

Programme specification

(Notes on how to complete this template are provide in Annexe 2)

1. Overview/ factual information

Programme/award title(s)	BA (Hons) Social Work
Teaching Institution	Ruskin College
Awarding Institution	The Open University (OU)
Date of first OU validation	26 November 2003
Date of latest OU (re)validation	16 th April 2013
Next revalidation	17 th April 2018
Credit points for the award	120 credits at Level 4 120 credits at Level 5 120 credits at Level 6
UCAS Code	L500
Programme start date	1 st September 2018
Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)	Social Work (October 2016)
Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes	The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)
Professional/statutory recognition	The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)
Mode(s) of Study (PT, FT, DL, Mix of DL & Face-to-Face)	full time (College based), part time (College and Work based)
Duration of the programme for each mode of study	3 years full time (College based) 4 years part time (College based) 4 years part time (Work based)
Dual accreditation (if applicable)	None
Date of production/revision of this specification	6th March 2018

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 student module guide(s) and the students' handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

2.1 Educational aims and objectives

2.1.1 The programme aims to provide students with professional training and education in social work. It aims to provide a teaching and learning environment and placement opportunities that enable students to develop their academic and professional potential and to demonstrate the critical knowledge, understanding, values and skills needed for professional social work. The programme is particularly interested in identifying non-traditional students who have not previously been able to navigate the education system. This approach is consistent with the College's Mission and Strategic Aims of widening participation, providing the best level of education and inclusion opportunities to adults, particularly those who may be excluded or disadvantaged and to transform the individuals concerned along with the communities, groups, and societies from which they come.

2.1.2 Embedded in our social work programme is a strong commitment to the empowerment of individuals and communities, and the contribution that social work can make to this through anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice, listening to and respecting the voices of the users of social work services and active implementation of the values of social work. We are committed to ensuring that social workers who successfully complete Ruskin programmes are reflective practitioners who will deliver high quality and effective services in a professional and compassionate way.

2.1.3 The programme has a social science approach to understanding modern society and its complexities, thus is both subject-based and thematic in its construction and delivery. The programme is designed to separate academic learning and skills development from practice learning and skills development in its early stages and to bring these two aspects of the programme together through Levels 5 and 6. This approach encourages students to draw on their rich life and work experiences in order to conceptualise and theorise.

2.1.4 Ruskin has traditionally been concerned to encourage prospective social workers to consider issues of social justice, equality and diversity and the implications of these for social work practice. The BA (Hons) in Social Work at Ruskin builds on long experience of delivering a social work programme which meets the requirements of the relevant professional body, employers and the OU. The experience of extending partnerships and undertaking new initiatives has ensured a continuing commitment to development and improvement.

2.1.5 The programme meets the requirements of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), the Department of Health and Ruskin College for effective and competent social work practice. It aims to meet the academic requirements of the Open University (OU), the QAA Benchmark Statement for Social Work (2016) and the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2008).

2.1.6 The programme team has also established partnerships in the training of Practice Educators. This has been developed through a partnership between Ruskin College, Buckinghamshire New University, Oxford County Council and Buckinghamshire County Council under the auspices of the regional Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire Social Work Education Group. In addition we have a number of social workers who have completed the Practice Teaching Award and who regularly oversee social work student placements.

2.2 Relationship to other programmes and awards

(Where the award is part of a hierarchy of awards/programmes, this section describes the articulation between them, opportunities for progression upon completion of the programme, and arrangements for bridging modules or induction)

2.2.1 The programme does not have any integral relationship with other programmes. It has an indirect relationship with the College's Graduate Certificate: Practice Educator Professional Standards (GCPEPs) and its Access to Higher Education Diploma in Social Sciences.

2.2.2 GCPEPs is a programme designed to equip qualified social workers with the skills to act as Practice Educators, mentoring students on their placement learning opportunities.

2.2.3 Students that are not considered by the interview panels to be ready for the academic rigour of degree level study, or who lack recent or good level 2 or 3 qualifications on application are invited to apply for a place on the College's Access to HE Diploma in Social Sciences. This Access to HE Diploma includes units directly associated with the subject of social work.

2.2.4 Both of the above programmes are taught fully or in part by members of the BA (Hons) Social Work programme team.

2.3 For Foundation Degrees, please list where the 60 credit work-related learning takes place

Not applicable.

2.4 List of all exit awards

Certification of Higher Education in Social Welfare comprising 120 credits at Level 4

Diploma of Higher Education in Social Welfare comprising 120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5

The above awards are **not HCPC accredited** and do not entitle graduates to apply to be included on the HCPC register.

BA (Hons) Social Work comprising 120 credits at Level 4, 120 credits at Level 5 and 120 credits at Level 6

The above degree award is **HCPC accredited** and entitles graduates to apply to be included on the HCPC register.

3. Programme structure and learning outcomes

Programme Structure - LEVEL 4					
Compulsory modules	Credit points	Optional modules	Credit points	Is module compensatable?	Semester runs in
Principles and Practice of Social Work	40	None		None	1&2
Sociology	20				1
Social Policy	20				1
Applied Psychology, Human Growth and Development	20				2
Law	20				2

Intended learning outcomes at Level 4 are listed below:

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 4	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
<p>A1 – a knowledge of the historical, socio-economic, political, legal and policy context of social work practice within England and Wales.</p> <p>A2 – an ability to present, evaluate and interpret social research and its application to understanding social work and the wider society</p> <p>A3 – an appreciation of the relevance of social science and social work perspectives in understanding individual and social development, behaviour and functioning</p>	<p>Formative and summative assessments; formal input; group work; debates; tutorials and case studies.</p>
3B. Cognitive skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
<p>B1 – appreciate the importance of task and problem solving in relation to interpersonal, group and social relations</p> <p>B2 – an ability to present, evaluate and interpret models, concepts and theories and discuss them orally with their peer group</p>	<p>Formative and summative assessments; formal input; group work; debates; tutorials and case studies.</p>

3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
C1 – demonstrate an ability to evaluate the appropriateness of different models, theories and perspectives of social work in a practice setting	Summative assessment; formal input; group work; debates; tutorials; role-play and case studies.
3D. Key/transferable skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
<p>D1 – an ability to think logically and systematically in problem solving activities</p> <p>D2 – an appreciation of the contested nature of knowledge when working with individuals, groups and communities competing perspectives in understanding human behaviour</p> <p>D3 – an appreciation of power imbalances within society including processes that lead to marginalisation, social stigma, discrimination and social exclusion</p>	Summative assessment; formal input; group work; debates; tutorials; role-play and case studies.

Upon successful completion of the above Level 4 modules, a student may exit with an award of Certification of Higher in Social Welfare (not HCPC accredited, see 2.4 above), comprising 120 credits at Level 4)

Programme Structure - LEVEL 5					
Compulsory modules	Credit points	Optional modules	Credit points	Is module compensatable?	Semester runs in
Placement Learning Opportunity 1	60	None		None	1
Principles and Practice of Social Work	40				2
Research and Social Work	20				2

Intended learning outcomes at Level 5 are listed below:

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 5	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
A4 – an ability to apply underlying concepts and principles of social science and social work theory to social work practice and settings A5 – an understanding of the limitations of individual knowledge when working with complex personal and social situations	Summative assessments; formal input; group work; case studies; presentations and placement.
3B. Cognitive skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
B3 – the ability to reflect on their learning and to apply their understanding to social work practice B4 – the ability to draw on a range of established skills and techniques to undertake critical analysis of a range of interpersonal and social situations in order to propose positive solutions	Summative assessments; formal input; group work; case studies; presentations and practice learning opportunities.
3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
C2 – demonstrate an ability to apply underlying concepts of social work theory in a relevant practice setting C3 – demonstrate an ability to operate in a multi-disciplinary setting and to engage with professional supervision	Summative assessment; formal input; group work; debates; tutorials; role-play and case studies.

3D. Key/transferable skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
D4 – demonstrate communication and inter-personal skills which enables the student to identify, challenge and counter discrimination D5 – appreciate relevant factors in the production of knowledge and the implications this has for service users and social work practice	Summative assessment; formal input; group work; debates; tutorials; role-play and case studies.

Upon successful completion of the above Level 4 and 5 modules, a student may exit with an award of Diploma of Higher Education in Social Welfare (not HCPC accredited, see 2.4 above), comprising 120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5)

Programme Structure - LEVEL 6					
Compulsory modules	Credit points	Optional modules	Credit points	Is module compensatable?	Semester runs in
Placement Learning Opportunity 2	80	None		None	1&2
Dissertation	40				1&2

Intended learning outcomes at Level 6 are listed below:

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 6	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
A6 – an ability to apply the models, perspectives and theories learnt to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge to social work practice	Summative assessments; tutorials; workshops; group work; presentations and placement opportunities.

3B. Cognitive skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods

3B. Cognitive skills	
B5 – an ability to apply conceptual understanding that enables the student to solve problems using the ideas and techniques of social work theory in social work practice B6 – an ability to manage and direct their learning through independent study and making use of scholarly and academic reviews.	Summative assessments; tutorials; workshops; group work; presentations and practice learning opportunities.
3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
C4 – demonstrate an ability to apply a range of social work theories to complex individual and social situations through social work practice learning opportunities C5 – demonstrate an ability to consolidate their understanding and provide solutions to complex personal and social situations C6 – demonstrate an ability to work with and make effective use of professionals and supervisors to deliver effective services to a range of groups of users of social work services	Summative assessment; formal and informal input; tutorials; presentations and workshops.
3D. Key/transferable skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
D6 – the ability to relate research and theory in exercising initiative in social work practice D7 – the ability to engage with unpredictable and complex social situations with non-specialist audiences and develop solutions that offer viable alternatives	Summative assessment; formal and informal input; tutorials; presentations and workshops.

Upon successful completion of the above Level 4, 5 and 6 modules, a student will complete with an award of BA (Hons) Social Work (HCPC accredited) (120 credits at Level 4, 120 credits at Level 5 and 120 credits at Level 6, see 2.4 above)

4. Distinctive features of the programme structure

- Where applicable, this section provides details on distinctive features such as:
- where in the structure above a professional/placement year fits in and how it may affect progression
- any restrictions regarding the availability of elective modules where in the programme structure students must make a choice of pathway/route

4.1 During Levels 5&6 of the programme, for a total of 170 days, student's learning is undertaken on placements. In addition, students are required to undertake 30 days in Skills Development sessions (in College) across their years of study. The first placement is for 70 days in the Voluntary sector. The second placement of 100 days will be in a Statutory setting.

4.2 As part of the preparation for placement, students are required to identify their learning needs. It should be noted that whilst the availability of placements does not guarantee an exact match, determined efforts are made to ensure that appropriate learning opportunities are available. Each student is allocated a Link Tutor from the course team and a Placement Agreement meeting is organised between the student, link tutor and the Practice Educator (or Practice Supervisor if appropriate). At this meeting the student's learning needs are explored further and opportunities for meeting these are identified. A review meeting is held through the placement and additional meetings or contact may be arranged as needed.

4.3 During the placement students receive both day-to-day support and guidance and structured supervision from an experienced and qualified professional. Recall days held during the placement provide the opportunity for informal advice and guidance to students, on-site practice supervisor and educators.

4.4 The programme is designed to encourage students to draw connections between their practice learning opportunities and the taught modules of the programme. For example, the Principles and Practice of Social Work modules at Levels 4&5 underpin and reinforce the learning derived from the three placement learning opportunities (at Levels 4, 5&6) by constructively aligning their learning and reflexion with submitted assignments. The portfolios associated with the placement learning modules (Levels 5&6) carry an expectation that students are able to demonstrate a critical approach to social work practice by drawing on social science / social work theory, and social research.

4.5 All portfolios (Levels 5&6) are critically evaluated by a Practice Assessment Panel (PAP), convened in advance of the Examination Board (to which it makes recommendations regarding student progress). Portfolios that do not demonstrate sufficient academic content are deemed not to have met the requirements to pass the module and thus returned to the student for resubmission. The PAP comprises the programme team and experienced practice educators who sample the portfolios and provide a written report and recommendation to the Panel. A copy of this sampling report is fed back to the student and is to be included in the student's identification of their future learning needs.

4.6 The key roles of the PAP are:

- To quality assure the outcomes of a student's practice learning and to ensure that the student is demonstrating the ability to engage with social work practice as a reflexive and critical learner by drawing on and applying relevant social science and social work theory.
- To carry out a critical review of all submitted portfolios to ensure that they meet the academic standards required for the relevant level.
- To maintain and assure academic and practice learning standards by including a sample review of portfolios by the programme's external examiners.

5. Support for students and their learning

5.1 Teaching on the programme is delivered in classes of normally no more than 40 students supported by tutorials. Tutorials cover both academic and pastoral aspects of a student's journey.

5.2 Through Student Services, students have access to Learning Development tutors, who offer support to students. Students requiring specialist assessments such as dyslexic assessments are referred to an external specialist in the area. Where a student is assessed as dyslexic, or as having

another disability need, tutors are informed of the ways they can help support the student better. The College provides access to a Counselling service.

5.3 Additionally, students will be fully supported by the provisions of the Ruskin Education Support Service (RESS). This is a new and all-encompassing provision bringing together and building on the values and provisions set out in the colleges' Equality and Diversity Policy (2016) and its Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy document (2014). The RESS includes a number of elements which together provide the potential for wrap-around additional learning support, as often befits Ruskin students who are traditionally more mature students drawn from a variety of disadvantaged backgrounds, often having been previously served poorly by an education system which has failed to identify their learning needs. At Ruskin, there is an initial Dyslexia screening process made available to all students entering onto programmes. A RESS initial assessment identifies additional needs for specific individual students. We work closely with an outside agency to provide additional one-to-one support, potentially both in-class and outside of class according to identified need. We have a system of class reps who are encouraged to guide individual students encountering study difficulties towards help. We are in the process of developing training and support – in disability awareness, autism awareness, mental health first aid – for staff, class reps and 'Learning Support Champions'.

6. Criteria for admission

6.1 All candidates must be able to satisfy the general admissions requirements for Ruskin College. These are:

Candidates must attend a 10 minute individual interview with the Admissions or other Tutors on the programme:

- Candidates must attend an interview with two academic or academic-related staff members.
- Candidates must demonstrate commitment to the ethos and vocation of Ruskin College
- Candidates must have the ability to benefit from study at this level, fulfil the learning outcomes of the programme and achieve the standard required for the award.

Ruskin is committed to the fact that achieving qualifications at this level can, and does, improve individual student's lives and the wellbeing of the communities which it serves.

College expectations for the admissions process are as follows:

- Students enquire about the programme or the College and receive information and are invited to our Open Days and/or Subject Taster Days
- Students' apply and are called for interview with two academic or academic-related staff members (depending on availability); and/or as outlined in regards to individual programmes.
- Students are either offered a place or are given detailed guidance on how to develop and encouraged to reapply at a future point.
- Students accept the offered place and are called for a literacy assessment.
- Prospective students to participate in a group interview
- Students with declared disabilities are also given information and advice on applying for provision to support their needs.
- Students attend induction week which introduces Ruskin systems and people and in which students have their first tutorial.

Additionally:

6.2 Ruskin College BA (Hons) Social Work recognises that applicants wishing to study on the programme may have prior learning from other institutions. The Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning provides information on the processes.

6.3 The quality of the student experience is captured in the College's feedback mechanisms. Students who identify specific or additional needs at the application or interview stage are encouraged to talk through support mechanisms, anxieties and barriers with interviewers and with their personal tutor, if accepted onto the programme.

7. Language of study

English.

8. Information about non-OU standard assessment regulations (including PSRB requirements)

None.

9. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning.

- End of year programme team meetings to compile the annual monitoring report.
- Meeting(s) with the external examiner(s) at examination board(s).
- Drawing up action points arising both from annual report, external examiners' report and discrete modules evaluations.
- Input from the academic reviewer provided by the OU.
- Tutor attendance at best practice sessions and other CPD events organised internally.
- Tutors' participation in external CPD especially conferences, writing of papers /books, attendance at seminars, reviewing articles for journals etc.
- Tutors bringing critical self-reflection gained from their work as external examiners in other institutions, experience of teaching in other institutions or practice.
- Monitoring of above through annual staff development report drafted by the relevant management systems in place and discussed at College Leadership Team and reported to the OU via the AMR annually.
- Termly monitoring of the programme through Programme Boards and Programme Enhancement Meetings.
 - Programme Boards are the key locations for detailed discussion about the programme areas at the College. Programme Boards have responsibility for, in conjunction with the College Leadership Team and programme Enhancement Meetings, for:
 - Monitoring the programme delivery and curriculum, including:
 - ensuring delivery is as outlined in the validation documents and make recommendations for change, as necessary
 - Monitoring student feedback, including:
 - Considering the outcomes of module evaluations
 - Receiving feedback from the student members
 - Receiving matters passed from other student forums
 - Reviewing the annual Monitoring report(s) and action plan throughout the academic year, including:
 - Receiving external examiners' reports and ensure that appropriate action is taken in response to issues raised;
 - Receiving and acting upon actions passed from other boards and Committees.
 - Programme Enhancement meetings are the key locations for detailed consideration of the effectiveness, viability and development of programmes of study. They are aligned with the College's strategic aim for excellence in both further and higher education using student centred quality assurance systems and provide a focus in course and programme teams to address the College's Key Performance Indicators.
 - To enable the programme to contribute to the College strategic aim for excellence in both further and higher education using student centred quality assurance systems.
 - To provide a focus in staff teams to address the College's Key Performance Indicators.
 - To maximise the success of students through regular review of practice on courses and programmes.
 - A review of the key stages in the students journey and will identify and address areas to support student success.
 - To enable course and programme teams to review and reflect upon their teaching, learning and assessment practice.

10. Changes made to the programme since last (re)validation

Not applicable.

Annexe 1: Curriculum map

Annexe 2: Notes on completing the OU programme specification template

Annexe 1 - Curriculum map

This table indicates which study units assume responsibility for delivering (shaded) and assessing (✓) particular programme learning outcomes.

Annexe 1 - Curriculum map

This table indicates which study units assume responsibility for delivering (shaded) and assessing (✓) particular programme learning outcomes.

Level	Study module/unit	Programme outcomes								
		A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	C1	D1	D2	D3
4	Social Policy	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓
	Sociology	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓
	Applied Psychology, Human Growth and Development		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
	Principals and Practice of Social Work	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Law					✓	✓	✓	✓	

Level	Study module/unit	Programme outcomes							
		A4	A5	B3	B4	C2	C3	D4	D5
5	Placement Learning Opportunity 1 (70 day)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Principals and Practice of Social Work and Law	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
	Research and Social Work							✓	✓

Level	Study module/unit	Programme outcomes							
		A6	B5	B6	C4	C5	C6	D6	D7
6	Placement Learning Opportunity (100 day)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Dissertation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

Annexe 2: Notes on completing programme specification templates

- 1 - This programme specification should be mapped against the learning outcomes detailed in module specifications.
- 2 – The expectations regarding student achievement and attributes described by the learning outcome in section 3 must be appropriate to the level of the award within the **QAA frameworks for HE qualifications**: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Pages/default.aspx>
- 3 – Learning outcomes must also reflect the detailed statements of graduate attributes set out in **QAA subject benchmark statements** that are relevant to the programme/award: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx>
- 4 – In section 3, the learning and teaching methods deployed should enable the achievement of the full range of intended learning outcomes. Similarly, the choice of assessment methods in section 3 should enable students to demonstrate the achievement of related learning outcomes. Overall, assessment should cover the full range of learning outcomes.
- 5 - Where the programme contains validated **exit awards** (e.g. CertHE, DipHE, PGDip), learning outcomes must be clearly specified for each award.
- 6 - For programmes with distinctive study **routes or pathways** the specific rationale and learning outcomes for each route must be provided.
- 7 – Validated programmes delivered in **languages other than English** must have programme specifications both in English and the language of delivery.