

DOCTORATE IN PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

(Health and Social Care Practice)

Aims & Outcomes of the Programme

The focus of the program is on professional and interprofessional concerns in health and social care. The programme is targeted primarily at professionals who seek advancement to positions requiring career progression involving more substantial levels of leadership or academic development. It is also targeted towards those in a range of different professional groups in the health and social care sectors.

The aims of this programme are to:

- To provide transferable knowledge and skills which underpin the theory and practice of health and social care professions in complex environments;
- To equip practicing health and social care professionals to provide leadership and management in their specific fields;
- To enable professionals to contribute to the development of their profession by developing new knowledge through undertaking original research and advanced level scholarship, evaluating and commissioning research, and developing advanced practice informed by theoretical analysis;
- To develop practitioners' skills, knowledge and expertise for work at senior levels, and also help them to undertake practitioner researcher roles;
- To enable practitioners to make significant contributions to their profession by undertaking, evaluating and supporting research which is of direct relevance to clinical or professional practice and the workplace but which also has academic credibility.

The approach is critical and reflexive, and uses an approach based on adult learning models. It is underpinned by social science perspectives, which take as their basis an understanding of the professions in social and cultural context, and may include social, political or economic understandings of how professions operate. This includes an appreciation of the global policy context and how it influences contemporary practice and the organisational settings within which health and social care professionals work.

The outcomes of the programme are as follows:

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, as well as particular skills, as follows.

Knowledge and understanding

- A complex understanding of organisational contexts and their impact on professional and interprofessional practice;
- An advanced understanding of the different facets of professional practice and how they interact;
- A coherent theoretical framework to underpin the connection between research and professional learning and practice;
- Comprehensive knowledge of key approaches and methods in researching professional practice and the key justifications which inform their usage;
- An appreciation of the range of perspectives on research and of the complex interplay between them;
- A sophisticated understanding of adult learning principles and how they inform learning in different settings, especially practice settings.

Skills

- Apply an understanding of complex global developments and policy to specific concerns in the student's own field of work at local levels
- Develop a continuing and robust professional identity and sense of professionalism in relation to key current challenges facing health and social care professions
- Advanced levels of critical analysis, evaluation and interpretation of the evidence underpinning relevant policy or practice in the student's own field of work.
- Ability to critically reflect upon the complexities of key professional practices and policies and how they are implemented
- A high-level ability to critically evaluate key literature and research studies relevant to the student's own field of work.
- Ability to devise relevant, topical and significant research questions from the student's own field of work
- Ability to design and conduct research relevant to policy or practice in the student's own field of work
- Ability to commission high quality research conducted by others and to evaluate it appropriately
- Ability to write papers suitable for publication in refereed forums relevant to the student's own field of work
- Ability to disseminate research findings in high level forums in ways relevant to the student's profession and practitioners in that profession
- Ability to provide leadership in a professional area relevant to the student's own field of work

* Transferable skills

The Department of Social Work office is on the 3rd floor of 11 Bedford Sq. and Room 105 Senate House. While students will mainly attend Royal Holloway's central London base in Bedford Square, students may also wish to use the Egham campus to access the library and other facilities.

Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching approach is based on the principles of adult learning, so that student concerns will also arise from their own practice and workplace setting, and will be made relevant to their experiences.

The broad approach will involve a range of methods, and this combination of methods will be used to enable different learning outcomes to be achieved. These teaching and learning methods include lectures, seminars, distance learning materials and on-line tutorial and discussion groups.

Key course components will be taught in block mode at Bedford Square campus or Senate House. Block sessions will be conducted in 3-day blocks.

The *Professions and Professionalism in Context (or Professional and Interprofessional Practice)* and *Research for Professional Practitioners* courses will be offered to part-time students in their first year of registration. These two courses will be taught during the three days of Block teaching that will take place three times per year. Each course will comprise of 3 days of lectures, workshops, interactive small group discussions and individual tutorials. In between the block teaching there will be on-line communication with lecturers and other students.

A similar format will be followed for the *Professional and Interprofessional Practice (or Professions and Professionalism in Context)* and *Methods for Practice Researchers* courses in the second year of a part-time programme, although the research teaching will be in the first part of the second year in order to enable students to prepare thesis outline.

In the third year, part-time students will be developing their portfolio and research.

Sessions will be offered on a monthly basis over a nine-month period. These sessions will comprise mainly of interactive seminars, presentations by students and individual tutorials. Throughout the programme on-line material (readings, lectures) and discussions will support face-to-face teaching sessions. Sessions will be organised as far as possible to make attendance accessible for students from outside the London area and also from overseas.

The final years (up to four more part-time) will be for the student to complete their thesis. Individual tutorials will be arranged between students and their supervisors.

Students will also have the option to access relevant research classes taught in existing programs (eg. M. Res.) at other SWan HEI sites.

Supervision of research work will include a “de facto” co-supervision through formal mentorship from relevant senior practitioners. Formal agreements will be signed with these individuals, and “in-kind” payments will be negotiated, such as access to research consultation services and/or partnership on grant applications.

Assessment tasks, where possible, will be organised to contribute directly to the research that the student plans to undertake for the thesis. For example, in the inter/professional stream students will be encouraged to undertake reviews of literature in key policy or professional areas which have a direct bearing on their research topic, and which may serve as a preliminary literature review for their thesis. In the research stream, students will be encouraged to write assignments on research design and methods, which may also serve as portions of chapters for their thesis.

Assignment requirements will also, where relevant, mirror requirements for submittable journal articles, and students will be encouraged to submit these for publication. (Submission and/or acceptance will however not be a requirement for satisfactory assessment)

For the professional portfolio, a mix of journal entries and reflective pieces will be required.

Each course will require the equivalent of one major assignment of 4,000 - 5,000 words, but this may be made up of a series of smaller assignments/exercises. In most instances the work required for each assignment may be used as a basis for other assignments. Students will be permitted to request informal advice on aspects of written work for assignment, before submission of the final piece. This is an important strategy a) to provide support and b) to avoid plagiarism.

The maximum thesis length is 50,000 words - excluding bibliography and appendices.

Programme Structure and Requirements

Programmes leading to the award of Doctorate in Professional Studies (DPS) will include elements of a practical, vocational and professional nature as well as formally-taught elements, and will include a substantial research element at HE Doctorate Level which is of a nature appropriate to the discipline and is presented in the form of a thesis.

The programme will comprise:

6 units organized into 3 streams:

- *Research for practitioners* (includes intro. to social research; research design; qualitative and quantitative methods; innovative methods for the research of practice) (11% weighting) (60 CP out of total of 540)
- *Professional and interprofessional practice* (includes global and national contexts of professions; policy contexts; major issues facing profession in west

and in developing world; professionalism and reflexivity; professional expertise) (11% weighting) (60 CP out of total of 540)

- *Portfolio* (may include electives, personal learning plans, articles submitted for publication application of research learning to specific topics and pre-dissertation work) (11% weighting) (60 CP out of total of 540)

PLUS

- 50,000-word Thesis (66% weighting) (360 CP out of total of 540)

The units may be taken on a modular basis, within the following parameters:

- The first research unit needs to be undertaken before the second research unit;
- Substantial work on the thesis may not be undertaken before successful completion of the first research unit;
- The research units would normally be undertaken earlier in the programme;
- All coursework must be completed successfully before the thesis is completed;
- The thesis shall be submitted not earlier than one year and not later than three years following the completion of course work.

Award requirements:

Minimum pass mark is 50% for each piece of work.