

Western Michigan University
School of Social Work
BSW Student Handbook

Introduction

This handbook lays out policies specific to the undergraduate social work degree. This is in conjunction with university policy, [WMU current catalog](#), and the [School of Social Work Common Handbook](#).

BSW mission and program goals

Mission	BSW Program Goals
Generalist social work education	Prepares generalist practitioners
Enhance the social functioning	Enhance, advocate, and support social and economic justice and personal well-being for all people.
Individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations.	Requisite skills needed to formulate and realize a vision of a just society
Social and economic justice	Support social and economic justice. Formulate and realize a vision of a just society.
Personal well-being for all people.	Personal well-being for all people. Diverse, vulnerable, and underserved populations.

Program Preparation

Mandatory New Student Orientation

Orientation is provided for all incoming BSW students prior to the start of their program. The agenda for the orientation always includes information about School policies and procedures, student services, field education, NASW membership, student organizations, and preparation for acceptance into the MSW Advanced-standing program.

Orientation is mandatory. If students fail to attend or are late, they are at risk of delaying their enrollment in the undergraduate Social Work program.

The Advising System

The purpose of advising is to provide information about program requirements and curricular matters, professional development, and resource location and referral. School of Social Work faculty and staff are committed to assisting each student to achieve their educational goals. Advising is one important element in the educational enterprise. Academic advising occurs in the advising suite on the second floor of the College of Health and Human Services, room 2125. Career and other types of advising are done by the BSW coordinator and Director of Admissions and Student Services in the School of Social Work.

During program planning, the adviser will map out any remaining General Education requirements and required social work courses. A key element of this plan is field education (SWRK4100/4110) where students are scheduled into these courses in advance and in limited numbers. All changes to program plans require meeting with the BSW coordinator.

Pre-social work advising, (including general education requirements), program and curricular planning and graduation audits are accomplished through the College Advising Office. Once admitted into the BSW program, undergraduate students are also assigned a faculty adviser for information about the profession of

social work, advice on how to cope with problems of a general nature which interfere with the educational process, and information and referral on the topic of graduate education.

Social Work Curriculum Requirements

You can find the full required curriculum for BSW students in the [current catalog](#).

Grading Policies: Interdisciplinary Minor and Social Work Major

Any student who fails to meet the following criteria will be notified in writing by the School of Social Work undergraduate adviser that he/she is in jeopardy of being terminated from the social work major.

A student must receive a “C” or higher in each required social work course to remain in the major. A student may repeat one required social work course to raise his/her grade.

The student must maintain an overall average of 2.0 in the interdisciplinary minor. Transfer students note that courses transferring into the minor are accepted with no grade (so an “A” at a two-year college can't be used to balance a lower grade in a course at WMU).

The School may refuse to permit a student to continue in the curriculum if at any time it is deemed that the student is exhibiting a pattern of professionally incompetent or inappropriate behavior as determined by the standards of the National Association of Social Work Code of Ethics governing social workers and their professional relationships with those they serve, with their colleagues, with their employing agency, and with the community. Further details on this policy and procedure may be obtained from the School of Social Work undergraduate coordinator.

Students having academic difficulty (e.g., on probation in the University or having trouble maintaining required grades in the major or minor) will meet with their adviser in order to develop a plan to resolve academic difficulty. The adviser may refer students to various services on campus such as the Academic Skills Lab or the Counseling Center.

Field Education

Field education strives to address and create opportunities for students to develop a working knowledge of the social work profession while integrating values and skills. Through the field placement, the student is given the opportunity to test out skills and theories taught in the classroom. Differing from the classroom, however, the learning is more direct, immediate, and personal. It is an active process with emphasis on participation. The opportunity is provided for the student to deepen, extend and apply foundation knowledge. The field placement should provide opportunities for the student to assume responsibility for productive tasks within the agency, to observe, identify, and shadow social work role models in various professional roles in the agency and community, to assess his/her interest in and suitability for a career in social work or another helping profession, and to develop his/her direct practice skills and knowledge of community resources.

Students are encouraged to do some research on the agencies they may be interested in so they can be prepared and informed prior to completing the field placement application. Students will be matched to a field placement agency and will interview with that agency prior to making a decision about accepting the placement. This allows the student to meet and be evaluated by their potential field instructor to learn about the agency expectations, and become familiar with the functions of the agency. It also gives the field instructor the opportunity to find out if the student would meet the needs and standards of the agency. If the student and/or the potential field instructor believe that the placement would not be a good “fit” for either party, then the field coordinator will match the student to another agency for a second interview.

WMU School of Social Work policy states that students applying for their internship, who are not offered a placement after three agencies interviews for reasons related to their appropriateness or readiness for internship, will be referred to the Professional Review Committee for evaluation and problem solving. This could result in a

recommendation that the student be terminated from the social work program.

Please refer to the [field manual](#) or call the field office at (269) 387-3173 for more information.

Drop/Add

Students should pay close attention to deadlines for adding and dropping classes without penalty. The dates for these deadlines can be found in the [academic calendar](#).

Withdrawal from a Class

The final date to officially withdraw from classes without academic penalty is the first Friday past mid-semester. Academic penalty means receiving an "X", which is computed as an "E". The specific date will be published in the [Course Offerings](#) schedule each semester. Petition may be made at the Records Office for exceptions to this policy.

After registration has closed, students must process dropped courses at the Registrar's Office.

The WMU Customer Account Services will grant 100% refund for dropped classes through the drop/add period, after which there is no refund for less than total dropped hours. If a student completely withdraws from all courses, there is a 50% refund through the fifth week of class in a semester or the second week in a session.

Financial Aid Resources

College Work-Study Program

These state and federal programs provide work opportunities for students demonstrating financial need. The WMU Student Employment Referral Service Office places students in campus jobs. In order to apply, the financial aid form or family financial statement must be completed and filed. Attempts are made to place the student at a job related to his or her area of study. A student can work a minimum of 10 hours and a maximum of 20 hours per week. Visit <http://www.wmich.edu/finaid/undergrad/work-study/> for more information.

Short-term Student Loans

WMU Short-term Loan Program

There are short-term loans available through the WMU Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships for students in time of emergency. Loans must be used for educational related expenses. When funds are available, the amount of the loan can be up to \$500 for books and emergencies. These amounts may be less depending on the availability. Loans are to be repaid within 30 days of receipt but no later than the last day of your enrollment for the academic year. If it is not paid by the due date, the borrower will incur a service charge of 1.5% a month on the unpaid balance. Delinquency in the repayment of a short-term loan will prevent future registration or release of transcripts. If the short-term loan application/promissory note is completed by 4:30 p.m., the short-term loan check will be available in Room 1080 Seibert Administration Building, after 8:00 a.m. in two business days.

School of Social Work Short-term Loan Program

In addition to the WMU Short-term Loan Program, there are short-term loans available through the School of Social Work designated for social work students only. The maximum amount of these loans is \$500.00 but may be increased to \$1,000 in emergency situations. While the Financial Aid Office administers these accounts, the School of Social Work Director of Admissions and Student Services must authorize all requests. Eligibility requirements specify that the student is both a full-time or part-time degree student

and that he or she has **no outstanding financial obligations to the University**. A promissory note must be signed for the full amount of the loan. Delinquency in the repayment will prevent a student from registering until the amount due is paid. Students may apply for the loan at the School of Social Work's Office of Admissions and Student Services. Loans are granted on a first-come basis and once the application is approved, the loan can usually be processed within two business days.

Employment Opportunities

Students interested in on-campus employment must request information by contacting the department of interest directly. Career and Student Employment Services located in room 1401 of Ellsworth Hall maintains a list of potential university employers, which can be obtained by calling (269) 387-2725. Students can also contact Career and Student Employment Services at (269) 387-2745 to schedule an appointment with a career adviser to discuss employment options. Another source to contact is the University's Human Resource Department in 1310 Seibert Administration Building (269) 387-3669. For off-campus employment, the Career and Student Employment Services offers employment services for WMU students seeking part-time employment. Additionally, students can contact the Career Center, located at 3020 Schneider Hall inside Haworth College of Business at (269)387-2711. BroncoJOBS also retains updated job listings at <http://wmich.experience.com>.

School of Social Work Scholarships

In an attempt to assist students with some of their financial burden, the School of Social Work offers scholarship opportunities. Application deadlines vary. These scholarship awards will be determined and announced in May of the current academic year. Awards are determined using information from the Scholarship Application form and the requested attachments. Economic need serves as the secondary criteria in making award decisions.

Scholarships

Nathaniel McCaslin Scholarship

Western Michigan University created this scholarship to honor Mr. Nathaniel McCaslin upon his retirement from the WMU School of Social Work. Mr. McCaslin has made outstanding life-long contributions to improving the quality of life in the community and the quality of social work education. Commitment to providing educational opportunities for minority students has been a large part of Mr. McCaslin's contributions.

The Nathaniel McCaslin Scholarship is awarded to **one BSW student and one second-year MSW student**. Priority will be given to those who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- First generation family member pursuing college degree;
- Commitment to working with adolescents;
- Single parent status;
- History of, or interest in, working in a community service area.

The Nathaniel McCaslin Scholarship is awarded during the spring semester.

Robert Barstow Scholarship

In 1991, the School of Social Work Alumni Association started a collection to develop this scholarship to honor Mr. Robert Barstow. Mr. Barstow was the associate director of the School of Social Work from 1968 – 1974, and director in 1974. His commitment to child welfare was demonstrated by employment as a caseworker, Director of Juvenile Court, Director of the Children's Aid Society, State Director of Michigan

Children's Society, and Deputy Director of the Children's Charter of Courts on Michigan.

This \$500.00 Robert Barstow Scholarship is awarded each year to **one BSW student** and **one first-year MSW student** (full-time or extended-study). Priority is given to those who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Current or past FIP/TANF/AFDC recipient;
- Current or past employee of Family Independence Agency;
- Interest in a child welfare career.

The scholarship is awarded during the spring semester.

Deloris Jordan Phillips Scholarship

Deloris Jordon Phillips retired from the faculty of the School of Social Work in December 1996, after 22 years of service. She taught courses in both the graduate and undergraduate programs. She had been an active participant, community member, and board member to numerous community organizations, including the Boy Scouts, NAACP, Kalamazoo Council of the Arts, YWCA, and Kalamazoo Civic Players. Upon her retirement, President Diether Haenicke allocated funds for the establishment of the Deloris J. Phillips Scholarship to honor her years of service to the University and the community.

This \$1000.00 scholarship is a two-year award, which contributes \$500.00 to the recipient each of the two years. It alternates every two years between an undergraduate social work major and a graduate student. The fall 2005 award went to an undergraduate student. The next award will be given to a **graduate student** in the fall of 2007. The scholarship recipient will be chosen on academic merit.

Elena Thomas Honorary Endowed Scholarship:

- Must be BSW or MSW student
- Must be a non-traditional aged student
- Financial need

Award amount: no less than \$500 depending on availability.

Whitney Young Scholar Award(s):

The Whitney Young Scholar Award is a faculty nominated award. Students need not apply. Faculty are encouraged to nominate students who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Must be a full-time undergraduate or graduate student from any WMU academic department
- At least a 3.0 GPA
- Demonstrated a history of community service

Award amount: \$500

Note: Students are nominated by faculty or staff.

John P. Mellein Endowed Scholarship

Preference shall be given to enrolled, full-time BSW students who have demonstrated an interest in areas of study including but not limited to mental health, social justice, community planning and development, or social policy. The student must have at least a 3.3 GPA.

Full-time and Part-time Advanced-standing Master of Social Work Program

Students who have earned a bachelor of social work degree from a CSWE accredited program within six years of application may apply to the 39-credit hour, 10-month Advanced-standing Program. Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- BSW degree from a CSWE accredited program that is not more than six years old
- Overall GPA of 3.0
- No more than one BSW course below a B. Any BSW course below a B will require retaking an equivalent course in the BSW curriculum
- One year of full-time post BSW human service work experience is *recommended*
- One of the three letters of support must address the applicant's BSW field or work experience and potential for success in an advanced standing program

NASW Membership

Students in the School of Social Work are entitled to full rights and privileges of membership in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Members participate at all levels of the Association.

NASW members work with experienced professional social workers through the [Michigan NASW chapter](#) to enhance social work practice and to lobby for beneficial change in professional standards, social policy, salary levels, and other concerns. More tangible benefits include:

- A subscription to Social Work, the NASW journal;
- A subscription to NASW News/Personnel Information;
- Reduced rates for Abstracts for Social Workers and other NASW publications.

The National Association of Social Workers [Code of Ethics](#).

Undergraduate Student Organizations

Eta Eta Sigma

Eta Eta Sigma is an undergraduate student organization open to any student interested in the helping professions. The Greek letters for the group are HHS, which stand for Health & Human Services. This reflects the commitment of Eta Eta Sigma members to work to improve the health and well being of others through the direct provision of services. The organization appropriately has its leadership in the School of Social Work and the undergraduate adviser as the faculty mentor. An organizational and membership meeting is held early each fall, at which time plans are made for events to take place during the academic year. The organization focuses on providing community service and providing professional and educational opportunities.

Eta Eta Sigma helps build relationships among students and provides hands-on professionally relevant experiences. Contact the undergraduate coordinator, Dr. Linda Reeser at linda.reeser@wmich.edu for additional information or to join.

Phi Alpha Social Work Honor Society: WMU Theta Phi Chapter

In 1999, the School of Social Work chartered a local chapter, Theta Phi, of Phi Alpha, the National Social Work Honor Society. Criteria for membership includes a minimum 3.0 GPA overall, a minimum of nine social work credit hours, and a GPA of 3.25 in social work courses.

This chapter is open to both undergraduate and graduate social work students and graduates who meet eligibility requirements. The mission of this organization is to promote high standards of education for social work and to invite into membership those who have attained excellence of scholarship and distinction of achievement as students of social work. Information on Phi Alpha is provided during the spring semester by the School of Social Work. Graduating members are honored during the School of Social Work Graduation, Hooding, and Pinning Celebration.

Membership in this honor's society is life-long so students do not need to apply and be admitted more than once. For more information about this organization, contact the undergraduate coordinator, Dr. Linda Reeser at

linda.reeser@wmich.edu.

Career and Student Employment Services

All students are urged to make use of the career education facilities of the University for assistance in deciding upon a major and minor, planning for realistic entry-level jobs, and visualizing a career path for the future.

Career counseling and advising are available in the offices of the Career and Student Employment Services, the University Counseling and Testing Center, and curriculum and departmental advisers. A course directly related to career education is UNIV 102, Career Exploration and Development.

The Office of Career and Student Employment Services offers a full range of services to help develop skills, explore the world of work and obtain full-time employment upon graduation. Services include a career learning lab, on-campus interviewing, part-time off-campus employment, internship opportunities, weekly job opportunity bulletins, web-based employment listings, maintenance and distribution of education credentials, a computerized career guidance system, career fairs, and workshops.

For more information, students may access the website at <http://www.broncojobs.wmich.edu/>; to schedule an appointment, call (269) 387-2745. The Office is located on the first floor of Ellsworth Hall.