Course Specification

Course Summary Information		
1	**Course Title**	BSc (Hons) Social Work
2	**Course Code**	US0893
3	**Awarding Institution**	Birmingham City University
4	**Teaching Institution(s)** (if different from point 3)	
5	**Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation** (if applicable)	Social Work England

6	**Course Description** (Marketing text for website)
	If you want to have a positive impact on people's lives by providing solution-focused support for social and interpersonal difficulties as well as promoting human rights and wellbeing, then social work could be the career for you. One of your key roles as a social worker will be in safeguarding vulnerable children and adults, working directly with people to support choice and independence. From providing early intervention to enable a family under pressure to stay together through to supporting someone with mental ill-health, social work is challenging and often emotional, but also a very rewarding career with a variety of routes and specialisms open to you once you qualify. We have over 50 years' experience training people to become social workers in the super-diverse and cosmopolitan city of Birmingham. Our BSc (Hons) Social Work degree programme will equip you with the skills and knowledge you need to meet the professional competencies required of a social worker and make a difference to people's lives. Our BSc (Hons) Social Work degree programme is designed to support you to become an excellent practitioner able to work with children and adults in a variety of social work settings spanning voluntary organisations, children and families, youth justice, adults and mental health. Successful completion of the degree will enable you to apply for registration with the social work regulator, Social Work England, and to hold the protected title of "Social Worker". **What's covered in the course?** We provide an academic learning with you as students at the centre of our planning. While we do deliver some online lectures, most of your time will be spent in sessions on campus and in service delivery settings within the community on practice-based placements, reflecting the nature of social work as both an academic and practical discipline. You will learn in a range of ways, including lectures, workshops and seminars, complemented by online resources and independent study. Your lecturers and tutors will include experienced social work academics, current practitioners, academics from other relevant disciplines, and service users and carers who are 'experts by experience'. Each will assist you to develop the knowledge, skills, values and professional capabilities you will need for effective social work practice in today's complex world. By bringing together these elements, you will learn to identify and navigate the complexities of social work to promote and protect wellbeing. The course involves direct practice experience through professional (work experience) placements. These are provided by our practice partners in both the second and third year of

	the course. While on placement you will be supported by a team of people, including a dedicated and qualified practice educator who will always be a registered social worker. Our practice partners include Local Authorities, and established private, independent, and voluntary sector agencies. Recent changes to our course plan mean that you will experience a range of assessment methods in addition to written assignments, such as role plays and presentations.

7	**Course Awards**		
7a	**Name of Final Award**	**Level**	**Credits Awarded**
	Bachelor of Science with Honours Social Work	Level 6	360
7b	**Exit Awards and Credits Awarded**		
	Certificate of Higher Education Studies in Social Care*	Level 4	120
	Diploma of Higher Education Studies in Social Care *	Level 5	240
	Bachelor of Science Studies in Social Care *	Level 6	300

*None of the awards titled Social Care will confer eligibility to apply for registration with the regulator and use the legally protected title “Social Worker”.

8	**Variation from the University Regulations**
	None

9	**Delivery Patterns**		
Mode(s) of Study	**Location(s) of Study**	**Duration of Study**	**Code(s)**
Full Time	City South	3 years	TBC
Full Time	City South	4 years (including Foundation Year)	TBC

10	**Entry Requirements**
	The full admission requirements for the BSc Social Work programme are available on the social work course page at https://www.bcu.ac.uk/ or may be found by searching for the course entry profile located on the UCAS website.

11	**Course Aims**
	The course aims to develop professionally curious and research-minded social workers who are work ready, equipped with the foundational skills required to engage in effective social work practice and to uphold the standards and expectations of the profession by the regulator, Social Work England.
	The course aims to provide the learning opportunities required to develop skilled, confident, critical, reflective and self-motivated professionals, who are able to continue their professional development to maintain their competence for registration.

12	Course Learning Outcomes
1	Demonstrate comprehensive and critical knowledge of theories, values, law, policy, research and knowledge from other disciplines necessary for holistic, skilled and person-centred approaches to social work practice.
2	Critically use evidence to make informed and justified decisions, showing initiative, creativity, autonomy, research mindedness and professional curiosity.
3	Apply ethical, anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory approaches to social work practice to advance human rights, equality and social justice.
4	Manage risk and uncertainty and complex and conflicting situations by drawing upon critical evaluation and relevant knowledge.
5	Evidence an ability and willingness to work in partnership with other professionals, organisations and people using social work services to achieve positive outcomes.
6	Demonstrate professionalism, accountability, and an ability for critical reflection necessary for social work practice.
7	Develop resilience and demonstrate strong independent study skills evidencing a commitment to continuous professional development.
8	Critically appraise the political and cultural context of social work both nationally and globally.
9	Demonstrate professional capabilities and uphold professional social work standards and conduct yourself in a manner consistent with the values of the social work profession.

13	Level Learning Outcomes
	This is an undergraduate course that is assessed at level 4 in year 1, level 5 in year 2 and level 6 in year 3.
	Upon completion of Level 4 / the Certificate of Higher Education, students will be able to:

1	Describe professionalism and professional standards underpinning social work and how these impact upon social work practice.
2	Apply elements of the social work knowledge base including foundation law and social policy and theories of human growth and development to support social justice, equity, choice and control.
3	Explain the underlying concepts and principles associated with empowerment, social justice and equity how these relate to the vulnerable individuals, families, groups and communities we work with.
4	Demonstrate the ability to use a range of communication skills effectively to build rapport and communicate with clients, carers and other professionals.
	Upon completion of Level 5 / the Diploma of Higher Education, students will be able to:

1	Apply knowledge and skills to practice to support assessment and intervention within anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice frameworks.
2	Demonstrate the ability to apply legislation and policy to inform social work practice within social work practice in safeguarding adults and children.
3	Compare and contrast a range of research design and methodologies and understand how these apply to research within the field of social work.
4	Demonstrate awareness of the need for professionals to take responsibility for their own conduct, safe practice and with guidance reflect upon and work with competing values and ethical dilemmas; working in partnership with clients and carers taking into account their needs, views and rights.
	Upon completion of Level 6 / the Bachelor's Degree, students will be able to:
1	Critically reflect upon the knowledge and evidence-base underpinning social work practice and justify ethically sound decision-making processes which reflect the diversity of clients, carers, groups and communities.
2	Contribute to the ongoing development of self and others by taking responsibility for lifelong learning and continuing professional development.
3	Demonstrate the ability to engage with and adapt to changing economic, social, political and organisational contexts.
4	Critically reflect on multi-agency and inter-professional partnerships and settings within diverse organisations and the development of appropriate culturally sensitive services and organisations.

The skills and practice elements of the course are assessed according to the criteria detailed in the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and as such are a professional requirement.

Social Work Skills for Practice 1 and 2 (Level 4): 'Readiness for Practice' https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-development/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf/the-pcf/readiness

Practice Placement One (Level 5): 'End of First Placement' : https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-development/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf/the-pcf/first-placement

Practice Placement Two (Level 6): 'End of last placement/Completion': https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-development/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf/the-pcf/last-placement

In order to complete the professional requirements of the course (Skills and Practice days), you must successfully complete Social Work Skills for Practice 1 and 2 in order to continue to the Practice Placement One.

14 Course Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

This Overview aligns itself with Birmingham City University's Principles of Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) and '*I Am BCU'* values of: Creating opportunity, Thinking differently and Building community.

A wide variety of Learning and Teaching approaches are used, as outlined below, to support formative learning and to assist you to achieve the learning outcomes in both the theoretical and practice-based elements of the course. The variety of methods used enables a diverse audience of learners to engage with diverse learning opportunities, whilst respecting individual learning styles and preferences. The purpose of the strategy is to give you a wide range of learning experiences, and exposure to new ways of learning whilst supporting reflection and development in addition to the experiences you already bring to the course.

The teaching team comprises qualified and registered social workers and practice educators with a wide range of diverse educational and practice experiences. The team is supported by Experts by Experience, current practitioners and visiting lecturers and colleagues from other disciplines within the University. An active research group "*Social Work Education, Policy and Practice*" (SWEPP) undertakes new research and promotes research activity and research mindedness within the department. Team members are developing research careers through doctoral studies, informing and contributing to the learning and teaching culture within the department, college and faculty.

The teaching team is also supported by a dedicated 'Placements team' that engages actively with practice partners in the region to ensure the provision of quality student placements offering relevant and current experiences of professional social work practice. This requires the team to appraise, monitor and 'quality assure' placements and also to provide training and support for practice educators. Both teaching and placement teams work closely with the Regional Social Work Teaching Partnership to develop and share best professional and educational practice across the West Midlands

All learning within the Social Work course at BCU is mapped against professional requirements described in the 'Professional Capabilities Framework' (PCF) and in our regulator Social Work England's Professional Standards and is designed to engage and support you in diverse ways.

University-based learning
A range of activities and opportunities encourage you to be an active participant in the learning process and to develop your full potential. Teaching methods used include:

- Whole group lectures (Face to Face and Online)
- e-learning materials and exercises via our online platform 'Moodle'
- Smaller group seminar workshops and learning activities
- Small group workshops and tutorials
- One-to-one and group tutorials
- Targeted and incremental skills development exercises spread throughout each year of the course
- Case Studies (Face to Face and Online)
- Expert by Experience and carer experiential accounts (Face to Face and Online)
- Presentations from qualified social workers and Practice Educators
- Presentations from individual students / small student groups.
- Viva voce individual student presentations.
- Presentations from other Professionals in the field of Health and Social Care
- Written and verbal feedback (Formative feedback will be provided Face to Face and Online, with summative feedback mainly provided through electronic mediums)
- Guided study days
- Directed independent study
- Independent and private study
- Reflective exercises
- Peer feedback
- Use of video and DVD material (Face to Face and Online)

- Role play and simulation
- Debate (Face to Face and Online)
- Student Group work projects (Face to Face and Online)
- Quizzes

University learning is a blend of theoretical and practical applications of the foundational and core concepts of Social Work. Interactive seminars and lectures, observation sessions and role plays will prepare students for practice placements and ultimately professional practice. Within these sessions, you will engage in debates, discussions, peer support and peer learning designed to promote a feeling of community and belonging, both to the University as well as to the profession.

Practice Skills will be explored and applied in a safe and supportive environment, with both informal, formative and summative feedback provided to encourage critical thinking and reflection. As part of your under-graduate studies you have the opportunity to exercise your professional curiosity and pursue an area of academic and professional interest by undertaking an introduction to research module at Level 5 and an extended-time project at level 6. This uses and consolidates knowledge and skills acquired and practiced throughout the course and develops the necessary 'research mindedness' required of an effective social work practitioner. The completion of the final module in relation to Critical Reflective Practice marks the end of your journey to become professional social worker and supports you to critically reflect upon all aspects of your practice and ensure continuing professional development.

Social Work England requires that all registrants to the profession have successfully completed two hundred Practice Skills days. Thirty of these are undertaken across all of the modules in Year 1 of the course to stress the links between academic knowledge and practice, with 25 being located within the Social Work Skills for Practice 1 and 2 modules. Skills days are facilitated in a safe and supportive environment within the University and provide you with practical opportunities to develop and practice skills such as communication, critical thinking, reflection, 'assessment' and analysis, and emotional intelligence. Skills days are designated across the two years of the course and are used creatively to offer varied and challenging experiences for learning, including for example 'Resilience building' days, international exchange events, and theatre productions etc.

Reflecting changes in social work practice in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, a greater emphasis on technology-assisted learning and teaching and digital literacy has been embedded into the course. Online lectures, skills training, discussion forums and assessment methods, using our virtual learning environment and MS Teams, supports and complements face to face teaching.

University based Assessments
A range of assessment methods are used throughout the course including:

- Written assignments
- Reflective Discussions
- Practice observations
- Oral examinations
- Individual presentations
- Group presentations
- Observed performances in skills sessions
- An extended project at Level 6.

Assessments are designed to prepare you for practice and to ensure the meeting of the required capabilities and standards for social work; some mirror real world professional tasks. Assessment workshops and tutorials are available to you to support your learning and students with additional support requirements are afforded reasonable adjustments in line with their identified needs.

Feedback is provided through formative tasks, tutorials and following the assessment of summative work, in the form of written electronic documents.

Practice Based (Placement) Learning
As stated, the regulator requires that social work students successfully complete two hundred days of Practice Skills Days with the 30 Skills Days required by Social Work England taking place across Year 1 modules as cited earlier.

The remaining 170 Practice Skills days are undertaken within two contrasting social work practice placements - 70 days in Year 2 and 100 days in Year 3 which are both supervised, supported and assessed by qualified Social Work Practice Educators throughout. Practice Educators work alongside colleagues to manage each placement, and to provide professional supervision, space for reflection, and constructive feedback. You are also supported by Practice Supervisors responsible for providing learning opportunities, line management, guidance and supporting your general wellbeing while on placement. A Practice Tutor from the University oversees placement processes and ensures that learning opportunities meet students' identified learning needs.

While on placement, you will engage in induction training and in social work practice, managing your own case load and undertaking work as directed under supervision. You will be afforded opportunities to observe and work in partnership with, and alongside, other professionals and service users, aiding your professional development. Learning and the assessment of learning will continue over the two placements aligned to the expectations outlined within the Professional Capabilities Framework, to ensure that at the end of the course, you are 'work ready'.

Practice Based (Placement) Assessment

Learning achieved on placements is assessed through the compilation and submission of portfolios of evidence completed by the student. This involves providing evidence of the achievement of identified 'professional capabilities' described within each of the nine domains of the Professional Capabilities Framework. This is achieved through:

- Written reflection
- Practice observations
- Evidence of feedback from others (such as service users and carers)
- Shadowing experienced social workers
- Practice supervision and practice reports
- Critical evaluation of case work

It is the student's responsibility to gather and provide relevant evidence, with the support and direction of the Practice Educator and Practice Supervisor. The Practice Educator's final report recommends whether the student should be considered to have Passed or Failed the placement and this recommendation is scrutinised by a portfolio assessment panel comprising academics, experienced practice educators and social work practitioners and managers.
Robust processes (overseen by the Head of the Social Work Department) are in place to support students' experiences on placement. A dedicated forum, Social Work Placement Evaluation Meeting (SWPEM) that meets regularly, monitors concerns as they arise, and manages decisions and recommendations as necessary.

Independent and Self-directed Learning

This course is an undergraduate programme leading to a professional qualification and requires you to engage in significant independent, self-directed learning. This is not only to meet the academic requirements of the undergraduate qualification, but also to ensure that you are capable of engaging in continuing professional development once qualified and in practice. This will ensure that you use evidence to inform your practice and contribute to 'knowledge exchange activities' as professionals

and leaders in your field. Independent learning is supported through guided study days in the timetable. You have access to materials on Moodle, various support services (e.g. the Academic Development Department and the Centre for Academic Excellence) within the University and crucially to a comprehensive and current collection of printed and online resources carefully curated by the library in consultation with the teaching team.

In line with the expectations of Social Work England's Professional Standards and the Professional Capabilities Framework, you are expected to take responsibility for your own learning, evidencing initiative, motivation and engagement.

Support for students

The University offers support in several areas, including academic development, mental health and well-being and in relation to disability related matters. You are encouraged to engage in services available to you and will be signposted to them, by teaching and placement tutors when appropriate.

In addition to the comprehensive support services provided by the University, every student is allocated a personal tutor who will offer pastoral support to you, reviews your progress and signpost to services when and where necessary.

15	**Course Requirements**

15a

Level 4:

In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 120 credits):

Academic Modules		
Module Code	**Module Name**	**Credit Value**
SOW4051	Introduction to Social Work	20
SOW4049	Equality, Diversity and Identity in Social Work	20
SOW4050	Foundation Law and Policy for Social Work	20
SOW4054	Theories of Human Growth and the Life course.	20
SOW4052	Social Work Skills for Practice One	20
SOW4053	Social Work Skills for Practice Two	20

Level 5:

In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 120 credits including a 70 day Practice-Based Module):

Academic Modules		
Module Code	**Module Name**	**Credit Value**
SOW5048	Social Work Practice Safeguarding 1- Adults	20
SOW5049	Social Work Practice Safeguarding 1- Children	20

SOW5050	Social Work Theories in Practice	20
SOW5047	Social Work Methods in Practice: Advanced Skills	20
SOW5046	Introduction to Research for Social Workers	20
Professional Requirements: Practice Based Modules		
SOW5051	Practice Placement One (Level 5)	20

Level 6: ***In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 120 credits including a 100 day Practice-Based Module):***

Academic Modules		
Module Code	**Module Name**	**Credit Value**
SOW6***	Social Work Law and Safeguarding 2	20
SOW6***	Contemporary Issues for Practice	20
SOW6***	Research Enquiry for Evidence-Based Practice	20
SOW6***	Critical Reflection in Social Work	20
Professional Requirements: Practice Based Modules		
SOW6***	Practice Placement Two (Level 6)	40

The Professional requirements are assessed at different levels and have been aligned to the requirement of the Professional Capabilities Framework at each level.

Prerequisite:

Successful completion of Skills for Social Work Practice 1 and 2 is prerequisite to undertaking Practice Placement One.

Successful completion of the Practice Placement One is a prerequisite to undertaking Practice Placement Two.

15b	**Structure Diagram**

All Modules are core modules

Level 4

Level 5
Level 6

Year 1

SEMESTER ONE	SEMESTER TWO / THREE
SOW4051 Introduction to Social Work	SOW4050 Foundation Law and Policy for Social Work (Semester 2)
SOW4049 Equality, Diversity and Identity in Social Work	SOW4052 Social Work Skills for Practice 1 (Semester 2)
SOW4054 Theories of Human Growth and the Life Course	SOW4053 Social Work Skills for Practice 2 (Semester 2 and 3)

Year 2

SEMESTER ONE	
SOW5048 Social Work Practice Safeguarding 1-Adults 20 credits	SOW5050 Social Work Theories in Practice 20 credits
SOW5049 Social Work Practice Safeguarding 2-Children 20 credits	SOW5047 Social Work Methods in Practice: Advanced Skills 20 credits
SEMESTER TWO / THREE	
SOW5042 Introduction to Research for Social Workers 20 credits (Semester 2)	
SOW5051: Practice Placement One – 70 days 20 credits (Semesters 2 and 3) Professional Requirement	

Year 3

SEMESTER ONE	SEMESTER TWO / THREE
SOW6**** Social Work Law and Safeguarding 2 20 credits	

SOW6*** Contemporary Issues for Practice 20 credits	
SOW6**** Research Enquiry for Evidence-Based Practice 20 credits (Semester 1 and 2)	
SOW6**** Practice Placement 2 – 100days (Semesters 1,2,and 3) 40 credits Professional Requirement.	
	SOW6*** Critical Reflection in Social Work 20 credits (Semester 3)

16	Overall Student Workload and Balance of Assessment

Level 4

Workload

Academic Learning

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	272
Directed Learning	306
Private Study	622
Total Hours	1200

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	80%
Exam	0%
In-Person	20%

Level 5

Workload

Academic Learning

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	188
Directed Learning	592
Private Study	958
Total Hours	1738

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	88%
Exam	0%
In-Person	12%

Level 6

Workload

Academic Learning

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	160
Directed Learning	964
Private Study	840
Total Hours	1964

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	84%
Exam	0%
In-Person	16%