

# Digital literacy and use of computing on the Social Work Degree

---

## Digital literacy and use of computing on the Social Work Degree

Digital literacy skills are key to how we engage in today's digital world. Defined as 'the confident and critical use of ICT for work, leisure, learning and communication' (JISC, 2012), digital literacy is essential in social work as in other professional practices because it enables practitioners to take advantage of the affordances of digital technologies to deliver a better service and secure better outcomes for service users and carers.

The importance of skills such as the ability to search for and locate information for service users; to effectively share information with colleagues; or to keep oneself up to date with evidence-based practice is reflected in the Social Work degree curriculum. This requires students to have developed a range of digital literacy skills including Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills and Information literacy (IL) appropriate for

- Use a range of OU systems and services
- 2. Communicate with their tutor and fellow students online
- 3. Explore multimedia case study material and interactive activities relating to module theories and concepts

Further integrated module activities within the Social Work programme will require students to:

- 4. Develop additional digital and information literacy skills to the level required of social work graduates.

The guidance below includes the preparation and set up students require for the programme.

### 1 Using OU online systems and services

OU students use a range of online and digital tools on a regular basis for study-related tasks. These enable students to work more efficiently, often providing time-saving benefits, and also give access to a wealth of information and expertise – key benefits to distance learners. For instance, students will submit assignments and receive comments from their tutor online. They will have instant access to digital resources via the OU Library and via their module and qualification websites so they can search quickly for the information they want. Additional integrated tools will enable students to store resources to access online, including for three years after graduation.

### 2 Communicating with tutors and fellow students online

In addition to regular face-to-face workshops with their tutor group, students are required to participate in regular online discussions and activities where they will continue to explore module themes and practise online communication skills important to social work. As their communication skills develop throughout the programme, students will have opportunities for creating and sharing resources and for engaging with perspectives from a range of agencies, disciplines, across the different countries in the UK. For these activities students will need regular internet access.

### 3 Exploring multimedia case study material

## 4 Developing additional digital and information literacy skills

these. This period is therefore an opportunity to draw on guidance provided by the University and follow up any issues with the OU Computing Helpdesk and other support services.

### Computer requirements

Details of the general computer specifications for the programme can be found on the Study at the OU website. Details are provided within the Study Materials section for each module. More specific details are provided here below.

- As well as a PC with Windows operating system, students will need access to Microsoft Office (including Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint).

Social work settings almost always require the use of Windows-

Arranging access to a computer