

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. *What is the degree in social work?***

It is the qualification for social workers which replaced the Diploma in Social Work. Successful completion of the programme will give you both a professional qualification and an honours degree. The programme structure changed in October 2014, so please refer to the attached Programme Structure document for the route that is most appropriate for you. If you are unsure about which structure to follow, please contact the contact The Open University in Scotland for advice. Email: [Scotland@open.ac.uk](mailto:Scotland@open.ac.uk) or tel: 0131 226 3851.

### **2. *How long does it take to get the qualification?***

The degree is worth 480 credits, which means that if you study two 60 point modules each year, you will complete it in four years. However, you can study fewer modules each year and complete the programme over a longer period of time if you prefer. Normally students will be expected to complete within seven years of registration with the Scottish Social Services Council. (From 2004 all social work students in Scotland have to register with the SSSC before beginning their studies to ensure that they are suitable to undertake social work training).

### **3. *What qualifications do I need to be accepted onto the degree?***

You should have Standard Grade Two in Maths and English, or an equivalent. If you do not have Standard Grade Two in English, you can meet this requirement by successfully completing K101 or DD102 before you register for the degree. If you do not have Standard Grade Two in Maths or equivalent, you can take a numeracy test which the Open University has devised and which your employer will administer. Students who have successfully completed the discontinued 15 point Openings module *Y182: Starting with maths* will also meet the numeracy requirement. You should have met the numeracy and literacy requirements at the point of entry to the degree; if for any reason you are unable to do so then please contact The Open University in Scotland for advice. Email: [Scotland@open.ac.uk](mailto:Scotland@open.ac.uk) or tel: 0131 226 3851.

### **4. *What else do I need to do?***

You have to be working in social care and your employer has to agree to support you on the three practice learning modules (K113, K216, K315), as a minimum. If your employer is willing to sponsor you they should contact the Social Work Co-ordinator, Scotland at The Open University in Scotland office who will be able to advise them about how to proceed (see contact details at end of this document).

Your employer will have a formal selection procedure, which will include an interview and a written statement from you. The selection process must demonstrate that you meet the student specification (attached).

## 5. Is my work setting suitable?

The key criteria as to whether a work setting is suitable are:

- Work which involves interaction with users of social care services
- **For sponsored students** whether your work could provide one practice learning opportunity of 100 days which meets the Scottish Government requirements for Social Work education in Scotland (available at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2003/01/16202/17018> - see particularly sections M and N)
- **For independent (non-sponsored) students** that your line manager will provide a statement in support of your suitability as a student social worker and will allow you time away from work to undertake two periods of 100 days practice learning.

## 6. *I work in social care but my employer is not in a position to sponsor me at the moment. What can I do?*

You can study any of the 'open' modules listed in the programme (attached) up to and including Stage Three and count them in if you subsequently obtain sponsorship. If you plan to do this, you are advised that you should take the modules in the order set out in the structure diagram attached. You must remember though, that taking Open University modules is no guarantee that you will be sponsored in the future or that you will be selected onto the programme.

## 7. *I know I will not be able to get sponsorship. Is there any way I can do the degree without sponsorship?*

Yes, please see point 14. below for information regarding our independent route.

## 8. *What are the requirements for practice learning in the SW degree?*

There are three practice learning modules – K113, K216, and K315. K113 is studied first. During K113 you will undertake a 10-day period of verified practice learning in a social care/social work setting. This can be done in your current post if it is in a social care setting. K216 and K315 both involve 100 days of practice learning (this was called a placement in the past) and at least one of these periods of practice learning must be external to your own agency. The Open University can advise on employers' responsibilities in relation to practice learning.

## 9. *KYJ113*

The Stage Two social work module *Foundations for social work practice* (K113) is available to students without the sponsorship of their employers. This module will be of interest to students who are interested in a career in social work or social care but who don't want to study for a degree or do not yet have sponsorship. It is also ideal for those returning to social work after a career break who want to refresh their knowledge and skills. Although it does not lead to automatic entry to the social work degree programme, if you do subsequently gain sponsorship and entry onto the social work degree programme within two years of completing KYJ113, you will be able to count it towards your degree. If two years or more have passed, the preparation for practice element of the course will need to be verified again as part of the degree selection process. A part-time fee grant can be used towards payment of KYJ113, subject to the usual eligibility criteria. Further information regarding part-time fee grants can be found at [www.openuniversity.co.uk/ways2payscotland](http://www.openuniversity.co.uk/ways2payscotland).

**10. I am disabled; how will the University support me to study?**

Many students with disabilities find OU study meets their needs better than a conventional University, since much of the work can be done at home, in your own time and at your own pace.

The OU has excellent services for disabled students; further information can be found on the website at <http://www.open.ac.uk/disability/pages/common/index.php>

**11. I already hold a qualification in a related field of study; will it count towards my degree?**

The OU offers credit for a number of qualifications, including the HNC in Social Care. Information about credit transfer is available on a separate leaflet or from the OU credit transfer office <http://www8.open.ac.uk/study/credit-transfer/> or [Scotland@open.ac.uk](mailto:Scotland@open.ac.uk). You should be aware that no credit is offered for any of the practice learning modules. Currently modules eligible for credit transfer must not be more than 10 years old.

**If you think you may be eligible for credit transfer then you must arrange this before you register for an OU qualification or start studying with us. Once you have commenced your studies you will need to de-register from the award in order to apply for credit transfer.**

**12. I am a graduate, will my degree count?**

Yes, if you hold a degree from any UK University you can enter the Programme directly at Stage Two, via the graduate entry scheme. You do not need to make a claim for credit transfer, simply include a copy of your degree certificate with your application. (The certificate must be signed on the reverse by your employer to authenticate it). If you hold a degree from any UK university in a relevant subject, you should apply for credit transfer as it is possible that you may be eligible for additional credit against some of Stage 2 (although not against K113/KYJ113).

**13. I hold the Diploma in Social Work; can I top it up to the degree?**

You can obtain 120 credits for the Diploma in Social Work, which means you do not have to do the first year of the degree. You cannot obtain credit for any of your placements, however, which means you would have to do the practice learning again. The Diploma in Social Work is still a valid qualification and there is no need to obtain the degree as well (it would just mean that you are qualified twice!) If you would like to obtain an academic qualification, you could 'top up' your DipSW to the BA (Hons) in Health and Social Care, for which you can obtain up to 240 credits as you are a DipSW holder, or towards the BA/BSc (Hons) Open Degree, for which you can also obtain 240 credits as you are a DipSW holder. For more information about top up degrees go to: <http://www.open.ac.uk/courses> or contact The Open University in Scotland, email: [Scotland@open.ac.uk](mailto:Scotland@open.ac.uk) or tel: 0131 226 3851.

#### **14. Independent route (separate information attached)**

We are now able to offer a limited number of places per year on the BA (Hons) Social Work: Scotland to students who are not in a position to be sponsored by a social care employer. Such students need to meet the eligibility criteria, undergo a selection process and be able to demonstrate an understanding of social care in practice. Successful candidates also need to meet the SSSC registration conditions.

**Eligibility to apply for this study route is dependant on a number of factors.**

**Firstly, students need to have completed Stages 1 and 2 of the programme.**

(Please note that module fees and presentation patterns are subject to change for 2015-16; please refer to our website at <http://www8.open.ac.uk/health-and-social-care/main/study-us/social-work/ba-hons-social-work/ba-hons-social-work-scotland/content-the-programme> for updated information when it is available).

Students who have not completed Stage 1 must have either credit transfer awarded against it, or be able to provide evidence of graduate entry i.e. an existing UK degree in any subject. Students also need to be able to provide evidence that they have met the numeracy requirement (standard grade 2 Maths or equivalent).

It is the responsibility of the Open University in Scotland to provide and organise the practice learning at Stages 3 and 4 of the programme. This means that practice learning opportunities will be limited and that students studying on the independent route must be prepared to travel.

**If you are interested in the independent route, there is nothing you need to do at present, other than commence your chosen modules. If you subsequently become eligible to apply for this route, we will contact you in writing in March of the preceding year of study i.e. March 2018 for students that would commence the Social Work Degree in October 18/February 2019.**

**Student Specification**

REQUIREMENT	HOW WILL THIS BE EVIDENCED?
1. Communicate clearly and accurately in spoken English	Application form Personal statement Interview
2. Commitment to the value base of social work	Personal statement Interview
3. Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships with service users, carers and colleagues	Line manager's statement of support
4. Understands the roles and tasks of social workers	Personal statement Interview
5. Ability to work as a member of a team	Line manager's statement of support
6. Capacity to achieve competence to the level of the ECDL by the end of the programme	Personal statement
7. Ability to make decisions	Line manager's statement of support
8. Ability to reflect on their life experiences and work, and learn from them	Personal statement Interview
9. Ability to comply with the code of practice for social workers	Interview Personal statement
10. Ability and willingness to undertake extended study at undergraduate level by distance learning and understand and use the written materials that are used to teach the degree	Personal Statement Interview Line Manager's statement of support