

Social Work
at Edinburgh

Study at one of
the UK's leading
Social Work
departments and
prepare for exciting
Social Work
careers.



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
School of Social and
Political Science

Teaching during Covid-19 (March 2021)

This brochure is based on a traditional campus-based teaching model, however our actual teaching model for 2021-2022 will depend on Covid-19 restrictions at that time. We will provide you with regular updates on what to expect throughout the application process.

For up-to-date information, visit [edin.ac/covid19](https://www.ed.ac.uk/covid19)

Welcome to the School of Social and Political Science

The School of Social and Political Science is one of the leading schools of social science in the UK and we pride ourselves on our innovative teaching, lively community of staff and students, and pursuit of academic excellence.

Our research is world class and it informs and shapes our teaching. As one of our students, you will enjoy a challenging, rich and rewarding learning environment, as well as the opportunity to engage in the most current debates from the start of your studies.

The School of Social and Political Science brings together specialists in a wide range of disciplines and is also home to a large number of research centres and institutes.

Our school is a big, vibrant and intellectually exciting place to study, which will provide you with an education enriched with insights from across the social and political sciences and beyond.

Why Edinburgh?

World-class reputation

The University of Edinburgh is one of the world's leading universities. We are consistently ranked amongst the 50 best universities in the world, which allows us to attract some of the world's brightest academics and students. This means that you will learn from and amongst the best and you'll experience the very best in teaching and research.

Invest in your future

Choose to study at Edinburgh and you'll be investing in an education that will help you build a successful future. We help students to develop a broad range of skills, grow in confidence and learn more about themselves.

As a result, employers regard Edinburgh as an excellent training ground for high-flyers and value our graduates for their intellectual ability and the attributes they're able to develop while studying with us.

Focused on practice

Social Work at Edinburgh is deeply rooted in practice and this is reflected in the many contributions made by practitioners and service users to the content of our programme. As one of our students, you will also benefit from our extensive experience researching, advising and consulting on best practice in Social Work.

Professionally accredited

Our programme will prepare you for professional practice. It will provide you with the skills and knowledge to improve the lives of those who use social services once you start practising. Our degree programme is approved by the Scottish Social Services Council, the Social Work regulatory body in Scotland.

A supportive environment

You will be allocated a Student Support Officer and Personal Tutor to guide you through university life. There are also a number of student peer-learning opportunities in place to ensure you always feel supported.

What is Social Work and who is it for?

Social workers are professionals who work with people experiencing difficulties in their personal and family lives. They deal with many different issues arising, for example, from poverty and deprivation, relationship problems in families, or drug use. They arrange care for adults with disabilities, work with health workers in hospitals and the community, and assist the courts in dealing with people who commit offences. Social workers are employed by local authorities and a wide range of large and small third sector organisations.

Some social workers specialise in community work, social education or social reform rather than direct service to individuals.

Social Work is a job for creative, practical and resourceful individuals who really enjoy working with people. Social workers have to combine ingenuity and optimism with honesty and realism in the face of the demanding situations which some service users experience. It is social workers who represent society's response to the challenges of families under stress, long-term illness, mental illness, and other serious problems.

The BSc (Hons) in Social Work is offered only as a single honours degree.

What you'll typically study

The BSc in Social Work comprises two years of foundation studies in the social sciences followed by two years of professional education and training.

In each of the first two years students take two courses in Social Work plus courses in other 'outside' subjects. The Social Work courses cover the history of Social Work and its place in society; sociological and political perspectives on social issues; the legal frameworks within which Social Work services are based; and an introduction to working and relating with others. In years 3 and 4 the degree moves to a more professional focus.

Throughout the programme, guest lecturers from our partner agencies contribute expertise from the perspectives of practitioners, service managers and these contributions are joined by those of people that have used social work services.

All students are required to register with the Scottish Social Services Council and to join the Disclosure Scotland-Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme. These are some of the conditions of entry to the degree programme.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this booklet at the time of going to press. However, it will not form part of a contract between the University and a student or applicant and must be read in conjunction with the individual degree specifications, which can be found at www.drps.ed.ac.uk

BSc (Hons) in Social Work

YEAR 1

- Social Work: Making A Difference
- From Research into Practice: Landmarks in Social Work Research
- Politics of the Welfare State
- Social Policy and Society
- 2 semester-long courses in outside subjects of your choice

YEAR 2

- Human Rights and Social Justice: social work and the law
- Working and Relating: Developing Your People Skills
- 4 semester-long courses in outside subjects of your choice

YEAR 3

- Understanding Care and Control in Social Work
- Social Work with Individuals and Families
- Working with Self and Others: Skills Theories and Methods
- Professional Practice in Social Work 1
- Social Work in Communities

YEAR 4

- Social Work Dissertation
- Working with Risk, Trust and Complexity
- Professional Practice in Social Work 2

Summary of Social Work courses

Social Work: Making A Difference introduces students to notions, definitions and insights about Social Work practice from within the profession, discussing how they compare with public understanding (and prejudices) of the social workers' role and tasks.

From Research into Practice: Landmarks in Social Work Research is developed from the use of selected examples of key bodies of Social Work research. For each of the selected areas the major research questions, methods of approach, and principal findings will be presented.

Social Policy and Society looks at Social Policy comparatively in a number of European countries, and examines the social dimension of the European Union. It enables Social Policy in the UK to be seen in a rather different light.

Politics of the Welfare State looks at the position of the welfare state in the UK in light of the dramatic economic events since 2008, including from an international perspective. The role of ideology, public opinion, political actors, interest groups and the media will be considered in understanding the directions that the British welfare state has taken in recent years.

Human Rights and Social Justice: social work and the law

The International Federation of Social Workers describes social work as being based on 'principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities' (IFSW). This course will consider what that means in relation to law and policy for social work. Social work operates within international human rights frameworks but also within national legal structures and local policy contexts. The course will explore the role of law and policy in social work practice, using specific examples from Scotland and internationally.

Working and Relating: Developing Your People Skills explores the theories which informs communication in the work place. Students draw upon their voluntary or paid employment in social work and social care related fields in order to demonstrate their professional people skills.

Understanding Care and Control in Social Work explores ways in which we might engage with others to bring about change in their lives; and discusses that intervention in the current context and climate is complex and multi-layered.

Social Work with Individuals and Families introduces students to Social Work with families and their individual members. The focus is on social work's broader welfare role and will include themes of assessment, early intervention, prevention, resilience and capacity building.

Working with Self and Others: Skills Theories and Methods provides an experiential vehicle for the enhancement of self-awareness, the learning and development of core communication skills, and the opportunity to learn and apply key Social Work methods of practice.

Social Work Dissertation

Undertaken during years 3 and 4, the dissertation allows students to study in depth a social work related subject of their choice.

Working with Risk, Trust and Complexity builds on previous teaching on the theory, skills and values of Social Work in its different contexts and takes it into the more complex areas of Social Work, in Scotland and beyond.

Teaching

In the first two years Social Work is taught through lectures, tutorials and some small group exercises. Lecture classes are usually small enough to permit questions and class discussion.

Later in the programme an 'Enquiry and Action' small-group approach to learning is used to explore Social Work theory and practice through direct engagement with practitioners in the field.

Throughout the programme, guests from our partner agencies contribute expertise from the perspectives of practitioners, service managers and service users. Essays are part of the assessment process throughout the programme. There are examinations in years 1 and 2. In years 3 and 4 we assess group presentations around practice related themes in addition to essays. A significant part of assessment is through the practice placements, the assessments of which are compilations of the student's self-appraisal and the Practice Teacher's commentary and evaluation.

Professional accreditation

Our Social Work degree is accredited by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and successful completion leads to eligibility to be registered with the professional body as a qualified social worker.

Towards the end of second year, students are asked to consider their commitment to Social Work and to demonstrate that they have met the criteria to progress to the honours years.

Students who do not wish to progress to the honours years, or who are not eligible to do so, can transfer to the main social sciences degree courses of BSc or MA (which will involve one or two more years of study respectively).

Careers

A degree in the social sciences provides the knowledge, analytical and communication skills that employers require. Our Careers Service will help you plan for the future and provide advice and guidance with the job application process.

Six months after graduating over 90 per cent of our students are in employment or postgraduate study.

Apart from Social Work practice, a degree in Social Work is a good preparation for employment in any field requiring use of interpersonal skills to promote change. Social Workers need to have well-developed social and communication skills, and combine empathy with a commitment to constant improvement of methods and services.

Practice placements

Partner agencies provide practice placements and their staff contribute to course planning and curriculum content.

Placements provide you with the opportunity for direct supervised practice in an agency providing Social Work services and take place in a broad range of settings. You will learn from a range of professionals in other fields as you begin to understand the importance of working together.

Practice placements take place in years 3 and 4 and are integrated into your degree as courses (Professional Practice in Social Work 1 and 2). We provide two types of practice placements, statutory and voluntary sector placement.

Statutory placements involve undertaking practice with children and families, criminal justice, or health and social care services. The third sector offers a range of interesting preventative and therapeutic placement opportunities across a range of service user groupings, such as youth projects, community care groups and trusts. You will experience both types of practice placement as part of your Social Work studies.

While on placement you are supervised and supported throughout by a Practice Teacher appointed by the agency to teach and assess you. You will also be supported by a tutor from the university. The opportunity for service users to give feedback on their experience of receiving help from you is also incorporated into your practice placement learning.

Assessments include the submission of a Practice Portfolio and a Practice Study.

Practice placements last 70 days in year 3 and 95 days in year 4.



Getting ready for Edinburgh

If you'd like to get ahead with some background reading, we recommend the following books.

Cree, V.E. (2003) *Becoming a Social Worker*. London, Routledge.

Cree, V.E. and Smith, M. (2018) *Social Work in a Changing Scotland*. London, Routledge

Pierson, J. and Thomas, T. (2010) *Dictionary of Social Work: The Definitive A to Z of Social Work and Social Care*. Maidenhead, Open University Press

Stephenson, O. (2013) *Reflections on Social Work: A Personal and Professional Memoir*. Buckingham, Hinton House Publishers

Thompson, N. (2015) *How to do Social Work: Steps Towards Effective Social Work Practice*. Avenue Media Solutions

Undergraduate degrees in Social Work

- BSc (Hons) in Social Work

For further information on entry requirements visit: [edin.ac/entry](https://www.edin.ac.uk/entry)

Read more about our programmes at: [edin.ac/ourdegrees](https://www.edin.ac.uk/ourdegrees)

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