POSTGRADUATE GUIDE
ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES 2015

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK (PROFESSIONAL QUALIFYING)
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Southern Cross University is an innovative, research intensive university providing inspirational learning experiences for its students, through high quality teaching engaged with scholarship. The School of Arts and Social Sciences is a multidisciplinary and creative learning community that provides quality teaching and focused research in a range of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in the fields of visual arts, contemporary music, media, creative writing, humanities/arts and the social sciences. The School’s mission is to provide degrees that are informed by scholarly research and which are of value to the community. The School aims to equip graduates with the knowledge and skills for careers in rapidly changing and competitive regional, national and global environments – graduates who are ethical, reflective and committed to lifelong learning.

Many of the degrees offered by the School are delivered on-campus and by distance education, to suit professionals and those needing the flexibility to study from home. They are taught by highly qualified academics committed to providing a supportive and nurturing learning environment to students throughout their studies.

We invite you to explore our full range of postgraduate course offerings at scu.edu.au/courses

Postgraduate degrees by research

In addition to its postgraduate coursework degrees, Southern Cross University offers Masters by Thesis (Masters) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) research degrees. These are referred to as higher degrees by research (HDR) and do not include prescribed units of study (coursework). Candidates select a research topic which is of particular relevance to their professional and/or personal interests. The research aims to increase human knowledge and understanding. The HDR program focuses on independent research, conducted under the supervision of a principal and a supporting supervisor, which results in a thesis that is then sent out for external and independent examination. It includes identifying a research topic and methodology, collection and analysis of data, and the development of a thesis.

Southern Cross University’s Research Training Unit offers advice and support to anyone who is considering HDR study. It provides quality assurance across the academic cycle of postgraduate research candidature – from recruitment, to supervisor selection and supported progress, through to examination.

Enquiries and applications are welcome at any time throughout the year.

Contact
Research Training Unit
W: scu.edu.au/research
T: 02 6620 3520
E: research@scu.edu.au

Alisha Robbins
Master of Social Work (Professional Qualifying) student

Master of Social Work (Professional Qualifying) student Alisha Robbins completed a 400-hour professional placement in the medical wards of the Tweed Heads Hospital.

She says her supervisors were a highlight of her experience.

“They gave me all the tools they possibly could to help me achieve my goals, improve my practice and reflect on my learning to help me become a better social worker.”

Alisha was provided with in-depth and varied social work experiences.

“At the beginning I observed other social workers and then I was given my own case load, so I had patients to see by myself. I undertook psychosocial assessments and had to document my cases in the patient’s case notes. I also attended daily ward meetings, social work handover meetings and spent time with the Aged Care Assessment Team, transitional care and inpatient care,” she said.

She also helped facilitate a relationship and sex awareness program in a local high school and spent time at the Tweed Heads Court House as part of a program for adult defendants with substance abuse problems undertaking voluntary work as part of their rehabilitation and bail.

“My placement experiences were invaluable. They taught me the importance of integrating theory with practice and the great benefits of reflecting on my practice. I will be forever grateful for the opportunities I was given while on placement.”
The Master of Social Work (Professional Qualifying) is an innovative course based on a problem-based learning paradigm. This course is suited to applicants who have undertaken prior study in the social sciences, psychology, or related fields. The course enables students to gain the skills, knowledge and values to be strategic, ethical and reflective social work practitioners in a wide range of organisational settings, including working with individuals, groups and communities. Students are provided with access to a personalised online learning environment, which facilitates professional learning and demonstrates professional capabilities through an ePortfolio.

Professional recognition
This is an AASW-accredited qualification. It is an entry qualification into the social work profession and has been determined to meet the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS).

Professional placement
In line with the Australian Association of Social Workers requirements, all students, whether studying on-campus or by distance education, will be required to undertake 1000 hours of supervised practice. These placements are completed in two separate organisations in different fields so that students gain a diversity of experience.

Social Work Field Placement I involves 400 hours (57 days) across sessions 2 and 3 of the first year (of full-time study), with a minimum of three days per week spent on placement. Social Work Field Placement II involves 600 hours (86 days) across sessions 2 and 3 of the second year (of full-time study), also with a minimum of three days per week spent on placement. These time commitments apply to both full-time and part-time students.

Major areas of study
The course includes core content in child protection, cross-cultural practice, mental health work and work with people from Indigenous communities. It covers essential theories and methods of social work practice including effective practice in working with individuals, groups and communities. Students are also exposed to key knowledge in using social policy and the law to advance the rights of clients and community members.

Teaching methods
All students need to have access to high speed broadband in order to complete the online activities, which are a core part of this course.

On-campus students have unlimited internet and email access and can connect to the University’s library catalogues, online full-text journal databases and book and article request service. Teaching methods include lectures, tutorials, workshops, and online discussion forums and problem-based learning material.

The distance education study option for this course is interactive and strives to promote collaboration and a sense of community. Students have contact with tutors, access to online problem-based learning material and discussion forums, study guides and access to all library services.

Residential schools
Distance education students are required to attend three five-day residential schools to be held at the Gold Coast campus.

Your career
Graduates of this degree will qualify as social workers in Australia. Graduates may also be eligible to apply to work as social workers overseas.

Graduates will be suited to employment in a wide range of jobs in the health and community services sectors. These include positions that are designated solely for social work-qualified staff (e.g. in hospitals), as well as other human services jobs that are open to other graduates. Graduates may be employed in organisations such as Centrelink, public and private hospitals, child protection agencies, Australian Defence Force, domestic violence services, housing and homelessness agencies, aged care and disability services, mental health agencies, family counselling agencies, rehabilitation services and private practice.

Summary
Location: Gold Coast, Distance Education
Intake: Session 1
Duration: 1.5 to 2 years full-time Depending on unit availabilities, previous study or work experience.
Total units: 16
Fees: Some Commonwealth supported places are available
GENERAL INFORMATION

Assessment methods
Assessment items may include essays, research reports, case analysis, assessment of competence on field placement and a DVD recording of interviewing skills. Students will develop an ePortfolio, drawing on assessment items to provide evidence of their practice framework and competence.

Learning resources
MySCU is our students’ point of entry to a range of online services and resources that support study and student life. The portal includes unit learning sites and information sites where students can access resources, communication tools and useful links that are integral to their studies.

The web-based program Blackboard Learn delivers advanced online learning environments for students and lecturers to communicate and collaborate through virtual meeting spaces, classrooms, and discussion boards. They can share files, presentations and applications. If a tutorial or lecture is recorded, students can view it afterwards.

Learning materials include the provision of unit information guides, study guides and books of readings. Students may need to purchase or access prescribed text books.

The SCU library provides a wide range of services including librarian assistance, print and electronic resources, a document delivery service, catalogues, databases, ebooks, ereadings and full-text journal literature.

Course structure
The availability of specialisations and units may vary at each campus location. Unit availabilities are published for each study period and vary from year to year. Some units may be only available by distance education.

Your previous work or study
Your previous learning experiences relevant to one or more units in your chosen course may help you cut months or years off your degree.

Recognition of formal and non-formal learning
Credit may be awarded to a student for formal learning (gained through full or partial achievement of an accredited qualification or course) or non-formal learning (that takes place through a non-accredited course or program of learning) completed at Southern Cross University or in other learning settings in Australia and/or overseas.

To help you identify how much credit you may receive for your related prior learning, the University has evaluated the learning within some Australian and overseas qualifications/courses, which are available at the SCU Pathways website.

Visit: scu.edu.au/scupathways

If your previous study or educational institution is not listed, we still encourage you to apply for advanced standing because you might still be eligible.

An application for advanced standing must be submitted so we can assess your prior learning. Please apply for advanced standing at the same time as you apply for admission into this course, because the amount of credit awarded will determine the sequence of units you will study.

Visit: scu.edu.au/advancedstanding

International students
Southern Cross University welcomes applications from international students. However this brochure is intended for use by Australian citizens and permanent residents only and should not be relied upon by international students. Brochures and information specifically for international students can be obtained from SCU International.

W: scu.edu.au/international
E: intoff@scu.edu.au
Freecall: 1800 626 481
T: 02 6620 3876

HOW TO APPLY

Apply online direct to the University

For further information visit:
W: scu.edu.au/sass
E: futurestudent@scu.edu.au
Freecall: 1800 626 481
For full details go to: scu.edu.au/howtoapply

For further course information visit: scu.edu.au/courses

This brochure is a guide to Southern Cross University and the postgraduate studies offered by the University. The information set out in this brochure is an expression of intent only and should not be taken as a firm offer or undertaking.

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