Social Work
and Applied Social Studies
Undergraduate
Welcome

The Department of Social and Policy Sciences is a leading centre for the study of sociology, social policy, international development and social work. Many of our staff are at the forefront of their discipline and are widely respected as empirical researchers, theorists, policy analysts and educators. We have a serious commitment to understanding local and global challenges. As the map of global power, poverty and wealth changes and as new environmental and transnational risks emerge, research to understand and solve social problems becomes ever more important.

Our research record is outstanding. For example, in 2011 we were awarded the Queen’s Anniversary Prize for our work on poverty and vulnerable people and in the last nationwide Research Assessment Exercise our department was rated second best in the country. Our degree programmes are consistently ranked amongst the best in the country; in The Complete University Guide 2015, for example, social work at Bath is ranked 1st, sociology 2nd, social policy 3rd.

Bath graduates have outstanding success in finding relevant employment or further training. This is a reflection of the confidence that comes from studying in a world class institution and of the social work practice skills and knowledge gained by students during their high quality practice learning placements that are integral to each of the three years of the BSc (Hons) Social Work and Applied Social Studies programme.

We are keen to share our enthusiasm for our subject with you and enable you to develop the knowledge and skills to take your interest in the world around you into a rewarding, socially aware career.

We look forward to meeting you!

Dr Louise Brown
Head of Social Work Group
Department of Social and Policy Sciences
What is Social Work?

‘The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being’ (International Federation of Social Workers, 2000).

Social work is an exceptionally interesting, challenging and rewarding profession to enter. It relies on your energy, enthusiasm, creativity and personal resilience. It also depends on your capacity to put knowledge to effective use. That knowledge can take many forms: research evidence drawn from the psychological and social sciences; knowledge of policy and legislation that provides the context for contemporary practice and; knowledge drawn from the experience of practitioners and service users.

In addition to developing a sound knowledge base you will acquire the necessary skills required to practise as an effective qualified social worker in a range of care settings. The development of skills such as engagement, communication and assessment is an important part of the training and includes meeting the current National Occupational Standards and the Professional Capabilities Framework. You will learn how to undertake direct work with service users, assess needs, respond to crisis situations, advocate on behalf of individuals or communities and work with a range of professionals from many different disciplines.

We have designed the social work programme at Bath to enable you to understand, analyse, practise and evaluate the knowledge, skills and values of social work in its theoretical, organisational and professional contexts, in order to equip you for a career that is as challenging as it is rewarding. We expect a lot from our students, as we know how much is expected from the qualified social worker.

Social Work and Applied Social Studies at Bath

League tables show that our Social Work and Applied Social Studies degree programme is consistently among the best in the country; social work at Bath is ranked 1st in The Complete University Guide 2015. Many of our staff are at the forefront of their discipline and are widely respected as empirical researchers, theorists, policy analysts and educators.

Why study Social Work and Applied Social Studies at Bath?

- Our three year, full-time programme leads to a BSc (Honours) degree which is recognised as a professional qualification that enables you to register and to practise as a social worker
- Our degree is designed to provide you with the knowledge, skills and professional values to equip you for a career in social work
- We are very committed to social work both as an academic discipline and as a form of professional practice. Service users, carers and social work practitioners also contribute to University-based teaching
- Our formal partnerships with international institutes provide students with the opportunity for overseas fieldwork visits and exchange programmes
- The Department places great emphasis on high quality teaching and prides itself on a personal approach to its students, who benefit from small group teaching and individual support
- We have an excellent reputation for cutting edge research and innovative teaching. We were ranked 2nd in the country in the most recent 2008 Research Assessment Exercise.
Your degree structure

In each of the three years of the degree you take core, compulsory units which lay the foundations for understanding social work theory and practice. The units taught at the University are combined with placements, which are assessed periods in practice. Our academic year is divided into two semesters. You will take five units per semester; each normally comprising two to three hours per week classroom time. The units are assessed by a mix of coursework (for example essays, group reports, case study analysis, presentations and a portfolio of evidence from your placements) plus examinations.

In Year 1 the units you study chiefly relate to sociology, social policy and psychology, forming the foundation of knowledge required for social work practice. Other first year units introduce you to social work knowledge, skills and values whilst also providing opportunities to undertake some social work practice on placement (see overleaf). In addition, you will undertake a social work practice unit that prepares you for full-time placement in years 2 and 3.

Year 2 equips you with further knowledge and skills, both through learning on your first placement and through University-based teaching on such topics as discrimination and empowerment, mental health, social work with adults, child development, child protection processes and social work theories and methods.

In Year 3 there is the opportunity to develop more specialised knowledge and practice with teaching on social work with adults, children and families, and mental health social work, as the focus of your University-based and practice-based learning. The Critical reflection (dissertation), a major piece of academic work, draws together all of the learning from across the three years.

BSc (Hons) Social Work and Applied Social Studies degree programme structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester 1</th>
<th>Semester 2</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community profiling: community needs assessment, groups and teamwork (including skills days)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to social work</td>
<td>Readiness for practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social work and life course 1 (psychology)</td>
<td>Social work and life course 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social problems and social policy</td>
<td>Social policy, welfare and the state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory sociology A</td>
<td>Introductory sociology B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Year 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Placement – Level 2</td>
<td>‘Race’ and racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination and empowerment in social work (6 day workshops during placement)</td>
<td>Child care policy, practice, research and law 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical reflective practice essay</td>
<td>Theories and methods in social work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mental health policy and practice (part 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Year 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Year 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in a social care organisation</td>
<td>Placement – Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation for social practice</td>
<td>Case study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health policy and practice (part 2)</td>
<td>Social work critical reflection (dissertation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social work with adults</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care policy, practice, research and law 2</td>
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For further details on the units available, please see our website: www.bath.ac.uk/study

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, but as courses and personnel change over time, this information may also change. It should therefore be treated as a guide rather than a definitive statement.
“The social work degree is fantastic; the staff’s passion for social work is admirable and the encouragement and support they continually provide is well received by all the students. The lecturers are constantly updating their research and knowledge so we get taught the most current and up to date social work practice.”

Emma White
graduate

“The support from the lecturers is fantastic, which is more so appreciated throughout the placement process where it can all seem a little overwhelming! It is very reassuring to know that you have a strong support network within the social work department, who will try their best to help you with any issue, be it personal or academic.”

Holly Luther
third year student

“The social work course at Bath University has provided me with a path, a life choice and an education. The course is well balanced with a mix of academic and self-learning which is achieved through lectures, seminars and placement experience. I feel I am very lucky to have been selected to study here. Each lecturer has their own style, offering something unique, making the course feel complete. I believe theory starts to make sense through experience, so don’t worry! With time everything will fit into place.”

Olly Saunders
third year student

“I have found the course covers everything you need to prepare for a career in social work. It has helped me to develop my self-awareness and ability to think critically about the world. The sessions are interactive and engaging, with good guidance for independent learning. The support from staff and peers is also one of the best things about studying social work at Bath.”

Alice Williams
third year student
International social work development

The social work programme at Bath is set in an international context and encourages its students to see social work as a global occupation. The programme has formal partnerships in place with the top social work departments in China (Sun Yat-sen University), the US (Ohio State University), South Korea (Yonsei University) and South Africa (Stellenbosch University). These provide students with the opportunity for overseas fieldwork visits and exchange programmes.

Service user and carer participation

In keeping with the values of the social work profession, the programme is designed and delivered in partnership with service users and carers. Local service user and carer organisations play an important role in the students’ training. Across the three years of the course service users and carers are meaningfully involved in designing and delivering thought-provoking lectures and training sessions. Student feedback has consistently highlighted the value of this involvement and the impact that the service user and carer input has had on their learning experience on the course.

“Utilising social workers and service users to teach on the programme allows students to gain a unique insight into the realities of professional practice and the lived-experience of service users. The teaching delivered by social workers has given me an insight into practice that encourages me to approach my work critically. Service user teaching has afforded me a greater understanding of their subjective experiences and allowed me to empathise with the problems that they face. I believe this level of empathy helps me to understand how best to approach my work with service users and to develop sound working relationships with them.”

Amy Bryan
third year student
“The social work programme at The University of Bath is fantastic. The Social Science base has given me an understanding of social and policy effects on the people we work with. Small class sizes enable teaching staff and students to get to know each other really well, leading to interesting class discussions and a sense that the people responsible for placements and teaching really understand me. The teaching towards a generic qualification is well-balanced and allows you to gain a range of skills and understanding of the variety of social work opportunities available when you qualify.

The fact that teaching staff have all practised, or are still practising, social work means that theory is always related to practice, helping to link everything together. Placement opportunities are varied and interesting, in a wide variety of settings and are matched to the learning needs you identify yourself, enabling you to grow and develop in the directions you want to go. I have enjoyed learning about myself and my own values in placements with adults with learning difficulties and with children who have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse. With support in placement from my tutor and practice educator I have been able to use my experiences to build on the professional values inherent in social work and to develop skills and experience which will be invaluable in professional practice.

I had the great fortune and privilege to visit one of the partner universities in China, which has allowed me to think about how social work is practiced in different cultures. The opportunities offered to Bath students to experience work with our partner universities, as well as with a range of service users and professional partners makes it a unique and brilliant course.”

Nicola Mackenzie-Smaller
third year student
Practice learning opportunities (placements)

Central to the degree programme is the opportunity to apply your developing knowledge, skills and professional understanding to direct practice with service users. Hence, in addition to the University based learning, in the course of your training you undertake a total of 170 days assessed practice plus 30 skill days, as required by the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) and endorsed by The College of Social Work. The placement is an opportunity to use the theory you have learnt in a practical context, refine your skills further and enhance your employability.

There are practice learning opportunities in a range of organisations, such as user-led agencies, small or large voluntary groups, independent or private agencies, local authority social work teams and health trusts. You may be working with children and their families, older people, those with mental health problems, the learning disabled or people with alcohol/drug problems.

Throughout your placements, you will be supported by staff tutors, as well as designated practice educators in the agency where you are placed. Both university and agency staff will enable you to learn from your practice as well as assess your professional competence. At the end of each of your periods of professional practice you will produce a portfolio of your work which will form part of your assessment.

As you progress through the three levels of practice you will be involved in work of increasing complexity, requiring more sophisticated reflection and increased competence in conceptualising and applying theories, methods and knowledge drawn from the social and psychological sciences. By the end of the third year you will have demonstrated that you are competent to practise as a professional social worker.

The degree is delivered through an alliance where the University as the academic institution collaborates with local social work agencies including service user and carer organisations. The current allies include: Bath and North East Somerset Council, Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council, Bath People First, Off The Record Bath, Off The Record Bristol, Wiltshire and Swindon Users’ Network, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust and The Carer’s Centre.

“The University has a dedicated placements officer who ensures you will suit your placement well and meet your desired learning requirements. My placement with Barnado’s Children & Family Services was a hugely enjoyable experience with large support from my tutor and all those involved with the social work degree. Lectures are designed to increase your knowledge and competency while entering the scary world of placements: Bath has been supporting students on placements for many years; the lecturers and teaching fellows’ wealth of experience truly shows and ensures you feel completely supported and ‘safe’ throughout the experience.

The University strives to ensure your employability once qualifying will be at its maximum; placements are hugely varied through years one and two and your learning potential is constantly met with a variety of lectures from the UK’s leading sociologists, psychologists and professors of social work and social policy.”

Joe Suckling
graduate

“One of the key features of the social work degree is the various professional placements. These provide invaluable opportunities to apply the many aspects of the course that you have studied into direct practice. The range of placements also vary, and the department strive to place you within the particular area that interests you, whilst maintaining the diverse experience that is required to set you up to be a fully qualified social worker. My particular placements have included elements of mental health, youth offending, learning difficulties, physical disabilities and drug/alcohol abuse. The degree, in combination with the placements, provides you with a clear understanding of social inequality within the UK and how this impacts on marginalised and disadvantaged groups of individuals in preparation for effective working to combat these social injustices.”

Ross Turmel
graduate
Careers and destinations

Bath graduates have outstanding success in finding relevant employment or further training. This is a reflection of the confidence that comes from studying in a world class institution and of the work related skills gained by students.

As a professionally qualified social worker you will work in a wide range of health or social care settings. Increasingly, employment opportunities arise in multidisciplinary settings where social workers work alongside healthcare professionals such as occupational therapists or community nurses.

Further information about careers in social work, as well as the professional standards that all practitioners and students must follow, can be obtained from The College of Social Work: www.tcsw.org.uk

“I genuinely feel very passionate about the University of Bath and the degree programme – it encouraged success in terms of academia but fundamentally the value base that Bath instils has really shaped my career path and my passion for service user empowerment and strengths-led practice.”

**Tara Gretton**
Graduate
Social Worker at 117 Project, Bath

“My placement opportunities at the University of Bath have been outstanding; they suited my individual learning aims and provided me with the experience to seek employment in my chosen area of social work. The quality and standard of teaching is recognised by employers, especially in relation to research, current critical debates and the grounding in sociology and social policy provides a significant context to social work in contemporary society.

My final placement at Cafcass really helped prepare me for my role as a social worker in the child protection court team where I now work. My time at Bath provided me with the confidence and competence to practice at the standard expected of a newly qualified social worker and this is largely due to the encouragement and support by staff and peers on the programme. There are further opportunities to study at master’s level and above and I would undoubtedly choose Bath as a place to study again in the future.”

**Zoe Ash**
Graduate
Social Worker for BANES Council
Department staff and affiliates are involved in a diverse range of fields in social work. Here are details of a few staff members to show how our research and teaching interests overlap:

**Dr Mark Baldwin**
Mark’s research interests focus on the key role that social workers play in the creation and implementation of social policies. He is also interested in the development of radical social work and its relevance to contemporary practice. He is a member of the national steering group for the Social Work Action Network.

**Dr Louise Brown**
Louise is currently researching the development of models of child protection in an international context (working with NGOs, academics and local government in China on child protection), and ‘improving practice through social innovation’; a training programme for social entrepreneurs developing business ideas in health and social care.

**Dr Jeremy Dixon**
Jeremy conducts research into mental health settings. His most recent research examines mentally disordered offenders’ views of social supervision and their perspectives on their own offending risks.

**Caroline Hickman**
Caroline is completing her MSc Social Research in foster carers’ experience and evaluation of therapeutic groups using Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy with TACT (Bristol).

**Barbara Neale**
Barbara plays a key role working with our partner agencies to develop new placement opportunities and implementing new quality assurance techniques for placements so students can be confident in the quality and standards of their placements.

**Megan Robb**
Megan is currently undertaking her PhD research examining how social workers conceptualise domestic violence against women with learning disabilities.

**Justin Rogers**
Justin is completing his PhD research exploring young people’s experiences of foster care and how they manage their relationships with family and friends in the context of disrupted social networks.
About Bath

The University of Bath has come top for student satisfaction out of more than 130 UK higher education institutions for the second year running. According to the 2014 National Student Survey (NSS) our students have an overall satisfaction rate of 93%. This year we have been recognised as the ‘Best Campus University in Britain’ in The Times and The Sunday Times 2014.

Our welcoming, purpose-built campus is safe and friendly, with a vibrant international community, excellent student services, outstanding arts facilities and a first-class sports complex. The campus is located about a mile from the World Heritage City of Bath - one of the most interesting, elegant and vibrant cities in the UK, home to several excellent museums and galleries, parks, numerous restaurants, cafés and pubs and a great range of shopping.

Frequent bus services link the campus, city and major student residential areas. Bath is not far from Bristol International Airport. By train, London is approximately 90 minutes and Bristol about fifteen minutes away. You are always connected to your work, your home and your social life when studying.

Programmes

BSc (Hons) Social Work and Applied Social Studies
Three years L501

Typical offer
A levels: ABB-BBB

A personal statement is requested with your application and is critical in informing the Admissions Team that you have personal, volunteering and/or paid employment experience that is relevant to social work or social care and that you are capable of studying social work at degree level.

You should reflect on what you have learnt from these experiences and show us how you intend to apply this knowledge to your future study. You will need to demonstrate that you can express yourself fluently and articulately and that you are properly equipped to be successful on an academic programme in higher education.

The Department of Social and Policy Sciences also offer undergraduate degree programmes in Sociology, Social Policy and Social Sciences; please refer to our separate brochure or visit our website.

Contact us

For more information about this programme, entry requirements and admission, please visit our website:

www.bath.ac.uk/study

For further enquiries on entry requirements and admission to the programme, please contact:

Undergraduate Admissions
Tel: +44 (0) 1225 383019
Email: admissions@bath.ac.uk

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