

These programme regulations should be read in conjunction with the University's [core regulations for postgraduate programmes](#), and the [marking and classification conventions for postgraduate programmes](#).

Master of Social Work (L5K480)

1. Location: Durham City
2. Duration: 21 months (full-time).
3. There will be no intake on this programme in either the 2026/27 or 2027/28 academic years.

Admissions

4. Before admissions, candidates must be interviewed and satisfy the Admissions Tutor that they are fit to attend the programme.

Programme structure – Year 1

5. Candidates shall study and be assessed in the following modules:

		Credit value
Social Work in Practice # ~ *	SOCI42040	40
Social Work in Context # ~ *	SOCI41940	40
Professional and Personal Development # *	SOCI43030	30
Social Work Practice 1 # ~ *	SOCI42150	50

Programme structure – Year 2

6. Candidates shall study and be assessed in the following modules:

		Credit value
Research in Social Work ~	SOCI40345	45
Advanced Social Work ~	SOCI42230	30
Social Work Practice 2 ~	SOCI42370	70

Assessment, progression and award

7. Modes of assessment include long essays, individual and group presentations, a law exercise, reports, and case studies.
8. As part of Social Work Practice 1 and 2, students will be required to undertake in each module respectively a 70- and 100-day supervised Social Work Practice Learning Opportunity and meet the Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Work at appropriate levels in order to be awarded the Master of Social Work and be eligible to apply for registration as a social worker with Social Work England. Students must pass this element in order to be eligible to apply for registration with Social Work England.
9. Students are required to attend practice modules between the dates specified in their learning agreement, including any associated teaching. A student's performance in either Social Work Practice 1 or 2 will not be deemed satisfactory if attendance falls below the total number of days for each.
10. Modules marked with # must normally be passed at 50% in order to progress to the next year.
11. Students will be required to pass the Readiness for Direct Practice Assessment of Professional and Personal Development prior to commencing Social Work Practice 1.
12. A student who fails to satisfy the Board of Examiners in either Social Work Practice 1 or 2 may, at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, be permitted either an extension to that module, or to repeat the module (at a time and location approved by the Programme Director).
13. Candidates must submit a dissertation (a component of the module Research in Social Work SOCI 40345) of not more than 10,000 words (including footnotes and endnotes but excluding the abstract, bibliography and appendices), by a date during the final term to be specified by the Programme Director. The overall mark for this module (comprising all components of assessment)

should be that taken into account when determining the award of distinction in line with the core regulations for Taught Masters Programmes.

14. Modules marked with ~ must be passed at 50% or above; a mark of 40-49% cannot be compensated.
15. Candidates who fail to satisfy all requirements for the Master of Social Work but who have achieved 180 credits including 'Research in Social Work' will be awarded an MA Social Work Studies (without eligibility to apply for registration as a Social Worker) as an exit award.
16. Candidates who fail to satisfy all requirements for the Master of Social Work but who have achieved a minimum of 120 credits will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Studies (without eligibility to apply for registration as a Social Worker) as an exit award.
17. Candidates who fail to satisfy all requirements for the Master of Social Work but who have achieved a minimum of 60 credits will be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate in Social Work Studies (without eligibility to apply for registration as a Social Worker) as an exit award.

Professional approval and standards

18. This programme is approved by Social Work England. In line with the Standards of Education and Training, the Programme will appoint one external examiner to the programme who will be registered with Social Work England as a Social Worker unless other arrangements are agreed.
19. Social Work England sets Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics to which students are required to adhere. These standards are included within the programme handbook and available from the Social Work England website <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/>. Where concerns are raised in relation to a student's conduct, performance or ethics, these should be submitted to the Programme Director in the form of a written report. The Programme Director will investigate the issue gathering any additional evidence if required and instigate one of the following processes as appropriate to the findings. Where appropriate a medical opinion may be sought via the University's Occupational Health Service.
 - a. If in the judgement of the Programme Director the evidence does not immediately raise serious concerns regarding the student's fitness to practise safely and effectively but justifies further consideration, the student will be invited to meet with the Programme Director to respond to the issues raised. A written record of this meeting will be made and a copy retained on the student's personal file. The potential outcomes of this meeting are:
 - i. That concerns are unfounded and no further action is required;
 - ii. That a professional development need is identified which the student may be required to address in their Reflective account of developing professional skills as part of Professional and Personal Development (Year 1) or, in Year 2, as an addendum to the Practice Report (where concerns are related to the practice placement) or as a stand-alone exercise;
 - iii. That concerns are sufficiently serious to require that a formal panel be convened to consider the matter further.
 - b. If in the judgement of the Programme Director the evidence suggests a major disciplinary offence under the University's Core regulations, the appropriate regulations will be followed.
 - c. If in the judgement of the Programme Director the evidence raises serious concerns regarding the student's fitness to practise safely and effectively, a formal panel will be convened according to the following process:
 - i. Where appropriate, the Practice Learning Co-ordinator may concurrently be asked to suspend the placement pending the outcome of the investigation. The membership of the Panel will be as follows:
 1. Programme Director (Chair)
 2. Chair of Practice Assessment Sub-Board
 3. An appointed member of the Exam Board for the Master of Social Work
 4. A representative of a partner agency.

5. Where concerns have been identified by the Programme Director, an appropriate deputy will be appointed from within the Board of Studies. Where concerns link to practice, the agency representative will be drawn from a partner agency other than one where the student is or has been placed.
- ii. The student will be written to normally giving a minimum of five working days' notice, explaining the purpose of the meeting and providing a written account of the nature of the allegations and concerns. The student will be advised of their right to be accompanied by a member of the Durham University community (e.g. an officer of the student's college or a member of staff from his/her Department or the DSU Advice Centre).
 - iii. At the meeting, the student must be asked to respond to the allegations.
 - iv. If the student fails to attend, the Panel may proceed in the student's absence provided that it is satisfied that failure to attend represents refusal to do so.
 - v. The Chair of the Panel is responsible for ensuring that a written record of the Panel meeting is made to be kept on the student's personal file.
 - vi. In the light of the evidence, the Panel must come to a view as to whether the student is judged to be not fit to practise safely and effectively. The Panel may recommend one of the following outcomes:
 1. that concerns are unfounded and that no further actions are required;
 2. that the student is not fit to practise safely and effectively and should be required to withdraw from the programme.
 - vii. If the student is judged to be not fit to practise safely and effectively, the Programme Director will take action to withdraw the student's registration with the University. The student will be advised of the decision in writing and advised that they may appeal this decision in accordance with the Academic Appeals Regulations contained within Section VII of the General Regulations.