

**Programme name:** MA/PG Dip/PG Cert Understanding Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse  
Programme specification

**1. Programme details**

Item	Information
a) Programme name (incl. pathways):	MA/PG Dip/PG Cert Understanding Domestic Violence & Sexual Abuse
b) Programme code(s)	730368D
c) Programme credit value(s)	180 / 120 / 60 CATS 90 / 60 / 30 ECTS
d) Programme author(s)	Doireann Larkin/ Atlas Torbati
e) Entry requirements	<p>We take a flexible and inclusive approach to entry requirements and welcome applications from candidates with a wide range of educational and professional backgrounds. While many applicants will hold an undergraduate degree, we also recognise that significant knowledge and expertise can be gained through professional practice, voluntary work and lived experience.</p> <p>Each year we admit students who do not have a primary degree but who bring substantial experience of working with survivors or perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual abuse, including those employed in charities, community organisations, statutory services and frontline support roles. Applicants who have developed relevant skills and insight through professional or voluntary work are encouraged to apply, even if they do not have conventional academic qualifications.</p> <p>Applications are considered on an individual basis, with careful attention to the knowledge, experience and commitment that applicants can bring to the programme. This flexible approach reflects the interdisciplinary and practice-informed nature of the course, and our commitment to ensuring that those already working in, or wishing to enter, the domestic abuse sector have access to advanced study and professional development.</p>

f) Academic year effective from	2026-2027
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## 2. Programme Aims & Overview

### Aims

The MA in Understanding Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse aims to provide students with an in-depth, interdisciplinary understanding of domestic abuse, sexual violence and trauma, recognising their profound impact on individuals, families and communities. The programme examines how abuse intersects with wider social issues including inequality, health, safeguarding, justice and social policy, highlighting the importance of informed responses across a range of professional settings.

Drawing on perspectives from psychology, sociology, social policy, law, health and related disciplines, the programme equips students with the critical, analytical and research skills needed to examine abusive behaviour, understand the lived experiences of those affected, and evaluate responses to abuse within diverse cultural, social and institutional contexts. Particular attention is given to the long-term psychosocial impact of trauma across the life course, including the consequences of adult–child abuse.

The programme is designed for students and professionals working in fields that engage with people and communities, including social care, education, healthcare, criminal justice, legal services, policing, and the voluntary and community sector. It aims to develop the knowledge and expertise required to recognise and respond effectively to domestic abuse, contribute to safeguarding and prevention, and support evidence-informed practice, policy and advocacy..

### Overview

The MA Understanding Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse is a distinctive and pioneering programme in the UK, offering a psycho-social approach to domestic and sexual abuse with a strong emphasis on the enduring effects of trauma across the lifespan. The programme creates an open, creative and intellectually curious learning environment where diverse perspectives are valued and students develop meaningful dialogue across differences. Flexible entry routes—including the Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and full MA—allow students to begin at a level that aligns with their experience, confidence and professional goals.

Developed in collaboration with experts from psychotherapy, law, social work, community practice, research and the public sector, the programme attracts a diverse student body from the UK and internationally. Students include those progressing directly from undergraduate study as well as professionals with significant experience in related fields. Applicants without a primary degree may also be considered, supported by strong academic guidance to ensure that all learners can succeed.

Throughout the programme, students explore the psychological, social and structural dimensions of domestic violence and sexual abuse. This includes examining how structural inequalities, cultural norms, economic pressures and institutional responses influence both the prevalence of violence and pathways to safety, justice and recovery.

Graduates go on to work in a wide range of roles across government departments, local authorities, NGOs, charities and international organisations. Career pathways include policy development, safeguarding, social care, criminal justice, public health, human rights and violence-prevention initiatives. The programme also supports career progression by strengthening students' research, analytical and professional practice skills, preparing them for senior practitioner, management, policy and advocacy roles. In doing so, it aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality, enabling graduates to critically understand how gendered power relations and inequalities shape experiences of abuse and care responsibilities in both national and global contexts.

### 3. External reference

Item	Information
a) FHEQ Level of Award:	7
b) UCAS Code(s):	N/A
c) HECoS Code(s):	N/A
d) QAA Benchmark group:	N/A

### 4. Awards

Item	Information
a) Awarding institution:	University of London (Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' University)
b) Teaching institution:	Goldsmiths, University of London
c) Home School:	Mind, Body & Society <b>If other, name here:</b> N/A
d) School(s) also involved in teaching of the programme:	1. Mind, Body & Society 2. None 3. None <b>If other, name here:</b>
e) Entry awards:	<input type="checkbox"/> Foundation Cert <input type="checkbox"/> CertHE <input type="checkbox"/> DipHE <input type="checkbox"/> PGCert <input type="checkbox"/> PGDip
f) Interim exit awards:	<input type="checkbox"/> Foundation Cert <input type="checkbox"/> CertHE <input type="checkbox"/> DipHE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PGCert <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PGDip
g) Final awards:	MA Understanding Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse PG Cert Understanding Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse PG Dip Understanding Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse

### 5. Delivery

Item	Information
a) Language of study:	English
b) Valid intake points in year:	<input type="checkbox"/> January <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sept/Oct <input type="checkbox"/> Other If other, specify:
c) Mode of study:	Online Distance Learning  Indicate the overall balance of teaching modes in the table below.
d) Total hours directed learning/year	145
e) In-person hours	0%
f) Online hours	145 hours 0%
g) Pace of study:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part time
h) Duration of programme	Full time: 1 <input type="checkbox"/> years <input type="checkbox"/> months Part time: 2 <input type="checkbox"/> years <input type="checkbox"/> months
i) External accreditation:	N/A
j) Apprenticeship Standard:	N/A

## 6. Programme Learning Outcomes

Also, see the [curriculum map](#) at the end of document.

For UG exit awards, Learning Outcomes must be achieved in the level indicated below:

- CertHE = Level 4
- DipHE = Level 5

### Learning outcomes are grouped in categories of:

- **Declarative learning** - knowledge, thinking & facts (D1-3)
- **Functional learning** - application of knowledge, thinking & facts (F1-3)
- **Professional and transferable skills and behaviours** (P1-3)

### On successful completion of the programme, you will be able to:

Learning Outcome	Level	Graduate Attribute
D1 Analyse key concepts, theories and debates in domestic violence and sexual abuse, including emerging and interdisciplinary approaches.	7	
D2 Integrate socio-cultural and psychological perspectives to interpret major theoretical frameworks and core texts, showing critical awareness of current issues and new insights in the field.	7	

D3	Critique the strengths, limitations and assumptions of socio-cultural and psychological theories and methodologies used in research and practice	7	
F1	Appraise research methodologies, evaluating their applicability, constraints and ethical implications in the study of domestic violence and sexual abuse.	7	
F2	Design and execute a research project using appropriate primary or secondary methods to investigate political, socio-cultural and psychological dimensions of domestic violence and sexual abuse.	7	
F3	Engage critically and creatively with debates on assessment, intervention and treatment models, applying advanced problem-solving skills to analyse psychological impacts and psychosocial approaches	7	
P1	Produce high-quality written work that communicates complex arguments clearly and meets scholarly and professional standards, using appropriate digital tools and data sources.	7	
P2	Collaborate effectively within multi-professional teams, applying leadership, networking skills, emotional intelligence and empathy when working with diverse viewpoints and experiences including those of perpetrators and victims/survivors	7	
P3	Manage self-directed learning and adapt concepts and methods flexibly to support ongoing professional development, career progression or further research	7	

## 7. Programme Structure

For Undergraduate programmes (UG), each level must amount to at least **120 CATS** (60 ECTS).

Postgraduate (PGT) programmes must amount to at least 180 CATS (90 ECTS), with exception to interim exit awards.

Programmes are staged in **Phases**, where each Phase relates to an exit award.

**Compulsory** modules must be taken by all students.

**Option** modules – you must choose one or more of the options available to this programme at this level and point. The option modules available from this list may vary from year to year, depending on student numbers and staff availability. Selection takes place during your studies, not before.

Also, see [curriculum structure grid](#).

### Phase 1 (FT)

Module Name	Code	Credit	Level	Type	Term	Year PT	Pathway
Theories, Policy and Interventions: working with adults in the context of domestic & sexual abuse	CU7110 5D	30	7	Compulsory	1	1	N/A
The Impact of Trauma - Distress, Resilience and Post-traumatic Growth	CU7110 2B	30	7	Compulsory	3	1	N/A

### Phase 2 (FT)

Module Name	Module Code	Credit	Level	Module Type	Term	Year PT	Pathway
Group Work: Power, Identity and Conflict	CU7110 6A	30	7	Compulsory	2	1	N/A
Safeguarding Children and Young People: Responding to Abuse and Harm	CU7110 4C	30	7	Compulsory	2	2	N/A

### Phase 3 (FT)

Module Name	Module Code	Credit	Level	Module Type	Term	Year PT	Pathway
Research Methods and Dissertation	CU7109 9B	60	7	Compulsory	1-2-3	2	N/A

## 8. Learning, Teaching & Assessment

### Learning & Teaching methods

Teaching will be via a range of formats to be as relevant as possible to the topic and learning outcomes. This may be through workshops, practical labs, lectures and seminars. It may have a mix

of in-person and online activities, designed to give you the best learning experience and to make the most out of your learning experience. You are expected to attend all of your timetabled learning activities.

**Specifically, this programme will be taught in the following ways:**

Distance learning will provide structured and guided study throughout the programme. Delivery will make extensive use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), enabling students studying in either mode to connect through discussion forums, webinars and the programme blog. Individual modules will also be available as part of a continuing professional development (CPD) pathway for psychological therapists and other professionals working in the field.

The College’s online learning environment, learn.gold, will support both on-campus and distance learning students across the programme. All students will have access to core learning materials, discussion forums and chatroom groups that facilitate engagement beyond the physical classroom.

The distance learning platform will also utilise Articulate 360, which provides interactive learning materials. Students will participate in live sessions for each module to support clarity and deeper understanding of key concepts, as well as opportunities for questions and discussion through dedicated Q&A sessions.

**Assessment modes and approaches**

You will be assessed in a range ways throughout your course. These will be both Formative (for feedback and development), and Summative (required to pass and progress to the next level). Summative assessments are compulsory.

Feedback is a crucial part of your learning and development in this programme. You will receive feedback both on your Formative (work in progress) tasks/assessments, and your Summative (graded) assessments. This feedback will help the assessment to be a part of your learning, not just a test. It may be verbal, written or video based. Please engage with this feedback to improve your future work.

**Specifically, this programme will be assessed in the following ways:**

Presentations, essays, reports , research proposals

**Assessment diet (number of assessments for compulsory modules)**

Mode	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Total
Coursework	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Exam	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Live	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Portfolio (multi-modal)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Practical / multimedia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2
Written	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7	7
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>

Of which...	Individual:	9	Group:	0
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## 9. Other information

Item	Information
a) Assessment regulations	<a href="https://www.gold.ac.uk/gam/taught-programmes/assessment/">https://www.gold.ac.uk/gam/taught-programmes/assessment/</a>
b) Placement opportunities	n/a
c) Programme-specific requirements	n/a
d) Programme specific costs and resources	n/a
e) Employability and potential career opportunities	<p>The MA Understanding Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse develops specialist knowledge and critical analytical skills that are increasingly valued across a wide range of professional sectors. Employers in areas including social care, healthcare, education, criminal justice, housing, legal services and the voluntary sector increasingly recognise domestic abuse as a key element of multiple disadvantage, both as a cause and consequence of wider social inequalities. As a result, specialist understanding of domestic and sexual abuse can help graduates distinguish themselves in competitive job markets and strengthen their progression within existing professional roles. Previous students have used the expertise gained through the programme to enhance their professional profiles, secure new roles and achieve promotion within their organisations.</p> <p>The programme also benefits from strong connections with practitioners and organisations working in the domestic abuse field. Teaching is delivered by academic staff with established expertise alongside visiting lecturers from specialist services, policy organisations and frontline practice. These contributors provide students with insight into the realities of working in domestic abuse-related roles across different sectors, while also connecting students to current professional networks and developments in the field.</p> <p>Graduates may pursue careers in a variety of settings, including government departments, local authorities, charities, NGOs, international organisations and community-based services. Potential career pathways include roles within domestic violence and sexual abuse services, safeguarding and child protection teams, victim support organisations, criminal justice agencies, public health initiatives, housing services and human rights organisations. The</p>

Item	Information
	programme also provides a strong foundation for further academic research and doctoral study.

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## 10. Academic support

There is a range of support available to you to give you the best possible chance of success in this programme.

Please see your tutors and student portal/VLE for details of what's available and how to access this support.

## 11. Curriculum map

### Programme Learning Outcomes assessed by each module:

Module name	Code	Type	D1	D2	D3	F1	F2	F3	P1	P2	P3
Theories, Policy and Interventions	CU7110 5B	Compulsory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Group Work: Power, Identity and Conflict	CU7110 0A	Compulsory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The Impact of Trauma - Distress, Resilience and Post-traumatic Growth	CU7110 2B	Compulsory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Research Methods and Dissertation	CO7109 9A	Compulsory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Safeguarding Children and Young People: Responding to Abuse and Harm	CU7110 4B	Compulsory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

