working with others, and skills in personal and professional development.

Programme Learning Outcomes

To be eligible for the award of Certificate of Higher Education at FHEQ level 4, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and an understanding of factors that shape identity, are able to take into account and develop strategies to challenge discrimination and oppression on a personal and institutional level.
2. Identify the principles of social justice, inclusion and equality and how legislation and guidance serves to advance or constrain people's rights.
3. Start to apply reflection and evaluation to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision-making and to identify, distinguish, evaluate, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge and evidence.

Additionally, to be eligible for the award of Diploma of Higher Education at FHEQ level 5, students will be able to:

4. Demonstrate awareness of the need for professional practice standards by taking responsibility for their own conduct, safe practice and learning.
5. Be able to reflect on the importance of professional standards in terms of time and workload management, with support through supervision and being open, honest and maintaining integrity in their work.
6. Start to critically reflect on social care values and principles and with guidance, recognise and work with competing values and ethical dilemmas; work in partnership with people with lived experience of social work taking into account their needs, views and rights within relevant legislation.

Additionally, to be eligible for the Degree of Bachelor award at FHEQ level 6, students will be able to:

7. Demonstrate a critical understanding of social work skills and methods in response to the diverse physical, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual needs of people using social work services. This will facilitate a creative approach encompassing legal and policy frameworks, human growth and development, research, and professional judgment.
8. Demonstrate a critical understanding of theory and methods in the use of initiative, judgement and authority to communicate, assess, engage and intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support and practice within legal frameworks when working with harm, neglect and abuse.
9. Work within legislation and policy whilst being mindful of the need to share and communicate verbal and written information appropriately, including the use of Information Communication Technology, within relevant timescales.
10. Engage with, inform, and adapt to changing economic, social, political and organisational contexts.
11. Demonstrate a critical understanding of multi-agency and inter-professional partnerships within diverse organisations, and the development of appropriate culturally sensitive provision and services.

Additionally, to be eligible for the award of Honours Degree of Bachelor at FHEQ level 6, students will be able to:

12. Evidence culturally sensitive social work theories and methods in response to equality, diversity and inclusion, whilst being mindful of people's social, cultural, and spiritual needs. To demonstrate creative practice and research-based considerations whilst working within legislative and policy frameworks that support human growth and development.
13. Evidence practice, with the appropriate level of autonomy, using initiative, judgement, and authority to relevant to the role to be able to communicate, assess, engage, and intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support and apply relevant legislation when considering risk and safeguarding.
14. Understand and meet the standards required by the professional regulator; Social Work England Professional Standards for Social Work. Evidence all the domains of the Professional Capabilities Framework (BASW). The DH and DfE (Department of Health and Department for Education) requirements for social work training, QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) benchmark statements for social work.
15. Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others through supervision, mentoring, assessing, research, teaching, leadership, and management.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

Our programme is built around high-quality practice placements, coupled with a clear system of curriculum development as students' progress through the stages of the programme. Our skills in teaching rest upon a commitment to clear learning outcomes, a structured system of progression, imaginative assessments and the provision of safe, stimulating learning environments. Our lecturers have a variety of specialist practice, academic and research skills as well as a commitment to providing high quality teaching and learning. Teaching on the programme is delivered through lectures, practical classes, workshops, tutorials, work-based learning and directed study (individual and small groups).

All assessments test skills in critical analysis and reflective practice in the integration of the practice and theory of social work. Assessment for the modules Practice Learning 1 (Stage 2) and Practice Learning II (Stage 3) includes passing a placement at the required level and the provision of evidence for 'fitness to practice' at the next stage of the degree. Other forms of assessment include: essays; individual and group presentations and exercises; *viva voce* exams, poster presentations, assessment report and care plans and case analyses.

If students fail the practice element of the course, then normally they are permitted one further attempt at placement during the following academic year, this means students will not be permitted to the next stage of study. If students fail the placement opportunity at second attempt students will be transferred to the BA Social Care route subject to eligibility. This exemption will not impact on students' attempts at the practice elements where extenuating circumstances have been applied or who are successful in an appeal. If a student fails the practice learning assignments, which is the assessed academic component of the placement, they will have one further opportunity to resubmit the revised piece of work. In Year 1, students must pass and complete the Readiness for Direct Social Work Practice module and Readiness for Practice CPD portfolio before they can progress to Year 2. Both components of the Practice Learning I module must be passed in order to proceed to Practice learning II. Teaching on the Practice Learning modules must be undertaken in tandem with the placement element.

Curriculum

BA (Hons) Social Work is a 360-credit degree programme made up of core modules that may not be substituted for others.

This programme accepts applications into Stage 1 as well as from foundation level courses such as our [Foundation Year in Social Care](#). All entrants to Stage 1 regardless of entry route must meet the same programme requirements and have experience in social care.

The first year of study (**Stage 1**) provides students with beginning knowledge and understanding of the context of social work practice and equips them with the required practice skills to undertake their first social work placement.

There will be a requirement to develop and maintain a CPD (continuous personal and professional development) portfolio as part of this process. Academic work dovetails with this and provides: an understanding of historical perspectives and contemporary issues within social work; social policy

underpinning social work practice; values and ethics; communication skills; sociological and psychological explanations of human development; skills in assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation.

At the end of stage one, students will be evaluated terms of readiness for direct practice. This forms the end point of the Readiness to Direct Social Work Practice module (SOW4020-Z) that acts as a central hub to the curriculum. Within this module students will learn from experts by experience and social work practitioners. This module prepares students for their first professional practice placement. Students must successfully complete the modules SOW4001-B, SOW4002-B and SOW4020-Z before they can take up their first placement.

Stage 1 Core Modules for Social Work/Social Care (FHEQ Level 4)

Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Study Period
SOW4020-Z	Readiness for Direct Social Work Practice	0	Academic Year
SOW4001-B	Introduction to Social Work	20	Semester 1
SOW4006-B	Academic Personal & Professional Development	20	Semester 1
SOW4005-B	Communication Skills: Children and Adults	20	Semester 1
SOW4022-B	Social Work Theories and Methods	20	Semester 2
SOW4002-B	Social Work Values and Ethics	20	Semester 2
SOW4019-B	Co-production and Inclusive Practice	20	Semester 2

The second year (**Stage 2**) builds upon this foundation and focuses upon the development of specialist skills with particular people with lived experience of social work groups.

Students will learn about: the law and implications for practice; mental distress, childcare, disability and work with older people, communication and interviewing skills and level two social work theories, models and methods of working with individuals, families, and carers. Students study 4 taught modules in Semester 1. In Semester 2 students will undertake a placement that is assessed at the End of First Placement level of the Professional Capabilities Framework.

Stage 2 Core Modules for Social Work/Social Care (FHEQ Level 5)

Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Study Period
SOW5001-B	Child and Family Social Work	20	Semester 1
SOW5025-B	Law for Social Work	20	Semester 1
SOW5004-B	Working with Adults	20	Semester 1
SOW5010-B	Mental distress across the Life Course	20	Semester 1
SOW5003-D	Practice Learning 1	40	Academic Year

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The final year (**Stage 3**) work emphasises the importance of autonomous learning, the acquisition of evidence-based practice skills and final preparation for paid employment. Student academic work focuses upon reflective practice; research and evaluation; theories of leadership and management in organisation; and developing cultural competence in social work.

In Semester 2 students will undertake a block placement which is assessed at the End of Last Placement level of the Professional Capabilities Framework.

Stage 3 Core Modules for Social Work (FHEQ Level 6)

Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Study Period
SOW6008-B	Cultural and International Perspectives in Social Work	20	Semester 1
SOW6020-B	Domestic Abuse Across the Life course	20	Semester 1
SOW6003-D	Research Methods for Social Workers	40	Academic Year
SOW6004-D	Practice Learning II	40	Academic Year

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Study Abroad

This programme is not currently eligible for Study Abroad opportunities.

Assessment, Continuation and Award Regulations

This programme follows the Assessment, Continuation and Award regulations published on the University’s website for undergraduate courses ([Regulation 2](#)) with variance from the regulations as outlined below and documented in the Variance Register:

- **Variance from 5 and 6.2** - Students who fail the Placement component (002) of SOW5003-D Practice Placement 1 or SOW6004-D, Practice Placement 2 will be required to undertake re-assessment with attendance in the following academic year.
- **Variance from 6.2** - Students will be permitted only one reassessment opportunity at component 002 of SOW5003-D Practice Placement 1 or SOW6004-D, Practice Placement 2.
- **Variance from 6.2** - Students who have passed 80 credits and SOW4020-Z Readiness for Direct Social Work Practice in Stage 2 and have not achieved a pass mark in component 003 in module SOW5003-D Practice Placement 1, will also be permitted to continue to the next stage of their programme.
- **Variance from 6.2** - Students who have passed all assessed components except component 003 at a 2nd attempt in module SOW5003-D Practice Placement 1 or SOW6004-D, Practice Placement 2 can be permitted a third attempt for this component only.

Awards and Operational Plan

Students who do not pass the placement element in Stage 3 will not be eligible to register as a qualified social worker. Students in this situation will be transferred to module SOW6006-D to become eligible for the award of Honours Degree of Bachelor in Social Care if they have successfully completed at least 360 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes. THIS AWARD DOES NOT CONFER ELIGIBILITY TO REGISTER WITH SOCIAL WORK ENGLAND.

In line with the regulations, it is possible to leave the course before completing with an Aegrotat or exit award. Aegrotat and exit awards do not confer eligibility to apply for registration with Social Work England.

Students will be eligible for the award of Honours Degree of Bachelor in Social Work if they have successfully completed at least 360 credits including all placement elements in Stage 3 and achieved the award learning outcomes.

Registration

BA (Hons) Social Work graduates are eligible to apply to join the Social Work England register upon payment of a registration fee and meeting the SWE application requirements.

Admission Requirements

We are proud to be [one of the most inclusive universities in the UK](#). All our students have potential, and we believe that as many people as possible should have the chance to benefit from higher education, no matter what their background or circumstances.

We take the time to understand the background of our applicants, understand their journey to education, and make decisions based on an applicant's potential to thrive at university and beyond.

People thinking of studying with the University of Bradford don't need to wait for the start of the year to contact our Disability Service. The University can arrange for anyone to talk to this team about what support is on offer at Bradford including an invitation to our Get Set Day. To contact the Disability Service please complete the [request support form](#).

Applications are welcome from students with non-traditional qualifications, and/or significant personal/professional experience. If applicants have prior certificated learning or professional experience which may be equivalent to parts of this programme, the University of Bradford has procedures to evaluate and recognise this learning to provide applicants with exemptions from specified modules or parts of the programme. Find more information about [recognition of prior learning decisions](#) on the University website.

Entry through Ucas

A **typical** offer to someone seeking entry through the UCAS scheme would be 120 points with Grade 4 (national Grade C) or above in GCSE English, along with the programme-specific requirements for Social Work.

We take into consideration a number of factors when assessing applications. It is not just about qualification and grades; we take the time to understand applicants' personal circumstances and make contextual decisions based on their potential to thrive at university and beyond. We are committed to raising aspirations and widening access to higher education, regardless of your background. The [University of Bradford Progression Scheme](#) welcomes Ucas applicants from a number of groups including adult learners who are 21+ on the first day of term, British armed forces families, carers and care experienced learners, estranged or orphaned learners, refugees and asylum seekers, and Romani or Traveller family members.

UK applicants who do not meet the entry requirements for this course, our [Foundation Year in Social Care](#) has a route to Social Work BA (Hons). A typical offer for entry to the Social Care Foundation Year would be 88 Ucas points including GCSE English at grade 4/C or above.

International students

This programme welcomes international applicants. We also welcome experience in social work overseas, either because applicants have lived there or because they have undertaken paid or voluntary work in another country. For information on what qualifications are equivalent to the above, visit the [Entry Requirements page for different countries](#) on our website.

This programme requires that all students have English language proficiency equivalent to **Minimum IELTS at 7.0**. More information, including equivalent test scores we accept, is available on our [Entry Requirements](#) website.

If applicants do not meet the IELTS requirement, students can take a [University of Bradford pre-session English course in Bradford at our Language Centre](#); or may be able to study an integrated route to Social Work through our International College.

All students

BA (Hons) Social Work applicants have to fulfil specific programme requirements regarding 'fitness to practice' as a professional social worker. To fulfil this requirement, applicants will need to demonstrate they have **a minimum of 100 hours of relevant social care work experience**, either paid or voluntary. This should have been undertaken within the last two years. Relevant social care experience includes direct work with people and could include:

- Direct work with people who need practical or emotional help or support either through face-to-face work or on an individual or group basis or telephone work.
- Mentoring or counselling.
- Care work (such as working as a health care assistant).
- Youth work.
- Working with children or young people who are socially excluded or have additional emotional and/or practical support needs.
- Placements through school or college which has been undertaken within the last 2 years at the point of application.

- Personal experience of caring for a relative or friend where you have had first-hand experience of social services or social work intervention; having a parent(s) who is a foster carer.
- Personal experience of using professional social work services.

We attach importance not only to the amount of experience that applicants have gained but crucially to the learning that they have gained and are able to apply this to their professional development. Applicants are asked to include in their personal statement, their roles and responsibilities, and reflections on the ways in which their experience has helped to prepare them for social work as a career and demonstrate that they can be entrusted to work with the vulnerable.

We will take into consideration any factors which indicate applicants and students may be unsuitable to become a social worker, and examples of this include certain previous criminal convictions or episodes within their health record. All places are therefore offered subject to undertaking a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check.

Information in this document is for the contemporary recruitment cycle and was accurate at time of publication. The current tariff and accepted qualifications for entry onto the programme is published at the online course page: <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/ug/social-work-ba/>