



LEEDS
BECKETT
UNIVERSITY

Course Specification

MA Youth Work and Community Development

Course Code: MYWCD

2026/27 (January 2027 start)

leedsbeckett.ac.uk

MA Youth Work and Community Development (MYWCD)

Applicant Facing Course Specification for 2026-27 Entrants

Confirmed at November 2025

General Information

Award	Master of Arts Youth Work and Community Development
Contained awards	Postgraduate Diploma Youth Work and Community Development <i>Non-professional contained awards:</i> Master of Arts Youth and Community Studies Postgraduate Diploma Youth and Community Studies Postgraduate Certificate Youth and Community Studies
Awarding body	Leeds Beckett University
Level of qualification and credits	Level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, with 180 credit points at Level 7 of the Higher Education Credit Framework for England.
Course lengths and standard timescales	Start dates will be notified to students via their offer letter. The length and mode of delivery of the course is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 18 months (full time, campus based)
Location(s) of delivery	The majority of teaching will be at City campus but on occasion may be at Headingley campus, plus location of work placements.
Entry requirements	Admissions criteria are confirmed in your offer letter. Details of how the University recognises prior learning and supports credit transfer are located here: https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/student-information/course-information/recognition-of-prior-learning/ Admissions enquiries may be directed to: AdmissionsEnquiries@leedsbeckett.ac.uk .
Course fees	Course fees are confirmed in your offer letter. A breakdown of any additional costs is included on the online prospectus entry for this course. Fees enquiries may be directed to Fees@leedsbeckett.ac.uk .

Policies, Standards and Regulations

<https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/our-university/public-information/academic-regulations/>

Standard regulations apply to this course except where noted below.

The course is professionally validated by the National Youth Agency (NYA).

Fitness to Practise

The course is authorised to use the University Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedure. Details can be found [here](#). Students are expected to act in a professional manner at all times in line with the Policy.

Modules required to be passed

The two Placement modules and all their components of assessment must be passed to achieve the target award or the contained award, PG Diploma Youth Work and Community Development, with each component of assessment for these modules to be passed at a minimum of 50% with no compensation of marks between the components and the pass/fail assessment must be passed. Placements are assessed in these modules:

- Placement 1
- Placement 2

Placements

In order to successfully complete the course and qualify as a youth and community worker, each student must undertake and pass both placements during their course. Students must undertake assessed practice in at least two settings, with a minimum of 200 hours in each placement. It is an NYA Professional Validation requirement that a minimum of 50% of this time must be spent in contact work with young people. Such work will normally be with 13- to 19-year-olds but may extend to 11- to 25-year-olds.

In the event of failure of placements

Once a student is on placement, they are expected to conform to the expectations of their host agency. All students have an allocated Placement Tutor who will undertake at least one three-way meeting (or discussion) during each placement, as well as observing the student delivering a piece of youth work (where practical). A focus on their fitness to practise will be discussed, where it is felt that this is not being met a student may 'fail' their placement. In the event of failure of any aspects of the placements, the student, Level Leader and Professional Practice Co-ordinator will determine whether this aspect can be re-assessed. If failure is deemed to be through lack of evidence of appropriate learning, students may be asked to complete a further piece of assessed practice. Students may be able to extend or retake the placement at a suitable time. Where appropriate, this process may involve an External Examiner (Fieldwork) meeting with them. However, where an issue of fitness to practise or misconduct is the reason for failure, the Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures will be followed. The Practice Placement modules can be repeated if failed.

Attendance requirements

The course follows the University's Academic Engagement Policy and expects attendance at all mandatory sessions on the timetable. All sessions are mandatory unless indicated as voluntary (e.g., drop-in sessions). Also, students are required to engage with all aspects of the taught course, and there is a minimum attendance requirement of 80% for taught modules and 100% for assessed practice placements. Evidence of attendance, in excess of the minimum placement hours detailed within the module specification, must be presented. The student is responsible for providing evidence of completing their assessed practice placement hours. Failure to meet the attendance requirements, without evidence of mitigation, may result in a student only being eligible for a non-professional contained award. Where students are at risk of

failing to meet the attendance requirement, they are seen in the first instance by their Academic Advisor, and if concerns remain the Level Leader or Course Director agrees an Action Plan/ Learning Contract and extended completion date.

Contained awards

- Postgraduate Diploma Youth Work and Community Development: Professional contained award for students meeting the professional requirements of the target award but not the requirements of an MA award. Professionally validated award: Students who meet the University requirement for the award of Postgraduate Diploma and:
 - Achieved minimum 80% academic attendance and 100% placement attendance as required by the NYA Validation Requirements.
 - Passed the two 20-credit placement modules as detailed above and met the Academic Regulations requirements for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma.
- MA Youth and Community Studies: Non-professional contained award for eligible students not meeting the professional / placement requirements of the target award noted above.
- Postgraduate Diploma Youth and Community Studies: Non-professional contained award for students not meeting the professional / placement requirements or the target award not the requirements of an MA award.
- Postgraduate Certificate Youth and Community Studies: Non-professional contained award.

Professional Accreditation or Recognition Associated with the Course

Professional body

National Youth Agency Education and Training Standards on behalf of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC).

Accreditation/recognition summary

This course gives graduates the status of professionally qualified youth and community worker, as recognised by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC).

'In Year' Placement Information

Summary

Students undertake two placements totalling 400 hours minimum during their course of study. A minimum of 50% of this time must be spent in contact work with young people. Such work will normally be with 13- to 19-year-olds but may extend to 11- to 25-year-olds. Students are encouraged to gain experience in new and challenging contexts, including international settings that meet both their individual learning needs and the NYA's Professional Validation Requirements (2022) guidance. The course is delivered on one day each week, allowing students to undertake a concurrent placement experience. As there are two assessed placements, their timing and weekly commitment is determined by the individual student's and placement's availability. All 400 hours should be close to completion prior to commencement of the dissertation.

Location

The course offers a wide diversity of placement opportunities, including short-term international placements during non-teaching periods. In addition, students can undertake placements with the National

Citizens Service during the summer months. Students can 'self-source' their placement or be allocated a placement, and this is co-ordinated with support from the practice learning and employability unit who maintain an up-to-date list of available placement agencies. These include alternative education providers; youth centres; community centres; environmental projects; schools; behaviour support units; mentoring projects; sports-based provision; arts and drama provision; mental health services; and young offender institutions.

Timetable

Timetables for Semester 1 will be made available to students during induction week via:

- i) The Student Portal (MyBeckett)
- ii) The Leeds Beckett app

Any difficulties relating to timetabled sessions may be discussed with your Course Administrator.

Key Contacts

Your course director

Alan Smith

Your course administrator

Urszula Scibior, urszula.scibior@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Course Overview

Aims

This course aims to provide students with the necessary knowledge, skills and values required by the NYA in its Professional Validation Requirements (2022) guidance to achieve a professional qualification. A distinctive aspect of the youth work and community development courses at the University has been the priority given to learning through reflection and the emphasis on the contribution of theory to practice and of practice to theory. As such, the MA encourages students to: critically examine previously held assumptions about themselves, others and society; question traditional concepts such as 'youth' and 'community'; recognise and explore contradictions inherent in youth work and community development such as the tension between empowerment and social control, and to promote enterprising, sustainable and ethical practice.

While the main focus of the professional validation is Youth Work, the MA course seeks to encourage students to understand the diverse family and community contexts in which young people live and the contribution they make. The aim is to equip our students with knowledge and skills to enable them to respond creatively to changes taking place in families and communities whether of identity, interest and or location. Our view is that there are common and defining principles which underpin youth work, work with young people and community development.

Similarly, the impact of the changing political world, more than a decade of public sector austerity measures, the Covid pandemic, and the impact of globalisation on young people and communities has taken on a greater significance in the curriculum and placement opportunities. The contexts for practice are changing, and innovative models of evidence-based practice are evolving to meet the demands and needs of new and diverse constituencies including newly arrived migrants and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, survivors of child sexual exploitation, those with mental health concerns, homeless people, and young people struggling to survive in mainstream education. Inter-agency working within and across different sectors has become an established requirement for all public sector work and this has resulted in models of practice that have the potential to complement and reinforce the significance of youth work and community development. These models include coaching and mindfulness, participatory practice, mentoring, counselling, mediation and restorative practice. The MA course introduces students to inter-professional working, models of evidence-based practice and the various approaches used and raises awareness of the professional roles and responsibilities that are inherent within a changing and diverse workforce.

The overall aim of the course is therefore to develop qualified workers who can demonstrate skills for employment and future learning and have attributes valued by employers within the specific youth and community work workforce and wider related settings; this includes the ability to undertake primary research and evaluation into areas of professional practice, using a wide range of approaches and evidence.

Course learning outcomes

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1	Have developed a sophisticated understanding of the place of social sciences in the professional and applied contexts of youth work and community development practices.
2	Be able to critically analyse the significance and impact of global political events on young people and local communities and support appropriate practice interventions

3	Be able to adopt an enquiring, analytical and critical disposition towards policy and practice relating to young people and communities.
4	Have developed a reflexive approach to new and creative forms of learning including digital literacy.
5	Be able to apply the knowledge, skills and values required of professionally qualified youth and community workers in a range of settings, critically assessing and evaluating new and evolving models of practice and how these are applied
6	Be able to undertake ethically informed, independent research which benefits their professional development and / or practice interventions.

Teaching and Learning Activities

Summary

The MA Youth Work and Community Development is a taught course, and all classroom-based modules are recorded (where appropriate) to enable students to revisit their learning. As the course has a minimum 80% attendance requirement, relying on a pre-recorded lecture is not sufficient to meet the professional body requirements.

A small number of modules are jointly taught with students studying other courses within the School of Health, including the Understanding Social Research and Evaluation module which is shared with the MSc Child and Adolescent Mental Health.

The course emphasises peer-learning and co-production of knowledge, in line with the professional value-base, and beliefs about the relationship between teacher and learner. This is experienced as a 'workshop' style approach to encourage everyone to participate. To enable students to make the most of this approach, significant emphasis is placed on preparatory work which is either uploaded in the virtual learning environment in support of 'flipped learning' or provided as module readers. This shared approach to learning is further embedded through the use of debates, in-class activities and small group tasks.

Placement workshops incorporate professional and academic skills support in the Placement modules, which is tailored to the needs of the group, and teaching or assessment activities as required throughout the year; these are central to how students prepare for, and engage with, studying and undertaking practice placements. As well as sessions on postgraduate study skills, employability and practitioner-based research, there will be a focus on tasks contained within the placement portfolio, including developing reflective practice skills, understanding safeguarding policies and practice, designing and delivering programmes of informal education, risk-assessments, and asset-based community development.

During the course, students undertake two periods of assessed practice with support from a suitably qualified and experienced practice supervisor on placement. During each of the placements, students will normally be visited at least once by a member of the course team, to undertake their summative practice assessment. This is usually their Placement Tutor, who will support them throughout their placements. Within the *Leadership and Management* module, students work in small teams to develop a project bid against a tender and present this to a panel of senior staff from local youth and community work projects for formative feedback. Within the current context of youth and community work management the ability to write and present funding bids and project proposals is a growing area of practice.

Understanding Social Research and Evaluation is shared across the School of Health's postgraduate portfolio and means youth work and community development students may be studying alongside students from a range of other disciplines, usually those undertaking the MSc Child and Adolescent Mental Health. This enhances their interdisciplinary learning and is informed by inter-professional teaching and

learning approaches. Once this module is completed, students can start to think about their eventual dissertation, which is the culmination of their studies. This is undertaken with an individual research supervisor and will be delivered through a series of supervision tutorials.

Your modules

This information is correct for students progressing through the programme within standard timescales. Students who are required to undertake repeat study may be taught alternate modules which meet the overall course learning outcomes. Details of module delivery will be provided in your timetable.

Level 7

Compulsory modules

Module title	Credits	Semester/ teaching period
Critical Perspectives in Youth and Community Work	20	1
Promoting Inclusive Practice	20	1
Placement 1	20	1-2
Understanding Social Research and Evaluation	20	2
Leadership and Management: Self; Team and Organisation	20	2
Placement 2*	20	2-3
Global Perspectives in Practice	20	3
Dissertation	40	3
Number of credits of compulsory modules	180	

* Where possible, Placement 1 is completed before Placement 2 starts

Assessment and Scheduled Learning and Teaching Activities

The assessment balance and overall workload associated with this course are calculated from core modules.

A standard module equates to 200 notional learning hours, which may be comprised of teaching, learning and assessment, any embedded placement activities and independent study. Modules may have more than one component of assessment.

Assessment

Modules are assessed through a combination of course work with practical assessments and a dissertation. Students are assessed on placement.

Workload

Overall Workload	Level 7
Teaching, learning and assessment	245 hours
Independent study	1227 hours
Placement	400 hours