**UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

**PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**

**Professional Doctorate in Social Work (DSW) - 5 years part-time**

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| **Final award** | Doctorate in Social Work (DSW) |
| **Intermediate awards available** | Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Research  Postgraduate Certificate in Social Work Research |
| **Mode of Delivery** | UEL on Campus |
| **Details of professional body accreditation** | N/A |
| **Relevant QAA Benchmark statements** | N/A |
| **UEL Academic School** | Cass School of Education and Communities |
| **Date specification last up-dated** |  |

**The summary - Programme advertising leaflet**

**Programme content**

The Professional Doctorate in Social Work (DSW) programme is a doctoral degree providing qualified social work and alternatively qualified social care professionals, from a range of practice backgrounds, with an opportunity to create and interpret new knowledge, through original research of a quality that extends the forefront of the discipline, satisfies peer review and merits publication. The programme enables professionals, working in social work, to develop a deep and critical understanding of social work research and the methodologies underpinning such research with the ability to disseminate research through written and oral modes. ***It is important to note that The Professional Doctorate in Social Work (or the exit awards) does not lead to eligibility for registration or licensure as a social worker with a regulatory body in the UK or abroad. This reflects the Care Standards Act (2000) when “social worker” become a protected title in the UK.***

The DSW is a professional doctorate with an emphasis on original social work and social care research, in particular, research into professional practice in local and/or international contexts. The programme emphasises “practice-near” research methodologies. The programme includes four taught modules that support participants’ understanding of the subject area of their research as well as their knowledge of research methodologies. The programme structure enables participants to develop and carry out original research, and to receive regular guidance and feedback on their progress. Key features of the programme are to provide an outstanding research environment for doctoral students, and to support learners to critically develop and share their research with a range of professionals interested in similar areas of exploration.

The DSW aims at enabling qualified social workers and social care professionals to conduct high quality, practice-near research focused on interrogating, understanding and improving social work and social care policy and practice. Participants develop research skills that enable them to complete a doctoral thesis, which enhances their professional practice through critical analysis, the application of research and theory, and through becoming discerning about the validity and quality of the research evidence. The programme offers a unique opportunity to join an innovative research and learning community through local, collaborative research groups as well as international links and networks.

The academic degree of the Professional Doctorate in Social Work is awarded to candidates who have demonstrated:

1. The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
2. A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
3. The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
4. A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Realising highest academic standards, the Professional Doctorate in Social Work programme reflects:

* The aspirations of a 21st century university
* The multi-cultural and diverse society in which this university is situated
* A commitment to the local area as well as to international and comparative perspectives of social work policy and practice
* Equal opportunities and mutual respect for all
* Widening access to university education
* Inclusivity
* Flexibility
* High quality teaching and regular and responsive tutorial support

The distinctive features of the programme are:

* Doctoral study in a structured and supported mode
* An emphasis on practice-near and creative methodological approaches to social work research
* A professional and experienced tutor support system
* Individually negotiated learning trajectories and assignment topics within agreed parameters
* Module assignments (five: total 25-30,000 words) that can be directly related to the thesis topic
* A Web-based monitoring system through Moodle
* Membership of one (or more) of the research groups in the School and invitations to bi-annual School Research Conferences.
* Dedicated office space for research students

**Entry requirements**

A first degree, 2:1 or above and a minimum of three years experience of professional practice in social work or social care is the normal requirement for consideration of entry onto the Professional Doctorate. As part of the application, potential students will be required to complete a 1500-2000 word research proposal and an online application form. The programme leaders will review each application before a decision is made. Potential students will then be invited for interview at the University to discuss their application and their research proposal.

Applicants with either prior-certified learning or prior-experiential learning that closely matches the specified learning outcomes of the taught part of the programme may be able to claim exemption via agreed university procedures. No exemption can be claimed against the research part of the programme or in situations where a professional body excludes it.

Where oversea’s applicants do not have English as the first language, a minimum IELTS Academic English, or such qualifications as our University deems comparable, score of 7.0 overall, with a minimum of 6.5 in all components, is required at entry. Such assessment of English language competence must normally have been undertaken no more than two years prior to application, though relevant and more recent study in a United Kingdom Higher Education Institution may be accepted as sufficient proof of ability.

**Programme structure**

The DSW is a five-year part-time modular programme with an accompanying thesis, specifically directed to professional development in social work and social care through research. It consists of two stages. In Stage One, four compulsory modules are studied and assessed over a two-year period. In Stage Two, students complete a research thesis.

**Learning environment**

Saturday study sessions comprising of lectures, seminars, study groups and tutorials.

**Assessment**

At Stage One of the professional doctorate, assessment consists of assignments (written and visual) and presentations. These will be marked by two members of the programme team and moderated by an external examiner. Stage Two of the programme consists of a 50,000-60,000 word thesis which is examined orally (Viva Voce) conducted by an internal and external examiner. Candidates for a Professional Doctorate must successfully complete all assessed elements of their programme before the award of the degree can be made. Students with disabilities and/or particular learning needs should discuss assessments with the Programme Leader to ensure they are able to fully engage with all assessments within the programme.

**Relevance to work/profession**

Due to the nature of the programme, students are encouraged to relate their academic work to their professional contexts.

**Research/project work**

Once students have passed their Stage One assignments they then move onto Stage Two which is the research component (the 50-60k thesis). Registration of the research component can only take place following a recommendation from the relevant School Research Degrees Sub-Committee to the University Research Degrees Subcommittee of the suitability of the candidate to undertake research, of the programme of research, of the supervision arrangements and of the research environment. These approvals require appropriate academic judgement to be brought to bear on the viability of each research proposal.

Candidates for a Professional Doctorate must successfully complete all assessed elements of their programme before award of the degree can be made.

Once the research stage of the programme is reached progression will be formally reviewed annually by a Panel comprised of staff with appropriate academic and professional expertise who are independent of the candidate’s supervisory team. The School Research Degrees Sub-Committee and the University Research Degrees Subcommittee monitor the reports from these Panels.

The examination of the research component of the Professional Doctorate has two stages: firstly the submission and preliminary assessment of the research; and secondly its defence by oral examination.

**Added value**

* Doctoral study in a structured and supported mode
* A professional and experienced academic tutorial support system
* Individually negotiated learning trajectories and assignment topics within agreed parameters
* Module assignments directly related to thesis topic
* Membership of one (or more) of the research groups in the School; invitations to bi-annual School Research Conferences and contributions to the School research periodical *Research in Teacher Education*
* A dedicated research space for research students

**Your future career**

The programme is designed to benefit professionals working within a range of social work and social care contexts. It is aimed at both practicing social workers and social work workers, who see doctoral study as a key step in their own professional development, as well as a means of improving social work and social care policy and practice. As such it is of particular benefit to experienced members of staff in a variety of social work and social care organisations, including, social services, charities, voluntary agencies and private social care agencies and those involved in the teaching of social work and social care.

**How we support you**

The Cass School of Education and Communities is responsible for providing a focus to the support of our postgraduate research students. Professional Doctorate students at thesis stage will have at least two and not normally more than three supervisors, who together demonstrate an appropriate range of academic and professional experience. One supervisor shall be the Director of Studies with responsibility to supervise the candidate on a regular and frequent basis. In addition to this the Cass School of Education and Communities offers:

- an individual tutor

- access to UEL study support learning resources

- access to cross-institutional seminars

- opportunities to join research groups within Cass

- small teaching group sessions

- specialised research methods training

- detailed formative feedback on all assessed work

- a dedicated specialist librarian

- an opportunity to be published in the Cass journal *Research in Teacher Education*

At stage 2 of the programme, The Graduate School offers administrative support

**Programme aims and learning outcomes**

**What is this programme designed to achieve?**

This programme is designed to give you the opportunity to:

* Create and interpret new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to extend the forefront of the discipline, satisfy peer review and merit publication.
* Develop a deep understanding of research methodologies and to use this understanding to critically investigate educational and professional contexts.
* Disseminate research and ideas through written and oral modes clearly and critically

**What will you learn**

A student who is awarded a Professional Doctorate will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes:

Created and interpreted new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, which extends the forefront of the discipline and merits publication;

Systematically acquired an understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline linked to an area of professional practice;

The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, application or understanding at the forefront of the discipline and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;

A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry;

Ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences:

Ability to continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches;

The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

Students who successfully complete their Doctorates in Social Work will have gained expertise in the following areas:

**Knowledge**

* In-depth knowledge of social work issues related to your professional practice
* In-depth knowledge of research methodologies and techniques, enquiry and critical evaluation
* Creation and interpretation of new knowledge within your own professional area of expertise

**Thinking skills (cognitive/intellectual)**

* Critical evaluation of existing research and publications
* Analysis and synthesis of data, and the ability to make decisions based on evidence
* Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between claims and evidence

**Subject-Based Practical skills**

* Current issues, perspectives and debates in social work policy and practice
* Critical understanding of concepts, problems and issues within their linguistic, socio-linguistic, socio-cultural and socio-political professional contexts
* Approaches for the analysis and evaluation of social work research

**Skills for life and work (general/key/transferable skills)**

* Problem-solving skills – working independently and within teams
* Effective communication skills – to both specialists and non-specialists
* Data presentation
* Interpersonal skills – interaction with peers
* Negotiation and interviewing skills
* Self-reflection and evaluation
* Management of information
* Web-based research and interaction

**The programme structure**

**Introduction**

All programmes are credit-rated to help you to understand the amount and level of study that is needed.

One credit is equal to 10 hours of directed study time (this includes everything you do e.g. lecture, seminar and private study).

Credits are assigned to one of 5 levels:

3 equivalent in standard to GCE 'A' level and is intended to prepare students for year one of an undergraduate degree programme

4 equivalent in standard to the first year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme

5 equivalent in standard to the second year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme

6 equivalent in standard to the third year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme

7 equivalent in standard to a Masters degree

8 equivalent in standard to a Doctorate degree

**Credit rating**

The overall credit rating for this programme is 540 credits for the Professional Doctorate.

**Typical duration**

It should be noted that the Doctorate in Social Work at the Cass School of Education and Communities is a five-year part time only programme consisting of Stage 1 (taught programme) and Stage 2 (thesis). The period of registration takes place in Stage 2 of the DSW.

The normal minimum and maximum periods of enrolment on a Professional Doctorate is as follows:

Minimum Maximum

Part-time 60 months 72 months

**How the teaching year is divided**

The teaching year begins in September and ends in July. The programme has one entry point in September. It is expected that the four modules of Stage One of the programme will be passed (Modules 1 & 2 in year one; Modules 3 & 4 in year 2).

**What you will study when**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **UEL Module**  **Code** | **Module Title** | **Credit** | **Status\*** |
| **7** | **Module 1**  **SK7001** | **Critically engaging with the literature** | **60** | **Core** |
| **7** | **Module 2**  **Sk7002** | **Philosophy and practice of research** | **30** | **Core** |
| **8** | **Module 3**  **SK8001** | **Research methodology – perspectives on research** | **30** | **Core** |
| **8** | **Module 4**  **SK8002** | **Integrating theory, research and ethical practice – Moving towards Registration** | **30** | **Core** |
| **8** | **Stage 2** | **Thesis** | **390** | **Core** |

*\*Please Note - A core module for a programme is a module which a student must have passed (i.e. been awarded credit) in order to achieve the relevant named award.*

**Requirements for gaining an award**

Candidates for a Professional Doctorate must successfully complete all assessed elements of their programme before award of the degree can be made. In line with the university regulations students who obtain the following credits will be awarded:

*Postgraduate Awards*

Postgraduate Diploma: A programme leading to a Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Research consists of 120 credits at Level 7 (M) or Level 8 (D)

Postgraduate Certificate: A programme leading to a Postgraduate Certificate in Social Work Research consists of 60 credits at Level 7 (M) or Level 8 (D)

Professional Doctorate in Social Work (DSW): A programme leading to a Professional Doctorate in Education consisting of a total of 540 credits: 90 credits at Level 7, 60 taught credits at Level 8 (D) and 390 research credits at Level 8 (D)

**Teaching, learning and assessment**

**Teaching and learning**

Knowledge is developed through

* lecturers
* seminars
* workshops
* tutorials
* research papers
* presentations and conferences

Thinking skills are developed through

* tutorials
* workshops
* carefully planned tutorial feedback, and feedback on written work
* group activities, discussion, seminars
* research methodology

Practical skills are developed through

* tutorials
* workshops
* presentations

Skills for life and work (general skills) are developed through

* negotiated learning
* researching skills

**Assessment**

*Knowledge is assessed by formative, summative and ipsative strategies including:*

* *Assignments*
* *Presentations*
* *Workshops*
* *Seminars*
* *The Thesis*

*Thinking skills are assessed by*

* *written assignments*
* *poster presentations*
* *seminars*
* *workshops*
* *tutorials*
* *thesis*

*Practical skills are assessed by*

* *Seminars*
* *Workshops*
* *Presentations and conferences*

*Skills for life and work (general skills) are assessed by*

* *Seminar work*
* *Workshops*
* *Tutorials*

**How we assure the quality of this programme**

**Before this programme started**

Before this programme started, the following was checked:

* there would be enough qualified staff to teach the programme;
* adequate resources would be in place;
* the overall aims and objectives were appropriate;
* the content of the programme met national benchmark requirements;
* the programme met any professional/statutory body requirements;
* the proposal met other internal quality criteria covering a range of issues such as admissions policy, teaching, learning and assessment strategy and student support mechanisms.

This is done through a process of programme approval which involves consulting academic experts including some subject specialists from other institutions.

**How we monitor the quality of this programme**

The quality of this programme is monitored each year through evaluating:

* external examiner reports (considering quality and standards);
* statistical information (considering issues such as the pass rate);
* student feedback.

Drawing on this and other information, programme teams undertake the annual Review and Enhancement Process which is co-ordinated at School level and includes student participation. The process is monitored by the Quality and Standards Committee.

Once every six years an in-depth review of the whole subject area is undertaken by a panel that includes at least two external subject specialists. The panel considers documents, looks at student work, speaks to current and former students and speaks to staff before drawing its conclusions. The result is a report highlighting good practice and identifying areas where action is needed.

**The role of the programme committee**

This programme has a programme committee comprising all relevant teaching staff, student representatives and others who make a contribution towards the effective operation of the programme (e.g. library/technician staff). The committee has responsibilities for the quality of the programme. It provides input into the operation of the Review and Enhancement Process and proposes changes to improve quality. The programme committee plays a critical role in the quality assurance procedures.

**The role of external examiners**

The standard of this programme is monitored by at least one external examiner. External examiners have two primary responsibilities:

* To ensure the standard of the programme;
* To ensure that justice is done to individual students.

External examiners fulfil these responsibilities in a variety of ways including:

* Approving exam papers/assignments;
* Attending assessment boards;
* Reviewing samples of student work and moderating marks;
* Ensuring that regulations are followed;
* Providing feedback through an annual report that enables us to make improvements for the future.

The external examiner reports for this programme are located on the UEL virtual learning environment (Moodle) on the School noticeboard under the section entitled ‘External Examiner Reports & Responses’. You can also view a list of the external examiners for the UEL School by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminersystem/currentexaminers/>

**Listening to the views of students**

The following methods for gaining student feedback are used on this programme:

* *Module evaluations*
* *Student representation on programme committees*
* *Student/Staff consultative committee*

Students are notified of the action taken through:

* *circulating the minutes of the programme committee*
* *providing details on the programme moodle pages*

**Listening to the views of others**

The following methods are used for gaining the views of other interested parties:

* *Questionnaires to former students*
* *Annual student satisfaction questionnaire*

**Further information**

Further information about this programme is available from:

* The UEL web site (<http://www.uel.ac.uk>)
* The student handbook (https://moodle.uel.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=12425)
* UEL Manual of General Regulations (<http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/policies/manual/>)
* UEL Quality Manual (<http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/policies/qualitymanual/>)
* The Graduate School (<http://www.uel.ac.uk/gradschool/>)