Social Work, BA

The undergraduate program in social work prepares students to work professionally as direct service providers and social change agents. The program has been accredited continuously by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1974 and is designed to be consistent with CSWE's 2022 Educational Policy Statement competencies:

- demonstrate ethical and professional behavior;
- advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice;
- engage anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) in practice;
- engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice;
- engage in policy practice;
- engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
- assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
- intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities; and
- evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Consistent with CSWE standards, the program explores how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersections of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power.

Visit the CSWE Assessment of Learning Outcomes for the BA program on the School of Social Work website.

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, which include social justice and social change. The program's goals are to:

- prepare generalist practitioners to work 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 contexts.

Learning Outcomes

In the social work major, students will build foundational competence in social work practice and demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

- Identify personal and professional ethics that guide social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Examine how one's own culture, values, biases, and beliefs influence professional use of self and one's ability to affect change at all levels of social work practice.
- Apply evidence-informed knowledge and skills to effectively engage, assess, and intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Identify social policies at the local, state, federal, and global levels that affect well-being, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services.
- Develop a deeper understanding of historical and current contexts of power and oppression to engage in practices that advance human rights and promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Requirements

The Bachelor of Arts with a major in social work requires a minimum of 120 s.h., including at least 54 s.h. of work for the major. Students must maintain a grade-point average (GPA) of at least 2.00 in all courses for the major and in all UI courses for the major. They must also complete the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences GE CLAS Core.

In planning coursework, students should be guided by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences maximum hours rule: students earning a BA may apply a maximum of 56 s.h. earned in one department to the minimum 120 s.h. required for graduation, whether or not the coursework is accepted toward requirements for the major; students who earn more than 56 s.h. from one department may use the additional semester hours to satisfy requirements for the major (if the department accepts them), and the grades they earn become part of their grade-point average, but they cannot apply the additional semester hours to the minimum 120 s.h. required for graduation.

The social work program draws on a liberal arts perspective and integrates a systemic perspective and understanding of the interconnectedness of people and their environments. The program encourages collaborative learning approaches to support students' development and growth. Knowledge and practice in social work values and ethics are an integral part of students' education. Beginning with the course SSW:1022 Social Justice and Social Welfare in the United States, knowledge and skills related to the social work profession are integrated throughout the curriculum, continuing through practice and research courses, and culminating in SSW:4189 Bachelor of Arts Generalist Practicum Seminar and SSW:4193 Bachelor of Arts Generalist Practicum.

While life experience, volunteering and working are all valued, the Council on Social Work Education does not permit the School of Social Work to grant academic credit for life experience or previous volunteer or work experience.

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

Requirements	Hours
Pre-Social Work Courses	9
Required Course	3
Professional Core Courses	33
Electives	9

Pre-Social Work Courses

Students must earn a grade of C or higher in pre-social work courses to advance into the professional core courses.

Transfer students can view transfer course tables for approved equivalent courses. Students who have taken an

introductory course not listed there may contact the School of Social Work for further guidance.

Course #	Title	Hours
SSW:1022	Social Justice and Social Welfare in the United States	3
SOC:1010	Introduction to Sociology	3
PSY:1001	Elementary Psychology	3

Required Course

Students must complete POLI:1100 Introduction to American Politics, preferably before taking SSW:4843 Social Welfare Policy and Practice.

Professional Core Courses

Students may enroll in these courses if they have completed the pre-social work courses with a grade of C or higher, have completed at least 45 s.h., have a minimum 2.00 overall cumulative GPA, and have submitted a signed professional social work agreement form.

Course #	Title	Hours
All of these:		
SSW:3840	Human Behavior in the Social Environment (must be completed for 4 s.h.)	4
SSW:3841	Fundamentals of Social Work Practice	3
SSW:3842	Interpersonal Skills Laboratory	3
SSW:3844	Introduction to Social Work Research	4
SSW:3845	Social Work Processes	4
SSW:3847	Discrimination, Oppression, and Diversity	3
SSW:4189	Bachelor of Arts Generalist Practicum Seminar	1
SSW:4193	Bachelor of Arts Generalist Practicum	8
SSW:4843	Social Welfare Policy and Practice	3

Electives

Students complete at least 9 s.h. of electives in social work (prefix SSW) or aging and longevity studies (prefix ASP) courses numbered 1000–4999. Cross references of these courses may also be counted.

Students who are earning a minor or a certificate may apply up to 6 s.h. from that program of study toward this requirement.

Honors

Honors in the Major

Students majoring in social work have the opportunity to graduate with honors in the major. Honors students complete in-depth study in areas that interest them. They must maintain a cumulative University of Iowa grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.33 and a minimum major GPA of at least 3.33. Consult the School of Social Work for more information about graduating with honors in the major.

University of Iowa Honors Program

In addition to honors in the major, students have opportunities for honors study and activities through membership in the University of Iowa Honors Program. Visit Honors at Iowa to learn about the university's honors program.

Membership in the UI Honors Program is not required to earn honors in the social work major.

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 6% from 2024–2034 (Bureau of Labor Statistics). Explore how social workers help individuals, groups, and families across their lifespans on the National Association of Social Workers website.

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.

The four-year graduation plan applies only to students who begin the professional core courses by their fifth semester.

Before the fifth semester begins: completion of the three pre-social work courses, at least 45 s.h. earned and a signed agreement to complete the major and begin the professional core courses.

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 generalist practicum 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, visit MyUI.

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Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
Students must have completed the pre-social work courses with a grade of C or higher, have completed at least 45 s.h., and have a minimum 2.00 overall cumulative GPA to be eligible to enroll in the professional core courses. [a, b]		
Students must maintain a GPA of at least 2.00 in all courses for the major and in all UI courses for the major.		
GE CLAS Core: Sustainability [c]		
	Hours	**0**
First Year		
Fall		
SSW:1022	Social Justice and Social Welfare in the United States [d, e]	3
RHET:1030 or ENGL:1200	Rhetoric: Writing and Communication or Interpreting Literature	3 - 4
GE CLAS Core: Understanding Cultural Perspectives [f]		3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages First Level Proficiency or elective course [g]		4 - 5
CSI:1600	Success at Iowa	1
Elective course [h]		1
	Hours	**15-17**
Spring		
SOC:1010	Introduction to Sociology [d, e]	3 - 4
ENGL:1200 or RHET:1030	Interpreting Literature or Rhetoric: Writing and Communication	3 - 4
GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences with Lab [f]		4
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Second Level Proficiency or elective course [g]		4 - 5
	Hours	**14-17**
Second Year		
Fall		
PSY:1001	Elementary Psychology [d, e]	3
GE CLAS Core: International and Global Issues [f]		3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Third Level Proficiency or elective course [g]		4 - 5
Elective course [h]		3
Elective course [h]		3
	Hours	**16-17**
Spring		
POLI:1100	Introduction to American Politics [e, i]	3
GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences without Lab [f]		3
GE CLAS Core: Quantitative or Formal Reasoning [f]		3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Fourth Level Proficiency or elective course [g]		4 - 5
Elective course [h]		3
Professional Social Work Agreement form should be submitted by end of second year in order to begin taking professional core courses in third year fall.		
	Hours	**16-17**
Third Year		
Any Semester		
The curriculum shown in the third and fourth years on this plan begins when students have met the criteria to enroll in the professional core social work courses and have submitted a signed Professional Social Work Agreement form.		
	Hours	**0**
Fall		
SSW:3840	Human Behavior in the Social Environment [j]	4
SSW:3847	Discrimination, Oppression, and Diversity [j]	3
Major Elective: elective course [k]		3
GE CLAS Core: Historical Perspectives [f]		3
Elective course [h]		3
	Hours	**16**
Spring		
SSW:3844	Introduction to Social Work Research [j]	4
SSW:3845	Social Work Processes [j]	4
Major Elective: elective course [k]		3
GE CLAS Core: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts [f]		3
Elective course [h]		1
	Hours	**15**
Fourth Year		
Fall		
SSW:3841	Fundamentals of Social Work Practice [j]	3
SSW:3842	Interpersonal Skills Laboratory [j]	3
SSW:4843	Social Welfare Policy and Practice [j]	3
Major Elective: elective course [k]		3
Elective course [h]		3
Elective course [h]		2
	Hours	**17**
Spring		
SSW:4189	Bachelor of Arts Generalist Practicum Seminar [j]	1
SSW:4193	Bachelor of Arts Generalist Practicum [j]	8
Elective course [h]		3
Elective course [h]		2
Degree Application: apply on MyUI before deadline (typically in February for spring, September for fall) [l]		
	Hours	**14**
	Total Hours	**123-130**

a After criteria is met, students must submit a Professional Social Work Agreement form to receive special permission to enroll in the professional core courses.

b Beginning with the course SSW:1022, knowledge and skills related to the social work profession are integrated throughout the curriculum, continuing through practice and research courses, and culminating in SSW:4189 and SSW:4193.

c 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 or Formal Reasoning; Social Sciences; Historical Perspectives; International and Global Issues; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts; or Values and Society.

d Pre-social work course; students must earn a grade of C or higher to advance into the professional core courses.
e Fulfills a major requirement and may fulfill a GE requirement.
f 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.
g Students who have completed four levels of a single language or two levels of two different languages in high school or college have satisfied the GE CLAS Core World Languages requirement. Students who have completed three levels of a single language may complete a fourth-level course in the same language or may choose an approved World Language and Cultural Exploration course. Enrollment in world languages courses requires a placement exam, unless enrolling in a first-semester-level course. Contact your academic advisor or CLAS Undergraduate Programs Office with questions concerning the World Languages requirement.
h Students may use elective courses to earn credit toward the total s.h. required for graduation or to complete a double major, minors, or certificates.
i Students must complete POLI:1100, preferably before taking SSW:4843.
j Professional core course; students may enroll if they have completed the pre-social work courses with a grade of C or higher, have completed at least 45 s.h., have a minimum 2.00 overall cumulative GPA, and have submitted a signed Professional Social Work Agreement form.
k Students complete at least 9 s.h. of elective social work (prefix SSW) or aging and longevity studies (prefix ASP) courses numbered 1000-4999. Cross references of these courses may also be counted. Students who are earning a minor or a certificate may apply up to 6 s.h. of SSW and/or ASP courses from that program of study toward this requirement. Work with academic advisor to select appropriate coursework.
l Please see Academic Calendar, on 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 Degree Services.