

Postgraduate Programme Specification

MSc Social Work

This specification provides a summary of the main features of the programme and learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate where full advantage is taken of all learning opportunities offered. Further details on the learning, teaching and assessment approach for the programme and modules can be accessed on the University website and Virtual Learning Environment, GCU Learn. All programmes of the University are subject to the University's [Quality Assurance](#) processes.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION			
Programme Title	MSc Social Work		
Final Award	Master of Science in Social Work		
Awarding Body	Glasgow Caledonian University		
School	School of Health and Life Sciences		
Department	Social Work		
Mode of Study	Full-time		
Location of Delivery	Glasgow Campus		
UCAS Code	L508		
Accreditations (PSRB)	Scottish Social Services Council		
Period of Approval	From:	September 2025	To: August 2030

2. EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF PROGRAMME
The overall aim of the MSc Social Work programme is to educate students as partners in the development of knowledge, skills and values to become confident, research-informed, problem-solving graduates who can make a positive contribution to society. The MSc in Social Work aims to develop students' intellectual and practical abilities to enable them to perform as confident practitioners and researchers. Critical thinking skills are key to this and are facilitated by providing sound academic challenges. Students are encouraged to explore these challenges creatively, through self-reflection and analysis of contemporary research and theoretical concepts. This underpinning framework allows students to move into professional practice or research with a deep and relevant body of knowledge, skills and values which prepare them to face the challenges of twenty-first century social work as autonomous and critically reflective social work practitioners. The programme is regulated by the Scottish Social Services Council and meets the professional requirements for social work education in Scotland. Graduates of the programme are eligible for registration with the Scottish Social Services Council as a qualified social work practitioner.

3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

A: Knowledge and understanding;

- A1 The role and functions of a professional social worker
- A2 Social work theory, concepts, values and ethics
- A3 Theoretical and empirical forms of knowledge that underpin practice
- A4 The interface of social work with other services
- A5 Processes that lead to marginalisation, isolation, disadvantage, injustice and exclusion
- A6 The impact of health and wellbeing issues upon the lives of individuals
- A7 The process and application of law and policy within a social work context
- A8 The lived experience of service recipients and carers
- A9 Assessment, intervention and planning
- A10 The complex relationship between justice, care and control
- A11 The nature of professional judgement, decision-making and risk assessment

B: Practice: Applied knowledge, skills and understanding;

- B1 Communication skills
- B2 Assessment, intervention and planning
- B3 Ethical management of information and data protection legislation and processes
- B4 Relational skills in working with clients, teams, other professionals and communities
- B5 Psychological, sociological and physiological theories of development
- B6 Applied research skills
- B7 Undertaking an extended research project

C: Generic cognitive skills;

- C1 Critical thinking, analytical thinking and problem solving
- C2 Intellectual skills commensurate with level of education and qualification
- C3 Analysis and interpretation of complex and diverse forms of information / knowledge
- C4 Capacity to make judgements and assess risk where information / knowledge is limited
- C5 Innovation and creativity in dealing with professional issues
- C6 Critical reflection on practice and the intended and unintended consequences of actions

D: Communication, numeracy and ICT skills

- D1 Communication skills (written and verbal)
- D2 Digital literacy and the use of ICT to support social work practice
- D3 Basic statistical, resource management and budgetary procedures and techniques
- D4 Management, presentation and dissemination of information
- D5 Analysis of diverse sources of written and numerical information
- D6 Inter-professional communication

E: Autonomy, accountability and working with others.

- E1 Practice as an autonomous, evidence informed practitioner
- E2 Accountability and transparency for own professional actions
- E3 Share knowledge and understanding with other professionals
- E4 Promote and safeguard the welfare and wellbeing of others
- E5 Recognise and manage complex tensions in intra/interpersonal relationships
- E6 Ensure that social work principles, codes of practice, ethics and values are applied

4. LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS

The programme provides a variety of learning and teaching methods. Programme and Module specific guidance will provide detail of the learning and teaching methods specific to each module.

Across the programme the learning and teaching methods and approaches may include the following:

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Practical classes
- Placements
- Simulation experiences
- Groupwork
- Flipped classroom approaches
- Online learning

The above approaches may be delivered either in person or online as appropriate and determined at module level by the Module Leader.

5. ASSESSMENT METHODS

The programme provides a variety of formative and summative assessment methods. Programme and Module specific guidance will provide detail of the assessment methods specific to each module.

Across the programme the assessment methods may include the following:

- Written coursework (essays, reports, case studies, dissertation, literature review)
- Oral coursework (presentations, structured conversations)
- Practical Assessment (Placement, VIVA)
- Group work
- Blogs and Wikis
- Portfolio Presentations
- Formal Examinations and Class Tests

The above assessments may be delivered either in person and online as appropriate and determined at module level by the Module Leader.

6. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Specific entry requirements for this programme can be found on the prospectus and study pages on the GCU website at this location: www.gcu.ac.uk/study

The Course webpage specific to this Programme is:

All students entering the programme are required to adhere to the [GCU Code of Student Conduct](#).

7. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND AVAILABLE AND FINAL EXIT AWARDS¹

The following modules are delivered as part of this programme:

[illegible]

¹ Periodically, programmes and modules may be subject to change or cancellation. Further information on this can be found on the GCU website here: www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/essentials/policiesandprocedures/changesandcancellationtoprogrammes

Students undertaking the programme on a full-time basis commencing in September of each year will undertake the modules in the order presented above. This may be subject to variation for students commencing the programme at other times of year (e.g. January) and/or undertaking the programme on a part-time or distance learning mode of delivery.

The following final and early Exit Awards are available from this programme²:

Postgraduate Certificate (Health and Social Care) - *achieved upon successful completion of 60 credits (excluding the Dissertation / Practice Placement modules)*

Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work - *achieved upon successful completion of 165 credits which must include the modules asterisked above*

Master of Science in Social Work - *achieved upon successful completion of 225 credits which must include all of the modules above.*

Both the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work and Master of Science in Social Work are qualifying awards that entitle registration with the SSSC as a qualified social worker.

8. ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

Students should expect to complete their programme of study under the GCU Assessment Regulations that were in place at the commencement of their studies on that programme, unless proposed changes to University Regulations are advantageous to students. These can be found at: <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/supportservices/qualityassuranceandenhancement/regulations-and-policies>

In addition to the GCU Assessment Regulations noted above, this programme is subject to Programme Specific Regulations in line with the following approved Exceptions:

Case No: 207

Details: University Assessment Regulations apply except where there is a documented exception approved by the University Exceptions Committee. The Programme Specific Regulations override the University's standard Taught Postgraduate Assessment Regulations.

Case No: 248

² Please refer to the [GCU Qualifications Framework](#) for the minimum credits required for each level of award and the Programme Handbook for requirements on any specified or prohibited module combinations for each award.

Details: Fit to Sit Policy – Section 1 (Fit to Sit), Page 4. Placement modules SDP1 and SDP2 are exempt from the Fit to Sit declaration process. This exemption applies to the assessments undertaken during the placements and does not apply to the academic assessment components.

All Practice Based Learning Modules must be passed including Elective Placements where offered. For Practice Based Learning Module assessments which consist of a practice component and a written component, both components must be passed in order to successfully complete any Practice Based Learning module.

For Practice Based Learning Modules only two attempts are permitted.

1. Students are expected to attend Practice Based Learning 100% of the time allocated. If a student misses up to 20 % (continuous or accumulated time) of a Practice Based Learning Placement, he/she is required to make up the time missed. How and when this time will be made up is at the discretion of the Programme of study.
2. Students who miss more than 20% (continuous or accumulated time) or more of a placement within AHP Pre- registration programmes will be deemed to have failed the placement and will be required to re-enter the placement as second attempt, at a time to be arranged by the Department.
3. If a student is absent from more than 20% of a placement on health grounds, then the placement will normally be considered void and the student permitted to re- enter at first attempt. (NB. evidence of health status will still be required to be submitted to the next relevant MITS board).
4. Completion of a Mitigating Circumstances form with supporting Medical and/or Personal documentation must be submitted as per the University Assessment Regulation before a placement may be considered void.
5. A student who fails/voids Practice Based Learning Module(s) will be required to re-enter these modules either during the students' summer recess, the next available opportunity within the teaching schedule or as an attached student, as determined by the next scheduled Programme Assessment Board. The specific dates will be determined by placement availability.
6. A student must satisfactorily complete all requirements laid down by Professional and Statutory bodies in relation to Practice Based Learning e.g. number of placement days, hours (as specified in the Programme Handbook). Failure to do so will require additional placements to be undertaken.

VERSION CONTROL (to be completed in line with AQPP processes)**Any changes to the PSP must be recorded below by the programme team to ensure accuracy of the programme of study being offered.**

<i>Version Number</i>	<i>Changes/Updates</i>	<i>Date Changes/Updates made</i>	<i>Date Effective From</i>
1.0			