



National Apprenticeship- Occupational Profile

Apprenticeship Title: Social Work

NFQ Level: Level 9

Duration: 24 Months (2-year Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Studies [PGDSWS], or 2-year Master of Social Work [MSW])

Typical Tasks/ Responsibilities:

- Empower individuals, families, and communities to address the different challenges that they face across the lifecycle. For example, social workers support people experiencing child abuse, elder abuse, complex disability, health or mental need, addiction, homelessness, discrimination, and rehabilitation within the criminal justice system.
- Research and contribute to developments in policies, legislation and interventions required to address these complex needs.
- Implement a comprehensive and holistic assessment of people, their environment and their presenting strengths and challenges.
- Identify, implement, and evaluate interventions including individual counselling and family work, community support, risk assessment, crisis intervention and advocacy.
- Collaborate effectively with other professions and stakeholders from health, social care, and legal settings across diverse health and social care settings.

On successful completion of the proposed apprenticeship, the Social Worker will:

- Meet the standards of proficiency as set 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*
- Apply knowledge of social systems and human behaviour to promote social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment of people.
- Respond to the impact of social and political contexts on service users and social work.
- Implement the values and ethics of the profession of social work.
- Promote social justice, human rights, and anti-oppressive practice.
- Apply research, theory, legislation, policy to assessment and intervention in practice.
- Work effectively with other professions from health, social, legal and criminal justice services.





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Demonstrate quality assurance through research, project management and service evaluation/review.

Knowledge:

- The purpose, role and implementation of social work assessment and intervention in the delivery of personal social services across multiple settings.
- The conceptual and regulatory environments in which social workers practice.
- Theoretical bases to social work practice including bio-psychosocial and ecological approaches, systems theory, lifespan development theory, crisis intervention, person-centred theory, grief and loss theories, counselling approaches, groupwork, critical, radical and community development approaches, and eco-social practices.
- Research and evaluation methods used in social work practice.
- Professional development, supervision, leadership and management.
- Familiarity with principles and application of relevant law – family, capacity, decision-making, criminal law – and best practice guidelines relevant to social work practice.

Skills:

- Demonstrate the standards of proficiency as set out by the statutory regulator, CORU.
- Use different evidence-based approaches in responding to the needs of individual service-users and groups.
- Plan and deliver care in an effective, safe, and resourceful manner within a model of person-centred care.
- Demonstrate a commitment to assuring high standards and strive for a user-centred service.
- Display awareness and appreciation of service users as expert through experience including promoting the involvement of service users in care planning, decision-making and service development.
- Use supervision effectively and engage in continuous professional development.
- Demonstrate a commitment towards equality, diversity, and inclusive practice.

Behaviours:

- Effective interpersonal, team collaboration and communication (verbal and written) skills.
- Demonstrate the ability to empathise with and treat others with dignity and respect.
- Demonstrate a capacity to develop IT skills relevant to the role.
- Flexibility, agility and responsive approaches to practice.
- Proficiency in moderating and adapting presentations, communication, reports and interactions based on service-user need and target audience (accessibility-awareness).



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Transversal Skills:

- Strong organisational and planning skills.
- Strong interpersonal and interprofessional communication skills.
- Professionalism, ability to work effectively with service users and with other disciplines.
- Strong assessment, evaluation and problem-solving skills.
- Networking skills.
- Mediation and moderation skills.
- Anti-discriminatory and inclusive value-base.
- Identification and assessment of ethical issues.
- Understanding of management, leadership and regulatory/legislative governance.
- Strong orientation towards teamwork and peer supervision.

Competencies:

- Practise professional autonomy and accountability.
- Practise effective communication.
- Engage in collaborative practice and teamworking.
- Show strong commitment and adherence to safety and quality in the workplace setting and in social work practice.
- Professionalism through integrity, objectivity, professional competence, service-user orientation, due care and confidentiality.
- Strong advocacy skills and promotion of service-user self-determination.
- Assessment, evaluation, and intervention skills including risk analysis and management.
- Responsive and respectful approach.
- Ability to multitask and manage workload.
- Awareness of limits of own knowledge and skills.
- Apply principles of best practice in social work.
- Strong adherence to legislative and regulatory frameworks.

Industry/industries served by the apprenticeship:

The role is found across the following services:

- Child and family welfare and protection
- Criminal justice
- Community and neighbourhood projects
- Acute, non-acute and community health care
- Acute and community mental health care
- Adult safeguarding
- Older Person's services





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- Disability services
- Corporate staff welfare programme

Proposed minimum entry requirements for apprentices on the programme:

(a) Academic

Minimum requirements for a Master of Social Work will typically be a 2:1 honours Level 8 degree in a relevant area, or equivalent, in the broad field of social science and related disciplines.

Minimum requirements for a Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Studies will typically be a Third-Class Honours Level 8 Degree in a relevant area, or equivalent, in the broad field of social science and related disciplines.

(b) Social Work-Related Experience

Apprentices will be required to have relevant social work-related practice experience, the form and duration of which will be defined and where necessary, facilitated by the employing agency.

Recognition of Prior Experience and Advanced Entry Transfer

Applicants who do not meet this entry requirement will be considered under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and assessed on the following factors:

- a) Academic achievement,
- b) Prior Work Experience,
- c) Letter of Reference, and
- d) Personal Statement.

(In an effort to diversify the professions, applications via RPL will be encouraged).

Academic Pathways During the Apprenticeship

Apprentices enrolled on the PGDSWS can proceed to the MSW degree in the second year if they obtain a minimum 50% aggregate mark in the first year of their apprenticeship and pass all requirements.

Apprentices on the MSW degree will be transferred to the PGDSWS if they do not meet a 50% aggregate mark, or if they request a transfer to the PGDSWS at the end of Year 1. Students in Year 2 of the MSW who do not obtain a minimum 50% aggregate mark but pass all requirements, will be awarded the PGDSWS.

Both the PGDSWS and MSW are CORU-approved so graduates of both programmes are eligible to apply for registration with CORU as professionally qualified social workers.



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