SOCIAL WORK

The social work major prepares bachelor-level generalist social work professionals with the knowledge, values, and skills necessary for competent and effective practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. The social work major provides students with a liberal arts perspective and the competencies to achieve social work’s mission to enhance human well-being. Classroom learning is applied in 445 hours of professionally supervised field internships. Upon graduation students competently serve diverse client populations especially those most vulnerable and oppressed. Program graduates are prepared for graduate education and employment in a wide variety of governmental and private agencies.

Enrollment in the social work program requires a separate admission process and is limited to approximately 50 new juniors per year. Students enter and complete the major in a cohort-based learning community. Most classes are small, with fewer than 20 students. Prior to beginning the social work major, pre-social work students complete foundation requirements in sociology, anthropology, psychology, American government and human biology, and an introductory social work course that provides an overview of the field. Major coursework is completed during the junior and senior years with 11 linked and sequential courses building on and extending prior learning. The major emphasizes social justice and human rights. Graduates learn skills for social action in addition to skills for empowering individuals, families and communities to achieve their goals. Social work majors obtain professional practice experience that is central to their learning. Class work is combined with 445 hours of supervised field experience preparing graduates to enter social work practice or continued education at the MSW level. Field agencies are matched to student interests and talents, permitting students to explore social work practice with a population of their choice. Throughout their field education, students are enrolled in three practice classes that provide the theoretical content and practice skills necessary for competent practice.

CAREER OPTIONS

Eastern’s BA in social work degree opens the door for social work employment in diverse roles such as counselors, case managers, advocates and organizers in diverse areas of practice.

- Schools
- Child welfare
- Family services
- Mental health
- Substance abuse
- Health care
- Gerontology
- Community agencies
- Domestic violence
- Criminal justice
- International non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Military and veterans

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Social work is a growing career. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, employment of social workers is expected to increase much faster than average through 2016. Strong areas of employment growth are projected in social work with older people, in health services, substance abuse treatment, and school social work. Social work is a satisfying career. It provides practitioners with diversity and autonomy in work settings, an action orientation, opportunity for creativity and intellectual stimulation. It also provides meaningful work and the experience of relieving human suffering while making a lasting difference for individuals, communities and society as a whole.

CAREER ALTERNATIVES

The degree, commonly known as a BSW, is licensable in many states and opens the door for social work employment in a wide variety of public and private work settings serving individuals, groups and communities. Recent Eastern graduates are employed in schools, child welfare and family service agencies, mental health programs, substance abuse treatment, hospitals, community agencies and domestic violence programs.

A BSW from Eastern is strong preparation for graduate education. More than 50 percent of Eastern social work graduates go directly into MSW programs and most pursue graduate education within five years of completing their BSW degree. Graduation from Eastern can open the door to advanced standing in many accredited graduate programs, shortening by up to one year the time needed to complete the MSW degree. Recent social work graduates have been admitted to Boston College, Columbia University, Fordham University, University of Illinois, New York University, Rhode Island College, Southern Connecticut State University, Springfield College, University of Connecticut, University of Denver, University of New England, University of Pennsylvania, University of South Carolina, Virginia Commonwealth University, Washington University, University of Wisconsin and Wheelock College.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Readiness for Graduate Study: 53 percent of graduating social work students complete master's degrees within six years post-graduation (National Student Clearinghouse).

Timely Graduation: 87 percent of entering junior social work majors graduated with a BA within two years of entering the major; 95 percent graduated within four years.

Competencies: Based upon multiple measures, which include internship assessment by social work field instructors, classroom faculty assessment of course assignments, and nationally normed tests, we expect that students will achieve competency in 80 percent of all measures in each competency:

Benchmark 2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly - ACHIEVED (100 percent)
Benchmark 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments - ACHIEVED (98 percent)
Benchmark 2.1.4 Engage diversity in practice - ACHIEVED (97 percent)
Benchmark 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice - ACHIEVED (98 percent)
Benchmark 2.1.10 Engage, assess, intervene and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities - ACHIEVED (98 percent)

Satisfaction: The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) survey of senior social work majors indicates that students in Eastern's Social Work major rank highest of all majors in reports of academic challenge, support, and enriching educational experiences. They also rank first in satisfaction with 95 percent indicating that their education was good or excellent and 98 percent stating that they would probably or definitely attend this institution again.