



LEEDS
BECKETT
UNIVERSITY

Course Specification MA Social Work

Course Code: SWKMA

2026/27

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MA Social Work (SWKMA)

Applicant Facing Course Specification for 2026/27 Entrants

Confirmed at November 2025

General Information

Award	Master of Arts Social Work
Contained awards	Postgraduate Diploma Social Work
<i>Non-professional</i>	Master of Arts Social Studies Postgraduate Diploma Social Studies Postgraduate Certificate Social 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">• 24 months (full time, campus based)• 36 months (part time, campus based)
Part time study	PT delivery is usually at half the intensity of the FT equivalent course, although there may be flexibility to increase your pace of study to shorten the overall course duration. Some modules may be delivered in a different sequence from that defined within this information set but the modules offered within each level are consistent.
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.

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.

Achievement of the award

All assessments, components of assessment, modules and placements, must be passed for the conferment of the award. The course does not allow for compensation or condoning of marks by the Progression and Award Board.

In-level stage

There is an in-level stage at the end of year one for full-time students and on completion of the Practice Placement 1 module for part-time students. This stage constitutes the group of modules undertaken by these points, on completion of which student progress is considered so both reassessment opportunities and subsequently repeat opportunities for any failed modules are undertaken part way through the course and prior to progressing to stage two of the course.

Mitigation

No mitigation is allowed for the practice component.

Attendance

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). Additionally, the full placement days for the relevant placement level must be completed. Details of how absences are managed are detailed in the Course Handbook and the Placement Handbooks. Attendance is monitored through the academic advisor process and in liaison with the Level Tutor and Course Director.

Contained Awards

Students who fail to achieve the minimum performance required for the target award or the professional contained award shall be recommended for the conferment of a lower or the same level award (non-professional) with a different title in line with the Regulations.

Professional contained award

Postgraduate Diploma Social Work: for students who successfully complete the Practice Placement 1 and 2 modules, but who do not pass the Social Work Research module. This contained awards does provide eligibility to apply for registration as a social worker.

Non-professional contained awards

These contained awards do not provide eligibility to apply for registration as a social worker.

- Postgraduate Certificate Social Studies and PG Diploma Social Studies
- MA Social Studies: students who do not successfully complete the Practice Placement 2 module only can opt to undertake the Open Learning module 20 credits in order to achieve the University's requirements for a master's award. This module is optional, and the student may decide to exit with the PG Diploma Social Studies contained award instead. See below for details regarding failing

placements, readiness for practice and the Practice Assessment Examination Committee's role when placements are failed.

Placement progression for placement 1 and 2

Placement progression is assessed through the practice settings and professional requirements. The Practice Assessment Examination Committee (PAEC) meets twice yearly to discuss practice assessments and makes recommendations concerning the progression of students to the Progression and Award Board.

Failing placement

Students normally have only one opportunity to repeat a placement throughout the course. Students who fail two assessed practice learning placements across the whole course will be deemed to have failed the course and a recommendation made to the Progression and Award Board for the student to be withdrawn from the course and be credited with completed modules with the appropriate contained award. This includes students who withdraw from placement following practice concerns and/or an action plan. Students in this situation will be discussed at PAEC and a fail recommendation will normally be suggested. The University cannot guarantee that a repeat placement can be sourced but will work with partners in the Teaching Partnership to make every reasonable effort to do so. Students who fail or withdraw from placement will complete a Readiness for Practice plan with their tutors, prior to any repeat placement, as outlined below.

Readiness for practice

The Professional Capabilities Framework outlines a number of statements relating to Readiness for Practice for student social workers which impact upon student progression as follows:

- Prior to first placement, students are assessed on their communication skills and ability to learn from feedback. The ability of students to apply basic social work knowledge, skills and values is assessed through a recorded role play. Students must pass this assessment in the Practice Placement 1 module prior to commencing placement.
- Students are also assessed at the end of the first practice placement concerning their readiness to progress to the second practice placement where more complex work will be undertaken.
- Students who have failed or withdrawn from placement must complete a Readiness for Practice Plan as determined by their tutor which will be considered by Practice Assessment Examination Committee (PAEC). Students who fail to undertake or complete a Readiness for Practice Plan will not be offered a further practice placement. All External Examiners are invited to attend the PAEC and it is a requirement that at least one will be available for this meeting.

Academic calendar

This course follows a non-standard calendar to accommodate placements.

Professional Accreditation or Recognition Associated with the Course

Professional body

Social Work England

Accreditation/recognition summary

Successful completion of the course provides eligibility to apply for registration as a social worker in England.

'In Year' Work Placement Information

Summary

Students are required to complete assessed practice in two placements.

Placement Delivery

Placement One: 70 days

Placement Two: 100 days

Location

The location of placements take place normally with the local authority or health and social care organisations that undertake statutory social work tasks in West Yorkshire.

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 Gill Impey

Your course administrator Evie Marsh, e.a.marsh@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Course Overview

Aims

The aims of the programme are to:

- Provide a challenging programme of applied learning that enables students to develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and values to embark on their career with a strong and confident professional identity and a commitment to continued professional development.
- To produce postgraduate, qualifying-level social work students who, at the point of completion of their course, meet the Social Work England Standards and associated PCF domains, enabling students to apply for professional registration as a social worker.
- To enable students to use professional judgement in making decisions in complex situations within legal and ethical boundaries and work in accordance with Social Work England Standards.
- Communicate effectively with a range of people (including children and adult service users, colleagues, other professionals and people in authority) and in a variety of settings and promote a philosophy of partnership working which is effective with other health and social care professionals, service users, carers and their families.
- Develop critically reflective practitioners, with the ability to utilise contemporary knowledge and theory and who can draw upon evidence-based research to monitor and evaluate both the effectiveness of their practice and the delivery of social work in a multi-disciplinary context.

Course learning outcomes

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

1	Demonstrate the ability to critically apply evidence-based knowledge to inform professional capability at qualifying level.
2	Demonstrate the ability to be accountable for the management and development of self as an independent learner and a professional practitioner.
3	Critically apply a range of social work skills in order to intervene ethically and effectively and make decisions in challenging situations
4	Critically reflect upon and analyse social work practice within the social and organisational context in order to provide creative and innovative solutions to complex problems.
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6	Demonstrate in depth knowledge and a critical understanding of social work practice to meet the professional requirements and standards of the regulator
7	Critically appraise and apply research- and evidence-based knowledge to inform best social work practice.

Teaching and Learning Activities

Summary

Teaching and learning is normally face to face. Lectures will normally be recorded although attendance is mandatory. One to one activities (e.g., tutorials or placement visits) may be online by arrangement.

The course commences with two days of induction and orientation that aims to introduce the core concepts of the course and to enable the student cohort to develop a cohesive sense of identity. The course promotes an inclusive environment that involves behaving in a non-discriminatory way, being respectful of others and valuing diversity. A group agreement is developed as part of the Induction process with every cohort of students, with the aim of creating a safe space for shared and independent learning. The course encourages students to engage in respectful discussion, debate, collaborative work and research, in order to recognise and learn from different viewpoints and critically examine diverse theoretical perspectives. Students are encouraged to identify and evaluate their learning styles and preferences and to develop action plans and Learning Contracts to support self-directed learning. The course employs a wide variety of teaching styles and assessment methods to promote and enable inclusive learning. Placement providers are offered support and guidance around reasonable adjustment, from tutors and the University Disability Service, to promote appropriate learning opportunities for all students.

Teaching takes place in multi-purpose teaching spaces throughout the University, with additional specialist teaching and learning facilities for interpersonal skills development and experiential learning within the School. Some modules enable the students to work mainly as one year cohort of postgraduate students and others include some joint teaching sessions with student peers from the BA (Hons) Social Work. In such modules it is recognised that there are shared areas of knowledge that are appropriate to be taught jointly to students at the relevant stages of their progress through the BA and MA courses. Module leaders ensure separate sessions and learning materials are offered to MA students to enable assimilation and synthesis of knowledge at a deeper and more challenging level. Students are supported to develop skills of advanced scholarship in undertaking their research to complete assessments for these modules at master's level.

Teaching approaches include staff and/or practitioner led lectures (including podcasts) and workshops for skills development. Some teaching includes working with students from different professional disciplines to promote inter-disciplinary learning and good practice. The School also co-ordinates inter-professional learning workshops enabling students from a wide range of health and social care disciplines to work together on themes such as multi-disciplinary case management.

Thirty days for skills development are embedded throughout the curriculum. These include opportunities to develop a range of professional skills through experiential learning at appropriate levels highlighted in the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), in particular, readiness for first placement, readiness for final placement and transition to qualified practice. Most of the skills development sessions are undertaken alongside students on the undergraduate course. This is in recognition of the fact that the PCF is common to both BA and MA students and both cohorts of students are seeking to attain the same levels of capability as they progress through their courses. Social work practitioners and service users and carers work alongside academic tutors in developing students' practice skills against the PCF. Examples include activities to develop and assess communication and inter-personal skills, conflict and risk management, court and report writing skills. The role plays and activities involve scripted roles and are recorded. Ground rules are agreed and established early in the course, which emphasise the importance of mutual respect and support.

To develop self-directed learning, students are encouraged to participate in student-led seminars and presentations, as well as group work activities and action learning sets to promote shared learning, peer feedback and team working skills. Analytical skills and critical thinking are developed through reflective learning blogs and critical incident analyses as well as problem-based learning activities. Case study analysis and experiential learning are used to integrate theory and practice and to develop critical application of theory.

Interpersonal skills are central to social work practice and students are enabled to practise and develop their professional communication skills in preparation for practice and throughout the course up to qualifying level. Students are supported to self-evaluate their skills, to provide peer feedback and to respond to the constructive feedback of peers, tutors, service users and carers and Practice Educators. Electronic portfolios are widely used throughout the curriculum to demonstrate evidence of skills development, critical thinking and reflective learning. Multi-media sources are used to engage and support student learning in the classroom and in the virtual learning environment.

Your modules

This information is correct for students progressing through the programme within standard timescales. Option modules listed are indicative of a typical year. There may be some variance in the availability of option modules. 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, Full Time

Compulsory modules

Module title	Credits	Semester/ teaching period
Year 1		
Social Work with Adults	20	1
Social Work with Children and Young People	20	1
Understanding Social Work: Knowledge, Skills and Values for Practice	20	1
Modules of Intervention	20	2
Social Work Research	40	2
Practice Placement 1	20	Year-long
Year 2		
Social Work Law for Qualifying Practice	20	1
Social Work Research <i>continues</i>		1
Practice Placement 2	20	2
Number of credits of compulsory modules	180	

Option modules

Module title	Credits	Semester/ teaching period
<i>Open Learning*</i>	20	2
Number of credits of option modules a student could choose	20	

* Students can opt to undertake the Open Learning modules if the Practice Placement 2 module is failed, in order to be able to achieve the non-professional MA Social Studies contained award.

Level 7, Part Time

Module title	Credits	Semester/ teaching period
Year 1		
Understanding Social Work: Knowledge, Skills and Values for Practice	20	1
Social Work with Children and Young People <i>or</i> Social Work with Adults	20	1
Models of Intervention	20	2
Year 2		
Social Work with Adults <i>or</i> Social Work with Children and Young People	20	1
Social Work Research	40	2
Practice Placement 1	20	Year-long
Year 3		
Social Work Research <i>continues</i>		1
Social Work Law and Qualifying Practice	20	1
Practice Placement 2	20	2
Number of credits of compulsory modules	180	

Option modules

Module title	Credits	Semester/ teaching period
<i>Open Learning*</i>	20	2
Number of credits of option modules a student could choose	20	

* Students can opt to undertake the Open Learning modules if the Practice Placement 2 module is failed, in order to be able to achieve the non-professional MA Social Studies contained award.

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

Level 7

This course is assessed mainly by coursework, with two examinations (timed online assessments), practical assessments and a dissertation. Placement experiences are assessed.

Workload

Overall Workload	Level 7
Teaching, learning and assessment	412 hours
Independent study	1167 hours
Placement	1275 hours