

BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM STUDENT HANDBOOK

XAVIER UNIVERSITY

This handbook contains current guidelines and policies of the University and the Department. The University and the Department reserve the right to revise these policies and guidelines with or without prior notice, and to depart from the policies and guidelines in individual circumstances where it is deemed advisable to do so. The provisions of this handbook do not constitute a contract between the student and the University or the Department.

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STUDENT HANDBOOK
XAVIER UNIVERSITY
SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

Introduction

The Social Work Program is a four-year program with the first two years devoted primarily to the liberal arts foundation and the last two years to social work courses and support courses. There is a basic interrelationship within the total curriculum among the liberal arts base, support courses, and social work courses. The completion and integration of these three components leads to the achievement of the primary goal for graduates: a beginning level of competence for generalist social work practice. The liberal arts serve as a fundamental educational experience by providing an understanding of theological, philosophical, scientific, cultural, and social thought. In addition, social work majors are required to take support courses to enhance the liberal arts foundation and the social work curriculum. The major in social work builds and expands on this academic base through the courses which fulfill the social work components of: Human Behavior and Social Environment; Social Welfare Policy and Services; Social Work Practice; Research, and Field Instruction. Underlying and permeating these components are content on human diversity, populations-at-risk, social-economic justice, and social work values.

The Department of Social Work at Xavier University has developed the vision and mission statements, and the program goals as its guide and source of direction for program decisions and curriculum.

Department's Vision Statement

The vision of Xavier University's program in Social Work in the College of Social Sciences, Health, and Education is to be a leader in collaborative interdisciplinary, social justice oriented undergraduate social work education locally and nationally through innovative educational partnerships and a strong adherence to the values of Jesuit and Social Work education.

Department's Mission Statement

Xavier University's Department of Social Work seeks to empower students for beginning level generalist practice through collaboration and community engagement with individuals, families, organizations and communities. The department fosters an academic environment of critical thinking with specific attention to social justice and the values and ethics of the social work profession.

Using a generalist framework as the foundation, Xavier's program provides content about social work practice with client systems of various sizes and types, both as clients and targets for change, building on the foundation, the concentration areas prepares graduates to become leaders in their profession.

Department's Goals

The goals of Xavier University's Social Work program are to educate students who are:

- beginning level generalist practitioners
- leaders in the profession
- professionals who adhere to the values of the institution and profession
- life-long learners with strong critical thinking skills reflecting rigor and compassion for others
- professionals committed to challenging social and organizational structures in order to advance social justice
- social workers prepared to meet the needs of a changing society
- prepared for entry into graduate social work programs

While the goals are important, the development of competency for a beginning level practitioner is the most important as the attainment of the remaining goals flow from the achievement of the first. To be a competent practitioner one must possess a professional value base and an appreciation of diverse social, cultural, and ethnic patterns. An effective practitioner must also be an informed citizen aware of social issues and problems. If one is ready for beginning practice, one should also be at a professional development stage compatible with entry to graduate school.

To actualize these goals, graduating students are expected to:

1. Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.
2. Practice within the values and ethics of the social work profession and with an understanding of and respect for the positive value of diversity.
3. Demonstrate the professional use of self.
4. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination, and the strategies of change that advance social and economic justice.
5. Understand the history of the social work profession and its current structures and issues.

6. Apply the knowledge and skills of generalist social work to practice with systems of all sizes.
7. Apply knowledge of bio-psycho-social variables that affect individual development and behavior, and use theoretical frameworks to understand the interactions among individuals and between individuals and social systems (i.e., families, groups, organizations, and communities).
8. Analyze the impact of social policies on client systems, workers, and agencies.
9. Evaluate research studies and apply findings to practice, and, under supervision, to evaluate their own practice interventions and those of other relevant systems.
10. Use communication skills differentially with a variety of client populations, colleagues, and members of the community.
11. Use supervision appropriate to generalist practice.
12. Function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems, and under supervision, seek necessary organizational change.

ACCREDITATION AND LICENSING

The Baccalaureate Social Work Program at Xavier University is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (<http://www.cswe.org/CSWE/accreditation/>). Graduates of an accredited program receive the benefits of advanced standing in graduate programs and have advantages in employment opportunities. The State of Ohio has a licensing law for social workers. Graduates with a Bachelor in Social Work from Xavier University may take the Ohio licensing exam for licensed social workers (LSW).

ADMISSIONS

Acceptance into the university is necessary for acceptance as a social work major. All freshman applicants are required to submit the results of The College Board Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or the American College Testing Program Examination (ACT). Evidence of a student's potential for success in college studies is judged by the high school grade point average, rank in class, aptitude test scores, and the comments offered on recommendations. Of these, the high school record (or for transfer students, the previous college record) remains the most important factor.

Transfer Students

The Xavier University Registrar evaluates all non-social work course work which students wish to transfer from another university. All transfer credits which would meet social work program requirements are reviewed by the chairperson for the determination of equivalency to Xavier courses. The first consideration in reviewing transfer credits is to be sure that all course content has been met and secondly, that duplication either does not occur or be at a minimal level. If a student took field instruction at another institution and it can be documented that it was appropriately structured and supervised then one additional semester may fulfill the field instruction requirement.

A student wishing to transfer from one undergraduate day college to another must have a cumulative average of at least 2.0. In addition, the student must receive the written approval of both deans involved, beginning with the Dean of the College which the student is leaving. The change of major form must also be signed by the chairperson of the new major.

Declaring Social Work as a Major

All students who have declared social work as a major are required to complete the following process to receive full acceptance into the Social Work Department. This process has been developed to determine each student's suitability for a career in social work.

1. After completing three (3) required social work courses in the Department, the student petitions in writing to the Chairperson for full acceptance into the social work major. The petition consists of a typed essay in which the student identifies their interest in social work and reflects on the impact the social work courses thus taken have had on their interest. A determination is made by the Department as to the student's full acceptance.
2. Students not receiving full acceptance will be required to complete all conditions stipulated by the Department before re-petitioning for full acceptance into the social work major.

Students may be counseled to consider a career other than social work at any time during this process, including after full acceptance.

To enter their field placement, students must have received full acceptance into the social work major and be in academic good standing.

Social work course credit for life experiences or previous work experience is not granted.

Nondiscrimination Policy Statement

Xavier University is dedicated to equality of opportunity in all areas of education and employment, and its goal is to achieve a diverse, multi-racial community. Accordingly, Xavier University does not practice or condone discrimination, in any form, against students, employees, or applicants on the ground of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or handicap. The university commits itself to positive action to secure equal opportunity. Xavier University reserves the right to maintain its heritage and destiny as a Christian and Catholic witness in higher education.

Xavier University supports the protections available to members of its community under all applicable Federal laws including Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Revenue Procedure (75-50) Department of Treasury, the Equal Pay and Age Discrimination Acts, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Executive Order 11246, as amended.

Social work faculty do not condone or practice discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

A grievance procedure pertaining to discrimination can be obtained by contacting the Assistant Vice President, Human Resources, (513) 745-3638.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Students in the Social Work Program are required to confer each semester with a member of the social work faculty, staff, or both. The advisor's function is to check that all academic requirements are being met and more specifically to advise regarding the social work curriculum and matters pertinent to profession or career planning. The student and advisor use a counseling report to monitor academic progress towards completion of the B.S.W.

All freshman who designate social work as their major are advised by a full-time faculty member, staff, or both. This advisor is responsible for assisting the student with course selections and initiates the professional advisement process. In the student's early academic career, the advisor provides general information about the social work profession and starts to assess whether the student has realistic expectations about her or his role in social work. By the junior year, the professional advisement has proceeded to the level of assessing the student's academic ability and personal characteristics necessary to successfully complete the social work program.

The Chairperson has the first contact with transfer students from other programs within the University and from other academic institutions. The student is then assigned to a faculty member, staff, or both for advising.

The student is provided with the opportunity to assess her or his abilities and capacity for a career in social work through dialogue with a social work faculty advisor who, because of the small number of students, has already acquired some knowledge and awareness of each student's attitude and motivation from the classroom experience.

Each student's performance is evaluated at the end of each semester to establish that the student is at least meeting the minimum standards for continuing the pursuit of a social work major within the department. Additionally, individualized consideration is given to a student(s) who may be exhibiting a lack of aptitude and/or motivation and thus may need more intensive counseling.

Junior year, the student interviews at three sites which she or he considers an appropriate field placement site. The student and Director for Field Education meet and discuss which field setting will best meet the student's academic and professional goals. The Director for Field Education keeps the Chairperson apprised of students' progress in field placement.

Students are advised to select elective courses or other educationally related experiences that will provide depth and breadth to their educational experience. The peace studies or gender/diversity option for example may be recommended to students who wish to emphasize

social justice in social work practice. It is the student's responsibility to fulfill all requirements for degree attainment. The Chairperson is responsible for evaluating if all program requirements have been met for graduation and works closely with the Registrar's Office to assess University and program degree requirements. Academic credit is not given for life experiences.

Non-Retention

The termination of a student's enrollment in the Social Work Program may occur due to the student's academic standing. The procedures and standards for a student being placed on academic warning, probation, or suspension are given in the University Catalogue.

A student may also be terminated from the major for non-academic reasons. Behavior or actions which are inconsistent with the helping process and the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (1996, 1999) will result in the student being advised to select another field of study. A student who does not receive full acceptance into the major may be advised to select another major. The Chairperson of the Social Work Program, after consultation with program faculty, has the ultimate responsibility to counsel or terminate any student out of the major.

Termination from Social Work Major: Policies & Procedures

The Social Work Department at Xavier University is interested in promoting professionalism in social work. The termination process of the Department is designed to ensure that individuals who do not meet the expectations for entry level social work do not graduate with a social work degree.

Termination from the Social Work Major

Students may be terminated from the social work major for both academic and/or professional performance issues. Students may be terminated from the major any time after declaration of the major. To terminate a student from the major is a serious decision that is made collectively by the social work faculty. These reasons may include, but are not limited to:

Academic Reasons for Termination:

1. Failure to meet or maintain academic grade point requirements as established by the University and the Department.
2. Failure to acquire full acceptance in the program.
3. Academic cheating and lying including plagiarism in any social work course.

Professional Performance Reasons for Termination:

Professional Performance reasons for termination can be personal or professional. The termination process can be sudden, if a problem is of a serious nature (e.g. conviction of a felony).

In most cases of termination, the chairperson meets regularly with the student to alleviate a problem(s). A contract for change is developed with the student and monitored by the student's faculty advisor and the chairperson. Students completing contracts remain in the program. Those not completing contracts to alleviate problems are terminated from the program.

Students can be terminated from the social work major for any of the following professional performance reasons:

1. Attitudes or behaviors inconsistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.
2. Evidence of chemical dependency.
3. Mental/emotional difficulties that impair performance, interactions, and/or relationships with classmates, faculty, agency staff, and/or clients.
4. Evidence of criminal activity occurring during or prior to enrollment deemed by the Social Work Department to be incompatible with professional social work.
5. Unresolved personal issues which impair performance, interactions, and/or relationships with classmates, faculty, agency staff, and/or clients.
6. Personal goals inconsistent with entry into the profession.

Termination Process

Prior to termination, the student will be provided with verbal and written notification of an impending action. An interview with the chairperson will be scheduled with the student to discuss alternate options to termination. If another option is viable, a contract will be negotiated between the chairperson and the student specifying steps to be taken toward resolution with a time limit for the accomplishment of the plan. A final interview with the chairperson will be scheduled to determine if the steps in the contract have been successfully accomplished. The chairperson may re-negotiate the contract as needed. Students who are terminated from the major are notified in writing of the decision. If a student believes that she/he has not been afforded due process, appeals should be directed to the College's Professional Review Committee.

Satisfactory Performance

Full acceptance into the major and an overall grade point average of 2.0 is necessary to graduate from Xavier with a social work degree. Students must pass all required social work courses. If a student receives a letter grade of “C- or below” in a required social work course, the student must repeat the course. A written petition for exception to this repeat requirement must be submitted to the Department by the appealing student. The Department has the right to deny or grant any such petition.

Attendance Policy

Any student who misses more than 25% of classes in a required social work course without a written excuse from a licensed health or mental health professional will be asked to drop the course or will be given a failing grade. A written petition for exception to this attendance requirement must be submitted to the course instructor by the appealing student prior to the drop/passing date. The instructor has the right to deny or grant any such petition.

SOCIAL WORK MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Educational and course work requirements for completion of the BSW (Bachelor of Social Work) degree at Xavier are given in the Xavier University Catalogue. Students should refer to the appropriate catalogue (i.e. the year in which they enter Xavier University) for degree requirements.

The curriculum has been developed along a model of sequential and integrated learning. The knowledge provided by the professional foundation areas of the curriculum are summarized below.

The liberal arts base, along with support courses, builds a base of human behavior and social environment content which is integrated and expanded by social work courses. Students are required to take two biology courses in order to understand the biological aspects of humans on which the social and behavioral sciences then build. The required support courses are from the social and behavioral science areas. Courses in sociology help students understand the individual as a member of groups, families, organizations, communities, and society. Sociology also increases knowledge in the area of differential socialization, content and components of institutional structure and social change. Courses in psychology add to the understanding of the individual as unique, the developmental stages of life, motivating and learning theories, as well as the emotional aspects of human action. Economics examines the allocation of resources, goods and services, and influence on life styles of individuals, families, and society. Students are also required to take an additional nine (9) semester hours from a list of recommended courses from the disciplines of sociology, political science, criminal justice, psychology, or social work. These courses broaden students' knowledge of human beings in a social context.

The specific life cycle courses which constitute the base and integrate the human behavior and social environment component are Child Welfare & Development (SOCW 299) and Human Life Cycles II (SOCW 300) which considers development from adolescence to death. Additionally, students are required to take two courses involving special populations where students explore the oppression of persons of color and women in society. These courses increase the knowledge, understanding, and appreciation for special populations in a pluralistic society.

Social Welfare Policy and Services content enlighten students to the historical development and structure of: the profession, social service institutions and systems, and social policies. This component leads to an understanding of the social forces which contribute to social dysfunctioning and the role of social welfare institutions in alleviating the consequences for individuals, families, communities, and society. Knowledge and analytical skills developed

in understanding the legislative process which result in policy formulation and implementation can be used in practice by the practitioner in her or his role as a change agent. Finally, the student is expected to acquire a value perspective consistent with a professional responsibility for a more equitable social and economic society.

The social work practice component is designed to implement the generalist model. Throughout the social work curriculum the student is to develop a personal identity consistent with the use of self as a change agent using the planned change process within a systems framework. Micro and macro theory and practice permeate the total curriculum and are considered a progressive learning experience for students. Students are educated to the universal application of theories and methods of individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and society. This approach prepares graduates for generalist practice capable of intervention in multiple types and size systems.

Research content enables students to critically analyze and interpret social data and utilize the results of research in professional practice. The scientific approach enables students to examine social policies, programs, procedures, and to assess their relevance to social work practice. The congruence between research ethics and practice is continuously emphasized and explored.

The field education program is the culmination of all the classroom preparation, which has both preceded and is concurrent with field, and provides the opportunity to experience a variety of professional roles, under the supervision of a professional social worker(s), designed to increase competency in social work practice. The seminar course taken concurrently with field instruction helps to integrate the theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom with the practice experience. These experiences finalize the acculturation of the social work professional and competency required of beginning level practitioners.

The Social Work program, through its Director for Field Education, has the major responsibility for evaluating agencies for field instruction, matching of students with field placement agencies, conducting orientations and training field instructors, overseeing the student evaluation process in field placement agencies, and final determination of semester grades (in consultation with field instructors). As part of this process, the Director for Field Education/Faculty Liaison will meet with the field instructor and student at each field placement site at least once each semester.

The Communication Skills Seminar taken by juniors in the spring semester has two objectives. The main objective is to develop students' communication skills for professional practice. This includes how professionals communicate about themselves via resume and interviewing, with clients at the micro level and at the organization level in supervision and within an agency. The second goal of the class is for students to participate in the matching process of arranging their field placements for their senior year.

The main criteria for the selection of an agency for field instruction is the agency's willingness and capacity to provide the student with learning experiences which are compatible with knowledge, skills, and values taught in the classroom and consistent with the overall educational objectives of the Xavier Social Work Program.

Moreover, the agency must recognize that the **primary goal of field instruction is educational**. Any assistance the student might provide the agency in meeting service commitments is secondary. This educational goal is what sets the social work field student's role apart from that of a volunteer or temporary employee.

For more information on the field education program, visit the department's website and click on the field education tab.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

There are a wide range of career possibilities for graduates of social work programs. Social work practitioners may either choose the population they want to work with, the institutional structure of the problem area at various levels of intervention. A sample of career possibilities follows:

Clients (by social class, race, geographical location, sex, etc.)

Children
Adolescents
Adults
Elderly

Institutional Structures

Hospitals
Mental Health Clinics
Schools
Military
Public Welfare
Private Agencies
Prisons
Industry
Political/Legal Systems

Problem Areas

Employment
Protective Services
Adoption
Family Services
Developmental Disabilities
Physical Illness
Work Related Stress

Housing
Foster Care
Substance Abuse
Community Services
Mental Illness
Marital Problems

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The University has policies on students' rights, freedoms, responsibilities and procedures to be followed depending on the area of concern. These policies and procedures are in the University Student Handbook and University Catalogue. Students should maintain a current copy of the University Student Handbook and University Catalogue, and refer to procedures if a need arises.

NASW CODE OF ETHICS
(Approved 1996, Revised 1999)

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

Value: Service

Ethical Principle: Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.

Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

Value: Social Justice

Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaning participation in decision making for all people.

Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person

Ethical Principle: Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

Value: Importance of Human Relationships

Ethical Principle: Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Value: Integrity

Ethical Principle: Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Value: Competence

Ethical Principle: Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

STUDENT HANDBOOK

ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

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By signing this form, I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Student Handbook of the Social Work Department at Xavier University. I also acknowledge that it is my responsibility to read this Handbook and abide by its contents.

Student's Name

Date