

**GENERATION  
APPRENTICESHIP**  
[www.apprenticeship.ie](http://www.apprenticeship.ie)



**Social Work  
Apprenticeship**

## Social Work

# Apprentice Handbook



**Social Work**

**SOLAS**  
learning works

**TÚSLA**  
An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

**UCC**  
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh  
University College Cork, Ireland



**HEA** | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY  
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

**IASW**  
Irish Association of  
Social Workers



**NATIONAL  
APPRENTICESHIP  
OFFICE** GENERATION  
APPRENTICESHIP



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## TRANSFORMING SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN IRELAND

The Apprenticeship in Social Work is an exciting dual programme that will allow you to gain both fully paid on-the-job practical experience and skills and a level 9 Masters of Social Work or Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Studies, both of which are CORU approved. Employers and the education provider work closely together to provide you with training and learning opportunities tailored to your individual needs, learning style and life situation.

### Key Features of the Social Work Apprenticeship:

- Over half your learning takes place on-the-job
- ‘Earn while you learn’ apprenticeship model with a formal contract of employment
- The apprenticeship leads to a Masters of Social Work and Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Studies awards and these are approved by CORU
- The off-the-job learning in year 1 will take place in 2 phases including from September- December and May. The Year 2 block will take place from Jan-April. The blocks will be structured for flexibility with three days online and 2 days face to face in small groups.



# OVERVIEW

Apprenticeship	Social Work
Duration	24 months
NFQ	Level 9 Masters of Social Work or Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Studies
ECT Credits	120
Qualification upon completion	Eligible to apply for registration with CORU as a social worker
Education Provider	University College Cork

## 2 YEAR APPRENTICESHIP WILL INCLUDE:

Year 1	Year 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>On-the-job learning where you will learn from experienced social workers and real-world practice and benefit from mentoring and being part of a wider community of practice</li><li>You will bring your college-based learning into the workplace.</li><li>Year 1 learning focuses on social work theory and practice skills; human development; child and family welfare; safeguarding adults at risk; domestic, sexual and gender-based violence; law and social policy and Research.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In Year 2, you bring more advanced college-based learning in areas that include law, probation, adoption, fostering, disability, ageing, working with young people, social work theory and practice and community work. You will learn about wider global changes such as climate change, migration and geo-politics and their impacts on social work and social work’s role in preserving human rights and social justice for all.</li><li>In each year, 14-weeks of ‘on-the-job’ learning focuses specifically on the CORU Standards of Proficiency with learning supports adapted for the requirements of placements outlined in the CORU Social Workers Registration Board Criteria for Education and Training Programmes.</li></ul>

Learning outcomes for the **Masters of Social Work**  
Learning outcomes for the **Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Studies**



# WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

The apprenticeship will give you the knowledge, values and skills to have a long and rewarding career in social work across a wide variety of settings including child welfare, health and criminal justice services.

You will learn to work supporting service users and allied professionals to find solutions and to effect change. The problems and challenges social workers seek to address span the life cycle and society at large. The issues you will learn to deal with might be a crisis or emergency or it could be providing support, information and advice to a person to cope with ongoing difficulties or loss.

The apprenticeship enables you to develop the standards of proficiency as set out by the statutory regulator, CORU, to register as a professionally qualified social worker in Ireland. The current standards are:

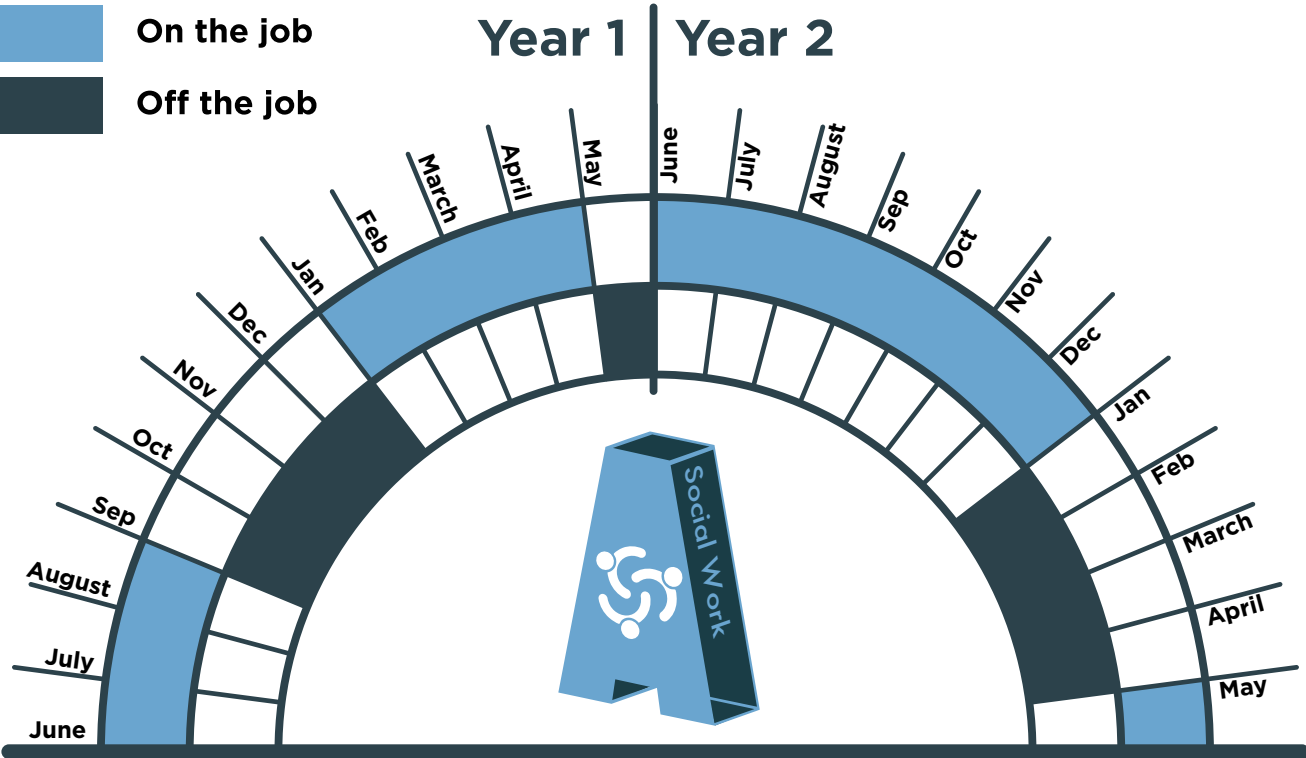
- Professional Autonomy and Accountability
- Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking
- Safety and Quality
- Professional Development
- Professional Knowledge and Skills research, project management and service evaluation/review

# APPRENTICESHIP STRUCTURE

This two-year apprenticeship programme is structured for blended delivery of online learning and face to face sessions which minimizes time off- the- job. You will benefit from small-class sizes when in college and learning and teaching methods will facilitate you to put your knowledge into practice through for example, small group activities, role-plays, student presentations and report writing tasks. You will be trained and assessed both on and off the job.

Further information on the Masters of Social Work course structure and modules is available at <https://www.ucc.ie/en/cke64/>  
Further information on the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Studies course structure and modules is available at <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ckc06/>

# YOUR APPRENTICESHIP JOURNEY



# SUPPORTING YOUR APPRENTICESHIP JOURNEY

We are very aware that the apprenticeship in social work requires significant commitment from you. We recognise the extent of your commitment as well as the other demands and challenges that life brings. To ensure that your apprenticeship journey is a successful one and that you are supported to achieve your best in social work, we have a range of supports to help you, including:

- Dedicated workplace mentors and college mentors
- Peer learning both on and off the job
- One-to-one meetings with mentors and tutors to support your learning and development
- Full access to all student supports as a registered student including a Student Support Officer; Student Health and Wellbeing; the Skills Centre; Clubs and Societies and much more
- Small class sizes to support group and peer learning
- Access to employee supports including HR and employee health and welfare



## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

1

Applicants must have at least a Second Class Honours Grade 1 in a primary honours degree in Social Science or its equivalent (eligible for the Masters of Social Work route)

or

2

Have an approved Level 8 conversion programme with at least a Second Class Honours Grade 1, and have completed a minimum of three-months' relevant work experience in a social work or social work-related field (eligible for the Masters of Social Work route)

or

3

Applicants who have not met the grade requirements outlined above but who hold at least an honours primary degree (NFQ, Level 8) in Social Science or its equivalent, or hold an approved Level 8 conversion programme i.e. the Higher Diploma in Social Policy and have completed a minimum of three-months' relevant work experience in a social work or social work-related field (eligible for the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Studies)

or

4

Non-graduates with at least 5 years' professional experience in social work or a social work related field may be considered for admission under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (eligible for the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Studies route)

**Note:** Applicants who are non-native speakers of the English language must meet the university-approved English language requirements. Visit our [PG English Language Requirements](#) page for more information

**Note:** There are opportunities for apprentices who enter on either the Masters in Social Work or Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Studies to move between programmes. Details of the criteria are available at <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ckc06/>



## STATUTORY REGULATOR ROLE

SOLAS is the statutory regulator for apprenticeship programmes with responsibilities governed under the 1967 Industrial Training Act. Under their remit SOLAS/National Apprenticeship Office (NAO) appoints 'Authorised Officers' (AOs) who carry out activities on its behalf. This includes approving new employers who wish to recruit and train apprentices and the registering of apprentices. Authorised Officers are employed by Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and are assigned to work with employers based on the geographical region in which the employer is located.

Upon receipt of an Expression of Interest (EOI) from an employer the Authorised Officer (AO) in the region will schedule a visit with the employer and complete the statutory approvals process. The AO will also complete the registration process for apprentices recruited by the employer and work with the employer and apprentice across the duration of the apprenticeship programme.

The Employer and Apprentice must sign the [Apprenticeship Code of Practice](#). For further information on your role and responsibilities as an Apprentice, please refer to this document.

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# HOW TO BECOME A SOCIAL WORK APPRENTICE

To become an apprentice in social work you must meet the eligibility criteria for the programme, apply for an apprenticeship vacancy with a Solas approved employer and successfully pass each stage of the recruitment process. To find an apprenticeship, you can search apprenticeship vacancies on the [apprenticeship jobs page](#). You can search for vacancies by location and by apprenticeship.

Further information on apprenticeships can be found on the [Generation Apprenticeship](#) website or the [UCC Social Work Apprenticeship website](#).

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## USEFUL CONTACT AND INFORMATION LINKS:

Generation Apprenticeship:  
[website link](#)

[Apprenticeship Code of Practice](#)

[UCC School of Applied Social  
Social Studies](#)

[UCC Social Work Apprenticeship Website](#)

UCC Apprenticeship contact email:  
[apprenticeship@ucc.ie](mailto:apprenticeship@ucc.ie)

