

Formal Admission to the Social Work Major

Process and Procedures

Introduction

Students are formally admitted into the social work major by the Department of Social Work. The student admission and academic/professional assessment process is required by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which is the national social work education accrediting body. In addition, the faculty believes this individualized formal admission and assessment process enhances the educational and professional development of each social work major.

CSWE accreditation standards are used by individual states to enforce legal requirements or licensing regulations for social work practitioners. It is recommended that students review Indiana's licensing regulations for social workers at (<http://www.in.gov/pla/>).

[Non Discrimination and Affirmative Action Policy](#)

[Student Privacy and Records Policy](#)

Timeframe

Formal admission to the social work major occurs following completion of SOCWK 200 and SOCWK 230 and prior to being granted permission to register for SOCWK 330. The formal admission application process and materials are reviewed in all SOCWK 230 classes. The timely completion of formal admission to the BSW program is in the student's best interest in order allow time for students to improve academic skills, acquire additional knowledge, and to raise grade point averages necessary for successful completion of the BSW degree. This is particularly true for students who have lower grade point averages. It is important not to delay the formal admission process once the 200 level social work courses are completed.

Criteria for Formal Admission

The following admissions criteria have been established by the Department of Social Work. To seek formal admission an applicant must have:

- Earned at Ball State University a minimum 2.3 grade point average on a 4.0 point scale in 100 and 200 level courses required by the major and taken prior to formal admission;
- Submitted a completed Social Work Application Packet to the Department at least five days prior to an assessment conference (interview); Application materials must demonstrate writing skills adequate for entry-level social work practice. There is no need to submit more than one packet for the admissions process;

- Submitted a completed Volunteer Field / Learning Contract and Evaluation Form for an approved Volunteer Field Experience. This minimum 25-hour Volunteer Field Experience is a course requirement for SOCWK 200. For students transferring in an equivalent of SOCWK 200 from another academic institution, a copy of an evaluation of their volunteer/internship experience, or its equivalent, must be submitted;
- Completed an assessment conference (interview) with the social work faculty member in SOCWK 200 and/or SOCWK 230. This faculty member then submits a reference on behalf of the student which becomes a part of the student's application materials;
- Signed an Admissions Contract verifying:
 - Familiarity with the *NASW Code of Ethics*
 - A willingness to adhere to the principles and tenets of *the Code of Ethics*.
 - A willingness to continue professional development through regular use of university and community resources;
 - Scheduling of advising sessions with your assigned Faculty Advisor to discuss academic and professional development;
 - Permission for social work faculty to discuss her/his progress in the social work program with the Chair and other relevant social work faculty members as needed;
 - Full disclosure of convictions or pending charges or serious offences.
- Focused upon a general career/educational goal consistent with professional undergraduate social work education;
- Demonstrated the absence of a criminal history of any of the following offences: felony, felony assault / assault, drug related offences, theft, domestic violence, child abuse, murder or manslaughter, felony DUI (bodily injury), and sexual assault, stalking or rape*;
- Completed an interview with the Chair of the Department of Social Work, Dr. Darlene Lynch, and received a positive recommendation for formal admission to the major.

*Students are welcome to seek clarification regarding the department's criminal history policy from social work advisors or the department chair.

Admission Interview with the Department Chair

In order to schedule an admissions interview with the Chair of the Department of Social Work, students must have completed a 200-level faculty reference interview. The 200 level faculty member writes a recommendation for admission or non-admission. Students not receiving a positive recommendation for admission may still proceed to complete the formal admissions process. During the second formal admissions interview application materials are reviewed and questions regarding social work education and practice are answered. Students are asked to elaborate on written responses on application materials. If materials submitted are not sufficient for decision-making regarding admission, additional information will be requested. **Please note** : Admission materials should be submitted at least five days *prior* to the scheduled interview. At the conclusion of the

interview, if the applicant meets the department's criteria for admission, she/he will be informed of acceptance into the program.

During the admission interview the Department Chair will also:

- Ask the applicant to sign an Admissions Contract with the department. A copy of the AdmissionsContract is included with this admissions packet.
- Develop an academic plan with the applicant designed to ensure a timely completion of all BSW degree requirements. These requirements are outlined on the DAPR which the applicant should review each academic term. **Please Note:** The Council on Social Work Education's standards state that required social work courses be completed in an accredited BSW program with the exception of Introduction to Social Work and Social Work Practice I (Interviewing Skills). Academic credit for life and previous work experience may not be substituted for any required or elective social work courses.
- Ask the applicant to specify which semester she/he intends to complete SOCWK 460 and SOCWK 462 (Field Practicum). Please Note: The field practicum (internship) is offered only during the spring and summer semesters each calendar year. The concurrent courses, SOCWK 460 and SOCWK 462, total 15 semester hours of course work and are completed during the final semester prior to completing the BSW degree requirements. All other course work and graduation requirements are to be completed before enrolling in SOCWK 460 and SOCWK 462.

Please Note: During practicum, the general policy is that no other courses may be taken, and a student may not be employed. Such policies are based on the fact that practicum is full-time (40 hours per week), with a concurrent seminar which requires research and papers. *Any exceptions or special circumstances must be discussed in advance with the Practicum Coordinator.* Since practicum experiences are unpaid, it is in the student's best interest to do advance financial and academic planning to avoid difficulties. Confirm the designation of academic advisor in consultation with the applicant and based upon faculty availability. Determine the latest semester the applicant will need to have successfully completed the writing competency requirement to gain permission to enroll in SOCWK 410.

Admissions Decisions

There are three possible decisions regarding formal admission to the BSW program:

- Full Admission to the BSW Program
- Conditional Admission to the BSW Program
- Denial of Formal Admission to the BSW Program

Full Admission

Students who are admitted to the program are informed at the end of the second admissions interview of their acceptance into the major and are sent a letter regarding formal acceptance to the BSW program.

Conditional Acceptance to the BSW Major

On occasion, an applicant may be accepted into the program conditionally. Conditional acceptance may be granted in cases where:

- The applicant has not completed or received a final grade or transferred in SOCWK 200 and SOCWK 230, but anticipates doing so prior to beginning SOCWK 330. In this situation, students are granted full admission once their academic record (DAPR) indicates they have successfully completed these courses and have earned the required cumulative grade point average of 2.3 in the major.
- The student's admission materials indicate that the student is not writing at a college level. Students admitted conditionally, based upon a concern regarding writing skill level, are required to seek regularly scheduled writing assistance in the Learning Center or in the Writing Center on campus during the first semester after they are admitted to the program. In such situations the Department Chair develops a plan with the applicant and monitors the student's implementation of the plan and progress in addressing the writing deficiency.

Students accepted conditionally are notified in writing of the necessary conditions that must be addressed prior to full acceptance being granted. In order to remedy problem areas or academic deficiencies students may be referred to any number of university or community services such as the University Learning Center, The Writing Center, the Counseling Center, the Scholarship and Financial Aid office or the Student Voluntary Services office. Additional recommendations may be made such as going to the Counseling Center.

Full acceptance is required if a student with conditional acceptance is to be permitted to continue in the BSW program beyond the initial semester after the admission interview. Students are notified by mail after the first semester if they have successfully met the required conditions and have attained full acceptance.

Denial of Formal Admission

In situations where there is concern regarding an applicant's suitability for the BSW program or for the social work profession, these concerns are discussed in the interview. If the student continues to want to pursue admission, her/his materials are then reviewed by the faculty BSW Student Standards Committee, which may request additional materials. The final decision is then made in a timely fashion by the Student Standards Committee, and the student is notified by mail of the Committee's decision.

Please Note: Students denied admission on the basis of felony or sexual/ violent criminal histories, who continue to want to pursue admission to the major, are reviewed by the BSW Standards Committee (all full time faculty), which makes the final decision regarding admission.

Appeals Regarding Denied Admission

Students denied admission by the BSW Student Standards Committee may appeal the decision within fourteen days by submitting a written appeal to the Department Chair. The written appeal must specify the reasons for the appeal. The Department Chair will convene the BSW Standards Committee to review all information obtained from the initial admission process, faculty advising conference notes, and other relevant data regarding the student's academic and professional performance. The BSW Standards Committee will schedule a meeting with the student within 20 working days. After meeting with the student the BSW Standards Committee will make a decision regarding the appeal and will notify the student in writing of the committee's decision. The BSW Standards Committee has the authority to admit or deny admission.

Permission to Enroll in SOCWK 330

Departmental permission to enroll in the required course SOCWK 330 will be granted only to social work majors who have been granted formal admission to the BSW program. During the semester that the formal admission process is being completed, social work majors can enroll in SOCWK 220, 300, 320 or 340. Faculty advisors are available to help with course planning.

Retention Standards after Full Formal Admission:

Admission to Senior Level Practice and Research Courses

Once formally admitted, students must:

- Earn and maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average in required social work courses in order to be granted permission to register for the senior level social work courses (SOCWK 400, SOCWK 410, and SOCWK 440);
- Successfully complete the University Writing Competency Examination or take Eng 393 to be granted permission to register for SOCWK 410;
- Successfully complete MATHS 125 or its equivalent in order to be granted permission to register for SOCWK 440.

Admission to Practicum

To receive permission to enroll in the social work practicum (SOCWK 460 and SOCWK 462) majors must have earned and maintained a minimum cumulative grade point

average of 2.5 in all required social work courses for the major. Grades of C or better must be earned in SOCWK 400, SOCWK 410, and SOCWK 440. The Department of Social Work does not accept a C minus as meeting the 400 level academic requirement.

Felony Convictions

Students who have been convicted of a felony or certain misdemeanors raise serious concerns regarding their appropriateness for the profession of social work since the protection of clients is of the utmost concern.

An increasing number of healthy, social service, family, children/youth and elderly serving agencies routinely complete criminal and driving record background checks when hiring new staff in order to provide greater client protection. These background checks, as well as drug screenings, verification of professional references and standard healthy assessments are also routinely required for student interns.

In keeping with current practice in most social service agencies today, the Department of Social Work routinely conducts a registry and directory check through the Indiana Sheriff's Office and the Indiana Sex and Violent Offender Directory on all students registered for SOCWK 200 Social Work Practice I. A major assignment in this course consists of a volunteer experience in a social service related agency. These same registry and directory checks are completed also at the time a transfer student is admitted to the university and declares social work as her/his major.

Students who have been convicted of or have pending charges related to the following offences are not generally eligible for formal admission to the major. Decisions are made on a case by case basis.

- Felony
- Felony assault / assault
- Drug related offences
- Theft
- Domestic violence offences
- Child abuse offences
- Murder / manslaughter offences
- Felony DUI (with bodily injury)
- Stalking, sexual assault / rape offences

Students with felonies or misdemeanors (this includes drug offences and drunk driving charges) may be admitted provided the convictions are not recent or pending and the student can document successful completion of probation or mandated requirements. Such students, if accepted, must sign a [waiver](#) saying that they understand that their criminal history may limit their professional options once they have completed the BSW degree, and that they authorize the Department of Social Work to discuss their criminal history with staff of potential field practicum sites. Failure to sign the waiver or to grant such authorization will result in non acceptance to the major and consideration for field

placement. Students who are concerned with prior or pending felony or misdemeanor charges should discuss their concerns with their faculty advisor, the transfer coordinator or the chair of the department.

Any information that would be revealed in a background or registry check must be disclosed by the student applying for formal admission to the major and during field placement planning. Failure to disclose criminal histories will result in a denial of formal admission to the major.

Students who plan to seek licensing as social work practitioners should contact professional. Federal and state regulatory agencies to determine current regulations regarding felony convictions. Examples of regulatory agencies are listed below:

National Association of Social Workers - National Office

750 First Street, NE, Suite 700

Washington, DC 20002-4241

1-800-638-8799

Web Page: <http://www.naswdc.org/>

National Association of Social Workers - Indiana Chapter

1100 W. 42nd Street, Suite 226

Indianapolis, IN 46208

(317) 923-9878

(317) 925-9364 FAX

Web Page: <http://www.naswin.org/>

To send e-mail message to Indiana Chapter:

naswin@naswin.org

Computer Fax: (317) 923-4451

Professional Licensing Agency

402 W. Washington Street, Room W041

Indianapolis, IN 46204

(317) 232-2960

Web Page:

<http://www.in.gov/pla/bandc/mhcb/>

*State agency regulating social work licensure in Indiana

American Association of State Social Work Boards

400 South Ridge Parkway, Suite B

Culpeper, VA 22701

Office (540) 829-6880

FAX (540) 829-0142

Web Page: <http://www.aswb.org/>

* National organization that creates and administers social work licensure exams across the country.