

bachelor of arts in social work
STUDENT HANDBOOK

Social Work
HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

History of The Social Work Program

The present Social Work Major is one of the oldest majors in Social Science at Humboldt State University. First mentioned in the 1945-46 catalog, it was one of four possible Social Science majors: Social Science, History, Economics, and Social Services, as it was then termed. Humboldt is unusual in that the Social Sciences major preceded Sociology as a major. The pattern in use was similar to that of the University of California, which followed the British concept of the Social Services being Applied Sociology. Thus, the courses were labeled Sociology. The institution's curriculum was very limited at that time due to its small size (600 total student enrollment), and the major included several academic disciplines, including economics and history. It was used for persons desiring employment as social workers, probation deputies, corrections counselors, and whatever else was termed social work in those days.

Under the direction of Professor Kathryn L. Corbett (1952 to 1980), the Social Services (Social Work) Department began hiring Sociologists in order to augment the program's curriculum with sociological perspectives and knowledge. Eventually Sociology became its own major option, though many students seeking an "additional string in their bow" still choose to study both subjects, by double majoring in Social Work and Sociology. The Social Services or Social Work major has been continuous from 1945 to the present. In the 1958-59 catalog, the name was changed to Social Welfare. This was in accord with the California State College system and the University of California, and was implemented to distinguish the undergraduate program from the graduate level Social Work degree. With the 1982-83 HSU catalog, the name of the major became "Social Work", as a result of faculty demand and the standardization of the undergraduate major title by the California State University system (it had grown from State College status).

Of additional interest, up until Humboldt developed a separate Pupil Personnel Credential program in the 1960's for students seeking employment in public school settings, many of the courses in the Social Work major were included in the requirements for that credential. The HSU Social Services Major pioneered the use of the community as a laboratory. Before 1945, only the Education curriculum, with its long tradition of student teaching, had valid courses involving "hands on experience" off campus. The addition of the Social Sciences major in 1945 resulted in a second HSU degree program that employed community based experimental learning courses as an integral component of its degree requirements. Termed "field work," it was recognized by community social agencies, (what few we had in those early days) as an important part of the education of future social workers. The current proliferation of off-campus educational experience with academic credit, under the aegis of a professor,

demonstrates the validity and success of these student field work experiences in the eyes of both the University and social service agencies. In addition to field work in the community, Social Work Students have the option of gaining practical experience and contributing to the campus and community by becoming involved with Youth Educational Services. The Y.E.S. program, located on the HSU campus, was established by Social Welfare professors Kathryn Corbett and Ben Fairless, who applied their extensive experience in field work coordination and instruction to develop this highly valued part of the HSU student community hands-on experience.

To those of you who use this handbook, we send the challenge to carry on in the finest of Humboldt traditions. The "past is prologue." Now it is up to you. ~Kathryn Corbett, Emeritus Professor of Social Work, Humboldt State University

Social Work Student Association

The Social Work Student Association (SWSA) is an organization for BA and MSW students who are interested in enhancing their education by being active on campus and in the community. The SWSA participates in many campus and community events. Money is raised each year for students to attend conferences and the annual "Lobby Days" at the state capitol. In addition, SWSA often publishes a newsletter, holds fundraising raffles, and sends student representatives to the weekly Social Work Department meeting. They are always open to new, fresh ideas.

Weekly Social Work Department meetings are open to all social work students. The SWSA appoints one person to attend these meetings every week. There is a regular place on the agenda for SWSA business. Student participation in Department meetings varies from year to year, depending on priorities and interest. These meetings address both academic and student affairs, to insure communication and collaboration between the faculty and students. In the event that the faculty need to discuss any personnel issues or concerns regarding an individual student, the meeting is closed to protect student confidentiality.

SWSA is a great place to gain organizational and leadership skills. Being a member is often an empowering experience, SWSA is also a great place to meet other Social Work students, and have a lot of FUN!

Transfer of Credit

Academic credit for life experience or previous work experience shall not be given, in whole or in part, in lieu of any required social work courses. It is important that students are not repeating courses when they transfer from other institutions. It is possible to transfer SW 101 and SW 255 from an accredited community college or university. It is also possible to transfer junior level courses from accredited BA Social Work Programs at four year universities; to do so courses are evaluated on a course-by-course basis to insure that their content and objectives are comparable to those of the HSU BA Social Work Program. These evaluations are made by the student's academic advisor and in situations that are unclear, the issue may be brought to the department for review. No course work can be applied towards the Social Work Major from an unaccredited college. In the case of exchange or transfer students from other accredited baccalaureate social work programs, every effort is made to honor course work completed at the previous program. In most cases the student's HSU advisor will contact the student's former program advisor to assess comparability and to develop a plan that is fair and advantageous for the student.

The Social Work Department at Humboldt State University does not, and has never allowed, a social work major course to be met by proficiency exam. Transfer students from California public community colleges who have completed their AA Degree have automatically met their lower division general education through a CSU/California Community College articulation agreement. Those general education courses that are required for our social work major are, therefore, certified as meeting the content areas sought by our program. SOC 34 Introduction to Social Work (equivalent to HSU SW 101) and SOC 38 Field Experience (equivalent to HSU SW 255 Beginning Social Work Experience), offered at College of the Redwoods, our major feeder community college, are approved according to Humboldt State University's master syllabi system and are pre-accepted through a special articulation agreement with their Human Services Program.

Advising

During your freshman and sophomore years, advising is focused on the general education program and course requirements in preparation for a social work major. Available from the department office and each faculty advisor is a "Social Work Major" course outline. During your third and fourth semester, a faculty advisor will assist you with your application to the major. An advisor can help you examine your experiences in SW 101 and SW 255, and identify the ways in which these courses may have provided information to assist you with greater self-awareness and knowledge about social work as a profession.

Usually, the department administration staff will assign you an advisor. During your junior year, you will collaborate with your advisor to file a university-mandated "Major Contract" form, that is used by the Registrar's Office to assess whether you are on track to graduate. One copy of this form is given to you, and another is kept in your academic folder in the department office. Your advisor is responsible for making any formal changes in this form after it has been submitted to the Registrar's Office. Your relationship with your advisor is more than academic, as they are concerned with your general professional interests and development. Advisors' meet often with students to talk about career and academic plans, assess their overall progress and experiences with coursework, and support them in their course studies and volunteer and senior practicum. Feel free to drop by your advisor's office on a frequent basis.

Academic Policies

Beginning Social Work Experience (SW 255) Waiver Policy

Students with relevant, documented, client-based social service volunteer experience may request that their advisor waive the requirement of SW 255. The procedure for waiver is:

- Students must submit written verification of the 60 hours (minimum) of client-based social service experience. The experience may be volunteer or paid. The verification must be on agency letterhead and signed by someone in the agency who can attest to the completion of the minimum number of hours and adequate performance.
- The student must submit a brief essay that describes their experience and relate their volunteer experience to relevant course objectives in SW 255.
- The student's academic advisor will review the verification letter and essay to determine if the request for a waiver is approved. This decision is based on the extent that the experience and learning are congruent with the learning objectives of SW 255. The advisor can reject the request based on lack of verification, the hours not being relevant, the experience not providing suitable learning, or the student being unable to articulate the learning or relevance of the experience.
- The advisor either grants or denies the request for a waiver.
- The decision and supporting documentation is included in the student's academic folder and on the Major Requirement Form submitted for graduation.

Incompletes

Students receiving an "I" or "RP" in a major course are expected to complete coursework prior to the beginning of the next semester in order to progress through the social work program. Because there are appropriate exceptions to every policy, the department allows for waiver of this policy. The waiver process requires the student to seek approval from her/his advisor and the instructor assigning the "I" or "RP." When a student has an outstanding "I" or "RP" before the beginning of their Senior Field Experience, they must additionally have the support of the Field Director. This is rarely approved.

Minimum Grades

While undergraduate credit can be awarded for a grade of "D" or better, the BA Social Work program requires major students to get a grade of "C" or better in required social work courses. A student receiving a grade below "C" in a required course will need to retake that course. Because courses are not offered every semester this may result in a student not being able to move forward in her/his academic plan. This may result in a delay of up to a year in moving forward.

Sequenced Courses

Students are expected to remain in the same course sections and labs for sequenced courses. In the social work Methods I course (SW340) students build relationships with one another that strengthen throughout the semester, and must already be developed for Methods II (SW341). This is also true for successful integration of the field seminar (SW456). In addition, the social work field experience (SW455) requires the course instructor to make visits with students and their supervisors in field settings. It is disruptive for supervisors to change who they meet with midway through the academic year. Students may only switch sections or labs of sequenced courses for serious and compelling reasons and with the approval of their adviser and the BA Program Director.

Academic/Professional Support and Review

The Department of Social Work at Humboldt State University is committed to our students' professional education and development in a supportive learning environment. In accordance with requirements of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the department has designed the Student Academic/Professional Support and Review process to facilitate student success, both academically and with regard to professional behavior. Any student or faculty member may initiate this process at any level. If faculty have concerns about your performance in a course, they may consult with other faculty, your advisor, and/or campus support services staff. Student Academic/Professional Support and Review is not a substitution for University policies and procedures, but is the preferred departmental procedure.

Support Process

Prevention – Through discussions in the classroom, field, and advising, faculty offer support to students experiencing challenges in meeting expectations of a course, the program, or the university. Typically, this level of support is sufficient to resolve concerns.

Level 1 (Support) – Meeting between Student and Faculty Member and/or Advisor Students are encouraged to access faculty and/or advisor support whenever they have a concern related to their own performance or the educational environment. At this level, faculty and/or the advisor may recommend behavioral changes to the student, modifications to assignments, and/or the provision of additional support services. The outcome of this meeting may be documented, but documentation is not required.

Level 2 (Consultation) – Meeting between Student, Faculty, Advisor, and/or Campus Support Services Staff If the issue is not resolved in consultation with faculty and/or the advisor, any party may initiate a meeting involving the student, faculty, and advisor to explore additional support and steps that might be required (if the faculty member is also the advisor a second faculty member will be chosen by the student or faculty member). At this level, the faculty and/or advisor may recommend additional behavioral changes to the student, modifications to assignments, and/or the provision of additional support services. Documentation of this meeting will be placed in the student file.

Level 3 (Resolution) – Meeting between Student, Faculty, Advisor, BA/MSW Director and/or Field Director and/or Title IV-E/MHESP Coordinator If the issue is not resolved in the meeting with the student, faculty, and advisor, any party may involve the Program Director (BA, MSW, and/or Field Director). In this meeting, the student, faculty, advisor, and program director may develop a formal plan and timeline for behavioral change, modifications to the student's course of study, referral to university disciplinary procedures, or re-evaluation of a student's suitability for the social work program. Results of this meeting will be documented in the student file and forwarded to the Department of Social Work Administrative Team.

Review Process

If the issue is not resolved, any party may submit a signed letter to the Department of Social Work Administrative Team within one week of notification of the Level 3 action requesting a review of the issue. The letter should indicate the concern with the prior recommendations/actions, and suggest further steps toward resolution of the concern. The student may bring an advocate to this meeting. Results of this meeting will be documented in the student's file and will include a

formal letter detailing the Department's requirements for resolution of the concern. If any party believes that further action is warranted, she/he may utilize University grievance procedure.

Process for Resolution of Student Concerns

Students are encouraged to follow the following steps in resolving their academic concerns.

1. In the event that a student has a concern about a class, a faculty member, or a staff member, the student is encouraged to speak directly with the faculty or staff member to discuss and collaboratively resolve the issue when possible. If the concern is not resolved, the student may consult with the respective BASW or MSW Program Director. If the concern is not resolved with the Program Director, the student may discuss the concern with the Department Chair.
2. Concerns regarding field education should be presented to the Director of Field or Assistant Director of Field.
3. If the concern is related to stipend project participation, students are encouraged to discuss the concern with the Project Coordinator. If the concern is not resolved, the student may discuss the concern with the Project Director (Department Chair).
4. If the concern is related to the program or curriculum, students are encouraged to discuss the concern with the appropriate Program Director (BASW/MSW).

Both the Department and the College administration encourage students to make every effort to resolve concerns at the Department level. Students may also utilize the University grievance process for which the policies and procedures are outlined below:

http://www.humboldt.edu/studentrights/complaint_staff.php

<http://www.humboldt.edu/advise/grievance.html>

Student Rights and Responsibilities on the University Campus

You are responsible for reviewing and complying with all HSU policies,

<http://studentrights.humboldt.edu/>

Council on Social Work Education - Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

<https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Standards-and-Policies/2015-EPAS>

HSU Department of Social Work Commitments and Competencies

<http://www2.humboldt.edu/socialwork/welcome-department-social-work>

International Federation of Social Workers Statement of Ethical Principles

<http://ifsw.org/policies/statement-of-ethical-principles/>

NASW Code of Ethics

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics>