Postgraduate Programme Specification

Session	2025/26	**Last Modified**	28/03/2024
Named Award Title	MSc Contemporary Drug & Alcohol Studies		
Award Title for Each Award	MSc Contemporary Drug & Alcohol Studies PG Cert Contemporary Drug & Alcohol Studies PG Dip Contemporary Drug & Alcohol Studies		
Date of Approval	November 2019		
Details of Cohort Applies to	All intakes from September 2020 onwards		
Awarding Institution	University of the West of Scotland	**Teaching Institution(s)**	University of the West of Scotland
Language of Instruction & Examination		English	
Award Accredited by			
Maximum Period of Registration		To ensure currency of knowledge the maximum completion time for this programme will normally be four years full-time, and six years part-time. Authorised Interruption Guidance notes (uws.ac.uk)	
Duration of Study			
Full-time	1 year	**Part-time**	2 years
Placement (compulsory)	200 hours		
Mode of Study	☒ Full-time ☒ Part-time		
Campus	☐ Ayr ☐ Dumfries	☐ Lanarkshire ☐ London ☒ Paisley	☒ Online / Distance Learning ☐ Other (specify)
School	**Education and Social Sciences**		
Divisional Programme Board	**Psychology Social Work**		

Programme Leader	Dr April Shaw

Admissions Criteria
Candidates must be able to satisfy the general admission requirements of the University of the West of Scotland as specified in Chapter 2 of the University Regulatory Framework together with the following programme requirements:

Appropriate Undergraduate Qualifications:
Applicants will typically possess a degree or equivalent. In the absence of a degree, where entry requirements do not conform to the general entry requirements, other evidence can be considered on an individual basis in line with Regulations 2.13 – 2.36 (Recognition of Prior Learning – RPL / Recognition of Credit).

Students are required to hold an honours degree in social science or equivalent. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)(Where candidates do not meet the standard entry requirement, significant and relevant work experience must be demonstrated – see Other Experience below). In particular circumstances students can use evidence of relevant professional experience to support applications.

Other Required Qualifications/Experience

Candidates must be able to satisfy the general admission requirements of the University of the West of Scotland as specified by Regulation 6 of the Regulatory Framework together with the following programme requirements: Honours degree (minimum 2:2 classification) within the broad area of the Social Sciences or a bachelor's degree with significant and relevant work experience. Where candidates do not meet the standard entry requirement, they must demonstrate that they have sufficient relevant professional or practice-based experience to undertake their chosen programme of study. They may be admitted to the programme at the discretion of the programme Admissions Officer/Programme Leader.
English language proficiency is also a requirement, with candidates expected to achieve IELTs average standard of 6.0.
Admission based on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will comply with the University's Regulatory Framework (Chapter 2), as well as University regulations on postgraduate study and guidance on RPL. Credit transferred into the programme through Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) must have been subject to reliable and valid methods of assessment at a recognised HEI. Accredited Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) entry is also permitted. The amount of credit transferred though RPL (APL and APEL) will comply with the maxima set out in the Regulatory Framework. Candidates should note that transferred credit does not carry a grade, therefore, award with distinction cannot be granted for awards where credit is transferred in at level 11.

Further desirable skills pre-application

General Overview
The MSc Contemporary Alcohol and Drug Studies is an innovative post graduate programme that adopts a critical social science perspective to explore the use of psychoactive substances in society. The programme introduces students to a range of cross disciplinary theories and concepts to analyse: the use and effects of psychoactive substances;

differentiated patterns of consumption across social groups; approaches to treatment and harm reduction; and current debates in drug and alcohol policy and practice.

We critically examine the contexts and consequences of substance-related harms for individuals, families and communities paying particular attention to the social economic and political contexts of risk environments and how harms are mediated by gender, class and ethnicity. We explore the influences of the alcohol industry and the drugs economy; and current debates on alcohol and drug law reforms nationally and internationally.

A key feature of the MSc programme is its exploration of current global developments in responses to substance use and its critical evaluation of the evidence for behaviour change, treatment outcomes, harm reduction and recovery.

In addition, the programme provides students with a unique opportunity to link theory and practice by engaging in work-based learning (WBL) in a practice (drug/alcohol service) or research setting. This maximises the employability of our graduates considerably.

The MSc Contemporary Drug & Alcohol Studies is aimed at students who wish to develop a specialist knowledge and critical understanding of substance use, policy and practice in the contemporary world. The programme provides a supportive, inspirational and transformative learning experience for students encouraging them to develop a high-level understanding of the research evidence in their field and harness this knowledge to critically engage in contemporary contested debates as to how society should best respond to substance use. The programme is open for full-time (over one year) and part-time (over two years) study and will be delivered through blended learning approaches: online with face-to-face learning; and, fully online.

Funding
There are several potential funding sources, including SAAS and the Society for the Study of Addiction (SSA). Prospective students in employment in a related field should also investigate funding via employers.

Graduate employment routes
The range of skills embedded in the MSc programme provide graduates with a wide variety of options in drug/alcohol services (in the statutory/voluntary sectors) and in broader health, community, youth, criminal justice, social work and social care professions as well as policy and research environments. For those already employed in services the qualification confers a specialist knowledge of theory and contemporary evidence-based developments in the field and is useful for career advancement and continuing professional development.

As a graduate from UWS students will be:
- Universal - globally relevant with comprehensively applicable abilities, skills and behaviours
- Work ready - dynamic and prepared for employment in complex, ever-changing environments which require lifelong learning and resilience
- Successful - as a UWS graduate with a solid foundation on which to continue succeeding and realising my potential, across various contexts.Through studying and graduating from UWS, you will develop attributes across three dimensions:
- Academic – knowledge, skills and abilities related to high-level academic study
- Personal – qualities and characteristics of well-rounded, developed, responsible individuals
- Professional – skills, aptitudes and attitudes required for professional working life in the 21st Century

The underpinning attributes are developed through the key skills and competencies you will learn as part of your degree programme.

Pointers to Further Study - Progression Routes
Students graduating with MSc may apply to study for a PhD in alcohol and drug studies. Supervision teams with a high level of expertise across a range of subject areas are available to support doctoral students on their research journey.

Typical Delivery Method

Distance Learning: Pre-recorded lectures and one-hour seminars
On-campus: Lecture and seminar (two hours)

Any additional costs

Students who opt to take the CDAS placement module may need to pay an additional fee of £59 if they do not have a current PVG membership which covers working with "Vulnerable Adults only." Students who have a current membership for this group, still need to make application, however, since it will be a like for like check, the University pays the £18 fee.

Graduate Attributes, Employability & Personal Development Planning

The programme is fully aligned with institutional priorities around the development of graduate attributes and with the institutional policy on personal development planning. The mapping of programme and module learning outcomes and employability-integrated assessment ensures the visibility of graduate attributes, employability and citizenship competencies. Personal development is embedded and explicitly signposted in the curriculum, with students provided with regular opportunities to capture and evaluate progression and development, stimulating reflection, self-regulation and a more constructive engagement with employability. It is recognised that personal development planning is an essential component of lifelong learning and continuing and professional development. To support this activity, all students are provided with access to personal development planning tools and enabled to develop a personal e-portfolio across the programme.
A fundamental component of the programme is our approach to supporting personal development planning for students. This work begins at induction, giving our students a clear understanding of progression routes on graduation, and of opportunities for skill enhancement during the programme. Students are made aware of, and encouraged to use the range of services offered by University Career and Student Services. All students have a Personal Tutor who encourages and supports them to strengthen PDP. Students are encouraged to develop goals and strategies for successful skill development and critical self-reflection.
The development and enhancement of key graduate attributes are central to the programme's PDP commitments, elements are spread across all modules. Graduates demonstrate a critical awareness and understanding of current issues, themes and debates in the contemporary drug and alcohol field. Establishing the skills and confidence to apply this knowledge to a range of potential employment settings is an important graduate characteristic supported across the programme. Teaching and learning strategies across the programme facilitate the development of key graduate attributes for employability in a number of ways. The spread of assessments and learning outcomes incorporate a wide range of skills and are designed to support development of key graduate attributes across all programme modules. Several elements of teaching are underpinned by CDAS team member's research. Providing students with the most contemporary developments in the

field and bringing opportunities for networking opportunities with experts across Scottish, UK, European and International research networks.
Work Based Learning (See 17) facilitates experiential learning and provides students with an insight and work experience in the field. This experience is valued highly by employers and students alike.
The critical research skills developed over the course of the MSc equip students with the ability to demonstrate a range of effective techniques. These include; data gathering and analysis, ethical research practice and dissemination of findings across multiple platforms. Dissemination activities further bolster tangible graduate attributes by presenting opportunities for networking with other postgraduates, academics and specialists in the field. Graduating with the MSc CDAS sees applicants move from the role of the student to the role of expert in their particular research topic choice. High quality research dissertations can be considered for publication, in some cases support through this process is ongoing post-graduation.
Communication skills are built on through delivering presentations and conveying complex information through a number of forums. Group work pedagogy and practice are explored and provide students the opportunity to develop team and group working and to recognize the benefit of this. Self-directed learning and the exercise of autonomy in a number of individual tasks is encouraged. These skills build on communication, writing and ICT skills; all essential characteristics for the contemporary workplace.
MSc CDAS PDP Priorities

- Ensuring the skills and competencies learners are developing are made explicit, facilitating learners to evidence the development of these skills and competencies and to provide opportunities for ongoing reflection.
- Providing opportunities for focused group working with peers. Contributes towards the development of leadership and negotiation skills and supports the expansion of diversity awareness and reflection.
- The development of digital literacy through, the use of online research techniques, data bases and digital archives. Learners will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their digital skills and competencies and access software to assist in the production of a presentation or short video and a poster presentation.
- Experiential learning in a relevant setting, out with the university in a practice based setting or, or as art of an academic research experience within the university. These experiences are valued by employers and students and provide valuable learning opportunities where students are able to apply some aspects of class based learning moves form the theoretical to the practical.
- The successful completion of the MSc dissertation demonstrates research skills and expertise in the topic area. Both valuable graduate attributes.

Research linkages with partners from Scottish, UK, European, and International networks provide students networking opportunities.

Work Based Learning/Placement Details

The MSc provides students with the opportunity to engage in Work Based Learning (WBL) with a partner organisation in the drug and alcohol or related field, or in research/policy settings. A variety of external organisations are involved in our WBL, including charities, NGOs, community groups and health related alcohol and drug services. Experiential learning is an important feature of the programme, allowing students to observe elements of class based learning in the work place, and apply theory to practiceThe MSc provides students with the opportunity to engage in Work Based Learning (WBL) with a partner organisation in the drug and alcohol or related field, or in research/policy settings. A variety of external organisations are involved in our WBL, including charities, NGOs, community groups and health related alcohol and drug services. Experiential learning is an important feature of the programme,

allowing students to observe elements of class based learning in the work place, and apply theory to practice.

Attendance and Engagement

In line with the Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure, Students are academically engaged if they are regularly attending and participating in timetabled on-campus and online teaching sessions, asynchronous online learning activities, course-related learning resources, and complete assessments and submit these on time.

For the purposes of this programme, academic engagement equates to the following:

In line with the Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure, Students are defined as academically engaged if they are regularly engaged with timetabled teaching sessions, course-related learning resources including those in the Library and on the VLE, and complete assessments and submit these on time.

For the purposes of this programme, academic engagement equates to the following:
In line with the Academic Engagement and Attendance Procedure, Students are defined as academically engaged if they are regularly engaged with timetabled teaching sessions, course-related learning resources including those in the Library and on Moodle, and complete assessments and submit these on time. Please refer to the Academic Engagement and Attendance Procedure at the following link:
https://www.uws.ac.uk/media/4153/academic-engagement-and-attendance-procedure.pdf

For the purposes of this module, academic engagement equates to the following:
All full-time students (part-time and distant learning students should check with their programme leader for any queries) are required to attend all scheduled classes and participate with all delivered elements of the module as part of their engagement with their programme of study. Consideration will be given to students who have protection under the appropriate equality law. Please refer to UWS Regulations, Chapter 1, 1.64 – 1.67, available at the following link: http://www.uws.ac.uk/current-students/rights-and-regulations/regulatory-framework/

Equality and Diversity

The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Procedure can be accessed at the following link: UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code.

Please detail any specific arrangements for this programme. This should be considered and not just refer the reader to the UWS Equality and Diversity policy.
Aligned with the overall commitment to equality and diversity stated in the Programme Specifications, the module supports equality of opportunity for students from all backgrounds and with different learning needs. Using Moodle, learning materials will be presented electronically in formats that allow flexible access and manipulation of content (part-time and distant learning students should check with their programme leader for any queries). The module complies with University regulations and guidance on inclusive learning and teaching practice. Specialist assistive equipment, support provision and adjustment to assessment practice will be made in accordance with UWS policy and regulations. The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy can be accessed at the following link:
http://www.uws.ac.uk/equality/
Our partners are fully committed to the principles and practice of inclusiveness and our modules are designed to be accessible to all. Where this module is delivered overseas, local equivalent support for students and appropriate legislation applies.

(N.B. Every effort will be made by the University to accommodate any equality and diversity issues brought to the attention of the School)

Programme structures and requirements, SCQF level, term, module name and code, credits and awards (Chapter 1, Regulatory Framework)

Learning Outcomes

SCQF LEVEL 11 - Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge and Understanding	
A1	Develop a critical understanding of substances and substance in relation to consumption, harm, policy and interventions across a range of social, political, economic and historical contexts.
A2	Demonstrate a broad and critical understanding of key theoretical perspectives and concepts relevant to the study of substance use in contemporary and historical contexts.
A3	
A4	
A5	
Practice - Applied Knowledge and Understanding	
B1	Systematically analyse and synthesise relevant theory, practice and evidence.
B2	
B3	
B4	
B5	
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	
C1	Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of material from a range of appropriate sources to issues relevant to substance use.
C2	
C3	
C4	
C5	
Generic Cognitive Skills - Problem Solving, Analysis, Evaluation	
D1	Demonstrate effective communication of complex issues in oral and written formats.
D2	
D3	
D4	
D5	
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	
E1	Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in learning activities.
E2	
E3	

E4	
E5	

Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) Modules

CORE

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
11	CDAS 11006	Contemporary Responses to Substance Use	20	☒	☐	☐	
11	CDAS 11005	Understanding Substance Use	20	☒	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
Footnotes for Core Modules							

Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) Modules

OPTION

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
11	SSPG11007	Applied Research Methods in Social Sciences	20	☒	☐	☐	
11	CDAS11001	CDAS Work Based Learning	20	☐	☒	☐	
11	SSPG11001	Contemporary Social Issues	20	☐	☒	☐	
11	CDAS11004	The Politics of Drug & Alcohol Policy	20	☐	☒	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
Footnotes for Option Modules Students can pick up an optional module from across the institution in a relevant discipline. Guidance will be provided to students to assist in making a suitable choice assuming that timetabling arrangements are suitable, and any pre-requisites have been met.							

Level 11- Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) **Criteria for Award** *Please refer to UWS Regulatory Framework for related regulations*
The Post-Graduate Certificate Contemporary Drug & Alcohol Studies is typically offered as an exit award after successful completion of 60 credits of which a minimum or 40 are at SCQF 11 and none less than level 10.

SCQF LEVEL 11 - Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge and Understanding	
A1	Develop a critical understanding of substances and substance in relation to consumption, harm, policy and interventions across a range of social, political, economic and historical contexts.
A2	Demonstrate a broad and critical understanding of key theoretical perspectives and concepts relevant to the study of substance use and of developments over time and space.
A3	Demonstrate a critical understanding of the research ethics theory and practice of social research.
A4	
A5	
Practice - Applied Knowledge and Understanding	
B1	Systematically analyse, synthesise and evaluate theory in a range of applied settings.
B2	Experiential learning in a service of research based work place setting.
B3	
B4	
B5	
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	
C1	Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of material from a range of appropriate sources relevant to substance use.
C2	
C3	
C4	
C5	
Generic Cognitive Skills - Problem Solving, Analysis, Evaluation	
D1	Demonstrate effective communication of complex issues in oral and written formats.
D2	Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative outputs and research data.
D3	Collaborate effectively with peers to produce and present complex ideas and information to peers and specialists.
D4	
D5	
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	
E1	Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in learning activities.
E2	

E3	
E4	
E5	

Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Modules

CORE

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
11	SSPG11007	Applied Research Methods in Social Sciences	20	☒	☐	☐	
11	CDAS11006	Contemporary Responses to Substance Use	20	☒	☐	☐	
11	CDAS11005	Understanding Substance Use	20	☒	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	

Footnotes for Core Modules

Students have the opportunity to pick up an optional module from across the institution in a relevant discipline. Guidance will be provided to students to assist in making a suitable choice assuming that timetabling arrangements are suitable, and any pre-requisites have been met.

Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Modules

OPTION

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
11	CDAS11001	CDAS Work Based Learning	20	☐	☒	☐	
11	SSPG11001	Contemporary Social Issues	20	☐	☒	☐	
11	CDAS11004	The Politics of Drug & Alcohol Policy	20	☐	☒	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	

Footnotes for Option Modules

Students have the opportunity to pick up an optional module from across the institution in a relevant discipline. Guidance will be provided to students to assist in making a suitable

choice assuming that timetabling arrangements are suitable, and any pre-requisites have been met.

Level 11- Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip)
Criteria for Award
Please refer to UWS Regulatory Framework for related regulations

The Post-graduate Diploma Contemporary Drug & Alcohol Studies is typically offered as an exit award after successful completion of 120 credits of which a minimum of 90 are at SCQF 11 and none less than SCQF level 10.

For information on the criteria for the award of Distinction please refer to University Regulations, Chapter 3 (3.25).

There may be instances where a student has been unsuccessful in meeting the award criteria for the named award and for other more generic named awards existing within the School. Provided that they have met the credit requirements in line with the SCQF credit minima (please see Regulation 1.21), they will be eligible for an exit award of PgC/PgD in Combined Studies.

SCQF LEVEL 11 – Masters Learning Outcomes (Maximum of 5 per heading)	
Knowledge and Understanding	
A1	Develop a critical understanding of substances and substance in relation to consumption, harm, policy and interventions across a range of social, political, economic and historical contexts.
A2	Demonstrate a broad and critical understanding of key theoretical perspectives and concepts relevant to the study of substance use and of developments over time and space.
A3	Demonstrate a critical understanding of the research ethics theory and practice of social research.
A4	
A5	
Practice - Applied Knowledge and Understanding	
B1	Demonstrate the ability to use and develop appropriate strategies to conduct research and critically evaluate research evidence in relation to core subject areas.
B2	Systematically analyse, synthesise and evaluate theory in a range of applied settings.
B3	Experiential learning in a service or research based work place setting.
B4	
B5	
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	
C1	Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of material from a range of appropriate sources relevant to substance use.
C2	Embed an awareness of the complexity of ethical issues into all forms of research, practice and thinking.
C3	
C4	
C5	
Generic Cognitive Skills - Problem Solving, Analysis, Evaluation	
D1	Demonstrate effective communication of complex issues in oral and written formats.
D2	Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative outputs and research data.
D3	Collaborate effectively with peers to produce and present complex ideas and information to peers and specialists.
D4	
D5	
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	
E1	Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in learning activities.
E2	Develop skills and take responsibility as an independent learner and researcher with a commitment to high ethical standards.
E3	
E4	

E5	

Masters Modules

CORE

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
11	CDAS11002	MSc Research Dissertation CDAS	60	☐	☐	☒	
11	SSPG11007	Applied Research Methods in Social Sciences	20	☒	☐	☐	
11	CDAS11006	Contemporary Responses to Substance Use	20	☒	☐	☐	
11	CDAS11005	Understanding Substance Use	20	☒	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	

Footnotes for Core Modules

Prior to starting the dissertation module, students have an agreed Research Plan and have completed the SSPG11007 Applied Research Methods on Social Sciences module.

Masters Modules

OPTION

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
11	CDAS11001	CDAS Work Based Learning	20	☐	☒	☐	
11	SSPG11001	Contemporary Social Issues	20	☐	☒	☐	
11	CDAS11004	The Politics of Drug & Alcohol Policy	20	☐	☒	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	

Footnotes for Option Modules

Level 11- Masters
Criteria for Award
Please refer to UWS Regulatory Framework for related regulations

The award of MSc Contemporary Drug & Alcohol Studies shall be awarded to students who have completed 180 credits with a minimum of 150 at SCQF11 and none less than SCQF10

Distinction will be awarded in line with University Regulations and no imported credit can be used. (Regulations 3.35 & 3.26)

Links: UWS Regulatory Framework and Student Experience Policy Statement

Regulations of Assessment

Candidates will be bound by the general assessment regulations of the University as specified in the University Regulatory Framework.

An overview of the assessment details is provided in the Student Handbook and the assessment criteria for each module is provided in the module descriptor which forms part of the module pack issued to students. For further details on assessment please refer to Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework.

To qualify for an award of the University, students must complete all the programme requirements and must meet the credit minima detailed in Chapter 1 of the Regulatory Framework.

Combined Studies

There may be instances where a student has been unsuccessful in meeting the award criteria for the named award and for other more generic named awards existing within the School.

Provided that they have met the credit requirements in line with the SCQF credit minima (please see Regulation 1.21), they will be eligible for a Combined Studies award (please see Regulation 1.61).

For students studying at Level 11, they will normally be eligible for an exit award of PgCert / PgDip / Masters in Combined Studies.

Version no: 1

Change/Version Control

What	When	Who