

Social Worker

Degree Apprenticeship



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mmu.ac.uk/apprenticeships

Award-winning Degree Apprenticeships

Manchester Metropolitan University is one of the most popular universities in the UK, currently educating over 39,000* students. The University takes its responsibility for creating work-ready graduates very seriously and maintains close industry and sector links.

Our degree apprenticeships are practice-focused. They equip our apprentices with the skills to ensure they are ready to take on the industrial challenges of tomorrow and make their mark. We develop our courses in partnership with employers, to meet the needs of social care providers and individuals.

As pioneers of degree apprenticeships, we have become industry leaders, allowing us to build unrivalled partnerships with some of the UK's largest employers and innovative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)



* HESA data 2020/21, includes students on distance learning and accredited courses at partner institutions.

2,400
apprentices
on 18 programmes

**Top university
in the UK**
for degree apprenticeships

RateMyApprenticeship
Awards 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022

92%

merit or distinction
at EPA in 2022

110+

apprentices
recognised
at regional and
national awards

Winner
**University
of the Year**
at the Multicultural
Apprenticeship Awards 2022

540+
Employer
partners

★ Rated ★
'Outstanding'

by Ofsted 2018 and 2022

**Training Provider
of the Year**
North West Apprenticeship
Awards 2023

About the programme

Social worker degree apprenticeship

Designed in conjunction with employers and delivered by University academics, this course blends academic thinking and best practice from the field to allow degree apprentices to directly experience the ways in which theory can be applied to every-day decision making.

Social Worker degree apprentices will benefit from inter-professional best practice and cutting-edge academic thinking, within an environment that gives first-hand exposure to the ways in which theory can be applied to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities and encourage social change.

Features and benefits

This is a rigorous and fast-track route to developing registered social workers already placed within an organisation. Additional benefits include:

- A package of study and work that attracts and retains enthusiastic and talented employees in this rapidly developing area of skills shortages.
- The ability for employers to select the most appropriate candidates for their needs.
- The opportunity for current employees to develop their skills and become registered social workers.
- Utilise government funding to prepare new and current staff for a significant future within their organisation.
- A course developed with input from regional and national stakeholders.

The qualification

All successful graduates are awarded a BA (Hons) Social Work degree from Manchester Met University, as well as a Level 6 apprenticeship qualification approved by Social Work England.

Graduates can apply to become registered social workers.

Who is the course for?

The course is only open to those already employed by a statutory or non-statutory agency, if the organisation can provide the experience and support to train an apprentice to be a fully qualified social worker.

Typically candidates will be involved in delivering direct services and will have the potential to take on greater responsibility and challenges as qualified social workers.

The employer has the responsibility to ensure that apprentices have the opportunity to engage in contrasted learning across the wider organisation, in order to complete statutory tasks.

Core skills, knowledge and behaviours

This programme prepares participants for the challenging, complex and rewarding world of social work. It explores the role of social workers within the context of people, society and ethics, to develop confident social work professionals. It builds resilience, encourages problem-solving, and embeds a collaborative approach to improving peoples' lives.

Core skills and knowledge

Apprentices will develop a variety of core skills and knowledge, in the areas of:

- Professional values and ethics.
- Views of people who use services, carers, their families and communities.
- Evidence-based decision making and analysis.
- Personal and professional development.
- Safe professional practice and safeguarding.
- Communication.
- Working with others.
- Recording and reporting.
- Use of technology.

Core behaviours

Social workers:

- Communicate openly, honestly and accurately. They listen to people and apply professional curiosity to evaluate and assess what information they need to gather, to provide quality advice, support or care.
- Treat people with compassion, dignity and respect and work together to empower positive change.
- Adapt their approach according to the situation and context.
- Commit to continuous learning within social work, with curiosity and critical reflection.
- Adhere to the HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics.
- Adhere to the Social Work England Standards of Conduct.



Success stories

The degree apprenticeship experience

Having lecturers who are extremely knowledgeable and approachable puts you at great ease to access the support that you require. There is always somewhere that you can find out the information that you need through the teaching staff, Library and IT department.

The most enjoyable part of the course is getting to know my peers. Working with people and communicating effectively is an integral part of social work. Lecturers put you outside of your comfort zone through discussions, debates and role plays. We have discovered that by having a supportive peer group you feel comfortable to work together to challenge and critique theories and research more effectively.

The most challenging aspect is having the time to read and update your knowledge in between work and study. It is important that you organise yourself and make time and space for this aspect of the course.

The aspect of new technology can also be intimidating so utilising the support from IT is important, being open to trying new things and having a proactive mindset will stand you in good stead.


Learning at Manchester Met

I have found just how adaptable the teaching staff are. Things have had to change a lot over the past few months, but the level of teaching has not been affected. We have had to become accustomed to new technology which everyone has adapted well to.

The staff are always on hand to support and advise. I love the different ways of learning, such as debates, roleplays, group work and research.

The support from the University has been fantastic, they make themselves available to you, they encourage you to develop your skills and point you in the right direction.

The library has been a fantastic resource and offered support and guidance that has been invaluable.



“This was a fantastic opportunity for me to utilise my years of social care experience to progress to be a qualified social worker. You don’t get many opportunities to continue to work and study at the same time.”

Career progression opportunities

Being part of the apprenticeship, I feel much more secure in my future career progression. My authority has invested in me and therefore it encourages me to want to utilise the new skills and knowledge I have to support the individuals I will work with.

My role has changed considerably within my 13 years as a support worker. It has adapted to the changes both within the community and within legislation. The needs of looked after children change with the demographics of that community, therefore you have to improve your knowledge and skills to work with them effectively.

I have been offered numerous opportunities to enhance my skills and knowledge to ensure that I have been able to support individuals the best way I can.

Would you recommend degree apprenticeships?

Absolutely. Being in practice has supported me to implement what I am learning right away. Being a visual learner, this supports me in making sense of the methods and approaches.

Kerry Hewart

Social Worker degree apprentice at Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

Creating a supportive environment

In order to create an environment where apprentices will be able to achieve successful outcomes, both academically and within their organisations, the University has put in place a wide range of support.

Apprentices

Dedicated skills coach

A dedicated Skills Coach will conduct termly reviews with the apprentice and employer, advise on University regulations and procedures, and provide pastoral support. Our Social Worker skills coaches are all experienced social workers and practice educators.

Personal learning plan

Where additional learning support requirements are identified, they will be met through a Personal Learning Plan.

University services

Full access to University services – including disability services, wellbeing, the library, IT services and sports facilities.

Online study environment

Our course is designed to support learners who live and work outside of the north-west. Study materials can be accessed 24/7 via our online study environment, Moodle. Moodle enables apprentices to access reading lists, download journal articles, contribute to online discussion groups, email tutors, listen to podcasts and submit assignments.

Cutting-edge facilities

The Faculty of Health and Education is based in the state-of-the-art and award-winning £139m Brooks building.

Inside the Brooks building are outstanding specialist facilities across all areas of health, psychology, social care, and education. To give apprentices as broad a range of experiences as possible, we organise practical simulations in 'The Flat' (our specialist space that represents a community flat) and our home and hospital suites.

University Library

The main University Library is located on the All Saints Campus and is open 24/7 during the academic year.

The Library provides access to a wide range of books, texts, journals, and business information and statistics. It also runs a number of workshops for mature students on study and research skills.

Many of the Library's resources are available online. For example, apprentices can search the Library catalogue, renew and reserve books, and download journal articles and research information.

Employers, line managers and mentors

Apprenticeships team support

The Manchester Met Apprenticeships Team is available to support employers throughout the apprenticeships process, including:

- Holding meetings with staff and managers to understand operational challenges and training needs.
- A dedicated account manager, providing a single point of contact with the University.
- Working in partnership to tailor content and delivery.
- Sending regular reports of apprentice progress.

Progress reviews

Line managers and mentors are supported through regular progress reviews to set, monitor and evaluate objectives and targets.

Delivery and structure

The 30-month apprenticeship will see apprentices split their time between study at University and the workplace. Apprentices will be given opportunities throughout the course to further develop their knowledge and practise their skills.

Delivery

The course, delivered over 30 months, has an inclusive, flexible and blended learning approach. Typically, one day each week is spent on the acquisition and application of new knowledge, skills and behaviours. The course utilises a variety of teaching and learning approaches and includes face-to-face lectures, seminars, action learning, practice simulation, skills-based work and digitised e-learning.

Assessment

Assessments have been developed with key stakeholders, including experts by experience, carers and employers. Assessment tasks can include case studies, exams, written work, presentations and work-based projects. They are designed to be creative and flexible, often based on work that the apprentice is doing in their job role. Apprentices are mentored throughout their studies with dedicated and personalised support from work-based mentors, academic staff and Skills Coaches.

“In Bolton we wanted to offer our social care practitioners the chance to access social work training alongside practice development opportunities. The Social Work Degree Apprenticeship at Manchester Met has enabled us to provide a career structure into social work embracing the ‘Grow your own’ culture and ethos.”

The support our Social Work apprentices have received from the enhanced skills coach, Derek, has been amazing and has provided a constant link between the university and practice. We are now advertising for our fourth cohort and have enjoyed a positive, productive and collaborative relationship with Manchester Met. I hope we will have many more years of working together ahead of us.”

Lisa Cassidy
Social Work Learning and Development Lead
Bolton Council



Unit overviews



Year 1 units

Social work, social justice and lived experiences

An introduction to social work within the context of our understanding of contemporary society and social justice. The unit focuses on the lived experiences of those in contact with social workers.

Strengthening relationships and wellbeing

This unit introduces the apprentice to the knowledge and skills required in social work to build and sustain effective relationships and interventions with service users, carers and interdisciplinary professionals. It builds on and tests understanding of human development, behaviour and interaction, and the principles of holistic wellbeing and resilience.

Society, welfare and global inequalities

This unit introduces apprentices to the historical and contemporary context of social work in relation to Global and British models of welfare, theories of power and society, and social and health inequalities. Apprentices will explore key sociological theories that social workers use to support their analysis of the social experiences of individuals, families and communities.

Ethical practice for professional social work

This unit supports the apprentice to develop knowledge and application of values and ethics relating to defined standards of practice, including knowledge of key philosophies, development of professional skills, awareness of inter-disciplinary contexts and readiness for practice.

Year 2 units

Law, rights and safeguarding

Introduction to the legislation, policy, rights and inter-disciplinary practice required to safeguard adults and children.

Aspire: knowledge and skills in practice

The Aspire module is designed to enable apprentices to consolidate and further develop their practice with service users, families and carers working in professional contexts. There is a taught element to the Unit, which will develop apprentices' skills in assessment practice, analysis, planning intervention, and review and evaluation.

Journeys through the life-course: social work practice and police

Exploration of key contemporary issues faced by service users and carers across the child and adult 'journey' through the life course.

Critical theory for social work practice

A critical introduction to a range of social and psychological theories that underpin and support social work analysis and decision-making.

Applied skills and methods for social work practice

This unit will focus on the critical application of skills and methods required by social workers based upon the requirements of employers and reflects the contemporary evidence base for practice.

Year 3 units

Applied social research and evaluation for practice

Understanding and application of principles and methods of social research and evaluation, linking this to direct social work practice and organisational delivery. Apprentices will use their developing knowledge and skills to make sense of and interpret potentially complex and sometimes conflicting findings.

Critical and international perspectives in social work

An advanced critical exploration of perspectives, theories, research and contemporary debates within chosen practice pathways (e.g. children and families, adult services, mental health).

Applying law, safeguarding and inter-disciplinary approaches in practice (apprenticeship)

Apprentices focus on developing and evidencing the professional skills required at qualifying level, including integrating and applying understanding of legal frameworks and procedures, working with greater complexity, safeguarding. Apprentices are supported to prepare for the integrated end-point assessment, which is delivered as part of this unit.

End-point assessment (EPA)

The EPA requires the apprentice to demonstrate advanced practice skills in assessment, analysis, planning, intervention, review and evaluation in their work setting. Prior to taking the EPA participants must have completed 300 academic credits of the Social Work degree, have completed assessed work experience in two contrasting settings, and achieved other specified criteria i.e. be able to evidence Level 2 competency in Maths and English.

Application information

Entry requirements

A minimum of 112 points at A Level (BBC at A Level). Applicants who do not meet these requirements will be individually assessed.

The University selection process will include a written test, role-play and panel interview.

The course is open to those employed by statutory and non-statutory agencies, if the organisation can provide the necessary experience and support to train an apprentice.

Level 2 English and maths requirements

Evidence of GCSE Mathematics and English Language (grade A*-C / 9-4), or equivalent, must be provided prior to application.

How to apply

Once an employer has confirmed that they will support their apprentice(s) on the course, we will issue an application pack to interested applicants. The application form enables us to build up a picture of the candidate, their experience and the knowledge and skill areas they are looking to develop. We recommend that a CV is included, with a complete work history, and that the personal statement is used to highlight management strengths and work achievements.

Off-the-job training

Apprenticeship funding rules state that apprentices should spend at least 6 hours per week on developing relevant skills, knowledge and behaviours. This means that apprentices must undertake University tuition, online learning and assessments in combination with a range of other eligible activities undertaken in the workplace.



Employer next steps

If you would like to discuss how this course could work for your organisation, or if you have any further questions, please contact our dedicated Apprenticeships Team.

E: apprenticeships-employer@mmu.ac.uk

T: 0161 247 3720



Get in touch

Our growing portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate apprenticeships include programmes in the following areas:

- digital and technology
- digital marketing, creative design and UX
- health and social care
- leadership, management and HR
- retail

If you think one of our programmes could work for your organisation, please get in touch. We will be happy to provide further information and guide you through the next steps.

Contact us:

Apprenticeships team

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T: 0161 247 3720

W: mmu.ac.uk/apprenticeships

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