

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Doctorate, Master's Degree programme and Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Studies (Health and Social Care Practice)**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2016**.

The focus of the programme is on professional and inter-professional 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 provide transferable knowledge and skills which underpin the theory and practice of health and social care professions in complex environments ;
- To equip practising 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 enable 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 context and how it influences contemporary practice and policy and the organisational settings within which health and social care professionals work.

The programme is studied over a *minimum* of three years full-time, or the equivalent part time, although we would recommend students take *up to five years full time* or the equivalent part time to complete the programme. In the first year the programme will only be offered on a part-time basis.

Further information

[Learning outcomes](#)

[Teaching, learning and assessment](#)

[Thesis Outline approval, review and submission](#)

[Process of transition from coursework to thesis component](#)

[Requirements of the DPS \(Health and Social Care Practice\)Thesis](#)

[Student support and guidance](#)

[Admission requirements](#)

[Further learning and career opportunities](#)

[Indicators of quality and standards](#) [Nomenclature of awards](#)

For students registered in or after September 2016

Version 2.1

Dated: 24/03/16

Learning outcomes

Teaching and learning in the programme are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

- A complex understanding of organisational contexts and their impact on professional and inter-professional 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

[Back to top](#)

Teaching, learning and assessment

The 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.

For students registered in or after September 2016

Version 2.1

Dated: 24/03/16

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

The professional and first research course 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 4.5 days teaching activity. This includes the block 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, directed reading tasks, and reflective exercises. The same format will be followed for the inter-professional and second research course in the second year of a part-time programme.

In the third year part-time students will be developing their portfolio and thesis. 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 three 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 programmes (e.g. MRes.) at other SWan Higher Education Institution (HEI) sites.

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 unit 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 b) to avoid plagiarism.

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

[Back to top](#)

Details of the programme structure(s)

Programmes leading to the award of 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.

For students registered in or after September 2016

Version 2.1

Dated: 24/03/16

The programme will comprise:

Five course units organized into three streams:

- *Research for practitioners (includes intro. to social research; research design; qualitative and quantitative methods; innovative methods for the research of practice)*

Research for Professional Practitioners [30 credits]

Methods for Practitioner Researchers [30 credits]

- *Professional and inter-professional 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)*

Professionalism and Inter Professionalism [30 credits]

Social Policy and Professional Practice [30 credits]

- *Portfolio (may include electives, personal learning plans, articles submitted for publication application of research learning to specific topics and pre-dissertation work)*

Portfolio [60 credits]

PLUS

- **Thesis (50,000 words) [360 credits]**

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.

The **Master's degree** may be awarded if a student has passed all the four taught modules – Professions and professionalism in context [30 credits], Professional and inter-professional practice [30 credits], Research for Professional Practitioners [30 credits], and Methods for Practitioner Researchers [30 credits] – plus has also successfully completed the Portfolio [60 credits] – (Total 180 credits) and the student is either ineligible or has chosen not to proceed to the Thesis, or has failed the Thesis on either the first or second attempt.

The **Postgraduate Diploma** may be awarded if a student has passed all the four taught modules – Professions and professionalism in context [30 credits], Professional and inter-professional practice [30 credits], Research for

Professional Practitioners [30 credits], and Methods for Practitioner Researchers [30 credits] – (Total 120 credits) and the student is either ineligible or has chosen not to proceed to the Portfolio or the Thesis, or has failed the Portfolio or the Thesis on either the first or second attempt.

[Back to top](#)

Thesis outline approval, review and submission

Where relevant, students will design and write assignments (for each unit) which support the topic of their thesis choice. They will however be required to submit a specific thesis outline half way through the second year (part time) of the program, and before registering in the thesis unit. The outline will be approved in a two stage process: First, students will present their work to an open forum (other students and staff). After revisions made on the basis of feedback from this forum, the outline will be submitted to a sub-committee of the program committee (comprised of the course co-ordinator, the co-ordinator of the thesis unit, the co-ordinator of at least one of the research units, and the prospective supervisor). The outline will need to be approved by the sub-committee, and the student will normally have attained pass grade levels to be approved to proceed for registration in the thesis unit. Students will be allowed to make only two attempts at the submission process. If the student's outline is not approved, the student will not be permitted to register for the thesis. In these cases an appropriate exit award will be considered, provided that other units in the program have been completed successfully.

Process of transition from coursework to thesis component

As stated above, students will need to have submitted, and had approved, a thesis outline before proceeding to registration in the thesis unit. However there will be ongoing preparation for thesis work from the beginning of the program. Some of this will take place in portfolio sessions, but, as also stated above, students will be encouraged to undertake assignment work in other units which supports their intended thesis work. There will also be guidance in writing the thesis outline provided in portfolio sessions. Students will also be required to present their planned work in seminars to other students, so that ongoing feedback is received.

Requirements of the DPS (Health and Social Care Practice) thesis

The thesis shall:

- (a) consist of the candidate's own account of his/her investigations, indicating in what respects they advance the study of the subject;
- (b) form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality shown by the discovery of new facts and/or the exercise of independent critical power;
- (c) be appropriate to the subject concerned, having regard to the other formally assessed elements for the degree;
- (d) be not more than 50,000 words in length; excluding appendices and bibliography;
- (e) be written in English to a satisfactory standard of literary presentation;
- (f) be presented in typescript or electronically or print and bound in accordance with instructions issued by the Academic Registrar.

A candidate may not submit a thesis which has already been submitted for a degree or comparable award of the College or another institution. Work which has already been submitted in this way may, however, be incorporated in a thesis covering a wider field, provided this is indicated on the examination entry form and in the thesis itself.

A candidate may submit the results of work done in conjunction with the supervisor or with other researchers, provided the personal share in the investigation is clearly stated and certified by the supervisor.

Published work may be included only if it forms an integral part of the thesis and makes a relevant contribution to the main theme of the thesis. A series of publications alone is not acceptable as a thesis. The personal share in publications in joint names must be clearly stated and certified by the supervisor.

A candidate may submit as supplementary material in support of his/her candidature any published contribution to the advancement of the subject. Such material should normally be bound in at the end of the thesis in its published form, with appropriate references made in the body of the thesis. The personal share in publications in joint names must be clearly stated and certified by the supervisor.

A thesis will normally be placed in the public domain immediately after the award of the degree. Exceptions to this requirement will normally be made only on the grounds of commercial exploitation or patenting or in other very exceptional circumstances and will usually only be granted for a maximum period of two years.

Conduct of the DPS (Health and Social Care Practice) thesis examination

1. A candidate must satisfy the examiners in all other elements of the assessment for the programme before submitting the thesis for examination.
2. Examiners for the thesis will be appointed by the College Board of Examiners Executive Committee, which will ensure that:
 - (a) the examiners are expert in the field of the thesis and able to make an independent assessment of the student;
 - (b) at least one of the examiners is external to the University of London;
 - (c) one examiner is from another college of the University of London, except where this is deemed impracticable or inappropriate;
 - (d) a candidate is not examined by his/her own supervisor, except in the most exceptional circumstances, in which case three examiners in total must be appointed.
3. After reading the thesis the examiners will:
 - (a) prepare independent written reports on the thesis prior to the oral examination;
 - (b) examine the candidate orally with only themselves, the candidate and, subject to the candidate's agreement, the supervisor present, save for the provisions of paragraph 4 (c-f).

4. There are six options open to the examiners in determining the result of the final examination as follows.
 - (a) If the thesis is adequate and the candidate satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners will report that the candidate has satisfied them in the examination for the degree.
 - (b) If the thesis is otherwise adequate but requires minor amendments and if the candidate satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination, the examiners may require the candidate to make amendments specified by them within three months.
 - (c) If the thesis, though inadequate, shall seem of sufficient merit to justify such action, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to re-present the thesis in a revised form within 18 months. Examiners shall not, however, make such a decision without submitting the candidate to an oral examination. The examiners may at their discretion exempt from a further oral examination, on the re-presentation of the thesis, a candidate who under this regulation has been permitted to re-present it in a revised form.
 - (d) If the thesis is adequate, but the candidate fails to satisfy the examiners at the oral examination, the examiners may determine that the candidate be permitted to re-present the same thesis, and submit a further oral examination within a period specified by them and not exceeding 18 months.
 - (e) The examiners may determine that the candidate has not satisfied them in the examination. The examiners shall not, however, save in very exceptional circumstances, make such a decision without submitting the candidate to an oral examination.
5. In the event that unanimity is not achieved on the result of the thesis by the examiners, a third examiner, appointed according to the procedure given in paragraph 57 shall be asked to advise. Each examiner will write a report on the examination and submit these to the Chair of the Academic Board, who will conduct an inquiry, taking advice as s/he shall determine, before reaching a decision in the matter.
6. The examiners for the thesis shall provide a detailed and reasoned statement of their judgement of the candidate's performance and for the decision they have reached, and this report shall be made available to the candidate for her/his personal information.

[Back to top](#)

Student support and guidance

A full induction programme will be carried out in the initial phase of the study. This will include campus orientations (especially library inductions) at each the 3 SWan HEI's (should students request this).

Face to face consultations will be available to students either during the course of block teaching sessions, or at mutually agreed appointment times outside teaching hours. In addition other informal consultations will be conducted online. Online chat and dialogue sessions will also be formally organised as part of the official requirements in some units.

Students will also be organised into informal study groups which may continue to meet face to face or work online outside class hours.

Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards:

The standard requirements for quality assurance in teaching apply:

- Teaching session reviews (feedback questionnaires and staff report).
- Termly reviews and reports.

For students registered in or after September 2016

Version 2.1

Dated: 24/03/16

- End of course review.
- Detailed reports reviewed by the Programme Management Committee (Independent Chair).
- Work samples and marking to External Examiner.
- External Examiner reports.

In addition, the professional doctorate course committee (including student representation) will continue to meet on a semester basis, and will receive (and discuss) regular reports and make recommendations for improvement.

Student reps from the doctoral programme will be invited to attend the departmental staff/student committee.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience:

- End of semester and End of Programme reviews.
- Student representation at the Programme Management Committee.
- Written feedback on each training session.

[Back to top](#)

Admission requirements

Entrants will normally have at least a Master's degree or equivalent and at least three years post qualifying experience (or equivalent). Entrants will normally have at least one degree in the social or behavioural sciences, or a qualifying degree in one of the health or social care professions. For those without relevant academic qualifications, a system for assessing prior learning will be developed.

[Back to top](#)

Further learning and career opportunities

Graduates will have access to informal continuing professional development opportunities offered across the three SWan HEI's (Royal Holloway (RHUL), St Georges (SGUL), Kingston University (KU)): these include seminar series offered by the participating faculties; qualitative methods seminars offered at SGUL/KU; research days offered by SGUL/KU Social Work; workshops offered by the Department of Social Work at Royal Holloway.

In addition graduates will have access to learning and research opportunities generated by a number of partnerships with which the three SWan HEI's are involved. These include the Academic Health and Social Care Network; the HIEC; the partnership for equality and human rights between the Inter-professional Institute and St Georges Trust; and the programmes generated through the Institute for Leadership and Management in Health (SWan).

Given that the programme is being offered under the SWan umbrella, students will also have access to library facilities, and staff expertise from all three participating HEI's.

[Back to top](#)

Indicators of quality and standards

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The scoring system for the REF 2014 measures research quality in four categories, with the top

score of 4* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour and 3* indicating research that is internationally excellent. 81% of the College's research profile was deemed to be within the 4* or 3* categories, an increase of over 20% since 2008. This result placed Royal Holloway 31st overall in the UK for 4* and 3* research and 33rd based on an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) score.

Students will be taught and supervised by a range of staff from the three SWan HEI's who are research active, and from a range of disciplinary backgrounds (health sociology, behavioural science, social work, allied health, and social policy). Many of these staff have established national and international reputations in the above fields.

In addition there are established and well recognised groups and centres which participating staff have also developed (e.g. The Life Span group at RHUL; the Centre for Abuse and Trauma Studies (CATS) shared by RHUL and KU; the Centre for Inquiry and Reviews at SGUL/KU; the planned Centre for Critical Reflection in the Professions (under the Inter-professional Institute).

[Back to top](#)

Nomenclature of awards

This is one of two Specialist University of London degrees awarded by the College:

Specialist Doctorates

Doctor of Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy)

Doctor in Professional Studies (Health and Social Care Practice) DPS

The Masters leads to an award of the University of London. The Postgraduate Diploma leads to an award of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. The Banner programme codes are given in parentheses.

Master's Degree programme (exit award only)

MSc in Professional Studies (Health and Social Care Practice) (2559)

Postgraduate Diploma (exit award only)

PGDip in Professional Studies (Health and Social Care Practice) (2560)

[Back to top](#)