

Plymouth State UNIVERSITY

Social Work Department BS in Social Work Student Handbook 2013-2015



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INTRODUCTION

Most of what you need to know about the Social Work major can be found in this handbook. We encourage you to read it and to use it as a reference and guide. (The terms Social Work Program and Social Work Department, and Program Director and Department Chair are used interchangeably.)

Please note that a link to the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers is included in the Application to the Major, which is found in the Appendices. Every professional social worker needs to be familiar with the Code of Ethics. One of the requirements for continuance in the major is professional and ethical behavior that is consistent with the Code. If you have any questions, please contact the Program Director/Department Chair or your advisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

The Department of Social Work at Plymouth State University (PSU) offers a Bachelors of Science in Social Work; the undergraduate degree includes several Options in the major. The department also offers several minors that focus on services for children and families, older adults, health care, mental health, and social services for Spanish-speaking communities. The undergraduate degree in social work prepares students for generalist, evidence-based social work

practice with a foundation in liberal arts and the knowledge, skills and values base of the social work profession. Through the mastery of competencies and practice behaviors established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), graduates apply their education to working with client systems of all types and sizes (individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities (CSWE, 2008).

The program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) ; it meets the rigorous academic standards established by CSWE to retain this accreditation. Candidacy status was first granted to the program at PSU by CSWE in 1993; initial accreditation was granted in 1995. The program received reaffirmation in 1999 for the full eight-year cycle ending in 2007, and again in 2007 for the full cycle ending in 2015. The program is currently engaged in self-study and application for renewed affirmation and will be visited by CSWE in 2015. Graduates of the program may be eligible for advanced standing in MSW programs that offer such options. (Most MSW programs offer Advanced Standing; this allows a student with a BSW from an accredited program to complete the degree in less than 2 years – typically 12 to 15 months.)

The Social Work Program's generalist curriculum is a reflection of its commitment to educate and prepare students for entry-level, generalist practice. The competency-based curriculum provides students with content in theories of human behavior and the social environment, policy, research, and practice. Content on values and ethics, human rights and social and economic justice are integrated throughout the curriculum. The curriculum includes required foundation courses in social work, additional required academic credits in optional social work courses, and a required 450-hour practicum with a concurrent social work seminar. This foundation prepares students to respond to the broad and diverse social service needs of individuals, families, and communities in New Hampshire, New England, and the wider community.

For SW2200 Introduction to Social Work, students must complete 30 volunteer service hours as part of this course. This offers students who are exploring Social Work as their major the opportunity to experience service learning. These volunteer experiences are approved by the course and documented by the agency attesting to the hours and activities engaged in by the student. In addition, students complete a 450-hour social work practicum during the spring semester of their senior/final year in the program along with a concurrent seminar. The Social Work Practicum is arranged between the student and the Director of Field Education. The practicum is evaluated by the student's assigned field instructor both at mid-semester and at the end of the practicum. This evaluation serves as one of the measurement tools used by the program to evaluate student achievement of program competencies. In compliance with CSWE accreditation standards, the program does not grant academic credit for life experience or for previous work experience.

The undergraduate curriculum at PSU adheres to the accreditation standards of CSWE. The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) identify ten core competencies that all social work students should be able to demonstrate. The EPAS competencies are available online at <http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=13780>

The competencies are as follows:

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.
2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice

3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments
4. Engage diversity and difference in practice
5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice
6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
9. Respond to contexts that shape practice
10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. (CSWE, 2008, p.3-6)

The department has also partnered with state and national efforts to offer specialized opportunities for students in our program. The BSW at PSU has a long standing IV-E-funded Child Welfare Educational Tuition Partnership with the New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families (NH-DCYF). Through this partnership, students have the opportunity to apply for tuition support and a stipend for up to two years. Our program was also privileged to be chosen as one of the original Gero-Ed grant recipients through the Hartford Foundation to receive funding and support to infuse content on aging in the social work curriculum and encourage students to pursue social work practice with older adults. The department grants a Social Work with Older People award on an annual basis. Most recently, the program is pleased to continue its focus on aging through a newly funded partnership project with the Council on Social Work Education National Center for Gerontological Social Work Education (Gero-Ed Center) and the National Resource Center for Participant-Directed Services (NRCPPDS). This project will give students the opportunity to apply for a stipend while engaged in a NH Service Link practicum.

Academic Program

The BSW curriculum requires an introductory course (SW2200), which includes 30 hours of volunteer experience, content in human behavior and the social environment (SW3340, SW3350), social welfare policy and services (SW3450), practice theory and skills (SW3510, SW3520, SW3530), and research (SW4020). Students are required to take prerequisites for these courses in human biology (SW2500), psychology (PS2010), sociology (SO2220), and statistics (MA2300 or SS/SW3700). The field education component (450 supervised hours) engages students in structured, supervised service learning through placements in social service agencies throughout New Hampshire (SW4550, SW 4430-4480). Students are also required to take one course in aging (SW3050), child welfare (SW3130, SW3150, SW3250), and health or mental health (SW3300, SW3500). The curriculum integrates content on values and ethics, human diversity, populations-at-risk, and the promotion of social and economic justice.

Options in the Social Work major are available in aging services, child and family services, health services, mental health services, and social services for Spanish - speaking communities. **Minors** are offered to non-majors in Child and Family Studies and Health and Mental Health Studies; a third interdisciplinary minor in Gerontology is also open to majors.

The department also has a 2+2 **articulation agreement** with the NH Technical Institute, Human Services Program, in Concord, NH. This permits NHTI students in this program to more easily transfer to the BSW program at PSU with the aid of the Undergraduate Studies Office on campus.

Mission Statement

CSWE describes the purpose of social work as follows:

“The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person and environment construct, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, social work’s purpose is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons.” (CSWE, EPAS, 2008, p.1)

Consistent with the purpose of the profession, the Social Work Department’s mission

is to educate and prepare baccalaureate students for effective, evidence-based professional social work practice that is rooted in the purpose and values of the profession, including respect for human dignity, diversity, self-determination, and advocating for just policies, programs, and services. This mission is congruent with the University’s commitment to excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, and service to the community; Ut prosim, or “that I may serve,” is the PSU motto. The program advances knowledge and critical thinking skills to prepare students for generalist practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities and to enhance the fulfillment of human potential. The program is committed to promoting the values of social and economic justice. (Revised and Adopted by Social Work faculty on August 30, 2013)

Special Programs

Older Adults. All majors are required to take SW3050 *Perspectives on Aging*. This is an outgrowth of the department’s commitment to infusing content on aging in the curriculum and to encouraging students to pursue social work practice with older adults. (See <http://www.plymouth.edu/departments/social-work/projects/geriatric-enrichment-project/> on the department’s website). The department recognizes students with an Social Work with Older People Award. Students interested in aging are encouraged to consider the interdisciplinary Gerontology Minor that is housed in the department.

Child Welfare. The Social Work Department has partnered with the NH Division of Children, Youth and Families for the past twelve years. This partnership provides Title IV-E Child Welfare and Adoption Assistance Act supported funding to 2-3 students each year. The objectives of this legislation are to improve the quality of care of children in foster care, reduce their numbers, return children to their homes as soon as conditions permit, and facilitate permanency. Specifically, this legislation provides educational and training opportunities to ensure the preparedness and retention of the child welfare workforce so that these objectives can be met. The educational tuition partnership at PSU (and other schools of social work) was developed to prepare a diverse group of social workers for careers with special emphasis on child welfare. (See <http://www.plymouth.edu/departments/social-work/projects/child-welfare-education-project/> on the department’s website.) IV-E students in the major are required to take all three course offerings in child and family welfare.

Program Goals

The goals of the Social Work Program reflect its mission and adhere to the educational policies and accreditation standards of CSWE for baccalaureate social work education and practice. The curriculum is designed to:

1. advance knowledge and critical thinking skills to prepare for students for entry-level, evidence-based generalist practice;
2. guide students in ethical and values-based professional practice in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics;
3. prepare students to intervene with diverse client systems of various sizes and types;
4. teach students to apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment to social work generalist practice;
5. prepare students to understand the impact of oppression, discrimination, and inequality in a complex, multi-cultural society, and to use policy practice and advocacy skills to promote social and economic justice; and
6. instill in students the importance and role of ongoing growth and development as a professional social worker.

(Revised and Adopted by the Social Work faculty on August 30, 2013)

Program Administration

The Social Work Department is part of the College of Education, Health, and Human Services, which was created as part of the University's reorganization and restructuring in 2011. The department Chair administers the program in conjunction with the department faculty and with external support from the Social Work Advisory Board. The Director of Field Education is responsible for student placements. The IV-E Child Welfare Coordinator manages all aspects of this tuition-supported program with support from the department Chair.

CURRICULUM

Social Work is a specialized degree that prepares students for generalist social work practice in a wide range of settings to work with children, youth, families and adults. The curriculum has a solid foundation in the liberal arts, focusing on the biological, psychological and social sciences, as well as the knowledge, skills and values of the social work profession. The strengths perspective, ecological systems perspective, and social justice perspective are theoretical frameworks that are integrated throughout the BSW curriculum.

Course Requirements

The following section provides course descriptions for all courses offered by the department:

SW3340 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I (3 credits)

SW3350 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II (3 credits)

Each course examines human behavior and the social environment. This analysis is designed to increase students' potential for effective generalist social work practice. Students apply knowledge from liberal arts courses in sociology, psychology, and human biology. A "person-in-environment", or social systems framework is used to study the impact of biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual influences on human behavior across the life span.

HBSE I focuses on birth through adolescence; HBSE II focuses on adolescence through older adulthood. In both courses, the effects of cultural patterns, social class, social structure, social policies, and other environmental influences are examined to help students understand ways that social systems can either promote or deter individuals from achieving health and well-being.

Prerequisites:

SW2500 Human Biology for Social Workers and the Social Sciences (3 credits)

This course gives students a basic understanding of human biology and how it relates to human behavior and the social environment. It integrates social work theory with human biology theory and helps students understand the role of human biology in social work's bio-psychosocial perspective.

PS2010 Introduction to General Psychology (3 credits)

This course introduces students to the scope and methods of psychology as a scientific study.

SO2220 Foundations of Sociology (3 credits)

This course introduces students to theories and methods of Sociology, which are applied to the analysis of such issues as social class, race, gender, religion and politics.

SW2200 Introduction to Social Work (4 credits)

This course introduces students to the history and practice of social work in the U.S. and the knowledge, skills, and values of the profession. It provides an overview of social problems and social services for diverse populations with an emphasis on advancing social and economic justice. Important concepts including ecosystems theory, strengths perspective, and generalist practice are introduced. The course also examines cultural diversity in the U.S. and the importance of developing cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity by exploring the life stories of different groups and issues of equity, opportunity and justice. Students participate in an observational service learning component (30 hours) arranged individually with the instructor.

SW3450 Social Welfare Policy and Services (3 credits)

The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of the history and current state of social welfare policies and services in the U.S., including the origins and development of values, policies, programs, and issues related to the development of the U.S. social welfare system. The course also addresses the role of policy in service delivery and the role of practice in policy development. The strengths perspective and social justice perspective are incorporated in the examination and analysis of social welfare policies.

SW3510 Theory and Practice of Social Work Intervention I (3 credits)

SW3520 Theory and Practice of Social Work Intervention II (3 credits)

SW3530 Theory and Practice of Social Work Intervention III (3 credits)

These three courses are included in the social work practice series. Together, these courses provide a professional foundation in generalist social work practice. The focus of SW3510 is the use of generalist problem solving techniques with individuals and families. The focus of SW3520 is generalist problem-solving skills with treatment and task groups. SW3530 focuses on generalist problem-solving skills with organizations and communities. Social workers use skills, knowledge, and values to enhance the functioning of micro, mezzo, and macro client systems.

SW4000 Social Work Research Methods (3 credits)

The purpose of this course is to assist students in gaining knowledge, values, and skills in the integration and application of research methods in generalist social work practice. Students should demonstrate competence in the methods, logic, and evaluation of research; the formulation of hypotheses; the application of techniques for testing relationships and patterns among variables; methods of data collection; and strategies to improve the validity and reliability of data. Further, the fundamental role of research in generalist practice is studied by examining ethical considerations in research, interpreting and disseminating research results, and the use of findings to inform practice, policy, and social service delivery.

Prerequisites:

Complete one of the following: (3 credits)

MA2300 Statistics I

This course provides an introduction to statistics, both descriptive and inferential. The content includes numerical and graphical summaries for 1 and 2 variables, linear regression and correlation, confidence intervals and tests concerning means. A standard statistical software package is used throughout the course.

SS/SW3700 Social Statistics

This course introduces students to the importance and uses of statistics in the social sciences and social work. It focuses on a beginning level understanding of probability, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics using applied examples. Students are introduced to computer applications for statistical analysis by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

SW3050 Perspectives on Aging (3 credits)

This course examines concepts of aging, the aging process and its impact on individuals, families, and society, and differences and disparities in aging by race, class, and gender. Students examine demographic trends, as well as physical, social, and emotional changes associated with aging. Political and economic issues of aging and older adulthood in modern society are also considered from both an historical and contemporary perspective. International approaches to aging policies and services are also considered.

Children and Families Elective - Complete one of the following: (3 credits)

SW3130 Child Welfare and Family Services (3 credits)

This course provides an historical overview of child welfare and family services in the United States from institutional care in the 1800's to the present day. Current child welfare principles, policies, programs, and services are assessed in depth with emphasis on family preservation,

supportive services, and protective care. The diversity of children and families impacted by child welfare systems, as well as differences within systems themselves are a focus throughout by considering relevant factors that underlie individual and systemic problems such as economic and political climate, oppression, poverty, and power. The organization and delivery of child welfare services in New Hampshire is reviewed.

SW3150 Child Maltreatment (3 credits)

This course offers a critical examination of the etiology, prevention, treatment, and effects of child maltreatment from an historical foundation to current theory, research, and practice models. This course will identify, assess, and integrate primary, secondary, and tertiary intervention models with particular attention to family preservation, empowerment, and the ecosystems perspective. The diversity of children and families touched by maltreatment as well as differences among types of maltreatment are a focus throughout by considering relevant factors such as oppression, poverty, and power. The course identifies and explores specialized content relevant to child maltreatment from a systems perspective including: history, developmental stages, child neglect, child abuse (physical, sexual, emotional/ psychological), family violence, reporting and legal response, and professional and family roles. Content is examined in a broad context to include burgeoning aspects of maltreatment world-wide such as: vicarious victimization and trauma, pornography, prostitution, online exploitation, poverty, pandemics, and war.

SW3250 Families, Schools, and Community (3 credits)

This course is designed to provide students with advanced knowledge of family systems and their interface with school and community. An applied focus will examine how social problems in all of these social institutions are identified, conceptualized and how society has developed responses to these issues. A framework of healthy and normative functioning in families, schools and communities will be utilized to enhance student understanding of the multivariate factors that influence children, their parents and the people who interact with them in school and the community. Students will be challenged to reflect on their own personal and professional goals as they relate to growing up in their own families, schools, and communities. The social institutions of family, school, government (politicians, courts, law enforcement and other juvenile justice agencies), health and mental health care, religion and the media will be examined to determine their impact on the socialization of children and parents. Learning outcomes include an understanding of how social workers, educators, health, mental health and juvenile justice professionals and other community leaders and resources can promote optimal child and family growth and functioning.

Health and Mental Health Elective - Complete one of the following: (3 credits)

SW3300 Mental Health and Society (3 credits)

This course examines current issues and problems in mental health, mental illness, and health care delivery from a domestic and global perspective. The impact of social life, including culture, social class, race and ethnicity, gender, and age on physical and emotional health is studied. The history and current status of mental health care and service delivery in the U.S. and other nations are studied. Cross-cultural issues and challenges, epidemiological trends, treatment methods and interventions, and mental health outcomes are addressed.

SW3500 Health and Society (3 credits)

This course examines current issues and problems in health, illness, and health care delivery from a domestic and global perspective. The impact of social life, including culture, social class, race and ethnicity, gender, and age on physical and emotional health is studied. Illness in developing countries, disparities in the health of populations, and health care systems and policies in other nations are examined.

SW4430 Social Work Practicum* (12 credits)

The practicum engages students in 450 hours of supervised social work practice and provides opportunities to apply classroom learning in the field setting. The practicum occurs in the senior year as a block placement in the spring semester; it is taken concurrently with SW 4550 Social Work Seminar. The practicum is arranged on an individualized basis in consultation with the faculty Field Education Director. Transfer credit cannot be applied to the Practicum. Paid field placements are prohibited. In special circumstances, with the permission of the Field Education Director, students may secure a stipend or scholarship from the field agency. Existing paid employment cannot qualify as a field placement.

SW4550 Social Work Seminar (3 credits)

This course is designed to facilitate student identification as a professional social worker to promote success in their concurrent Social Work Practicum. Through selected readings, discussion, lecture and written assignments, students will learn how to integrate social work theory with their practice experiences. Synergistic learning will also occur through students sharing their own field experiences with one another in class. Emphasis will be given to critical thinking and creativity in addressing practice issues.

Social Work Electives:

SW3480 Exploring the Dominican Republic: Culture and Social Justice in a Developing Nation (3 credits)

This course examines issues of culture, poverty, social development, and social justice in the Dominican Republic through direct service learning work and preparatory and reflective class sessions and discussions. Students have the opportunity to examine development issues that have plagued the island nation for years and current efforts to address these concerns. The service learning component includes working on a designated construction project, working in a local elementary school, spending time with community leaders to learn about social and historical issues, and engaging in a variety of cross-cultural activities with community members. The trip also includes a visit to a local Haitian immigrant community (a batey), a tour of local schools and orphanages, an evening visiting and touring the Zona Colonial of Santo Domingo, spending a night with a local family, and taking some time to explore the small Caribbean country.

SW3800 Social Work Internship (1–9 credits)

The internship engages students in workplace settings and provides an opportunity to learn about various fields of practice. Individually arranged with instructor who will supervise internship. Does not fulfill requirements of Social Work Practicum courses (SW4430, SW 4440, SW 4450, SW 4460, SW 4470).

SW4910 Independent Study (1–3 credits)

Provides students with specialized knowledge in an area of social work practice not covered in

available courses or relating to a student’s special interests. Consent required of the instructor who will supervise the independent study and the Department Chair.

SW3440 Topics in Social Work (3 credits)

Specialized topics in social welfare and social work not normally covered in depth in other Social Work courses. Examples include substance abuse, income maintenance, administration, school social work. Course may be repeated with a different topic.

International Opportunities

The Global Education Office (GEO) located in Bagley House offers opportunities for international travel and study for PSU students. Each semester PSU students fan out across the globe to study in other countries such as Australia, New Zealand, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Austria, Hungary, Japan, Ireland, Spain, and South Africa. Through the GEO, PSU also offers students the opportunity to spend the first semester of their freshman year studying in Ireland, to study through the National Student Exchange program, and to participate in a variety of short term faculty led trips. The Social Work Department’s service learning course to the Dominican Republic (SW3480) is coordinated with the GEO. These opportunities offer students a meaningful way to participate in cross cultural experiences.

General Education

The following table outlines the Social Work courses required for the major that meet the “Connections” requirements for PSU’s General Education program (for more information on the general Education program, see <http://www.plymouth.edu/undergraduate/general-education/>)

Diversity	SO2220 Foundations of Sociology SW3480 Exploring the Dominican Republic: Culture and Social Justice in a Developing Nation
Global Awareness	SW3300 Mental Health & Society SW3480 Exploring the Dominican Republic: Culture and Social Justice in a Developing Nation SW3500 Health & Society
Wellness	SW3050 Perspectives on Aging SW3500 Health & Society
Writing in the Disciplines	SW4550 Social Work Seminar
Quantitative Reasoning in the Disciplines	MA2300 Statistics I, OR SS/SW3700 Social Statistics
Technology in the Disciplines	SW4020 Social Work Research

* The department does not offer nor require a specific Integration course.

Recommended Course Sequencing

The table outlines a *recommended* course sequence for scheduling courses from first-year through senior year (note that some courses are offered only in the fall and some only in the spring) to ensure completion of the program within 4 years:

	Fall	Spring
First Year or Sophomore Courses	SW2200 Introduction to Social Work (4 credits) SW2500 Human Biology for Social Workers and the Social Sciences (3 credits) PS2010 Introduction to General Psychology (3 credits) SO2220 Foundations of Sociology (3 credits)	SW2200 Introduction to Social Work (4 credits) PS2010 Introduction to General Psychology (3 credits) SO2220 Foundations of Sociology (3 credits)
Junior Courses	SW 3340 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I (3 credits) SW3510 Theory and Practice of Social Work Intervention I (3 credits) SW3130 Child Welfare and Family Services* (3 credits) SW3150 Child Maltreatment* (3 credits) SW3250 Families, Schools, and Community (3 credits) SW3500 Health and Society ** (3 credits)	SW3350 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II (3 credits) SW3520 Theory and Practice of Social Work Intervention II (3 credits) SW4020 Social Work Research Methods (3 credits) SW3050 Perspectives on Aging (3 credits) SW3130 Child Welfare and Family Services* (3 credits) SW3150 Child Maltreatment* (3 credits) SW3300 Mental Health and Society (3 credits)
Senior Courses	SW3450 Social Welfare Policy and Services (3 credits) SW3530 Theory and Practice of Social Work Intervention III (3 credits) SW3130 Child Welfare and Family Services* (3 credits) SW3150 Child Maltreatment* (3 credits)	SW4430 Social Work Practicum (12 credits/ 450 hours)*** SW4550 Social Work Seminar (3 credits) *** Different course numbers are assigned for Practicum linked to Options, such as Child & Family Services Option

	SW3250 Families, Schools, and Community SW3500 Health and Society ** (3 credits)	
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*May be taken fall or spring during Junior or Senior year/ **May be taken during Junior or Senior year

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT: ADMISSIONS, ADVISING, RETENTION, AND TERMINATION

Admission and Continuance in the Major

Students admitted to the university may declare Social Work as their major, but to remain in the major students must meet the department’s continuation requirements, as follows:

1. a grade of C or better in the required (SW) Foundation Courses: SW2200, SW3340, SW3350, SW3450, SW3510, SW3520, SW3530, SW4020, SW4550, and
2. a minimum major grade point average of 2.5 (all courses required for the major)

The student and his/her faculty advisor should monitor the student’s progress and status throughout the student’s Social Work education. To be admitted to the Practicum and the Seminar (SW 4550), students must have completed all of the course requirements of the major, achieved an overall grade point average of 2.0 and a major grade point average of 2.5, and earned a grade of C or better in the eight Social Work Foundation Courses (as listed above). Permission to enter the field will be granted by the Program Director/ Department Chair or the Field Education Director .

The Department of Social Work encourages applications from students from diverse backgrounds including race, color, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, culture, political ideology, gender, gender identity and expression, sex, sexual orientation, social class, family type, religion, age, and physical and mental abilities.

Application Procedures: Students are advised to apply by their sophomore year. To apply, students must 1) be enrolled in or completed SW2200; 2) complete an application by submitting a written statement; and 3) participate in a personal interview with a member of the Social Work faculty. Applications are typically submitted to the instructor of SW2200 – Introduction to Social Work by the end of the course. Completion of the application process is a pre-requisite to enrollment in SW3510 – Theory & Practice Social Work Intervention I.

The director of the program reviews the applications and assigns a Social Work faculty member to contact the student for an interview. The interview is designed to assess student ‘fit’ with our four criteria for admission (listed in next paragraph). Upon completion of the interview, the faculty member makes a recommendation to the chair of the department. The chair reviews the recommendation and makes a final decision regarding student continuance in the major. Applicants will receive notice regarding the decision within fourteen (14) calendar days.

The criteria and procedures used for admission are based on the academic and professional standards established by the Council on Social Work Education, the national accrediting body. The criteria used for assessment are: 1) intellectual qualities and academic skills; 2) commitment to the enhancement of quality of life for individuals and families; 3) concern for issues of social justice and sensitivity to cultural diversity; and 4) capacity for self-awareness and self-evaluation. If materials submitted are insufficient for decision-making, additional information will be requested.

A copy of the program's application form and directions for application are included at the end of this handbook. The written application includes a 1) a required signature indicating that the student has read and is willing to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics; and 2) a required signature indicating that the student understands that practicum sites may require criminal background and health checks for placement.

Transfer Credit

The University's policy with regard to transfer of credit is published in the university's undergraduate academic catalog and can be accessed online on the university web page. The program's policies with regard to transfer credit for foundation courses, the practicum, and Social Work Seminar, are as follows:

The Chair of the Social Work Department makes decisions regarding transfer credit for courses that meet the requirements of the social work major, except in the case of 2+2 agreements, which have been pre-determined by the department. The following policies and procedures guide these decisions:

1. A number of non-social work courses are required for the liberal arts foundation for the major. Courses that are accepted for transfer credit as General Education or elective courses will generally be granted credit for the Social Work Program. However, the director of the program reviews the initial decisions made by the Undergraduate Studies Office regarding these courses on an individual basis. In some cases, additional information (such as course descriptions, syllabi, texts, etc.) may be required by the Director to further assess the course and grant equivalency credit.
2. All social work courses with a grade of C or better from social work programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education or in Candidacy Status will be applied to the major. In order to receive transfer credit for a social work course taken at a non-accredited social work program, the course must a) be completed with a grade of C or better; and b) be reviewed and approved by the Social Work Program and office of Undergraduate Studies. Decisions regarding transfer credit for these courses are made by the program director after reviewing course descriptions, texts used for the courses, syllabi, course requirements, instructors and/or other related information.
3. **Transfer credit is not granted for the Social Work Practicum or the Social Work Seminar;** the requirements of the practicum experience must be completed at Plymouth State University.

4. Academic credit for life experience and previous work experience shall not be granted in lieu of any course required for the major.

Academic and Professional Advising Policies

All Social Work students are assigned a full time Social Work faculty member as their advisor; students have the right to request a specific faculty member as their advisor. All advisees are required to meet with their advisors during the scheduled fall and spring advising weeks before they are able to access the online registration system for classes (they must obtain a web registration access code from their advisor).

Advisors provide students with information concerning alternatives, limitations, and possible outcomes of academic choices as well as to help solve problems that arise in relation to academic work. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that they are making adequate progress toward meeting the requirements of the degree program they have chosen. Enrolled students and faculty have access to a computerized assessment of their progress toward completion of degree requirements. The university's Degree Works program compares the courses a student has taken (or officially transferred) to the General Education requirements and the specific requirements of their major. Course work in progress is noted as such. Degree Works also notes the area of study, credits earned, and grade point average as well as all courses taken or transferred to Plymouth. Degree Works is an important academic planning and monitoring tool for all students and faculty.

In addition to the assistance provided to students by their academic advisors and the tools available online, the university offers advising services through the Undergraduate Advising Center, particularly for the graduation review process for all students who have earned at least 48 credits. The center's role is to assist students with declared majors to review remaining degree requirements; calculate major, discipline, and minor GPAs; process necessary paperwork; plan courses for their remaining semesters; and find available resources to achieve their goals. The center also provides counsel to students in academic difficulty on the best and fastest ways to return to good academic standing.

Retention

The university's Fair Grading Policy and Grading System is available in the undergraduate academic catalog and can be accessed online on the university web page.

The following policies and procedures are excerpted from the current undergraduate academic catalog:

Academic freedom allows instructors (1) to determine course objectives, within the bounds of established curricula, and the means by which a student's mastery of those objectives will be evaluated, and (2) to evaluate the quality of work on individual exams or assignments. Students have the right to challenge evaluations of their work, and hence instructors are accountable with regard to providing and explaining all relevant grades and grading criteria. Grading challenges are of two kinds. Those that question the accuracy of grades are resolved by means described under Grade Appeals. Questions related to the policy or process of making assignments and determining the final grade are addressed by Standards for Fair Grading.

Grading System: Letter grades, with pluses and minuses noted, are used to assess the relative extent to which students achieve course objectives in the vast majority of Plymouth State University courses. These courses are the ones on which a student's grade point average is based.

Grade Point Average: A student's grade point average is calculated on both a semester basis and on a cumulative basis that takes into account all grades earned by a student at Plymouth State University. Grades earned at other colleges/universities whose credits were transferred to PSU are not taken into account except translocated courses as described in the Transferring Credits section. The following grade point system is used to determine the student's grade point average:

Grade	Points per Credit	Grade	Points per Credit
A	4.00	C	2.00
A-	3.67	C-	1.67
B+	3.33	D+	1.33
B	3.00	D	1.00
B-	2.67	D-	0.67
C+	2.33	F	0.00

The point equivalent of a grade is multiplied by the credits earned in that course. The sum total of all such points earned in a semester, divided by the number of credits attempted, yields the semester grade point average. To calculate a cumulative grade point average, the same procedure is used except that all graded credits and points earned at PSU are used. The PSU transcript keeps a running tally of the cumulative grade point average as well as of the semester grade point average.

Administrative Failure: AF stands for administrative failure. This notation is placed on a student's transcript when an instructor does not have enough information to assign a letter grade in a graded course. The administrative failure is usually a student's failure to drop a course they stopped attending. An AF counts as an F grade in the calculation of grade point averages. It is not a reason for a course withdrawal.

Incompletes: A grade of Incomplete (IC) should be awarded at the discretion of the course instructor in the instance that a minimal proportion of the total class work needs to be completed, such as an exam, paper, or project. The instructor, in consultation with the student, determines the conditions for the granting and completing of the Incomplete and files a Request for Incomplete Grade form with the registrar's office before the final grades are due.

Pass/No Pass Courses: Some courses are designated as Pass/No Pass (P/NP), such as the Social Work Practicum. Credits earned in P/NP courses do not affect the grade point average.

In addition to these university policies, the Social Work Department has the following policies and procedures for evaluating academic and professional performance:

Grade equivalencies: All faculty in the Social Work Department use the following grade equivalencies for course assignments; these are included on all syllabi:

GRADE EQUIVALENCIES		
Point Range	Grade	Quality Points
94-100	A	4.0
90-93	A-	3.67
87-89	B+	3.33
83-86	B	3.00
80-82	B-	2.67
77-79	C+	2.33
73-76	C	2.00
70- 72	C-	1.67
67- 69	D+	1.33
63- 66	D	1.00
60-62	D-	0.67
59 or below	F	0.00

Admission to Practicum: As stated earlier, to be admitted to the Practicum and the Seminar (SW 4550), students must be in good academic standing in the program. They must have

- 1) completed all of the course requirements of the major,
- 2) achieved an overall grade point average of 2.0 and a major grade point average of 2.5, and
- 3) earned a grade of C or better in the Social Work Foundation Courses (SW2200, SW3340, SW3350, SW3450, SW3510, SW3520, SW3530, SW4020). *

Permission to enter the field will be granted by the Program Director/ Department Chair or the Field Education Director.

(*Note: SW4550 must also be completed with a grade of C for graduation.)

Professional Competency and Ethical Behavior: In addition to academic requirements, students are required to demonstrate professional and ethical behavior. Student behavior that is contrary to the ethics of the profession will be reviewed by the program to determine the student's appropriateness for continuance in the major. Behaviors that would warrant such a review are based on the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Examples of unprofessional or unethical behavior include impropriety in personal conduct (such as dishonesty or criminal behavior); exploitive relationships (such as sexual relationships or other behaviors pursued for personal advantage), e.g., with practicum clients; and any form of illegal discrimination or discrimination contrary to Plymouth State University policy (see the NASW Code of Ethics).

Grievance Procedures

University policies: The university's policies and procedures for student grievances are available in the PSU undergraduate academic catalog and the Student Rights Handbook. The Grade Appeals Policy can be accessed online at <http://www.plymouth.edu/academics/files/2013/05/2013-14AcademicCatalog.pdf> . The **Student Rights Handbook** is available online at <http://www.plymouth.edu/office/student-life/psu-student-handbook/> including Grievance Filing Rights which are available online at <http://www.plymouth.edu/office/student-life/psu-student-handbook/handbook/rights-of->

[students/grievance-filing-rights/](#) . A student may file a grievance regarding the actions of an employee of the university or the actions of another student.

Social Work Department Policies: Students denied admission to the Social Work major or the Practicum may appeal the decision by sending a written request for reconsideration to the Department Chair within fourteen (14) calendar days following the decision. The student must specify the basis for the appeal. The Department Chair will discuss the appeal with Social Work faculty and the student within fourteen (14) calendar days of written notification of the appeal.

Relevant materials, including the initial application and faculty advising notes, if any, will be reviewed. The decision to admit the student to the field or retain the student in the major will also be made within fourteen (14) calendar days of written notification of the appeal.

Students have a right to appeal any Social Work Program academic restriction by writing to the Department Chair. The Chair, in consultation with the student's advisor and the faculty, will review all appeals. The program's decisions may be appealed to the Undergraduate Studies Office. Further appeal must be made in writing to the university's Academic Standards Committee.

Termination

The policies and procedures for termination of a student are outlined in the Student Rights Handbook. These policies and procedures also apply to termination from the Social Work program.

University Policy: "The University expects students to know and abide by the ordinances and regulations of the Town of Plymouth, University rules, policies and expectations, as well as laws that apply to all citizens. Any alleged violation of University policy may result in judicial follow-up" as outlined in the Policies and Expectations section of the handbook which are available online at <http://www.plymouth.edu/office/student-life/psu-student-handbook/files/2011/07/policies.pdf> . As noted in the Policies and Expectations section, "additional policies may be found on department/office web sites and in department/office publications."

Social Work Department Policy:

Academic Reasons: As described earlier, to remain in the major, students must meet the academic criteria set forth by the program including a 2.5 major GPA and a minimum grade of C in the foundation courses. The faculty make every effort to support the student's efforts to repeat foundation courses (with a grade lower than a C) by offering individual enrollments during Summer and Winterim. In the unusual likelihood that a student does not meet the requirements to enter the practicum, the Director of Field Education and the student's faculty advisor meet with the student to discuss their options with regard to staying in the major or switching to a new major.

Non-Academic Reasons: Issues related to student professional behavior and ethical concerns* that surface during the course of teaching, advising, and other faculty-student interactions are

brought to the department chair by the faculty to resolve informally. The Chair and the faculty involved in such discussions should document the meetings held with students regarding issues of professional and ethical behavior. This documentation must include the date of the meeting(s), the stated concern, the intervention, and the accompanying plan for monitoring agreed upon changes. (*Note: Refer to policy on pp. 18.)

In the event that there is no resolution or expected change in behavior, the Chair and the faculty involved move to the department's formal process for consideration of student's termination from the program. The steps in this process are as follows:

- 1) The Chair and faculty member bring the concern to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The concern should be clearly identified and related to the NASW Code of Ethics and/or the PSU Student Policies and Expectations in the Student Rights Handbook.
- 2) The student is informed of the need to meet with the VPAA and may prepare a written document in response to the concern raised by the faculty.
- 3) The VPAA in conjunction with the Department Chair will make a determination on the need to terminate the student from the program (typically within 2 weeks) and inform the student in writing.
- 4) The student may appeal the decision in writing to the VPAA and Department Chair within 2 weeks of the decision. Further appeal may be submitted to the Dean of the School of Health and Human Services and final appeal may be made to the office of the Provost for Academic Affairs.

EMPLOYMENT

Assistance with career services, including job searching, workshops and job fairs is available online from Career Services at <http://www.plymouth.edu/services/career-services/>

NASW has a Student Center page on its web page at <http://www.naswdc.org/students/default.asp> and a Career Center e-page available online at <http://careers.socialworkers.org/>

The *New Social Worker* has a Social Work Jobs & Career Center e-page available online at http://www.socialworker.com/feature-articles/career-jobs/Social_Work_Jobs_%26_Career_Development/

Licensing laws: New Hampshire's licensing laws for social work do not include licensing for baccalaureate level practitioners and masters level practitioners except with regard to clinical practice. However, two neighboring states, Maine and Massachusetts, do have licensing for social workers at the BSW level. In Maine and Massachusetts, a baccalaureate degree holder may take an exam to be considered a Licensed Certified Social Worker. With a BSSW degree, there is no work experience requirement to sit for the basic ASWB (Association of Social Work Boards) exam.

For information on Massachusetts go to: www.mass.gov

For information on Maine, go to: <http://maine.gov/pfr/professionallicensing/professions/social-workers>

For general information on licensing, see: www.aswb.org (Association of Social Work Boards)

STUDENT RIGHTS

Students in the Social Work program have the following **Rights**:

- 1) to learn in an academic environment free of discrimination based on economic status, gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, culture, sex, sexual orientation, political orientation, or physical or mental ability;
- 2) to advocate, individually and collectively, for their needs and concerns;
- 3) to learn in an academic environment without fear of improper disclosure of confidential information (such as academic records) or improper limitations of freedom of expression or due process of law;
- 4) to learn in an academic environment with supportive pedagogical practices such as policies regarding class cancellation and rescheduling, returning papers and exams, and posting and keeping office hours;
- 5) to use department meeting facilities in accord with University policies; and
- 6) to receive recognition for their contributions in faculty or staff research projects or other scholarly works.

The program encourages students to provide feedback to the faculty through the use of course evaluations, an annual focus group meeting with students, and by participating in the organizational structure of the department. Since the program is a small BSW-only program, the department does not have any committees in its structure, but it does have an Advisory Board. A student representative sits on the Advisory Board and attends meetings of the board. The board provides an opportunity for students in the major to contribute to the program's educational policies and curriculum content. In addition, a faculty member serves as an advisor to the Student Social Work Club to facilitate dialogue between the students and the faculty as concerns or ideas emerge regarding student affairs.

Social Work Club

The student Social Work Club was initially formed in 1990; it is a fully recognized and funded student organization with its own by-laws and elected student officers. Club functions include attendance at professional seminars, sponsoring guest speakers on campus, and a variety of community service activities. Through the regularly scheduled club meetings, students have a direct means of sharing their thoughts and concerns about the curriculum and program. A social work faculty member serves as an advisor to the club. This year the students expanded their structure and outreach by creating a page on the OrgSync website. It contains a listing of the officers and faculty advisor, club fundraising activities, service projects, photos, and financial account information.

The Social Work Club continues to be an active student organization as described on our department homepage (<https://www.plymouth.edu/department/social-work/“making-a-difference”/>). For the past twelve years, students in the Social Work Club have organized a dinner dance at the Plymouth Regional Senior Center; this intergenerational service-learning project has been coordinated through the SW3520 Theory and Practice Social Work Intervention III course. The experience introduces students to working with older adults and gives them an opportunity to consider pursuing a career in gerontological social work.

The Social Work Club has organized and funded a Habitat for Humanity trip during Spring Break for the past six years. For example, in 2008, the students travelled to Corpus Christi, Texas where they helped build a home for the Garcia family. A story about the project aired on the local television news station and included interviews with our students. This year the students travelled to Wilmington, DE.

The club also participates in several local community service projects on an annual or regular basis, including the Cancer Walk, the campus Candlelight Vigil, a holiday dinner for youth at the Pemi Youth Center, the Clothesline Project, and the Festival of Trees. All of these activities have helped to create a strong bond among students in the major and a sense of community.

APPENDIX A



Social Work Department

APPLICATION FOR CONTINUANCE IN THE SOCIAL WORK MAJOR

Please complete Parts I and II of this form.

PART I (Cover form)

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name

(Last, First, M.I.) _____

School Address: _____

Permanent Address: _____

Current Phone Number: _____ Student ID: _____

Email Address _____

2. EDUCATION

High School _____

Higher Education
(if any) _____

Credits Achieved _____

Other Specialized Training (Volunteer, Military, etc.): _____

3. EMPLOYMENT

What work experiences if any have you had that relate to Social Work? Be Specific.

4. VOLUNTEER OR COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES

What volunteer activities or community experiences, if any, have you had that relate to Social Work? Be specific.

A. Placement for SW2200 Intro to Social Work

B. Other volunteer experience (Either prior to enrollment at PSU, or during enrollment through the Student Social Work Club; please specify)

5. NASW Code of Ethics

I am aware that the professional practice of social work (BSW and MSW degreed practitioners) is guided by the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. I have reviewed the Code (which can be accessed via the web at: <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>) as part of my application for continuance in the social work major.

Signature

Date

6. Readiness for Social Work Practicum

I understand that the Social Work major includes a 450-hour practicum and practicum sites may require health or criminal clearances. Although sites may cover the expenses of this requirement, ultimately it is my responsibility to ensure that the necessary clearances are obtained. I understand that the department will not cover the related expenses.

Signature

Date

PART II (Written Statement)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Address the following questions in a personal statement that is typed, double-spaced and approximately two to three pages in length. Attach (or include) the statement to (or with) this application.

Your statement should be a serious reflection on your thoughts and feelings about being a Social Work major. It will be considered carefully by the Social Work faculty as part of the application and approval process for continuance in the major.

1. Why do you want to be a Social Work major? What personal (family and friends), academic, work, volunteer and/or community experiences influenced this decision?
2. What social problems in our society are of concern to you? Why do you think these problems exist and how can social work contribute to their alleviation?
3. What qualities, attributes, skills do you possess that could be used to solve problems?
4. What strengths do you feel you possess that will assist you in your career as a social worker? What areas of growth have you identified that you will need to address in your work as a social worker?
5. How would you describe your experiences with human diversity? What do you consider your strengths as well as areas in need of further growth in relation to working with people whose class, gender, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, developmental ability, or mental health status are different from your own?
6. Please identify any significant events you have experienced in your life that could influence your practice as a social worker, or that you feel you will need to address in your work as a social worker.

Evaluation of Statement

The following factors will be considered when your application is reviewed by the department:

1. intellectual qualities and academic skills;
2. commitment to the enhancement of quality of life for individuals and families;
3. concern for issues of social justice and sensitivity to cultural diversity; and
4. capacity for self-awareness and self-evaluation.

PART III (Interview)

Interviews will be scheduled after receipt of the application and personal statement. If materials submitted are insufficient for decision-making, additional information will be requested. The Department Chair will assign a faculty member to contact you for a brief interview. The purpose of the interview is to provide an opportunity for you to discuss becoming a part of the social work profession. Students will be questioned as to their reasons for choosing Social Work as a major, what they know about the profession, and what areas of practice or client populations they want to work in or with.

Upon completion of the interview, the faculty member will make a recommendation to the chair of the department. The chair reviews the recommendation and makes a final decision regarding student admission. Applicants receive written notice regarding the decision within 14 calendar