



NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Bachelor of Social Work Program Student Handbook

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Welcome to Social Work at NMU!

This guide is designed to aid you in reaching your goal of attaining a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree. By completing the BSW, you will be prepared to enter the exciting and challenging world of social work practice. Social work is a promising career field; it's also a very diverse field where BSW graduates work in many different settings to address a wide array of social issues.

In order to make the most of the opportunities for you here at Northern Michigan University (NMU), we hope that you will make a point of working with your advisor on a regular basis. Your advisor can help design a curriculum to meet your particular goals. For example, if you plan well, you may meet all the content requirements and still have 20 or more credits available for electives as you complete the degree requirement of 120 credit hours. We have additional opportunities for you to pursue your individual interest through social work elective courses such as Substance Use Disorders, Mental Health, and Aging Programs and Policies. We also offer a Child Welfare Certificate program for students interested in working in fields such as foster care or child protective services. We encourage you to complement your academic program with volunteer and employment experience that can expand your career potential.

Your BSW prepares you to enter social work practiced as a generalist, and most of our graduates take professional positions upon graduation. You may also opt to complete a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. Your BSW qualifies you to apply for “advanced standing” MSW programs at NMU and across the country, which allows you to complete the MSW degree in one year.

The career outlook for social workers is excellent. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of social workers is expected to grow by 13 percent through 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/social-workers.htm>). Growth will vary by specialty and will be significant in areas such as child, family, and school social work; healthcare; mental health; and substance abuse. We encourage you to explore the full range of opportunities within the world of social work. In addition to this brief guide, we have also provided a wealth of information about the program on our department web page at www.nmu.edu/socialwork/home.

We, the faculty in the Department of Social Work, extend our best wishes for an exciting and rewarding education experience at NMU.

BSW Program Mission

The mission of the NMU BSW program is to prepare competent practitioners who promote service, social and economic justice, human rights and dignity and worth of diverse individuals, groups, families, organizations and communities through generalist social work practice.

BSW Program Goals

1. The program prepares social workers for generalist practice with diverse populations in various contexts.
2. The program identifies with the social work profession and the values and ethics that guide practice.
3. The program provides an environment that fosters respect for diversity, and the pursuit of human rights and social and economic justice.
4. The program educates future social workers on theories of human behavior, especially person-in-environment frameworks, and develops their abilities to apply these in engaging, assessing, intervening with, and evaluating individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
5. The program educates future social workers to use critical thinking and research-informed practice. The program promotes lifelong learning to refine skills and develop knowledge to deliver more effective services.
6. The program develops future social work leaders who will use their knowledge, skills, and values to create effective services in the region, state, and beyond.

The BSW Curriculum at NMU

NMU's Department of Social Work strives to provide an excellent educational experience for aspiring social workers. Graduates of the program will ultimately earn a Bachelor of Social Work Degree with a Human Behavior Cluster Minor. NMU's BSW program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which mandates that undergraduate programs focus on preparation for generalist practice. A BSW degree prepares practitioners for entry-level professional social work positions, and is an ideal pathway to an MSW degree where practitioners will select further areas of specialization. A BSW degree also qualifies students to apply for the Licensed Bachelor of Social Work (LBSW) credential.

Students considering a major in social work are highly encouraged to seek advising services. Advising services are provided by the Academic and Career Advisement Center (ACAC), the social work embedded advisor, and social work faculty members. Entering freshmen who declare social work as a major are assigned to the pre-admission social work curriculum. It is important to evaluate completed course work so as to prevent enrolling in unnecessary courses. Transfer students should also arrange to review completed courses with an advisor in order to determine which requirements have been completed.

Because of the interdependence of courses in the major and the cluster minor, it is very important that students follow the curriculum in sequence. In order to help assure this occurs, the program requires that students first complete a set of pre-admission courses, and then apply for admission before being permitted to complete upper level courses. Courses in the cluster minor may also be used to meet requirements of the General Education Program. Because of this "double counting" and the many requirements of the program, students are strongly urged to consult with an advisor in planning their program. In addition to the curriculum outline (Appendix A) and illustrative schedule (Appendix B) provided in this handbook, the department provides curriculum advising to help students monitor their progress.

The Social Work major itself is divided into a pre-admission set of two courses for eight credits, and a post-admission sequence of courses for an additional 40 credit hours. In addition to the 48 credit hours of Social Work courses, students must complete a multidisciplinary Human Behavior Cluster minor. The cluster minor provides a foundation in understanding the interface between people and the entities such as families, groups and organizations that make up our social environment. The cluster minor also provides the student with beginning research skills for understanding our social science knowledge base and for learning to evaluate practice. The Social Work major draws from these cognate areas and provides the student with a foundation of knowledge, values and skills necessary for beginning professional social work practice.

Planning Your Curriculum

The BSW curriculum is broken into two primary phases: the pre-admission curriculum and the upper level curriculum. The pre-admission phase is generally for freshman and sophomore students working to meet the general education requirements, the cluster minor and the first eight credits of the social work major. Many of the courses in the cluster minor also fill general education requirements in order to accomplish both goals at the same time.

The second and final phase of the BSW program is the upper level curriculum, which generally begins the second semester of a student's junior year and continues through the senior year. The upper level curriculum is made up of two, four-credit practice methods courses during the winter semester of the junior year, and ten credits each semester of the senior year, which includes a 400-hour field placement in a social service agency. Students must apply to the upper level curriculum, and those who are accepted continue through this sequence as a cohort group. The curriculum planner (Appendix A) and illustrative BSW four-year curriculum (Appendix B), along with the assistance of an advisor, will help you with this task.

BSW Program Admission and Retention

NMU's Department of Social Work is committed to quality in its social work preparation program. Quality programs demand that student participants exhibit characteristics that show promise for success as social workers. Potential for success in the profession is evidenced by demonstration of basic intervention skills, intellectual capacity, good oral and written language skills, and aptitude for dealing with social problems and issues. Social workers must exemplify characteristics identified in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. Students are responsible for knowing, meeting, and maintaining all program requirements. Failure to meet retention standards may result in temporary suspension or dismissal at any point in the program.

Admission to Upper Level Social Work Curriculum

Students must have a 2.50 grade point average in the social work major and cluster minor at the time of application and admission to the upper level curriculum. The pre-admission curriculum contains two courses (SW 100 and SW 230) that must be completed prior to being admitted into the upper level curriculum. Five of the seven clusters in the Human Behavior Cluster must have been completed (or are in the process of being completed) at time of application to the upper level curriculum. Students may enroll in several 300-level social work courses and 400-level social work electives prior to applying to the upper level curriculum.

Course sequencing is critical for students accepted into the upper level curriculum. The first practice methods courses in the upper level curriculum (SW 370 and SW 372) are only offered in the winter semester prior to a student's senior year. Students should enter the upper level curriculum during their junior year (56-87 credit hours), or the year prior to their final full year at NMU.

Student applications for the upper level curriculum are due annually on or about October 1. The application for admission includes the following requirements and students are admitted according to the following criteria:

- GPA at or above 2.50 in at least five of the seven courses within the Human Behavior Cluster minor. All courses in the Human Behavior Cluster minor will be considered in calculating a student's GPA. Applications must also include a plan for completing remaining required courses.
- GPA at or above 2.50 in the two social work pre-admission courses (SW 100 and SW 230). Both must be completed by end of the fall semester in which they apply.
- A personal statement. The statement will be used to evaluate:
 - understanding of generalist social work practice
 - commitment to the profession
 - readiness for practice methods courses and field placement
 - evidence of skills and attributes necessary for social work practice
 - employment and volunteer experience in the human services (preferred but not required for admission)

Retention in Social Work Program

Behaviors and qualities that are valued by the social work profession and which are expected of students by the faculty include class attendance and participation, promptness in completing assignments, leadership, commitment to learning, a willingness to build collegiality by working with peers in collaborative, reflective, and problem-solving setting, and a multi-cultural perspective. In order to be retained in the upper level curriculum and ultimately graduate with a BSW degree, students must:

- Maintain a minimum GPA of 2.50 based on all course work applied to the BSW curriculum (social work major and cluster minor)
- Earn a minimum of a "C" (73% or higher) in all upper level curriculum courses
- Demonstrate skills and attributes necessary for social work practice
- Show continuing progress toward possession of the personal characteristics and competencies which personify the professional social worker. Any violation of the NASW Code of Ethics on the part of a student engaged in field experience will be considered to be contrary to social work professionalism
- Exhibit academic integrity. Social workers are in a position to be influential adults and academic integrity is an important indicator of social work professionalism

Retention standards will be monitored by the Social Work Program Director under the standards for admission above. Suspension or dismissal for failure to meet retention standards may be appealed in accordance with the procedures described in the document entitled Academic Dismissal from the Professional Social Work Program.

Determination of BSW Grade Point Average (GPA)

Determining program GPA for admission, placement in field, retention and graduation is a two-step process. First, the GPA for the 28 required credits of the Social Work Major is computed; it must be at least 2.50. In the second step, other program required courses are included. The GPA for the Human Behavior Cluster minor and the required SW courses must each be at least 2.50.

GPA is calculated by dividing the total amount of grade points earned by the total amount of credit hours attempted. Grade point average may range from 0.0 to a 4.0. The total grade points are divided by the total credit hours attempted. Transfer credits related to the major and cluster minor are included in this calculation.

Approval for Field Placement GPA

Step 1	Social Work Major	Credits
SW 100	Exploring Social Work	4
SW 230	Human Behavior and Social Environment I	4
SW 308	Research Methods II	4
SW 331	Human Behavior and Social Environment II	4
SW 341	Social Welfare Policy	4
SW 370	Generalist Practice Methods I	4
SW 372	Generalist Practice Methods II	4
SW 440	Social Work Policy Analysis	4
SW 472	SW Practice with Diverse Populations	4
SW 473	Integrative Seminar I	2
SW 474	Integrative Seminar II	2
SW 480	Senior Field Placement I	4
SW 481	Senior Field Placement II	4
GPA Must Be 2.5 or Above		48
Step 2	Human Behavior Cluster	
Cluster Topic	Course Number	Credits
Economic Justice	EC 101, 201, 202 or 337	4
Populations at Risk	SO 322, 362, or 382	4
Diversity	AN 100, HS 233, NAS 204, HS 273, HS 283, or HS 293	4
Biological Science	BI 100, 104, or 207	4
Sociological Science	SO 101	4
Psychological Science	PSY 100	4
Research Methods	SO 208, PSY 201, or DATA 109	4
GPA Must Be 2.5 or above		28

Academic Dismissal

Any situation that may involve a failure to comply with social work admissions and retention standards will be considered by the Social Work Program Director. If the student fails to comply with the social work admissions and retention standards, the director may take any of the following courses of action:

- A. Placement on provisional status in the Social Work Program until standards are met.
- B. Suspension of the student from the Social Work Program for a specific period of time not to exceed one year or until the student meets academic eligibility requirements.
- C. Suspension of the student from the Social Work Program pending completion of a corrective plan of action agreed upon by the student and Program Director.
- D. Academic dismissal from the Social Work Program. The director will notify the student, identifying specifically the standard or standards and the corresponding failure to comply on which such action is based.

Notice of any such action shall be communicated in writing to the student involved.

Action of academic dismissal by the director of the social work program may be appealed to the Social Work Grievance Committee within 10 working days of the mailing of the Director's written notice of such action.

In response to student appeal of an academic dismissal, the Social Work Program Grievance Committee will hold a hearing at which it will consider the issues raised, the information presented, and the action of the director. At such hearings the committee will then consider any matters presented by the student and the director of the social work program. The committee will decide on the appeal based on the information presented at the hearing.

A student who wishes to have a hearing before the Social Work Program Grievance Committee shall be entitled to:

- A. receive a timely hearing by impartial persons *
- B. be present at the hearing
- C. present his/her case through statements, questions, witnesses and other forms of evidence
- D. be accompanied by counsel of his/her choice; counsel shall be a member of the faculty, staff, or student body of the university. However, it should be understood that the student is to be the respondent to questions asked and to otherwise interact with the Committee directly
- E. refuse to answer questions
- F. make a record of the events of the hearing
- G. receive a written notice of the decision reached in response to the appeal

The elected chair of the Social Work Grievance Committee shall give written notice of the committee's decision within 10 working days. The decision of the committee shall be final.

* The committee will consist of at least two faculty committee members other than the faculty that may have been directly involved with the dismissal or suspension action.

General Grievance Procedure

For most situations in which a student believes that unfair treatment has occurred on the part of a faculty member, the following procedure applies. Complaints about admission and/or retention in the program are handled by a special committee. See the above section for those procedures. There are several steps to follow if a student feels that he or she has been treated unfairly. Although the academic adviser is not directly part of the grievance procedure, the adviser may be able to help the student with following the process outlined below. The order is as follows:

1. The student presents the complaint to the faculty member whom they feel has been unjust
2. If unresolved and the faculty member in question is a member of the social work faculty, the student brings the concern to the attention of the social work program director. If the instructor in question is not a social worker, proceed directly to the next step
3. The student presents the concern to the department head of the instructor in question
4. If unresolved, the student may go through an appeals procedure. The department head will provide information on the procedure for invoking an appeals process

Composition of Appellate Bodies

Departmental Grievance Committee: Membership on the Social Work Grievance Committee shall include the Social Work Department Head plus two Social Work faculty, none of whom are involved in the complaint. The student who submits the grievance may also request that two, unbiased students serve on the grievance committee, subject to university policy.

School Appeals Committee - The appeals committee within the College of Health Sciences and Professional Studies at NMU shall consist of seven faculty members selected in an unbiased manner by the dean. This responsibility may be delegated to the school advisory council at the discretion of the dean. The committee shall select from among their number a chairperson who shall assume responsibility for convening the committee and chairing review proceedings. Five members shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of all review proceedings.

Rules of Procedure can be found in the NMU Student Handbook, which can be obtained from the NMU Dean of Students Office or at <https://nmu.edu/dso/studenthandbook>.

Opportunities for BSW Students

Child Welfare Certificate Endorsement

A Child Welfare Certificate is available for BSW graduates. The certificate prepares graduates for a career in child welfare, including foster care, adoption, and protective services. Completion of the certificate will qualify students to waive a portion of the training requirements for child welfare staff at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and at agencies that contract with DHHS for these services. Students may also elect to be placed on a recruiting list with DHHS.

To qualify for the Child Welfare Certificate, students must satisfactorily complete the SW405 Child Welfare course, and complete their senior field placement in program areas of child protective services, foster care, or adoption at a DHHS child welfare program or at an agency that contracts with DHS for child welfare services. Students are still required to complete the Human Behavior Cluster minor. Aside from tuition to complete the courses, there is no additional cost for the Child Welfare Certificate.

Substance Use Disorder Minor

This interdepartmental minor focuses on substance use and approaches that explain, prevent and treat substance use disorders in the United States. It is especially appropriate for students pursuing degrees and careers in which they will have interactions with people experiencing substance use disorders. All courses in this minor have been approved by MCBAP (Michigan Certification Board for Addiction Professionals) and if the minor is successfully completed, students will have met all of the educational requirements necessary to apply for their CADC (Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor) credential.

The educational objectives of the Substance Use Disorder minor are to support students into becoming professionals who are confidently prepared to work with people experiencing substance use disorders. Completion of this minor will result in students having entry level competence to work with individuals experiencing substance use disorders. The intended learning outcomes are:

- recognizing and interpreting the impact of substance use on individuals, families and communities
- foundational knowledge and interventions with regards to prevention and treatment
- understanding signs and symptoms of substance use
- drug policies in the United States
- effective communication skills when working with people experiencing substance use disorders

Student Representation in Policies and Curriculum

Pre-admission students and social work students have rights and responsibilities to participate in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs. Students are encouraged to provide input through the following channels:

1. Students are encouraged to meet directly with faculty members to provide input and resolve program issues.
2. Students may present issues to executive board members of the Student Social Work Organization (SSWO), who will then forward issues through representation on the faculty/student BSW Advisory Committee.

Student Social Work Organization

The Student Social Work Organization (SSWO) is an organization that seeks to connect students with an interest in connecting with like-minded students, and practicing social work values and ethics as a team in supporting the campus and community. SSWO engages in group volunteering, raising awareness for social justice issues, bringing supplemental education opportunities to campus, and creating a safe place for discussion. Students can find out more through the Center for Student Enrichment or by email at nmusswo@gmail.com.

BSW Student Rights and Responsibilities

Student Rights

In the NMU Department of Social Work, students have the right:

- to be treated with dignity and respect by their professors, staff, and other Social Work students
- to have Social Work faculty who uphold the values of the profession and act as professional role models
- to be informed about the Social Work program including its mission, goals, objectives, policies, and procedures
- to know the purpose, expectations, and objective of each Social Work class in which they are enrolled and how each class fits into the Social Work curriculum
- to get departmental support (financial, planning and/or other) for their ideas and actions which promote social work values, skills, knowledge and/or social and economic justice
- to get support from their academic advisor(s) who will meet with them to help them understand the Social Work program and make informed choices about their education and careers
- to participate in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs in the Social Work Department through
 - (a) providing direct feedback to faculty members and the BSW Program Director
 - (b) participation in the Student Social Work Organization (SSWO)
 - (c) volunteering as a student representative position on departmental committees such as the BSW Program Committee or Social Work Advisory Committee
- to appeal all decisions made by the Department that directly affect them as individual students. This includes decisions about admissions, eligibility to enroll in specific classes and possible termination from the Major
- to learn in an environment that supports diversity and is free from discrimination or harassment

Student Responsibilities

NMU Social Work students are expected to:

- treat faculty, staff, and peers with dignity and respect
- to learn about and work for social, economic and political justice
- to uphold the values and ethics of the profession as outlined by the NASW Code of Ethics
- to abide by the NMU Student Code of Conduct
- to attend classes, participate, and contribute to learning in the classroom and to turn in assignments when due
- to pursue their education with openness to learning about new ideas and about themselves in relationship to others
- to inform the department about barriers that may interfere with their ability to effectively practice Social Work
- to pursue their Social Work education in an active manner, taking primary responsibility for their own learning
- to ensure an environment that supports diversity and is free from discrimination or harassment, and to practice without discrimination, and with respect, knowledge and skills, related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

Appendix A: Curriculum Planner Worksheet

		Advisor:			
		Student:			
General Education Requirements	30	Course #	Course Title	# Cr	Grade
Effective Communication	3				
Effective Communication	3				
Quantitative Reasoning	3				
Social Responsibility in a Diverse World	3				
Integrative Thinking	3				
Human Expression	3				
Perspectives on Society	3				
Perspectives on Society	3				
Scientific Inquiry	3				
Lab Requirement for Graduation					
World Cultures Requirement for Graduation					
Required Pre-Admission SW Courses	8	Course #	Course Title	# Cr	Grade
SW 100 Exploring Social Work	4				
SW 230 Human Behavior I	4				
Other Pre-Admission SW Courses	16	Course #	Course Title	# Cr	Grade
SO/SW 308 Research Methods II (SI)	4				
SW 331 Human Behavior & Social Environment II	4				
SW 341 Social Welfare Policy Analysis	4				
SW 370 Generalist Practice Methods I	4				
Post-Admission SW Courses	24	Course #	Course Title	# Cr	Grade
SW 372 Generalist Practice Methods II	4				
SW 440 Social Work Policy Analysis	4				
SW 472 Human Diversity Issues in Practice	4				
SW 473 Integrative Seminar I	2				
SW 474 Integrative Seminar II	2				
SW 480 Field Instruction I	4				
SW 481 Field Instruction II	4				
Additional/transfer SW courses to reach minimum					

Required Cluster Minor		28 Credits Total				
Choose ONE elective from each cluster						
Economic Justice Elective		4 Cr	Course #	Course Title	# Cr	Grade
EC 101	American Economy* (PS)					
EC 201	Microeconomics					
EC 202	Macroeconomics					
EC 337	American Economic History* (IT)					
Social Justice Elective		4 Cr	Course #	Course Title	# Cr	Grade
SO 322	Social Class, Power & Mobility* (SR)					
SO 362	Gender and Society* (PS)					
SO 372	Minority Groups* (SR)					
Diversity Elective		4 Cr	Course #	Course Title	# Cr	Grade
AN 100	Introduction to Socio-Cultural Anthropology* (SR & WC)					
HS 233	Native American History					
HS 273	Gay and Lesbian History					
HS 283	The American Woman					
HS 293	Minorities in American History					
NAS 204	Native American Experience* (SR & WC)					
HBSE Biological		4 Cr	Course #	Course Title	# Cr	Grade
BI 100	Biological Science* (SI)					
BI 104	Human Anatomy & Physiology* (SI)					
BI 207	Human Anatomy & Physiology 1					
HBSE Psychological		4 Cr	Course #	Course Title	# Cr	Grade
PSY 100	Introduction to Psychological Science* (SI)					
HBSE Sociological		4 Cr	Course #	Course Title	# Cr	Grade
SO 101	Introductory Sociology* (PS)					
Research Methods		4 Cr	Course #	Course Title	# Cr	Grade
SO 208	Research Methods I *(QR)					
DATA 109	Intro to Probability & Statistics (QR)					
PSY 201	Psychological Statistics (QR)					
Transfer/additional courses, if needed						

*Minor or General Elective Courses may "double-count" between General Education Requirements and the cluster minor; that is, a student may use the same course to fill both requirements. An unduplicated list of courses and credits must total at least 120 for any Bachelor's degree at NMU.

Appendix B: Illustrative 4-Year BSW Curriculum

Freshman Fall				Freshman Winter			
<u>Req</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Req</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Credits</u>
Eff Comm	EN 111	Composition 1	4	Eff Comm	EN 211	Composition 2	4
Persp Soc	SO 101	Intro Sociology	4	Hum Exp	XXX	Human Exp Elective	4
Sci Inq	PSY 100	Psychological Science	4	Persp Soc	EC 101	American Economy	4
	UN100	Freshman Seminar	2	Major	SW 100	Exploring Social Work	4
			14				16
Sophomore Fall				Sophomore Winter			
<u>Req</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Req</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Credits</u>
Sci Inq	BI 104	Anat & Phys	4	Soc Resp & WC	NAS 204	Native American Experience	4
Soc Resp	SO 372	Minority Groups	4	Any	Any	Any Elective or Minor	4
Major	SW 230	HBSE I	4	Quant Reas	SO 208	Statistics/Research I	4
Int Think	XXX	Int Think Elective	4	Major	SW 331	HBSE II	4
			16				16
Junior Fall				Junior Winter			
<u>Req</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Req</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Credits</u>
Sci Inq	SW 308	Research Methods II	4	Major	SW 370	Practice Methods I	4
Major	SW 341	Social Welfare Policy	4	Major	SW 372	Practice Methods II	4
	GE XXX	Elective or Minor	4		GE XXX	Elective or Minor	4
	GE XXX	Elective or Minor	4		GE XXX	Elective or Minor	4
			16				16
Senior Fall				Senior Winter			
<u>Req</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Req</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Credits</u>
Major	SW 472	Diversity	4	Major	SW 440	SW Policy Analysis	4
Major	SW 473	Senior Seminar I	2		SW 474	Senior Seminar II	2
Major	SW 480	Field Placement I	4		SW 481	Field Placement II	4
	XXX	Elective or Minor	4		XXX	Elective or Minor	4
			14				14
Total Credits Earned:							122

This chart is for illustration purposes only. There are several course options for many of the Cluster Minor requirements. Course availability and scheduling will also affect which courses a student should take in a given semester. Consult with your Social Work advisor when planning your program.