Social Work

The School of Social Work’s Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) Program prepares undergraduate students for beginning professional social work practice. The BSSW degree provides generalist practice skills and is considered the first professional social work degree. BSSW graduates are eligible for membership in the principal professional organization, the National Association of Social Workers. In addition to preparing students for generalist social work practice, the BSSW program is designed to provide an excellent foundation for those who wish to pursue graduate education in social work or in other graduate programs.

The BSSW program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE accreditation is important for at least three reasons. First, it promotes a high quality, comprehensive social work education. Second, some states, including Missouri, offer professional licensure to graduates of CSWE-accredited undergraduate programs. Third, many Master of Social Work (MSW) programs grant advanced standing (i.e. waiver of introductory social work courses) to graduates of CSWE-accredited undergraduate social work programs. For example, the Saint Louis University MSW program waives the first 18 credit hours for students who receive advanced standing, resulting in students taking 39 credit hours rather than the full 57 credits for the MSW degree and may then be able to complete both the BSSW and MSW degrees in five years.

Emphases of the BSSW Program

The BSSW Program at Saint Louis University has two areas of emphasis. Skilled Practitioners - The program is dedicated to ensuring that graduates are skilled practitioners. To accomplish this, the program includes five classes devoted specifically to social work practice skills. These courses address all levels of social work practice, as well as social work practice with diverse and oppressed populations. Students ground the skills they learn in the classroom through their application in a social work organization. During their senior year, BSSW students complete 16 to 20 hours per week of field practicum under the supervision of an experienced MSW-level social worker. Students, in consultation with their social work faculty mentor, choose their placement from over 200 agencies in the St. Louis area that have contracts with the School of Social Work.

Commitment to Social Justice - The BSSW Program’s commitment to social justice is reflective of the social work profession as a whole, as well as the Jesuit and University mission. Social work students are introduced to the concept of social justice in their first social work course and further discuss it throughout the social work curriculum. Students’ commitment to social justice is enhanced through activities of the School of Social Work’s Center for Social Justice Education and Research. This Center promotes social justice through the funding of student awards, educational workshops and conferences.

Careers in Social Work

Social workers have many career opportunities. Some social workers choose to do direct practice with individuals, families, or groups. Others are program directors and administrators in social work organizations. Still, others work as legislative advocates, engage in neighborhood and community practice, or conduct research. The following is a small sample of the areas in which social workers may be employed: aging and gerontology, substance abuse treatment, child welfare, family practice, mental illness and development disabilities, health care social work, international social work, juvenile justice and adult corrections, occupational social work, and school social work. Some social work jobs in these areas require an MSW degree, while many offer entry-level positions for graduates with a BSSW degree.
Evening BSSW Program

In addition to having a program for traditional day students, the School of Social Work provides an opportunity for working adults to earn a social work degree by offering classes during the evening. The Evening Program is offered in a partnership between the School of Social Work and the School for Professional Studies (SPS). Students apply and are admitted to SPS in accordance with their guidelines. Students take core courses (57 credits), elective courses (24 credits) and two social work courses (6 credits) through SPS. After both social work courses and a minimum of 60 hours are completed, students apply to the School of Social Work as a social work major. After being accepted and completing 90 credit hours, the student will transfer to the School of Social Work to complete the junior and senior level social work courses to obtain their BSSW degree.

Second Majors and Minors

Many social work students choose to obtain a second major, a minor, or a certificate to enhance their social work education. Some of the most common choices include International Studies, Theology, Psychology, Criminal Justice, Spanish, Urban Affairs, Women’s Studies, Business, African American Studies, and the Micah House Certificate in Urban Social Analysis.

Admission to the BSSW Program

Incoming freshmen, students changing their majors, and transfer students can identify social work as their intended major. As a professional school, the School of Social Work requires an additional and separate process for formal admission to the social work major. Formal admission to the social work major typically occurs at the end of the sophomore year.

5-Year Program (BSSW and MSW in 5 Years)

BSSW students interested in pursuing their MSW degree at Saint Louis University have the opportunity to complete their BSSW and MSW degrees in five years. BSSW students who receive a grade of “B” or better in their undergraduate social work courses receive 18 credit hours of graduate credit (“advanced standing”) for those courses. Additionally, with careful planning, students can take up to 9 graduate credit hours (3 courses) during their senior year. Students then graduate with a total of 27 credit hours toward their MSW degree. Students would then need to complete only 30 credit hours. Students could begin taking courses either during the summer or fall following their May graduation. All courses could be completed within three semesters (Summer, Fall, and Spring; or Fall, Spring, and Summer). Students considering this option need to carefully plan their schedules with their social work faculty mentor or academic advisor to accomplish this.

School of Social Work Faculty:

Faye Y. Abram, Ph.D.
James Allen, Ph.D.
Rebecca A. Banks, MSW
Dorothy Becvar, Ph.D.
Gary Behrman, Ph.D.
Marla Berg-Weger, Ph.D.
Julie M. Birkenmaier, Ph.D.
William C. Brennan, Ph.D.
Ellen M. Burkomper, Ph.D.
Jami Curley, Ph.D.
Pamela J. Huggins, MSW
Donald M. Linhorst, Ph.D.
Michael Mancini, Ph.D.
Roy A. Ruckdeschel, Ph.D.
John J. Stretch, Ph.D.
Susan S. Tebb, Ph.D.
Sabrina W. Tyuse, Ph.D.
Stephen Wernet, Ph.D.
Jan Wilson, Ph.D.
Social Work Program (B.S.S.W.)

Curriculum Requirements (120 hours):

**English & Communication: 9 Hours**
- ENGL190 Advanced Strategies of Rhetoric and Research
- ENGL202-290 Literary Studies
- CMML200 Public Speaking

**History: 6 Hours**
- HIST112 Origins of the Modern World 1600 to Present
- HIST261 History of the United States Since 1865

**Philosophy & Theology: 12 Hours**
- PHIL105 Introduction to Philosophy: Self and Reality
- PHIL205 Ethics
- THEO100 Theological Foundations
- THEOXXX 200 level or higher Theology course

**Mathematics: 3 Hours**
Statistics Preferred: RMET 410; others: MATH 126, MATH 130

**Natural Sciences: 3 Hours**
- BIOL Preferred: Human biology-related; 2nd choice: Environmental science; 3rd choice: non-biology science course (e.g., chem, physics)

**Fine Arts: 3 Hours**
- ART/ARTH THR MUSC Any Fine and Performing Arts course

**Foreign Language: 6 Hours**
- Any foreign language at the freshman level

**Social Science Requirements: 15 Hours**
- SOC110 Introduction to Sociology
- POLS110 American Political System
- EON190 Principles of Economics
- PSY101 General Psychology
- PSY439 Abnormal Psychology

**Electives: 24 Hours**
- Electives should be taken which will enhance the social work major

**Required Social Work Courses: 39 Hours**
- SWRK100 Introduction to Social Work
- SWRK227 Human Behavior and the Social Environment
- SWRK302 The American Social Welfare System
- SWRK327 Diversity and Anti-Oppression Practice
- SWRK351 Social Work Practice I: Communication Skills
- SWRK352 Social Work Practice II: Individuals and Families
- SWRK372 Introduction to Social Work Research
- SWRK451 Social Work Practice III: Groups
- SWRK452 Social Work Practice IV: Organizations and Communities
- SWRK481 Social Work Practicum I
- SWRK482 Social Work Practicum II
- SWRK486 Integrative Practice Seminar I
- SWRK487 Integrative Practice Seminar II
Social Work Elective Courses

Selected MSW elective courses at the 700 and 800 levels are available to senior social work students for BSSW credit. Each semester a list of elective courses are made available to students. Below is a partial list of those BSSW/MSW elective courses.

SWRK703 International Social Work: Experiencing Community Among the Poor in Mexico
SWRK703 International Social Work: The Ghana Experience
SWRK705 International Social Work
SWRK717 Foundations of Non-Violent Peacemaking
SWRK729 Corrections and Social Work
SWRK739 Seminar in Communicating with Children
SWRK764 Child and Families Issues in Social Service
SWRK767 Response to Crisis: Violence and Natural Disasters
SWRK774 Clinical Interventions with the Elderly
SWRK744 Substance Abuse Interventions
SWRK898 Interprofessional Care of Medically Underserved Populations
SWRK790 Feminist Approaches to Social Work Practice: Not for Women Only

Pass/No Pass Option

School of Social Work students may not take any Social Work course as Pass/No Pass, with the exception of SWRK481 and SWRK482 that are offered as Pass/No Pass courses only. Students wishing to take non-Social Work courses as Pass/No Pass must register for this option and follow the conditions stated in the BSSW Student Handbook.

Typical Course of Study

The following is intended as an illustrative model for completing the requirements for the BSSW degree. Other models are possible in keeping with a student’s particular needs and interests.

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Minor in Social Work

Minimum of 18 credit hours

Required courses:
SWRK100 Introduction to Social Work
SWRK227 Human Behavior and the Social Environment
SWRK302 American Welfare System
SWRK351 Social Work Practice I: Communication Skills

Select any two of the following courses:
SWRK227 Human Behavior and the Social Environment
SWRK327 Diversity and Anti-Oppression Practice
SWRK352 Social Work Practice II: Individuals and Families
SWRK372 Introduction to Social Work Research

Students considering pursuing an MSW degree need to know that they will not be able to obtain Advanced Standing toward the MSW degree with a minor in social work. Only students with a Bachelor of Science in Social Work degree can obtain Advanced Standing.

Additional Information

Please contact the Director of the BSSW Program for additional information (Tegeler Hall, 200 East, 314-977-2712).