Module description

This module is part of the Open University Degrees in Social Work in Wales. Students must be registered for the degree, have passed K113 and be sponsored by their employing agency. The module helps them to understand the application of social work practice, addressing key roles for social workers and relevant knowledge, values and skills for the social work process. The module includes a 90-day practice learning opportunity under the supervision of a practice assessor appointed by the student’s sponsoring agency. The module includes written, audio, CDROM and web-based resources, and communication through online forums, supported by tutors.

Welsh language policy

The Open University is working towards the introduction of a Welsh language policy for this programme and wishes to encourage applications from suitably qualified people who can communicate in Welsh. If you apply to teach the programme in Wales, an ability to communicate in Welsh would be advantageous. You are not currently expected to teach in Welsh.

Social work degree programme tutor

The programme tutor has a broader role in relation to the professional programme; they are vital to the success of the programme and its professional credibility. These programme tutors have a particular responsibility for practice issues, for facilitating practice learning meetings in a student's practice learning opportunity and for monitoring the overall progress of their student group, particularly progress on practice learning opportunities. Duties entail a mix of individual student support and group work as well as contact with sponsoring employers. Overall, the role is a challenging one and could be described as combining aspects of an associate lecturer, a mentor and a coordinator. Experience has proved this role cannot be undertaken by someone in full-time employment elsewhere due to the concentrated and occasionally unpredictable pattern of the work.

The Open University social work degree is a professionally accredited learning work-based programme. The number of student support hours is greater than in the usual associate lecturer contract and the job description for the programme tutors includes duties outside the prescribed role for associate lecturers. For this reason, we have to divide the programme tutors duties into two separate job descriptions:

- the substantive associate lecturer contract covering the vast majority of the work (job description 1 below)
- a second contract including duties delegated by the Staff Tutor for briefings, promotional events and support to quality assurance (job description 2 below).

Person specification for programme tutor

You should have:

- a first degree or equivalent in a relevant discipline
- a professional social work qualification and practice experience (preferably recent)
- experience of delivering social work education as a practice teacher, practice assessor or associate lecturer
- familiarity with the literature, policies and research in social work
- familiarity with current practice regarding delivery of personal social services and social work
- sensitivity to the needs of adult learners and an understanding of how adults learn
- evidence of ability to negotiate, liaise and problem-solve with a range of agency contacts
- experience in the use of IT or a willingness to train and experiment with IT.

Programme tutor: job description 1

- Monitoring the progress of up to a maximum of 10 K216 or K315 students throughout their time on the programme.
  
  This means being available by phone, email and through visits to support students undertaking practice learning opportunities and assist them with any issues which might affect their successful completion. Examples might include: being allocated too much, or too little work by their assessor or supervisor; assessor, supervisor or student being ill, the student being overloaded or falling behind with academic work.
  
  Also requires maintaining connection with other tutors (students have two tutors for this module and will be doing other modules alongside)
  
  - Providing specialist programme support, including advice on practice-issues for allocated students and assisting their understanding of OU systems, policies and practices, as necessary.

As above

- Taking action as necessary (in association with other relevant staff) if a student is at risk of failing: evaluating need for additional support and ensuring that it is provided.
  
  This probably will entail a meeting with the student, either alone or with her practice assessor and/or supervisor to develop a plan of action to assist the student to complete
  
  - presenting an annual introductory workshop on the programme, for allocated students.

One Saturday at the beginning of the academic year:

- coordinating and attending three face-to-face meetings each year with each student and their practice assessor, in order to contribute to:
  establishment of the practice learning agreement
  the mid point review
  the end of practice learning review

- reviewing and reporting (via appropriate forms) on student progress for:
  Examination and Assessment Boards

- maintaining satisfactory records for each allocated student.

Programme tutor: job description 2

The number of contracted days will be five days per programme tutor per student group.

Duties will typically include the following

- support of Quality Assurance processes and links with Agencies and practice placement settings
  in consultation with the line-manager (Staff Tutor) report on the quality assurance issues concerning practice arrangements.

- undertake audit of practice location by:
  completing a checklist form on the adequacy of the practice arrangements
  feeding back (via the Staff Tutor) on the adequacy of the practice arrangements
  submit checklist form to The Open University.
In addition some programme tutors may be involved in ad hoc events for which additional payment up to a maximum of five days will be made.

- ad hoc events
  - presenting a briefing session and workshop forum for practice assessors facilitating or contributing to Open Days or other promotional events
  - supporting the Staff Tutor in liaison work with agencies.

Additional information

- References must include at least one professional practice reference relating to social work practice or social work education from a current or recent employer.

Module related details - a full explanation can be found on the website

Credits awarded to the student for the successful completion of a module: 60
Number of assignments submitted by the student: 1a
Method of submission for assignments: 1a
Level of ICT requirements: 2
Number of students likely to be in a standard group: 10
Salary band: 8
Estimated number of hours per teaching week: 6.5