Social Work, BA

The undergraduate program in social work has been accredited continuously by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1974 and is designed to be consistent with the council’s 2022 Educational Policy Statement competencies.

Consistent with CSWE standards, the program views dimensions of diversity as intersections of multiple factors, including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Students learn that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim.

Learning Outcomes

The specific mission of the BA program in social work is to prepare culturally aware generalist social workers whose practice is consistent with social work values and ethics, including a commitment to social justice and social change. The program’s goals are to:

- prepare students for culturally competent generalist social work practice with individuals, families, small groups, organizations, and communities;
- provide students with a base for continuing graduate education in social work and for lifelong learning; and
- prepare students for active engagement with issues of social justice, oppression, and social welfare in local, state, regional, national, and global goals.

The program draws on a liberal arts perspective; social and behavioral science theory; social research; social policy development, analysis, and implementation; culturally competent intervention and prevention approaches in working with individuals, families, small groups, organizations, and communities; social integration; multiple systems assessment and evaluation; and knowledge pertaining to diversity.

Knowledge and practice in social work values and ethics are also an integral part of students’ education. Knowledge and skill related to the evaluation of practice are integrated throughout the curriculum, beginning in SSW:1022 Social Justice and Social Welfare in the United States, continuing through practice and research courses, and culminating in the field experience and field seminar.

Requirements

The Bachelor of Arts with a major in social work requires a minimum of 120 s.h., including at least 56–60 s.h. of work for the major (a minimum of 35–38 s.h. in social work courses, 9–10 s.h. in cognate areas, 6 s.h. in one other department or in social work courses, and 6 s.h. in social work electives). Students must maintain a grade-point average (GPA) of at least 2.00 in all UI courses and a GPA of at least 3.00 in social work courses for the major. Only the first 6 s.h. of School of Social Work elective courses (prefix SSW) completed will be calculated in the major grade-point average. They also must complete the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences GE CLAS Core.

Students must complete SSW:1022 Social Justice and Social Welfare in the United States to be admitted to the major and before enrolling in the remaining social work courses required for the major; this course also fulfills the Values and Culture requirement of the GE CLAS Core. A transfer student may be given approval by the department to substitute this requirement if they have completed an introduction to social work or an introduction to human services course at another institution. If transferring the course from another institution, a student may be able to reduce the social work credit required for the major by 3 s.h.

The BA with a major in social work requires the following coursework.

### Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSW:1022</td>
<td>Social Justice and Social Welfare in the United States</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSW:3840</td>
<td>Human Behavior in the Social Environment</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>SSW:3841</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Social Work Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSW:3842</td>
<td>Interpersonal Skills Laboratory</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSW:3844</td>
<td>Introduction to Social Work Research</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>SSW:3845</td>
<td>Social Work Processes</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>SSW:3847</td>
<td>Discrimination, Oppression, and Diversity</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSW:4189</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts Generalist Practicum Seminar</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>SSW:4193</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts Generalist Practicum</td>
<td>8-11</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSW:4843</td>
<td>Social Welfare Policy and Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
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### Social Work Courses

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social work electives</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electives in another discipline related to social work</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or this:</td>
<td>Social work electives</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Cognate Areas

Students complete the following.
Admission

The School of Social Work endeavors to enroll students who represent diverse backgrounds and cultural perspectives.

The School of Social Work criteria for admission for a BA in social work is being revised and will be detailed on their Undergraduate Admissions Process website.

Admission to the undergraduate program in social work requires:

- completion of SSW:1022 Social Justice and Social Welfare in the United States with a grade of C or higher;
- a cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of at least 2.50 (exceptions may be made for persons who do not meet the GPA requirement if they are strong candidates on the basis of other criteria); and
- completion of application forms and statement.

Students should complete SSW:1022 in their first year or in fall of their sophomore year and apply to the major during their sophomore year. Students who apply during their junior year and are admitted must expect to complete an additional summer session, or more, in their second year. Students who apply during their junior year and are admitted to the major or until they have earned more than 72 s.h. are admitted to the major or until they have earned more than 72 s.h.

All of the items above are required for transfer students, except that substitution of SSW:1022 is permitted with a grade of C or higher in a course approved by the department, such as introduction to social work or introduction to human services.

Meeting the admission requirements above does not guarantee admission. Admission may be limited by available instructional resources and opportunities for field placement. While volunteer, work, and life experience are valued in the admission process, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) does not permit the School of Social Work to grant academic credit for life experience or previous work experience.

For more information about admission policies, contact the program administrator at the School of Social Work.

Social Work Interest

Students who are interested in applying to the social work major may declare social work interest at any time after they enroll at the university and before they earn 60 s.h. of credit, and preferably while they still will have time to enter and complete the major in a total of four years of study. Students with over 60 s.h. earned must contact the School of Social Work to gain permission to declare social work interest. Students may not declare a social work interest after they have earned 72 s.h., even if they already have declared another major.

Declaration of a social work interest qualifies students with at least sophomore standing to be advised by a senior academic advisor assigned to social work interest students. The declaration allows students to participate in the Social Work Student Association and other social work activities, but does not allow them to register for required courses in the major. They may take electives in the social work department prior to formal admission to the major.

Students may continue their social work interest standing until they are admitted to the major or until they have earned more than 72 s.h. of credit.

Career Advancement

The social work major prepares students for employment in social service areas such as public welfare, child welfare, human service organizations, mental health, health providers (such as hospitals, hospice, skilled care, substance abuse treatment), senior services, group services, residential treatment for youth and persons with disabilities, and corrections. Many graduates continue with advanced study in social work or related physical and mental health professions. Overall employment of social workers is projected to grow 16% from 2016–2026 (Bureau of Labor Statistics).

The Pomerantz Career Center offers multiple resources to help students find internships and jobs.

Academic Plans

Four-Year Graduation Plan

The following checkpoints list the minimum requirements students must complete by certain semesters in order to stay on the university's Four-Year Graduation Plan. Courses in the major are those required to complete the major; they may be offered by departments other than the major department.

Admission to the major in social work is selective. The four-year graduation plan applies only to students who are admitted by the beginning of their fifth semester.

Before the fifth semester begins: four courses in the major and admission to the major.

Before the seventh semester begins: five more courses in the major and at least 90 s.h. earned toward the degree.

Before the eighth semester begins: five more courses in the major and finalized field placement.

During the eighth semester: enrollment in all remaining coursework in the major, all remaining GE CLAS Core courses, and a sufficient number of semester hours to graduate.

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.
Social Work, BA

Course Title Hours

Any Semester

Students apply to the Social Work BA program through a selective process. Acceptance is not guaranteed.  
Students must maintain a GPA of at least 2.00 in all UI courses and a GPA of at least 3.00 in social work courses for the major.

GE CLAS Core: Sustainability b

First Year

Fall

SSW:1022 Social Justice and Social Welfare in the United States c, d 3
RHET:1030 or ENGL:1200 Rhetoric or The Interpretation of Literature 3 - 4
GE CLAS Core: Diversity and Inclusion e 3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages First Level Proficiency or elective course f 4 - 5
CSL:1600 Success at Iowa 2

Hours 15-17

Spring

BIOL:1140 Human Biology: Nonmajors d 4
SOC:1010 Introduction to Sociology d 3 - 4
ENGL:1200 or RHET:1030 The Interpretation of Literature or Rhetoric 3 - 4
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Second Level Proficiency or elective course f 4 - 5

Hours 14-17

Second Year

Fall

PSY:1001 Elementary Psychology d 3
GE CLAS Core: International and Global Issues e 3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Third Level Proficiency or elective course f 4 - 5
Elective course g 3
Elective course g 3

Hours 16-17

Spring

POLI:1100 Introduction to American Politics d 3
GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences without Lab g 3
GE CLAS Core: Quantitative or Formal Reasoning g 3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Fourth Level Proficiency or elective course f 4 - 5
Elective course g 3

Admission Application: Students apply to the BA program through a selective process. Applications are only accepted once a year in the spring semester. See Social Work Interest advisor or department website for more information. b

Hours 16-17

Third Year

Any Semester

The curriculum shown in the third and fourth years on this plan begins upon acceptance into the School of Social Work.

Fall

SSW:3840 Human Behavior in the Social Environment 4
SSW:3847 Discrimination, Oppression, and Diversity 3
Major: social work elective course (prefix SSW) i 3
Major: social work elective course j 3
GE CLAS Core: Historical Perspectives e 3

Hours 16

Spring

SSW:3844 Introduction to Social Work Research 4
SSW:3845 Social Work Processes 4
Major: social work elective course (prefix SSW) i 3
GE CLAS Core: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts e 3
Elective course g 1

Hours 15

Fourth Year

Fall

SSW:3841 Fundamentals of Social Work Practice 3
SSW:3842 Interpersonal Skills Laboratory 2
SSW:4843 Social Welfare Policy and Practice 3
Major: social work elective course 3
Elective course g 3
Elective course g 2
Field experience planning (attend meeting, interview, match with agency)

Hours 16

Spring

SSW:4189 Bachelor of Arts Generalist Practicum Seminar 1
SSW:4193 Bachelor of Arts Generalist Practicum 8 - 11
Elective course g 3
Degree Application: apply on MyUI before deadline (typically in February for spring, September for fall) k

Hours 12-15

Total Hours 120-130

a The Academic Advising Center and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences advise Social Work Interest students on prerequisite course planning. Students are advised for success, based on academic strength, not necessarily for a four year plan. Prerequisites may take more than two years to complete.
b Sustainability must be completed by choosing a course that has been approved for Sustainability AND for one of these General Education areas: Natural Sciences; Quantitative and Formal Reasoning; Social Sciences; Historical Perspectives; International and Global Issues; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts; or Values and Culture.
c Students must complete SSW:1022 to be admitted to the major and before enrolling in the remaining social work required major courses. Students may take this course in any semester, but must have completed the course before admission is finalized. It is recommended that it be taken in the first three semesters.
d Fulfills a major requirement and may fulfill a GE requirement.
e GE CLAS Core courses may be completed in any order unless used as a prerequisite for another course. Students should consult with an advisor about the best sequencing of courses.
f Students who have completed four years of a single language in high school have satisfied the GE CLAS Core World Languages requirement. Enrollment in world languages courses requires a placement exam, unless enrolling in a first-semester-level course.
g Students may use elective courses to earn credit towards the total s.h. required for graduation or to complete a double major, minors, or certificates.

h Students are expected to apply to the major in their sophomore year. Juniors are permitted to apply and if they do so, it is with the expectation that at least one additional summer session of coursework will be necessary to complete all of the requirements of the major due, in part, to the sequencing of social work courses.

i Students must take two elective courses in social work (6 s.h.).

j Students must take an additional two courses (6 s.h.) of electives. They may take the two courses as additional social work electives, or they may take two courses in a related discipline.

k Please see Academic Calendar, Office of the Registrar website for current degree application deadlines. Students should apply for a degree for the session in which all requirements will be met. For any questions on appropriate timing, contact your academic advisor or Graduation Services.