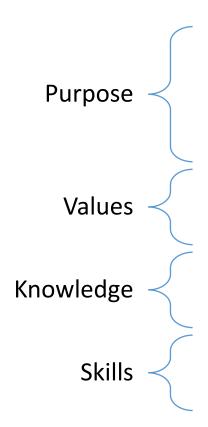


Global definition of social work



- a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people.
- Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central.
- Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge
- social work engages with people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.

https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/

Foundations for Social Work Practice

Knowledge

 Knowing what you are supposed to do

Skills

 Your ability to do it – putting knowledge into practice

Values

The way you do it

Process

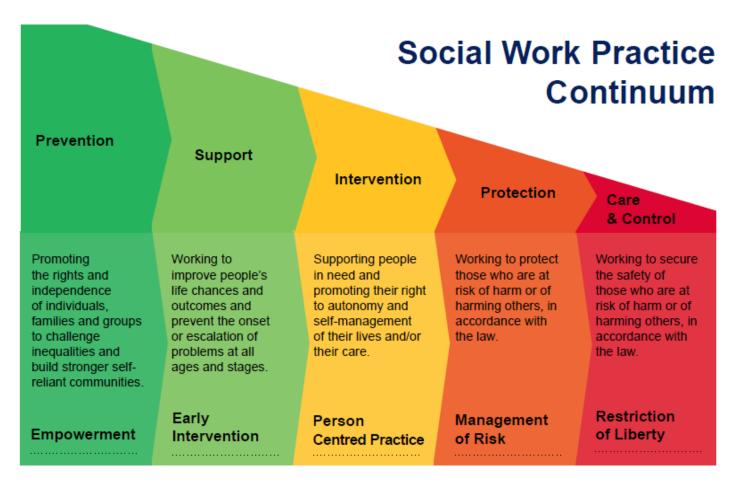
 The actions you take & procedures you follow to achieve a particular aim

What do social workers do?

- Work with individuals, families and groups facing challenges; help and enable them to find solutions to the problems they face
- A key part of government and society's efforts to manage and control social problems
- Safeguard vulnerable adults and children from harm
- Need to be able to:
 - communicate with children and adults,
 - build effective relationships,
 - make decisions in a context of risk & uncertainty







Department of Health, The Purpose of Social Work

The Social Work Process



The ASPIRE Model

Sutton (1994)



Watch: Changing Lives
- the Vital Role of
Social Workers in
Children's Services in
Northern Ireland

NISCC YouTube channel



Different

Individuals

Valuing

Each other

Regardless of

Skin

Intellect

Talents or

Years

NISCC Standards of Conduct & Practice for Social Work Students (2019)

Social work students must:

- Respect the rights, dignity and inherent worth of individuals
- Work in a person-centred way
- Treat people respectfully and with compassion
- Support and promote the independence and autonomy of service users
- Act in the best interests of service users and carers
- Uphold and promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Ensure the care they provide is safe and effective and of a high quality.

The social work curriculum



Understanding people

Understanding how to help

Understanding society and contexts

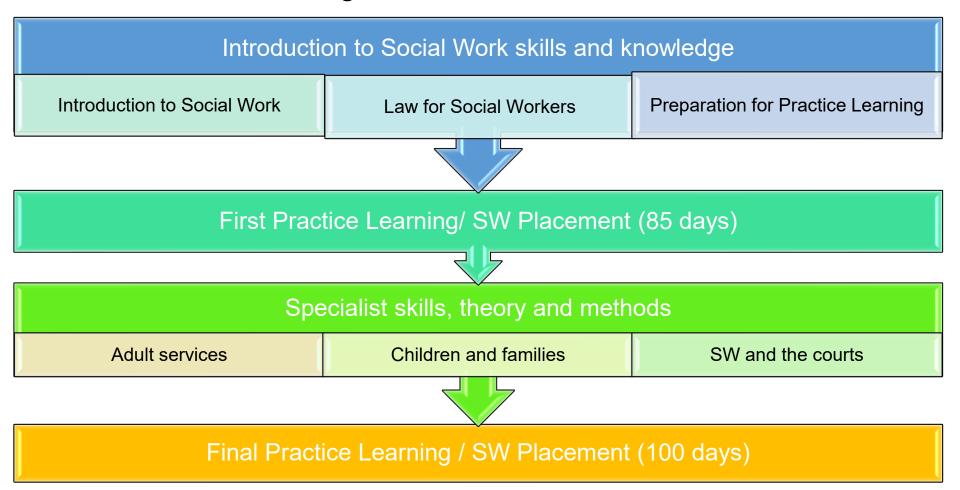
Practice Learning Opportunities

The BSW Degree Programme

- It is wisely and sensibly a generic initial qualifying programme focussed on the development of core social work professional competencies and identity whilst also introducing students to the knowledge base across the spectrum of social work roles and activities.
- It provides the opportunity for students to decide across the range of social work employment where they might want to work and keeps open the opportunity to have a varied career within social work.
- Jones, R. (2023) The NI Review of Children's Social Care Services Report



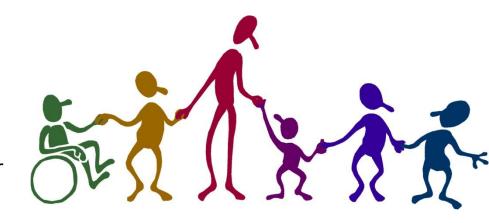
How it is Taught? 2 Year Relevant Graduate Route



Practice Learning Opportunities / Placements

1st = 85 days & 2nd =100 days

- Direct work with service users / carers
- Statutory and voluntary sector agencies
- Range of settings
- Supervised/Assessed by Practice Teacher
- Regional allocation process





Typical Social Work Placements

- Children and families in need (e.g. Gateway, LAC, FSIT, fostering)
- Children or adults with mental ill health (CAMHS, CMHT)
- Children or adults with an illness/physical disability
- Children / adults with a learning disability
- Individuals dealing with addictions or homelessness
- Older people (integrated care teams or memory services)
- Youth Justice, Criminal Justice or Probation Board
- Education Authority
- https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6MjHoVkPFvIYuE0Ha5cl e4JuhPgN0fn8





What You Do on Placement?

- Carry out statutory social work tasks
- Work in two different settings
- Complete the social work process with two different service user groups
- Work with at least two other professionals
- Experience the scope and purpose of social work in a contested society
- Participate in formal decision making forums
- Participate and present evidence to courts, tribunals or other formal hearings*
- Group care & community development







SOCIAL WORK AT QUEEN'S

High ranking in Social Work League Tables

- 1st in the UK, Complete University Guide 2026
- 2nd in the UK, *Times & Sunday Times Good University Guide 2026*
- 9th in the UK, Daily Mail University Guide 2026
- =10th in the UK, Guardian University Guide 2026
- Belfast-based teaching with excellent library and accommodation facilities
- QUB is part of the Russell Group
- Highly motivated and committed Social Work staff team
 - All academic staff have Social Work and PG Teaching Qualifications
 - All academic staff have PhDs (or close to completion) and are research active

What Can You Expect from a Social Work Career?

- Excellent employment opportunities in a Health & Social Care Trust, voluntary sector organisations (i.e. Extern, Barnardos), Education Authority, Youth Justice, Probation or criminal justice.
- Opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- A professional qualification enabling you to work across the life span (i.e. birth to death).
- Starting salary at Band 5 (AfC £24,214 £30,112).
- Progressing to Band 6 after completing the Assessed Year in Employment (AYE) (AfC £30,401 - £37,267).
- Working in a challenging, exciting, yet fulfilling profession...with excellent promotion opportunities.
- Access to an excellent range of post-qualifying courses.





A Career Offering Diversity



Service User Groups



Organisations/Sectors
(Public, voluntary, private, self-employed)



Settings

(Fieldwork, hospital, residential, day care, family centre, etc.)



Roles and tasks

Employability: Career Prospects



 96% of QUB graduates are in employment or further study within 6 months of graduating!

 Graduate prospects: 6th in UK for social work (Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2025)

 Career Prospects: Social Work is 5th in the UK (Guardian University Guide 2026)



THE SOCIAL WORK STUDENT EXPERIENCE:

KATIE-ANN



Social work education in Northern Ireland

- Professor Ray Jones' review of children's social care NI noted that:
- social work students spoke positively about their degree programmes and the commitment of the staff who provide the programmes.
- The quality and commitment of qualifying students entering social work should bode well for the future.
- University staff have a strong track record of research and publication enhancing social work's knowledge base.

• Jones, R. (2023) The NI Review of Children's Social Care Services Report

Social Work Incentive Scheme

- The NI Department of Health (DoH) currently offers a Social Work Student Incentive Scheme to help with the costs associated with completing the Degree in Social Work in NI
- Applicants to the DoH Social Work Student Incentive Scheme must be:
 - ➤ordinarily domiciled in Northern Ireland
 - registered on the Social Work Student part of the NISCC Register
- Successful applicants to the Student Incentive Scheme receive an annual payment of £4,000 and an allowance of £500 towards travel costs associated with practice placements.
- Social Work Student Incentive Scheme payments are made by way of two instalments in students' bank accounts in December and March of each year.

NB: All Health and Social Care Student Incentive Schemes may be subject to review and change at short notice.



Regional Selection Process

Application

Submit UCAS application

Screened for eligibility based on academic entry requirements

Prompted to complete / return Consent and Declaration

All eligible candidates invited to interview

Interview

- In-person interview on campus at Queens
- Interviewed by 1 academic & 1 agency SW
- 4 questions
 - question on case scenario
 - questions to prompt you to draw on your experience (i.e. life, paid, voluntary, social work related) and show your understanding of the knowledge, skills, and values important to social work.
- Can have one interview shared with UU
- Interviews early-February to end-March 2026

Top Tips for Interview

- Listen to the question carefully and answer it fully.
- Draw on learning from your current or past studies e.g. psychology, sociology, law, health & social care.
- Comparison on learning from employment or volunteering use these to illustrate your knowledge and skills
- Consider how your life experiences are relevant for social work (anonymously)
- Demonstrate understanding of the social worker's role
- Consider the importance of social work values and standards of conduct
- Think about current social issues and some of the challenges people face.

Is social work the career for you?

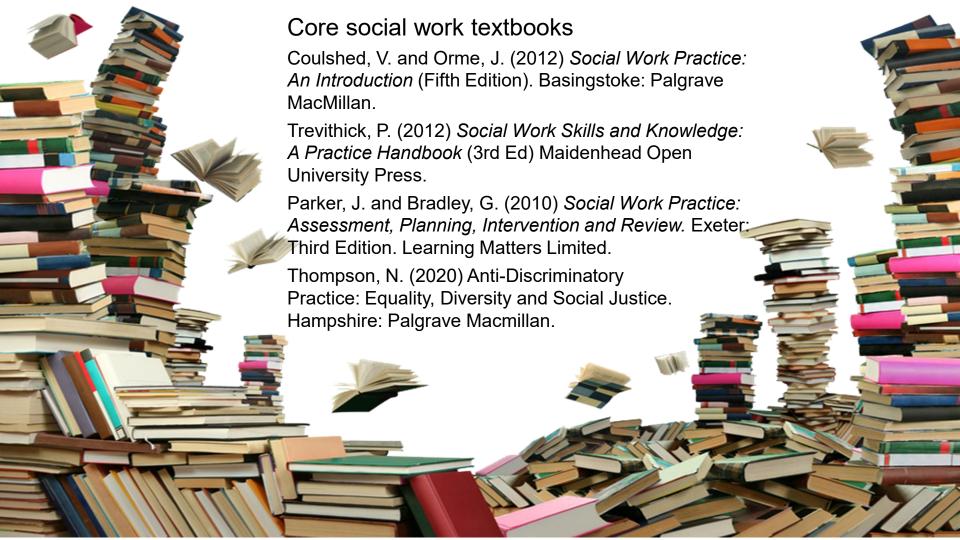
- RGR route relevant degree
- Previous experience <u>not</u> required
- Feel motivated to 'help' or 'empower' people
- Have insight into social care/social work
- Value diversity & want to promote social justice

ADVICE TO APPLICANTS

- Find out about what social workers do, what skills they use, their standards of conduct and values, and how they make important decisions
- Undertake voluntary work through voluntary organisations in the community, your school or church – it will be useful to refer to this during your response to interview questions
- Visit NISCC Learning Zone to find out more about social work







Getting ready...

- Queens Course Finder webpages:
 - BSW Relevant Graduate Route: https://www.qub.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/social-work-relevant-degree-entry-bsw-l501/
 - BSW Undergraduate Route: https://www.qub.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/social-work-bsw-l500/
- Visit NI Social Care Council's learning zone/resources for SW: <u>Social Work NISCC</u> <u>Learning Zone</u>
- Department of Health, (2017) The Purpose of Social Work: Improving and Safeguarding Social Wellbeing: https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/swswb.PDF
- Western Health and Social Care Trust (2022) So You Think You Want to be a Social Worker? https://learningzone.niscc.info/app/uploads/2023/02/So-You-Think-You-Want-to-be-a-Social-Worker.pdf
- NISCC (2019) Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Work Students: <u>Standards</u> and <u>Guidance</u> - <u>NISCC</u>

ANY QUESTIONS?



