

**POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE FOR
INDEPENDENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE ADVISORS**

NOW TAKING APPLICATIONS FOR 2014-15

1) SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The 2013 government publication 'An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales' tells us that on average over 400,000 females and 72,000 males over the age of sixteen years, experience some form of sexual violence every year.

The NSPCC report that 1 in 20 children have been sexually abused and official statistics show that 18,915 sexual crimes against children under 16 were recorded in England and Wales in 2012/13.

Not all cases of sexual violence get reported to the police or go through the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

2) THE INDEPENDENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE ADVISOR (ISVA)

The ISVA role was commissioned by Baroness Scotland through the Home Office Violent Crime Unit in 2005. ISVAs have since provided essential, appropriate and timely information, support and advice to victims of sexual violence and play a vital role in service provision for those who have experienced sexual violence including helping 'victims' engage effectively with the Criminal Justice System where appropriate.

**3) ABOUT THE POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE (PG Cert) IN ADVOCACY FOR
'VICTIMS' OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

The PG Cert in Advocacy for 'Victims' of Sexual Violence is designed to enhance knowledge of the different forms of sexual violence, the theoretical perspectives on causation and the impact of it as well as critically exploring the terms 'victim' and 'survivor' in the process of analysing attitudes and myths that surround sexual violence and which impact upon service provision.

The ultimate aim of the course is to support students to establish a firm knowledge and evidence base for practice which is rooted in theory, legislation, policy and standards and in the process provide students with the skills necessary to undertake the ISVA role effectively and professionally in line with Skills for Justice National Occupational Standards.

This course also develops transferable skills, including critical thinking, effective communication skills, report writing and group work.

4) WHO SHOULD APPLY?

- Existing ISVAs who would like to gain a Level 7 qualification
- Those with an interest in becoming an ISVA
- Any other worker involved in advocacy work with those who have experienced sexual violence
- Anyone with an interest in sexual violence and the ISVA role i.e. multi-agency professionals who work with ISVAs and would like to know more about the role.

Though this is a Postgraduate course, those wishing to apply do not have to have achieved education at degree level. This course is open to anyone who has:

- A first degree at second class honours or above in a related field **or**
- A professional qualification in a related field (i.e. health, social work, the criminal justice system etc.) **or**
- Is currently in practice in the field of sexual violence and be able to demonstrate an ability to study at postgraduate level
- Has an interest in becoming a sexual violence professional and be able to demonstrate an ability to study at postgraduate level

Applicants may be asked to *demonstrate an ability to study at postgraduate level* by submitting some written work prior to admission

5) WORRIED THAT YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO WORK TO POSTGRADUATE LEVEL?

WHAT PAST STUDENTS HAVE SAID

I really liked gaining some theoretical underpinning knowledge to the work I am doing

Meeting other ISVAs and sharing practice, knowledge, resources and gaining support was invaluable

Doing this course gave me the opportunity to come out of practice for a short while and take the time to re-visit practice

The course tutors were approachable, exceptionally knowledgeable and very supportive

It was really useful to looking at best practice models and this has helped me think about my practice

The course content has given me lots more knowledge about the background of sexual violence, I only work with the here and now so I found it very useful and interesting as it also related to cases I have.

Having guest speakers from Forensics, the CPS and the police reinforced my knowledge of proceedings and gave me confidence to put into practice within my role.

This course is challenging and informative. It prepares you for the ISVA post effectively and makes it clear what the role is all about

I didn't think I would be able to study ant postgraduate level but I found I could! It was challenging but we got lots of support and it was

6) Why Postgraduate Level?

ISVAs tell us that though the Home Office states that the aim of the ISVA is to “to work within a multi-agency setting to provide a pro-active service to adult victims of sexual violence within and outside the CJS” (Home Office, 2006, Annex A); professionals from a range of organisations/agencies still do not know about or fully understand the ISVA role.

The reason for this according to ISVAs is that in spite of the fact that the first ISVAs were in place by 2006, the ISVA role is still not recognised as a professional role and that there is no professional identity for ISVAs. Within this Postgraduate qualification ISVAs explore ‘professional identity’ with ISVAs and with NCSPVA support, help them to work toward their vision of it.

Recent NCSPVA work with the Ministry of Justice (2014) identified that many sexual violence services ensure that counsellors and in some cases other support workers who work for or with them; are qualified to postgraduate level but that ISVAs would only be trained internally or to a low level i.e. Level 3 or 4. **The NCSPVA believe that ISVAs should be qualified to the same level as other sexual violence sector workers and to a level that gives them professional recognition and status. The PG Cert in Advocacy for ‘victims’ of Sexual Violence is designed to do this.** The Higher Education Authority (HEA) state that holders of Level 7 qualifications

will have undertaken work informed by, professional practice or discipline at an appropriate academic level. For Level 7, students will have shown originality in the application of knowledge be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and show originality in tackling and solving problems”.

7) COURSE FEES

Teaching the course at PG level allows us to charge a lower fee for a qualification that can be completed within one year. Currently Level 6 Degree courses at the University of Worcester are just under £9,000 per year and take 3 years to complete. The 2 year Foundation Degree at Level 5 costs £6,000. This is because the government set the fees for these degrees. Institutions themselves can however set the fees for Postgraduate degrees.

The PG Cert in Advocacy for ‘Victims’ of Sexual Violence’ offers a higher level degree (Level 7) that can be studied for less time (over 1 year) and at a lower fee; while at the same time giving higher professional recognition and status.

Fees for 2014/15

£1,590.00 (this equates to £530 per module)

Current or ex-University of Worcester students going onto Masters Programmes will have a 10% discount in fees. Applicants with any gap in study of more than two years are advised to talk to the University finance office to confirm their eligibility to receive the discount.

8) PAYMENT OPTIONS

Payment can be made in full or can be made via monthly instalments to the University of Worcester. Students wishing to pay by monthly instalments are advised to notify Finance when registering for the course.

9) FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

9.1 Employer funding

Many employers pay for their staff to attend the ISVA course. Prospective students should discuss this with their employer.

9.2 Home office funding

Existing ISVAs can apply for funding for this course from the Home Office. Those wishing to do so should make a Business Case for funding that should be forwarded to the Home Office directly isva@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

9.3 Government Professional and Career Development Loan (PCDL)

A PCDL is a bank loan to help learners pay for learning that leads to work or career development.

Learners can apply for any amount between £300 and £10,000. This can be used to pay course fees and/or other course costs including books, childcare and travel. It is up to the learner to decide how much money they need to borrow. It should be noted though that a learner can only borrow 100% of the course fee if they have been registered as unemployed for at least three months prior to their learning. If a learner has not been registered as unemployed for at least three months, they will be able to borrow 80% of the course fee.

Learner applying for a PCDL must be:

- aged 18 years old or over at the point of application
- Been ordinarily resident† in the UK for at least three years prior to the start of the learning programme
- Intending to work in the UK, the EU or the EEA (European Economic Area) when the course finishes

Recent graduates from undergraduate courses can apply. ***Current or ex-University of Worcester students going onto Masters Programmes will have a 10% discount in fees. Applicants with any gap in study of more than two years are advised to talk to the University finance office to confirm their eligibility to receive the discount.***

If you would like to apply for a PCDL you should call the National Careers Service on **0800 100 900** to request an application pack and complete the relevant application form with one of the participating banks. Learners should submit the completed application form to their chosen bank, which will process the form to determine the learner's eligibility for the loan.

Please note that the University of Worcester's code for this loan is 4364. You will need this for the application form.

9.4 West Mercia Scholarships

The West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner has generously given the NCSPVA 2 fully funded scholarships for the PG Cert in Advocacy for Victims of Sexual Violence

Applicants must be living or working in the West Mercia and must be able to show how doing the course will impact upon crime (including the support of victims) in West Mercia in line with the 'Police and Crime Plan for West Mercia 2013-17 – see www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/Document-Library/Publications/POLICE--CRIME-PLAN-PUBLISHED-VERSION.pdf

Applications for should be made by completing the course application form after which staff will contact West Mercia applicants regarding the scholarship.

9.5 Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Scholarships

Local PCCs have individual grants application forms. It is worth applying for funding via your local PCC

9.6 Charities and trusts

Charities and trusts sometimes provide grants. Find out more at your local library in these publications:

- the Educational Grants Directory
- the Charities Digest
- the Grants Register
- the Directory of Grant Making Trusts

See [Trust Funds](#)

You can also use the [Family Action grant search.](#)

9.7 The Disabled Students Allowance

The Disabled Students' Allowance is also available for postgraduate students. For information on eligibility see the Department for Business Innovation and Skills publication Bridging the Gap 2014/2015. You can also download a copy from Student Finance England at www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/further-information or telephone 0300 100 0607 for a copy.

9.8 University of Worcester - Eligible Access to Learning Fund

The University of Worcester now has an Access to Learning Fund which is a non-repayable grant administered by The University of Worcester to help eligible students who are experiencing financial difficulties.

You must already be a student and have paid part of your fees but can prove that you are having difficulty paying the remainder or finding it hard to find childcare or travel expenses. The amount awarded ranges from £100 to £3,500 but awards above £2,000 are rare. In particular help is given to:

- Mature students with other financial commitments
- Disabled students
- Students who are, or have been homeless
- Students from a low-income background
- Students whose financial commitments change unexpectedly after the start of the course
- Students with children, especially lone parents
- Students with high travel expenses and/or course costs

Application forms are available by request. Please contact r.jones@worc.ac.uk after you have started your course. Applications cannot be made in advance

Further information on sources of postgraduate funding can be found at www.prospects.ac.uk.

10) WHO TEACHES ON THE COURES?

The course sits within the National Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence and Abuse (NCSPVA) at the University of Worcester.

The Director of the NCSPVA is Ruth Jones OBE who has been recognised for her work in the domestic and sexual abuse sector with a number of awards including; the award for best UK Universities Applied Researcher for 'A Needs and Gaps Analysis of Sexual Violence Services' (2010). Ruth was awarded the title of Worcestershire Woman of the Year in 2011 for her work on domestic and sexual violence and was named as an 'Inspirational woman of Europe in 2012. She received the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to victims of domestic and sexual violence in the New Year Honours List in 2014.

Ruth and her team do local, national and international work including but not exhaustive of consultancy for the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice and work in India, Fiji, Cambodia, Russia and the USA. The team are currently writing a Toolkit for ISVAs commissioned by Rape Crisis England and Wales

As Principal Lecturer, Ruth will input on the PG Cert in Advocacy for 'Victims' of Sexual Violence which will also be taught by Dr. Holly Taylor who has academic and practice experience in the field and Jocelyn Anderson Msc; the Chief Executive of West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre and Sessional Lecturer at the NCSPVA. Specialist guest speakers will also input to teaching on the PG Cert in Advocacy for 'Victims' of Sexual Violence

11) HOW AND WHEN IS THE COURSE DELIVERED?

The PG Cert in Advocacy for 'victims' of Sexual Violence is delivered over one year and consists of 3 modules (one per semester).

Each module is taught over 2 X 3 day blocks. Students must attend both blocks (total of 6 days) and with tutor support, will be required to do set and independent reading and work towards assignments outside of taught days.

The modules and dates for 2014/15 are as follows:

MODULE CODE	MODULE TITLE	DATES
ISVA4001	The ISVA: Role, Risk and Responsibility	September 2014 Friday 26 th , Saturday 27 th & Sunday 28 th AND November Friday 7 th , Saturday 8 th & Sunday 9 th 2014
ISVA4002	Supporting survivors of Sexual Violence	February 2015 Friday 13 th , Saturday 14 th & Sunday 15 th AND March 2015 Friday 27 th , Saturday 28 th & Sunday 29 th
ISVA4003	Professional Practice	June 2015 Friday 12 th , Saturday 13 th & Sunday 14 th AND Friday July 24 th , Saturday 25 th & Sunday 26 th

Please note that the course is run on weekends to allow for those who work to attend however; many students will be granted time off in lieu from their employer.

Assessment

Assessment includes:

- Essays
- Reports
- Case Study
- Poster Presentation
- Professional reflection

12) APPLICATION & INFORMATION

For an application form or for more information, please contact the University of Worcester Programme lead for Domestic and Sexual Violence by telephone – 01905 855000 Ex 2355 or Email: r.jones@worc.ac.uk