

Programme Specification 2025-26

1.	Programme title	PGDip Social Work
2.	Awarding institution	Middlesex University
3a	Teaching institution	1 Middlesex University London
3b	Language of study	English

4a	Valid intake dates and mode of study	
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Mode of Study	Cohort	Delivery Location	Duration
Full-time (FT)	Semester 1	Hendon	17 Months

4b	Delivery method	On Campus/Blended Learning
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5. Professional/Statutory/Regulatory body (if applicable)	
Social Work England	

6.	Apprenticeship Standard (if applicable)	N/A
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7. Final qualification(s) available	
Target Award Title(s)	
PGDip Social Work	
Exit Award Title(s)	
PGCert Applied Social Studies	

8. Academic year effective from	2025-26
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9. Criteria for admission to the programme	
•A second class honours classification or above (i.e. 2:2 or above). •GCSE Grade C/4 or above in English or certificated equivalence. •Relevant paid or voluntary work experience of at least three months. •Applicants whose first language is not English must meet communication and comprehension skills to International English Language Testing System (IELTS) with a	

score of 7 (with 6.5 in all elements).

- Successful performance in an individual interview.
- An assessment of the applicant's suitability and fitness for practice through completion of a self-declaration, appropriate references, a satisfactory check on their criminal record and background including the safeguarding register; Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and any further information gathering as indicated via other professionals or further interview and assessment.
- RPL is not permitted for admission to this programme.

Principle of fair admission

The University aims to ensure that its admissions processes are fair, open and transparent and aims to admit students who, regardless of their background, demonstrate potential to successfully complete their chosen programme of study where a suitable place exists and where entry criteria are met. The University values diversity and is committed to equality in education and students are selected on the basis of their individual merits, abilities and aptitudes. The University ensures that the operation of admissions processes and application of entry criteria are undertaken in compliance with the Equality Act.

We take a personalised but fair approach to how we make offers. We feel it's important that our applicants continue to aspire to achieving great results and make offers which take into account information provided to us on the application form.

10. Aims of the programme

The programme aims to:

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MA and PGDip Social Work:

- Produce post-graduate, qualifying-level social work students who, at the point of completion of their Social Work MA or PGDip, meet all Social Work England Professional Standards and associated Professional Capabilities Framework domains enabling students to apply for professional registration as a social worker with SWE.
- Develop graduates with leadership capacity able to actively contribute to working in organisations; through offering students an intellectually rewarding and stimulating post-graduate, qualifying-level programme where theory and practice are integrated throughout both academic and practice modules.
- Equip graduates with an evidence-informed knowledge-base and embed skills for life-long learning.
- Ensure that graduates are critical, analytical and reflective thinkers and are able to critically evaluate knowledge, to problem-solve, research and develop scholarship through debate and analysis.
- Promote a collaborative, ethical and transformational approach to working in partnership with the programme's stakeholders, including employers, students, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work (PWLE); integrating equal opportunities and awareness

of diversity at every stage.

- Provide a coherent and creative curriculum incorporating learning, teaching and assessment strategies that are mapped against Social Work England Professional Standards (2019), linked to the Professional Capabilities Framework and the Benchmark Statement for Social Work (QAA, 2019).
- Contribute to and champion the mission of the University by working closely within its structures and processes, to ensure that student support is maximised and valued to enable them to successfully achieve their ambitions.

11. Programme learning outcomes

Programme - Knowledge and Understanding

On completion of this programme the successful student will have a knowledge and understanding of:

1. How to conceptualise, analyse and critically appreciate key social work theories, methods and interventions.
2. The complex and contested interplay of contextual knowledge of sociological, psychological, organisational, political, economic and cultural perspectives which underpin social work.
3. The conceptual links between social work values and professional codes of ethics and their impact on practice
4. The interplay of social work law, social policy, and human-rights frameworks, and their complexity, enhanced through advanced practice
5. The significance of equality, inclusion and diversity and PWLE perspectives for social work practice.
6. Advanced and proficient research mindedness and an ability to engage in sophisticated evidence-based practice.
7. Advanced competency in leadership and organisational theory, professional authority and boundary-setting.
8. International/global perspectives on social work and the ability to engage in debates concerning these issues.

Programme - Skills

On completion of this programme the successful student will be able to:

9. Demonstrate proficiency in a wide range of problem-solving skills, critical reflection, analysis, reasoning and evaluative skills.
10. Make use of advanced practice skills in communicating, engaging and intervening through their work with service users, carers, other professionals, teams, organisations and multi-agency settings.
11. Show highly competent professional written communication skills (including case-notes, assessment reports, genograms & ecomaps).
12. Put into practice in a wide range of appropriate professional assessment approaches.

13. Show the ability to apply ethical reasoning and decision-making in practice to an enhanced degree and deliver targeted professional interventions (including counselling, advocacy, crisis-intervention and safe-guarding).
14. Identify and take into account multiple perspectives and contexts present within the social work domain, through reflection and analysis; showing an awareness of the contested and changing world of social work practice and awareness of equality, inclusion and diversity.
15. Conduct analysis in professional practice that identifies knowledge gaps leading to the development of pertinent hypotheses and research questions.
16. Show the ability to sustain a reasoned debate and exploration of a key topic of relevance to the profession via their research skills.
17. Demonstrate a competent use of information technology.

12. Teaching/learning methods

Students gain knowledge and understanding through

- Large and small group workshops (incl. skills workshops and role plays)
- Engaging research-based exercises within the classroom and via VLE.
- Engagement in peer and individual led classroom presentations which demonstrate synthesis and interrogation of different sources of knowledge, which promote co-leadership.
- Assessed professional practice learning - practice tutorials in placement.
- Accommodation to students' individual learning needs provided within the classroom and in practice placement setting to promote inclusive learning.
- Guidance provided in class and on VLE on how to plan individual study and on assessment preparation, including pre- and post- classroom delivery exercises.
- Debate and discussion in small and large groups and through reading and critical reflection on learning materials, with a focus on evidence-informed practice, and to enhance UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Students learn skills through:

- Reflective activities, such as reflective diaries, experiential exercises and group discussion.
- Communication skills and theory/intervention workshops.
- Interrogating and debating learning materials, individually, in seminar settings and on-line.
- Recording and evaluating student's own overall development and progress through the programme via the placement planning documents which enhance practice learning and employability.

Approx. number of timetabled hours per week (at each level of study, as appropriate), including on-campus and online hours FT Variable. Average 4 hours per teaching week, over whole programme.

Approx. number of hours of independent study per week (at each level of study, as appropriate) FT Approx. 12 hours per week.

Approx. number of hours on placement (including placement, work-based learning or year abroad, as appropriate). Where relevant, provide further details under 13c below. FT 170 days over whole programme (approx. 1,190 hours)

13. Employability

13a Development of graduate competencies

13b Employability development

Development of graduate competencies

MA and PGDip Social Work are professional education programmes, with successful completion resulting in eligibility for graduates to apply to the regulator, Social Work England, for registration. Therefore, development of professional graduate competencies run throughout every element of the programme.

Students undertake 170 days of assessed professional practice learning in employer partner settings, concurrently to classroom-based learning. On placements, students gain first hand work experience, in an incremental and planned way, appropriate to the stage of their studies. Placements are carefully quality assessed and students are supported and guided by Practice Educators, who are experienced, qualified social workers and educators, along with university tutors. In addition, 30 days practice skills are delivered by the course team, people with lived experience of social work and practice partners, to enhance professional practice learning and employability. Sessions on applying successfully for jobs, interview skills and information on Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) are run with students on the programme. Through these experiences, students gain essential graduate competencies in leadership, problem-solving and person-centered professional practice. Every aspect of the curriculum is mapped to SWE Education and Training Standards and Professional Standards to retain approved status. This is confirmed through SWE Annual Monitoring processes.

Employability development

MA and PGDip Social Work programmes are qualifying professional programmes and new graduates can apply direct to Social Work England for registration. Employability is therefore integrated into the programmes from beginning to end. During induction, new students are introduced to employer partners, who explain local authority, private and voluntary agency roles, and employer expectations of, and opportunities for, graduates. Programme partnerships are strong with local authority providers, private and voluntary agencies. Students attend two practice placements with partner social care agencies during their studies and are prepared and assessed on their professional skills and knowledge throughout the programmes, preparing them for employment in a very direct way. Students have structured sessions with Middlesex employability services (MDXWorks) during their studies, to ensure they are work-ready via job application and role play interview preparation, with employer partners taking part. We invite alumni to speak to current students during their studies, to encourage and inspire.

13c Placement and work experience opportunities (if applicable)

With MA and PGDip Social Work, compulsory practice learning takes place in organisations and settings centered on the provision of social work and social care. A total of 170 days assessed practice placement learning must be achieved to be eligible for registration with SWE. Our placements are all quality-assured and the learning opportunities are identified in accordance with the thresholds of learning in the Professional Capabilities Framework (BASW 2018) and SWE Education and Training Standards (2021). For example, students

can expect to typically have their first placement in a community-based setting within the private, voluntary or statutory sector where they will gain experience of direct work with service users and carers, in undertaking assessments and interventions and of working with other professionals within inter-professional networks. In the final placement students will gain experience of undertaking statutory tasks and are likely to be placed in a local authority or health trust providing adult or children's services. Placements are matched to students' learning needs. Students are taught on placement, by qualified Practice Educators and are supported by university tutors.

13d Future careers / progression

There are a wide variety of career opportunities for qualified social workers in the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors. These are with different user groups in different models of social welfare.

The University organises annual career fairs for students. On MA and PGDip Social Work programmes, tutors support students' preparation through their Tutor Groups and professional development planning as well as linking them to the central university services. Employability workshops are offered to students, by MDXworks, staff and employers, drawing on the excellent partnerships in place between the university and employers.

14. Assessment methods

Assessment methods

Students' knowledge and understanding is assessed by

- Peer and individual presentations which demonstrate synthesis and interrogation of different sources of knowledge, employed during research and practice- related teaching and learning
- Focused debate and discussion in small and large groups
- Practice learning portfolios connecting knowledge (formal & informal) and placement practice skills
- Presentation, discussion and analysis of case studies
- Online searches and critiques of findings.

Assessment methods

Students' skills are assessed by

- Tutorial-based exercises through debates, discussion and communication /intervention assessment activities.
- Written assignments and presentations demonstrating critical understanding of theories and knowledge and their application.

15. Programme Structure (level of study, modules, credits and progression requirements)

Structure is indicative for Part-time routes.

Students must take all of the compulsory modules and choose following programme requirements from the optional modules.

Non-compensatable modules are noted below.

Available Pathways

Not Applicable

Year 1

To graduate with a social work qualifying award all modules must be passed. Students enrolled on MA Social Work may however exit with PGDip Social Work (qualifying), if they pass all modules apart from SWK4720 dissertation module. All modules are core apart from SWK4720 Dissertation.

Students must pass their readiness for direct practice interview and assignment from SWK4800 RDP module before progressing to their first placement (SWK4710).

Students must pass SWK4710 before progressing to SWK4711 Final placement module

Students must pass SWK4900 before progressing to SWK4711 Final placement module

Year 1 Level 7 FT and PT

Code	Type	Module Title	Credits at FHEQ Level
SWK4711	Compulsory (pass required - non-compensatable)	Final Professional Practice Placement 2025-26	15 at Level 7
SWK4710	Compulsory (pass required - non-compensatable)	Initial Professional Practice Placement 70 days 2025-26	15 at Level 7
SWK4800	Compulsory (pass required - non-compensatable)	Readiness for Direct Social Work Practice 2025-26	15 at Level 7
SWK4900	Compulsory (pass required - non-compensatable)	Social Work Law 2025-26	15 at Level 7
SWK4604	Compulsory (pass required - non-compensatable)	Social Work Research 2025-26	15 at Level 7
SWK4802	Compulsory (pass required -	Social Work Theory and Contemporary	30 at Level 7

	non-compensatable)	Practice 2025-26	
SWK4605	Compulsory (pass required - non-compensatable)	Understanding the Life Course 2025-26	15 at Level 7

*Please refer to your programme page on the website re availability of option modules

16. Programme-specific support for learning	
When studying on MA and PGDip Social Work programmes, students have an allocated personal tutor (Academic Advisor) throughout the programme, who oversees the academic and professional development of students. While on placement, they will have a Practice Educator who will deliver their practice learning and assessment in the workplace in a supportive manner. We recognise that students on the postgraduate qualifying programmes may be returning to study after period, so support is integrated into the curriculum, by effective use of the University Student Support Services and the Information and Learning Resource Services.	
17. HECos code(s)	100503: Social Work

18. Relevant QAA subject benchmark(s)	Social Work 2019
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19. University Regulations
This programme will run in line with general University Regulations: Policies Middlesex University https://www.mdx.ac.uk/media/middlesex-university/about-us-pdfs/academic-quality/University-Regulations-for-Undergraduate-Taught-Programmes.pdf These programmes will run in line with general University Regulations. Additional information for MA and PGDip Social Work programmes: Owing to the professional nature of these programmes, there are several additional regulations. The University is required to abide by the entry threshold criteria set by the Professional Capabilities Framework (BASW 2018) and Social Work England Education and Training Standards (2021). In addition, students must pass the SWK4800 readiness for direct practice assessment in term one before they can commence their first 70-day placement. Prior to commencement of the final 100-day placement students must also have passed the Social Work Law module SWK4900. Fitness for Practice is assessed continuously throughout and complies with the University Fitness for Practice Framework. Breach of these procedures may lead to an investigation and subsequently the student may

be asked to leave the programme.

All components of the programme must be successfully completed before MA or PGDip Social Work can be awarded. Fail grades are not compensated for on any social work module.

A minimum of 75% student attendance is required for all MA and PGDip Social Work academic modules for students to be entered for assessment. Professional regulatory requirements are that students must complete the full 70 days of the first placement and 100 days in the second. Students must also complete 30 days of direct practice skills throughout their programme.

In line with the University Regulations regarding the assignments, students have two attempts for the modules' summative assessments.

Placements are the exception to this where a second attempt at placement is only given following an independent investigation into the circumstances by a member of the academic team, with the recommendation for the second attempt endorsed by the external examiner.

In some exceptional circumstances student who double failed a module may be considered to retake the module again entirely with a fee in following academic year at Programme Lead and Director of Programmes discretion. In this case it may impact on a student's progression on the Programme as practice placements cannot be taken while the fail is outstanding.

20. Reference points

- British Association of Social Work, The Code of Ethics for Social Work (2021)
- British Association of Social Work, The Professional Capabilities Framework (2018).
- The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Subject Benchmark Statement for Social Work (2019).
- Social Work England Professional Standards (2019)
- Social Work England Qualifying Education and Training Standards Guidance (2021)
- Middlesex University Assessment Regulations
- Middlesex University Learning Framework 2031
- Middlesex University Graduate Competencies
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

21. Other information (if applicable)

Please note programme specifications provide a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if they take full advantage of the

learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information about the programme can be found in the rest of your programme handbook and the university regulations.