



“The integration of knowledge, values and skills in the context of field education is a critical and distinctive aspect of social work education; therefore, field education is considered the central component of social work education.”

Canadian Association for Social Work Education, 2012, Standards for Accreditation

Social Work

Our program prepares graduates for the general practice of social work by developing:

- Capacity to analyze personal, community, family and societal problems
- Practical skills such as interviewing, counselling, community development, social action and advocacy

Areas of focus include:

Struggles for Social Justice

Injustice is embedded in society, whether it be the dismissal of and violence against Indigenous people, disabled people, people labeled as ‘mad’, racialized people, women, people who are queer and people who are old. Social workers strive to understand, challenge and transform social injustice.

Critical Practice and Leadership

‘Critical’ social work practice and leadership recognizes the historical and social inequities which cause (or worsen) individual, family and community troubles. Critical approaches also recognize the contradictions and harms of social work and social policies.

Advocacy and Support

Social workers are actively involved in supporting individuals and communities to gain access to decision making, within their own lives and in public settings.

Political and Institutional Change

Social policies and social welfare institutions significantly impact the lives and life chances of individuals and communities. Social workers study and take action to improve and transform them.

Degree options

Social Work students start in a Social Sciences Level I program. Students apply for the Social Work program at the end of their first year. Social Work offers two limited enrolment programs, an Honours B.S.W. and a B.S.W. for students who already have a degree. Both programs can be taken full-time or part-time. Enrolment in this Academic Plan is limited and possession of the published minimum requirements **does not** guarantee admission. All applicants must complete the Supplementary Application by February 1 of Level 1, or the year of application for transfer students. Students applying from other universities must also apply through OUAC.

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| Honours Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.) | Completion of six units of introductory Social Work or introductory Sociology and six additional units of introductory level courses from the Social Sciences course list (or equivalent). Students who are interested in the Honours B.S.W. are strongly encouraged to take both SOCWORK 1AA3 and SOCWORK 1BB3. Students are also encouraged to take INDIGST 1A03 in Level I as this course will be required for completion of the B.S.W. Admission requires, as a minimum, completion of any Level I program with a grade point average of at least 6.0 (C+) and evidence of personal suitability which may be evaluated by one or a combination of written statements, tests or interviews. Bachelor Social Work (B.S.W. as a Second Degree) |
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| Bachelor Social Work (B.S.W. as a Second Degree) | Eligibility is dependent upon the completion of an undergraduate degree from a recognized university, including six units of introductory Social Work or Sociology and six additional units of Level I courses. Students who are interested in the B.S.W. (post degree) are strongly encouraged to take both SOCWORK 1AA3 and SOCWORK 1BB3 during their first degree. Students are also encouraged to take INDIGST 1A03 in their first degree, as completion of this course will be required for completion of the B.S.W. To be considered for admission, students must normally have a minimum average of 6.0 (C+) on the most recent 30 units of university-level courses completed and evidence of personal suitability which may be evaluated by one or a combination of written statements, tests or interviews. |
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Level I courses

Social Work 1AA3

So You Think You Can Help? Introduction to Social Work I

A critical exploration of ideas and values influencing “helping” in social work. Focus on how helping is experienced by people intended to benefit from it.

Social Work 1BB3

Re-Imagining Help: Introduction to Social Work II

A critical exploration of alternative understandings and practices of “helping” in social work rooted in inclusive engagement with service users/communities and respect for their knowledge.

Indigenous Studies 1A03

Introduction to Indigenous Studies

An introduction to Indigenous peoples’ worldviews from precontact to the Indian Act of 1876. Examine Indigenous history and philosophy examined along with the issues of representation and colonialism.

Beyond first year

Required courses:

- Theory, Process and Communication Skills for Social Work
- Social Work with Groups
- Social Work with Individuals
- Social Work with Communities
- Social Movements and Advocacy

Also choose from a variety of courses, such as:

- Critical Perspectives on Race, Racialization, Racism and Colonialism in Canadian Society
- Social Work & Indigenous Peoples
- Child Welfare
- Critical Issues in Mental Health and Addiction: Mad and Critical Disability Studies Perspectives for Social Work
- Social Work, Disability and Dis/Ableism
- Poverty and Homelessness

Field Experience

Students have two field placements during their degree. Working in a community organization, students:

- Gain real-life experience working with service users and community groups
- Apply skills and knowledge acquired in academic courses
- Understand how social service organizations and networks work
- Collaborate with other professionals and learn social work values and ethics
- Learn from and are supervised by a practicing social worker

Skills development

- The capacity to gather, analyse and interpret information from a range of sources
- Effective communication skills including composition and organization of ideas
- Writing and presentation skills
- Knowledge of current practice approaches
- Skills for working effectively with individuals, families, groups and communities
- Experience hands-on learning in the field

Potential careers

Our B.S.W. programs prepare students to make vital contributions to the community, working in many different settings, including:

- Health care
- Children’s services, including Children’s Aid societies
- Services for immigrants and refugees
- Anti-poverty organizations
- Schools
- Organizations for people with disabilities
- Indigenous communities
- Women’s services, including shelters

Jennie has many years of experience in building community networks and creating accessible consultation, community planning, and advocacy processes. She also develops new, innovative Field Education opportunities particularly in the areas of community development, community-based research, social justice and grassroots advocacy.

Jennie’s interests revolve around housing and homelessness, especially the complex intersection of personal and structural risk, and food security, especially how communities participate in responding to poverty-related hunger. – Jennie Vengris

MEET A FACULTY MEMBER



MEET A FELLOW STUDENT



“I loved the social work program at McMaster because it has taught me so much about the world, the community and myself. The classrooms are the perfect place to challenge existing ideas, situations and institutions as well as learn from your remarkable peers and professors.”

Chriselle Vaz, Honours Social Work Alumna, Masters Social Work (2020)