



UNIVERSIDADE LUSÍADA
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Course Unit Program
Professional Contexts in Social Work

Academic Year 2026/2027

1. Organic Unit

Higher Institute of Social Work

2. Course

SOCIAL WORK

3. Cycle

1st

4. Course Unit

Professional Contexts in Social Work (L4515)

5. Scientific Area

6. Curricular Year

2nd

7. Type of Curricular Unit / Semester

1st Semester



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8. Class type and workload (work time)

Theoretical classes:	30,00
Practical classes:	
Theoretical-Practical Classes	
Tutorial Guidance:	20,00

9. ECTS Credits

6,00

10. Scientific Area Coordinator

11. Regent

Prof. Doutora CRISTINA MARIA RAMOS COELHO

12. Assistants

13. Teaching Language

Portuguese

14. General Objectives

- To develop critical and analytical reflection on the multiple contexts of professional practice, exploring new contemporary fields of intervention.
- To consolidate the identity of Social Work as a human rights profession, grounded in social justice and collective responsibility.
- To promote the dialectical articulation between theoretical knowledge and practical "action-based knowledge"

15. Specific Objectives

- To identify professional practices across different sectors (public, private, and for-profit/not-for-profit) and fields of action.
- To understand the evolution of the Welfare State and its influence on the definition of the object and functions of Social Work.
- To distinguish between the procedures and purposes of direct intervention (personal contact) and indirect intervention (technical management and planning).
- To analyse the ethical-political challenges of mediation between service

16. Skills to be acquired



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- Identification and critical analysis of contexts: To be capable of identifying different areas and units of Social Work professional practice, conducting a reflective analysis of the theoretical-methodological and ethical-political challenges specific to each intervention context.
- Consolidation of professional identity: To develop and promote the social worker's identity, recognising the profession as a human rights profession grounded in social justice, dignity, and respect for diversity.

17. Teaching Methodology

Theoretical exposition of the subjects;
Analysis and interpretation of technical documents;
Discussion of case studies, based on students' fieldwork on specific contexts of professional practice of social workers (observation visits to professional contexts) and / or with support from testimonials of practices of invited professionals.

18. Course Unit Program

Module I: Professional Identity and Theoretical-Political Framework

- 1.1 - The professional identity of the social worker: Human Rights.
- 1.2 - Welfare State and Social Policy: focus and general functions of Social Work.
- 1.3 - Professional jurisdiction of the social worker's intervention.

Module II: Configuration of the Professional Action Space and Methodologies

- 2.1 - Sectors, areas and fields of Social Work intervention.
- 2.2 - Generic Functions.
- 2.3 - Direct vs. Indirect Intervention.

Module III: Analysis of Specific Intervention Contexts

- 3.1 - Health; Education; Justice; Local Government; Gerontology; Social Protection and Action; Housing; Community Development; emergency contexts and others.
- 3.2 - Challenges for social workers' action in the mediation between service users, the organisation, social policies and the core issues.
- 3.3 - Action-based knowledge: articulations between theoretical, methodological and technical knowledge in Social Work intervention.

19. Assessment Methods

One written assignments.
Written assignment and presentation of a group report on the observation visit.
Class participation.
Other elements

20. Didactic Resources

Computer
Projector
Documentation and bibliography recommended and/or provided by the teacher



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21. Sustainability Objectives

SGD 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

SDG 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

SGD 10 - Reduce inequality within and among countries

22. Keywords

Professional Contexts

Professional Identity

Social Intervention

Social Work



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23. Main Bibliography

Author(s): Tomás Fernández García e Carmen Alemán Bracho
Title: Introducción al trabajo Social
Edition: 1ª Edição Year: 2009
Local: Madrid
Publisher: Alianza Editorial
ISBN Code:

Author(s): Maria Inês Amaro
Title: Urgências e emergências do serviço social.
Edition: 2ª Edição Year: 2015
Local: Lisboa
Publisher: Universidade Católica Editora
ISBN Code:

Author(s): Clara, C. Santos, Cristina Albuquerque e Helena Neves Almeida
Title: Serviço Social: Mutações e Desafios
Edition: 1ª Edição Year: 2013
Local: Coimbra
Publisher: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra
ISBN Code:

24. Complementary Bibliography

Author(s): Dean H. Hepworth, Ronald H. Rooney, Glenda Dewberry Rooney e Kimberly Strom-Gottfried
Title: Direct social work practice: theory and skills
Edition: 9ª Edição Year: 2013
Local: Belmont, CA
Publisher: Brooks-Cole - CENGAGE Learning
ISBN Code:

Author(s): Fialho, Joaquim; Casquilho, Inês (coord)
Title: Serviço Social Fundamentos, metodologia e contextos de intervenção
Edition: 1ª Edição Year: 2025
Local: Lisboa
Publisher: Silabo



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