

# International Social Work with Refugee Studies

*Please refer to the programme specification for MA International Social Welfare with Refugee Studies.*

<b>Final award</b>	MA
<b>Intermediate awards available</b>	PGCert, PGDip
<b>UCAS code</b>	N/A
<b>Details of professional body accreditation</b>	N/A
<b>Relevant QAA Benchmark statements</b>	N/A
<b>Date specification last up-dated</b>	May 2013

## Profile

### The summary - programme advertising leaflet

#### Programme content

The MA in International Social Work and Refugee Studies is a taught postgraduate programme for students who are already qualified in social work or who work with refugees or asylum seekers. Students study international social work, introduction to refugee studies or a similar module, research methods, and one other optional modules relevant to social work or refugee studies. Students undertake a research-based dissertation related to social work or refugee studies, based on their experience of at least one other country.

#### MA International Social Work and Refugee Studies at UEL

The distinctive feature of the MA in International Social Work and Refugee Studies is that it offers an opportunity for qualified social workers or people who work with refugees and asylum seekers from all over the world to share together in learning about Social Work and Refugee Studies across the globe.

Students are part of a multi-cultural peer group recruited from countries around the world as well as from the locality.

The course content is highly innovative in that it explores and analyses social change and professional responses in a globalised world and equips students for future local or international practice in their area of work.

The dissertation enables students to tailor their research to reflect their own interests and to select their own topic, with the emphasis being on learning from other countries and cultures. The varied teaching, learning and assessment methods draw on student experience and are underpinned by principles of adult learning, individual responsibility and group support.

#### Admission requirements

A good Hons degree in any discipline. Applicants should be able to demonstrate a clear commitment to refugee related work and issues.

A selection is made on the basis of a written application supported by two satisfactory references. Decisions will be based on evidence of the following:

- a professional qualification in social work or relevant field (note UK applicants must be qualified in social work – see below);
- an indication (e.g. through personal statement) that the applicant has relevant previous experience and that the course is appropriate to future work plans;
- evidence of ability to study at advanced level
- realistic plans for financial support, including during any study or project period abroad.

*Note: This is an advanced course and not a conversion course. It is therefore not suitable for applicants without prior qualifications in social work or a related profession or for applicants wishing to gain a basic professional qualification in the UK.*

*UK applicants should also note that they must be qualified social workers in order to register for this programme as the term "social work" is protected by UK law. UK applicants who are refugee workers without social work qualifications may instead apply for the MA in Refugee Studies and Community Development.*

In the case of applicants whose first language is not English, then IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent) is required. International qualifications will be checked for appropriate matriculation to UK Higher Education postgraduate programmes.

Students who apply to enter stages of the programme may be admitted through normal Accreditation of Experiential Learning (AEL) or Accreditation of Certificated Learning (ACL) processes, or through an approved articulation agreement. Therefore such applicants must be able to demonstrate and evidence that they have the required learning outcomes as listed in the modules for which they are seeking exemption.

### **Programme structure**

The MA in International Social Work and Refugee Studies programme comprises two core modules ‘International Social Work’ and ‘Researching and Learning’, supplemented by two option modules which must relate to refugee studies. These are followed by a dissertation. Students are expected to choose two options from a selection of modules that are appropriate to refugee studies. Normally students will be able to make a selection from two or three modules in the first semester relevant to refugee studies, with a similar choice in the second semester. Teaching on the compulsory ‘Researching and Learning’ module may be shared with other students on MA Programmes in the School.

Intake is in September, with a possible February start for students wishing to undertake the course part-time. The four taught modules are offered across Semesters A and B (that is, over one academic year for full-time students and over two years for part-time students). Students proceeding to the MA undertake a fifth module (the dissertation) in the third (or fifth) semester. The course for full-time students therefore extends beyond a calendar year although students from abroad may return to home countries for the third semester.

### **Learning environment**

The MA in International Social Work and Refugee Studies programme makes use primarily of lectures and seminars in relation to the taught modules, as well as project group meetings in preparation for the dissertation module. Additionally students are expected to contribute significant time to self-directed learning as highlighted in the lectures, seminars and project group meetings. In some modules students are expected to contribute to individual or group class presentations; and all students proceeding to the MA are expected to undertake individual project work, normally outside the UK.

### **Assessment**

All modules are assessed, usually by a mixture of oral and written assignments with an emphasis on the latter. Written assignments may take the form of seminar papers, essays or reports, and project work in the final module is assessed through a dissertation. Assessment takes place at the end of each semester. Course work may include in-class tests but there are no examinations.

### **Relevance to work/profession**

Although this programme does not carry a professional award (since it is assumed that all students already have a relevant qualification) there is an expectation that students will be able to draw on previous or current work experience in class presentations and written assignments as well as preparing students for career change or development.

### **Thesis/Dissertation/project work**

Preparation for the final dissertation project commences in the Research and Learning module which is scheduled for Semester B when students begin the process of defining their selected research topic and approach. The data collection stage of project work is normally undertaken outside the UK and supported through e-mail contact with a UEL supervisor, as is the writing up stage of the dissertation. Projects should aim to investigate 'real life issues' in relevant policy and practice areas and previous examples have included: resettlement programmes for refugees in the Balkan region; evaluation of community responses to disability in Namibia; identification of good practice by NGOs in relation to rehabilitation of children who have been commercially sexually exploited; addressing the needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Malta; attitudes to repatriation of Afghan refugees in England and Pakistan; changes in Dublin's children and families statutory social services.

The underlying principle is that UK social workers should undertake research abroad, whilst international students may if they wish undertake research in UK. Research must be international in its context and nature.

### **Added value**

Students on this programme will benefit from participation in a very diverse international group of students. They will also benefit from teaching from lecturers committed to international perspectives, particularly in relation to refugee studies, international development, and global social policy.

### **Your future career**

A qualification at Masters level is normally essential for people seeking employment in International welfare and humanitarian organisations, including the United Nations and major Non-Governmental Organisations. Successful completion of the MA in International Social Work and Refugee Studies programme has enabled previous students to take up a variety of posts in the London region or their country of origin. Examples of subsequent employment include: work in a UN resettlement programme; as a social worker with asylum seekers in the Netherlands; social work with unaccompanied young asylum seekers in a UK local authority children's services department; as a specialist social worker working with refugees in Malta. The award also lays the basis for progression to further research, which may be either agency based or through PhD study (full-time or part-time). Alternatively students may wish to use this Programme as the basis for moving on to a professional doctorate.

### **How we support you**

Support to students is provided initially through module leaders who are knowledgeable about their teaching areas, and who are able to monitor the input of students to classes as well as their progress in assessment. The Programme Leader provides more general tutorial support, and the emphasis is also placed on the role of the student group as being both a resource and providing peer support.

Research training is given in relevant selected methods and, given the nature of the course, significant use is made of e-mail communications and the Virtual Learning Environment (UEL Plus). Social Work at UEL has strong collaborative links with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust which has a national and international reputation in the field of children and families work and mental health, and there is a joint Social Work Research Centre which encourages staff and postgraduate students to have their research published and disseminated. A number of former students on this programme have had their dissertations written up as articles in refereed journals, and staff are delighted to assist with this.

### **Bonus factors**

#### Overseas Experience

- opportunity to gain experience of conducting research in another country
- opportunity to share experience with students from other countries

#### Experience of international agencies or UK social work agencies

- for UK students there is an opportunity to learn first-hand of the work of international agencies or social work organisations in another country
- for international students there will be opportunities to learn first-hand about social work in the UK

potential for dissertations to be written up for publication.

## **Outcomes**

### **Programme aims and learning outcomes**

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

This programme is designed to give you the opportunity to:

- enhance your understanding of global influences on socio-economic and welfare developments, and appreciate the place of Europe in a wider framework;
- increase your knowledge of comparative and cross national welfare issues, with particular reference to refugee studies and migration and to global social policy and practice;
- develop skills in comparative analysis and research as relevant to the field of work of the social professions
- engage in analysis of roles of social professionals and their place in promoting social change and empowerment at a local and global level;
- engage in intercultural learning in ways which promote developments in professional knowledge and practice at cross-national and international levels.

**What will you learn?**

### **Knowledge**

- about the inter-relationship between countries and communities globally
- about the ways in which events and developments in one part of the world impact on the social conditions and life chances of individuals and communities in other societies
- about ways of comparing social work and refugee work in different countries

### **Thinking skills**

- enhancing your ability to critically analyse material
- relating general theories to specific cases that are relevant to the role of social professionals;
- assessing and analysing complex human situations in an international perspective

### **Subject-Based Practical skills**

- presentation of topic to an international audience (fellow students)
- evaluate theory and research and apply the outcomes of research
- test out skills in setting up and carrying out a small scale research project

### **Skills for life and work (general skills)**

- presentation skills
- networking skills
- cross cultural and intercultural communication skills
- organising time and its effective use
- taking responsibility for original piece of own work

## **Structure**

### **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:

- 0 - equivalent in standard to GCE 'A' level and is intended to prepare students for year one of an undergraduate degree programme
- 1 - equivalent in standard to the first year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- 2 - equivalent in standard to the second year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- 3 - equivalent in standard to the third year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- M - equivalent in standard to a Masters degree

## Credit rating

The overall credit-rating of this programme is:-

- 180 credits for the MA in International Social Work and Refugee Studies.
- A student who gains 60 credits is awarded a Postgraduate Certificate in International Social Work and Refugee Studies
- A student who gains 120 credits is awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in International Social Work and Refugee Studies

## Typical duration

The typical duration of this programme is three semesters full-time or six semester part-time. It is possible to move from full-time to part-time study and vice-versa to accommodate any external factors such as financial constraints or domestic commitments. Many of our students make use of this flexibility and this may impact on the overall duration of their study period.

## How the teaching year is divided

The teaching year is divided into two semesters of roughly equal length. A typical full-time student will study two 30-credit modules per semester and a typical part-time student will study one 30-credit module per semester.

In this programme students are expected to spend the summer period of year one, if full-time, or year two, if part-time, either abroad or in conducting comparative research in the UK or abroad. They complete the dissertation in the semester that follows.

## What you will study when

Level	UEL Module Code	Module Title	Credit Status
-------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

<b>1</b>	<b>PSM 302</b>	<b>International Social Work</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Core</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>varies according to choice</b>	<b>option module, choice to be agreed with Programme Leader but must relate to refugee studies</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Option</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>PSM 301</b>	<b>Research and Learning</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Core</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>varies according to choice</b>	<b>option module, choice to be agreed with Programme Leader but must relate to refugee studies</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Option</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>PSM 307</b>	<b>Dissertation</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>Core</b>

### **Requirements for gaining an award**

- In order to gain a Postgraduate Certificate, you will need to obtain 60 credits at Level M.
- In order to gain a Postgraduate Diploma, you will need to obtain 120 credits at Level M
- In order to obtain a Masters, you will need to obtain 180 credits at Level M. These credits will include a 60 credit level M core module of advanced independent research.

### **Masters Award Classification**

Where a student is eligible for an Masters award then the award classification is determined by calculating the arithmetic mean of all marks and applying the mark obtained as a percentage, with all decimals points rounded up to the nearest whole number, to the following classification

70% - 100% Distinction  
60% - 69% Merit  
50% - 59% Pass  
0% - 49% Not Passed

## **Assessment**

### **Teaching, learning and assessment**

#### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Learning outcomes**

Knowledge is developed through

- lectures
- class presentations
- private study

Thinking skills are developed through

- discussions in seminar groups
- project group meetings
- private study

Practical skills are developed through

- class presentations
- project group meetings
- research project / dissertation

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

- project group meetings
- research project / dissertation
- private study

*Note: given that this is a Masters level course emphasis is placed on the student's ability to adopt a systematic approach to private study as well as taking full advantage of the opportunities for gaining knowledge and developing communication and networking skills through the availability of subject related research seminars and access to other resources and institutions.*

## **Assessment**

Knowledge is assessed by

- seminar papers
- essays
- reports
- dissertation

Thinking skills are assessed by

- personal portfolios and/or learning agreements
- project proposal
- essays
- dissertation

Practical skills are assessed by

- class presentations
- projects

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

- class presentations
- project presentations

# Quality

## How we assure the quality of this programme

### Before this programme started

Before the 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 field 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

### **Listening to the views of students**

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

- Module evaluations
- Student representation on MA in International Social Work and Refugee Studies programme committee (shared with MA in International Social Work and Refugee Studies)
- informal feedback – welcome at any time

Students are notified of the action taken through:

- circulating the minutes of the programme committee usually through e-mail or UEL Plus
- newsletters usually circulated through e-mail or UEL Plus
- during vacations, if necessary, by letter to the correspondence address you registered with the university at enrolment

### **Listening to the views of others**

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

- Annual university student satisfaction questionnaire
- Collating information from module evaluations
- Seeking information from former students

## **Further Information**

### **Where you can find further information**

This MA is one of a portfolio of programmes offered by the University of East London.

**UK applicants:** while this programme does not qualify as a General Social Care Council recognised post-qualifying (PQ) programme PQ, UEL does offers the full range of PQ

programmes, some of which are run in conjunction with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. These range from BA Level 3, through MA levels right up to professional doctorates.

See <http://www.uel.ac.uk/programmes/hss/undergraduate/summary/dippqsw.htm> For more information.

Further information about this programme is available from:

- [The UEL web site](#)
- The student handbook
- Module study guides
- [UEL Manual of General Regulations](#)
- [UEL Quality Manual](#)
- [Regulations for the Academic Framework](#)
- [School web pages](#)