

# MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

ADMISSIONS BULLETIN 2016-2017



*The*  
**UNIVERSITY**  
*of*  
**VERMONT**

Making  Difference



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*UPDATED SUMMER 2016*

# DEPARTMENT INTRODUCTION, HISTORY, AND MISSION STATEMENT

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## DEPARTMENT INTRODUCTION

The Department of Social Work at the University of Vermont (UVM) offers two nationally accredited social work degrees, a Bachelor of Science with a Major in Social Work (BSW) and a Master of Social Work (MSW). These programs reflect the history and character of the University, state, and region. The rural character, sparse population, climate, and progressive traditions combine to give life in Vermont its particular character. These qualities also help shape the kind of social work practice that can best serve the population and address the needs of the region.

Social work education at UVM is intended to prepare students for the multiple role demands and organizationally based settings characteristic of social work in Vermont, northern New England, and beyond. While the program prepares students for social work practice that is locally informed, it also is mindful of national and global trends and influences. These include issues of human rights, social justice, human diversity and the globalization of economic, cultural, and political spheres of life. Therefore, emphases are placed on preparing social work students to become reflective, conscientious, lifelong learners and professionals whose practice will reflect the most humane and empowering knowledge, skills, and values of social work.

The Department offers three options for completing the MSW degree:

- Full time
- Part time
- Advanced Standing

## DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM HISTORY

Social work education at UVM has a nearly 40 year history. It began with the establishment of the BSW Program in 1974. In 1989, when the University began the MSW Program, the Department of Social Work was formed as an academic unit in the College of Education and Social Services (CESS).

The first ten years of the Department's life entailed maintaining and enhancing the quality of the BSW Program while developing the MSW Program and its particular niche in social work education. One aspect of this has been to maintain accreditation for the BSW Program and to gain initial accreditation for the MSW Program in 1993 and reaffirmed accreditation in 1998, 2003 and 2011 from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

The MSW program has continuously evolved and the faculty has refined its curricula in light of contemporary intellectual and social developments. It has established a niche as a postmodern/constructionist social work program that enables students to individualize their learning in the context of a transformative social work agenda.

The faculty, students and field instructors (nearly half of whom are alumni) pride themselves on being at the cutting edge in innovating and applying practices that are largely congruent with postmodern/constructionist principles. The MSW faculty pursues active scholarly agendas that inform and are informed by their teaching and other social work practice experiences.

## DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

The Department of Social Work at the University of Vermont, through its teaching, scholarship and public service, prepares students for entry level and advanced professional social work practice, helps meet the human service needs of the State of Vermont, in particular, the needs of vulnerable populations; advances social work knowledge; and contributes to a more just world order.

In carrying out these activities, we affirm our commitment to human rights and social justice. Our educational programs will reflect this commitment by emphasizing the historical, social, and political contexts of social work knowledge and practices, the individual and collective strengths of people served by social workers, the values, and ethical standards of the social work profession, and our active opposition to all forms of oppression.

We will prepare our graduates with the knowledge, skills, and values to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities in ways that respect, enhance, and support human dignity, is oriented toward strengths-based and relational understandings and practices, and guided by principles of human rights and social justice.

## UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY INFORMATION

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### VERMONT AND THE BURLINGTON AREA

The University of Vermont campus is located in Burlington, Vermont. As the state's largest city (with a population of about 40,000), Burlington is the hub of Chittenden County, home to more than 152,000. An area of picturesque suburbs, farms, and woodlands, the county has spectacular views of Lake Champlain and New York's Adirondack Mountains to the west, and Vermont's Green Mountains to the east. Since Burlington is about 225 miles northwest of Boston, 300 miles north of New York City, and 100 miles south of Montreal, it offers easy access to these large metropolitan centers. Major airlines and buses serve the city.

The state is well known for its varied recreational and outdoor activities. Ski areas are within an hour's drive of Burlington, and the Green Mountains are ideal for hiking. Lake Champlain offers plenty of opportunities for fishing, swimming, and boating, and outdoor enthusiasts value the Champlain Valley countryside.

The city and state have a history of progressive cultural and sociopolitical activism that fosters broad-based participation in the arts and volunteerism, and support for innovative social services and political participation. The social climate and the beauty of the natural environment attract students, scholars, and social activists, as well as tourists, outdoor enthusiasts, and environmentalists from around the world. For more information about Vermont and the city of Burlington, visit:

<http://www.ci.burlington.vt.us/>

or

<http://www.vermont.org/>

### THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

The University of Vermont (UVM) was founded in 1791 by Ira Allen, and was the fifth New England college to be chartered. UVM was also the second college established by a state to grant the bachelor's degree, and the first college or university in the country to declare a commitment to religious freedom in its charter. UVM was also one of the first universities in the country to admit women to full membership in the scholarly society Phi Beta Kappa.

Since UVM has a combined heritage of a private university and a land-grant institution, it embraces a broad range of instructional and research programs. It also focuses a significant portion of its resources on meeting the practical needs of the citizens of the state. The University is a dynamic and significant part of life in the immediate community and in the state itself. Besides contributing to the educational and cultural milieu, UVM promotes mutually beneficial programs with the high technology, manufacturing, tourist, and dairy industries that are predominant in Vermont's economy. The University offers a rich, stimulating environment for research, scholarship, and creative work in many areas of inquiry, and it shares the excitement and fruits of innovation with students and society. An excellent library, laboratory facilities, and a university-wide computer system promote a unique opportunity to pursue challenging, high quality graduate programs.

UVM has the range and diversity of a comprehensive university, yet it retains a

“personal touch” through the teaching environment of a college. It is larger than most schools in New England, but the number of students it serves is relatively small, approximately 9,970 undergraduates and 1,317 graduate students.

The University includes seven undergraduate colleges and schools, the College of Medicine, the Graduate College, and a Division of Continuing Education that operates programs statewide. As a result, undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education students have a multitude of challenging academic opportunities. A student can choose from 100 undergraduate majors, four pre-professional programs, 40 masters and 20 doctoral degree programs, and an M.D. program.

UVM has a long tradition of distinguished faculty. Ninety-one percent of the faculty has earned a Ph.D. or the highest degree in their fields. The faculty attracts research grants worth five times as much as those awarded to most other universities of comparable size.

### **GRADUATE COLLEGE**

The MSW degree, like all graduate degrees at UVM with the exception of the MD degree, is awarded by the Graduate College. (The MD is awarded by the College of Medicine.) Therefore, many of the academic requirements, policies, and procedures governing the MSW Program are based in the Graduate College.

The Graduate College offers 40 academic programs leading to the masters’ degree and 20 programs leading to the doctorate. The college currently enrolls more than 1,317 graduate students and more than 454 of these pursuing the doctorate. Since the establishment of the MSW Program in 1989, students in social work have often comprised the largest number of master’s level students in any one discipline at UVM.

### **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

The Department of Social Work is located in the College of Education and Social Services (CESS). In addition to the social work, the CESS is home to two other departments: (a) the *Department of Leadership and Developmental*

*Sciences* (graduate programs in Counseling, with tracks in School and/or Mental Health; Early Childhood Special Education; Educational Leadership, M.Ed.; Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Ed.D. & Ph.D.; Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration, and Interdisciplinary Studies; and three undergraduate programs); and (b) the *Department of Education* (with graduate programs in Curriculum Instruction, M.A.T. and M.E.D.; Early Childhood Special Education; Reading and Language Arts; and Special Education, M.Ed. and nine undergraduate programs).

### **SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE COMMUNITIES**

The Department of Social Work has multiple enriching ties to the local, national, and international social work practice communities. Local ties include relationships with field education instructors, alumni, and colleagues with whom faculty members collaborate as practitioners and scholars in Burlington and across the state. National ties include relationships with social work colleagues in professional associations, in research projects, on editorial review boards, on inter-professional commissions, and in other professional practice and scholarship enterprises. International ties include scholarly, practice, and academic relationships with social workers in international associations, regional and national organizations, global and regional social movements, and academic institutions located in other countries.

Faculty members provide field instructor seminars and in-service training; co-sponsor conferences; serve on boards and councils; participate in NASW (the National Association of Social Workers) and CSWE; and design, evaluate, and provide services and technical assistance in collaboration with various communities. Relationships with national and international social work and inter-professional practice communities, indigenous and refugee communities, and grass roots activist communities influence the department’s commitments to protecting and promoting multi-cultural, socially just policies and professional practices. Likewise, these commitments and ties to various communities inform the content and

methods of the Department's teaching, research, writing, and service.

## COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK

The Department of Social Work is a member of the Council on Social Work Education, a nonprofit national association representing more than 2,500 individual members, as well as graduate and undergraduate programs of professional social work education. This partnership of educational and professional institutions, social welfare agencies, and private citizens is recognized by the [Council for Higher Education Accreditation](#) as the sole accrediting agency for social work education in the United States.

Reflective of the global context influencing social work, the Department is affiliated with The International Association of Schools of Social Work. Likewise, individual faculty members are affiliated with both the IASSW and the International Federation of Social Work and assign reading in classes that is produced by them. For more information about these worldwide professional organizations go to: <http://www.iassw-aiets.org/> and to: <http://ifsw.org/>

# MSW PROGRAM INFORMATION

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## MSW PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Underlying the mission and the goals of social work programs in the department is a set of core, interrelated beliefs that provide an orientation to the way in which social work is understood and practiced. We label these beliefs as the strengths perspective, critical social construction, social justice, and human rights.

**A strengths perspective** affirms the basic dignity, resourcefulness, resilience, and adaptability of people and their capacity for transformational growth and change. It orients services toward people's capabilities, triumphs, and resources, and encourages the development

of social policies and research that identify, nurture, and support these qualities. Strengths-oriented social work honors difference and diversity. Social workers practicing from a strengths perspective respect the unique life worlds of the people they serve and recognize the creative and supportive potential of heterogeneous communities. Thus, they support the multiple ways in which people choose or feel compelled to live their lives and work against social processes that marginalize.

The value-explicit position of the strengths perspective and its emphases on social processes and language place it within the broader conceptual framework of critical social construction.

**Critical social construction** provides a conceptual framework for understanding, and analyzing knowledge claims, and for generating new perspectives. From a constructionist standpoint, knowledge is created through historically, culturally, and politically situated processes of social interchange rather than being the product of individual minds or a reflection of the external world. By viewing people and their environments, as well as knowledge of people and their environments, as historically and socially embedded, critical social construction both supports and extends social work's traditional person-in-environment perspective.

Within social construction's social relational view of knowledge, language is the primary currency, not merely mirroring the world but constituting it. This orientation highlights the linguistic and regulatory influences of the cultural, institutional, structural, and interpersonal contexts within which language is shaped and expressed. By unfettering knowledge from a foundational view of truth, social construction invites and legitimates multiple analytic frameworks and forms of knowledge, and value-explicit inquiry and practice. Since no one perspective is considered to have privileged access to truth, social construction supports intellectual diversity and tends to oppose the elimination or suppression of forms or models of understanding. As a socio-historical product, knowledge is intimately connected to power. This connection encourages social workers to engage in "oppositional discourses of criticism and

resistance” (Lather, 1991, p. xvii). These qualities of critical social construction connect it with the program’s third emphasis on human rights and social justice.

**Human rights and social justice** provide the moral grounding for social work practice and research. These concepts reflect our belief that all people should fully participate in the “culture’s construction of the good and the real” (Gergen, 1994, p. 180). They direct social work resources and activities toward people who are oppressed and marginalized. Since respect for basic human rights (freedom and well-being) provide the necessary conditions for a just society, they are both the starting points and ultimate criteria by which we judge the value of social work practice and research. Social workers contribute to a just society by helping to create the structural arrangements and social processes in which these fundamental rights are honored, and resources are obtained and distributed in an equitable manner.

The above philosophy defines the conceptual parameters and commitments of the program. It articulates the assumptions that underlie the curriculum of the UVM MSW Program’s unique concentration in Transformative Social Work, and outlines our vision of professional social work. This framework is further refined through the mission statement and program goals

## MSW PROGRAM CURRICULUM

### FOUNDATION YEAR CURRICULUM

The professional foundation curriculum is designed to assist students to explore and develop generalist social work knowledge, values, and skills for professional practice with individuals, families, small groups, organizations, and communities. Students take 30 credits of professional foundation course work, including one elective. The curriculum is comprised of coursework in five areas:

- Human Behavior in the Social Environment (HBSE)
- Social Welfare Policy
- Social Work Practice
- Field Practica
- Research

### ADDITIONAL CONTENT

In addition to the courses provided in the above content areas, seven other professionally required content areas are infused throughout these courses. These include: identification as a professional social worker, values and ethics, critical thinking, diversity and difference, human rights, social and economic justice and contextual thinking. Moreover, each MSW program articulates its own theoretical orientation. At UVM students are introduced to a postmodern-constructionist theoretical orientation in the foundation curriculum and deepen thinking and its application in the concentration year.

### CONCENTRATION YEAR CURRICULUM

The *Transformative Social Work* area of concentration is a *theoretically rich, globally and locally responsive* curriculum that prepares students for contemporary practice. Within this 30-credit concentration, students generate a self-designed area of focus, which they pursue throughout this last half of the program.

*The primary focus of the concentration is the promotion of transformative change in relationships of all types, from the most intimate to the most public. Infused throughout the curriculum is a critical stance toward unjust dominant relations of power and the taken-for-granted practices reproducing these.* Transformative social work emphasizes the challenges and possibilities of change that is sustainable and life-giving.

The social work approaches to transformative change emphasized in the curriculum are *relational* in that they require the coordinated action of many people working in a context of mutuality and respect. They are *profound* in that they go beyond the surface of incremental change to question and dislodge the uncritical acceptance of taken for granted discourses and practices. They are *generative* in that they are meant to envision and support new and better futures at all levels of the community.

Concentration courses are connected both by their juxtaposition to one another and the centrality of transformative social work to their



particular topical focus. Therefore, students must complete all of their foundation year requirements before taking any concentration courses, including summer focus courses. The concentration curriculum is comprised of the following required and focus courses:

- Transformative Social Work I
- Transformative Social Work II
- Integrative Applications of Transformative Social Work
- Advanced Social Work Research, and
- Concentration field practica
- Four focus courses

Students select the four social work “focus” courses from about ten options that are typically offered each year. In these courses they consider transformative social work from the context of a specialized practice topic and the intersection of this topic with their individualized learning foci. The individualized aspects of the curriculum are developed as part of students’ individual planning with their advisors.

#### ADVANCED STANDING OPTION

The Department of Social Work offers an Advanced Standing MSW option to accepted students who have completed a BSW degree from an accredited BSW program within 7 years of application to the MSW program. This option requires **39 credit hours of study over a summer and an academic year.**

During the summer semester, advanced standing students are required to take two elective focus courses and SWSS 380, Perspectives on Social Work, which is designed to provide an orientation to the philosophical underpinnings of the MSW Program curriculum. Summer courses begin as early as the first week after graduation in mid May. In the following fall semester, advanced standing students join the Concentration year class in the MSW Program.

Advanced standing eligible students may apply for part time status and can undertake their Concentration year on a part time basis after completing the course, Perspectives on Social Work, during the first summer semester.

## FIELD EDUCATION

Social Work Field Education is a vital and rich component of the MSW curriculum. Students register for the Field Practicum courses during both their Foundation and Concentration year and spend 450 hours per year “in the field.” Advanced Standing students do one field placement starting in the fall and going through the spring for a total of 600 hours. Students are placed in a variety of agencies and organizations with qualified Field Instructors, who serve as their supervisors, consultants, and teachers. This hands-on training and education is an integral part of the MSW curriculum, contributing greatly to the students’ overall professional skill development and competence. Below is a sample list of practice areas, and some of the agencies within which UVM students have completed their field experiences in the past.

All student placements are located within an hour’s drive of the UVM campus unless otherwise requested by the student. Students are required to provide their own transportation and to cover the cost of that transportation to and from their field sites.

Please be aware that many field placement agencies require a Criminal Records Check for students placed at these sites. The individual agencies are responsible for conducting these checks and will discuss the process with assigned interns. For students who have a record of felony conviction, placement options will be limited. Many employers and state social work licensing boards also have policies regarding criminal histories that may limit employment and licensure options. *The Field Coordinator will make reasonable efforts to place students who have criminal records but the Department of Social Work cannot guarantee acceptance by the field agency or organization.*

#### Domestic and sexual violence work

- Women Helping Battered Women
- WomenSafe
- RU12? Community Center

**Medical social work**

- Fletcher Allen Health Care
- Community Health Center of Burlington
- Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center
- Vermont Department of Health

**Social work with the aging population**

- Champlain Valley Agency on Aging
- The Converse Home
- Cathedral Square
- Birchwood Terrace Healthcare
- The Arbors

**Substance abuse work**

- Centerpoint Day Treatment Program
- Turning Point Center
- Drug Treatment Court

**Adult mental health**

- Westview House
- Washington County Mental Health Services
- Northwestern Counseling & Support Services
- Safe Harbor Clinic

**Children, youth, and family services**

- The Lund Family Center
- King Street Center
- Addison County Parent Child Center
- Visiting Nurse Association
- HowardCenter
- Sara Holbrook Community Center

**School social work**

- HowardCenter – Edmunds Middle School
- BFA St. Albans Middle and High School
- Hunt Middle School

**Corrections, restorative justice, and other anti-violence work**

- Essex & Burlington Community Justice Centers
- Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services
- Vermont Network Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

**Legislative advocacy, policy, and administration**

- Vermont NASW
- VT. Department of Aging and Independent Living

**Issues of hunger, poverty, and homelessness**

- Community College of Vermont Post Secondary Education Program
- Champlain Housing Trust
- John Graham Shelter
- Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS)
- Spectrum Youth and Family Services

**Social work with adults who have a developmental disability**

- HowardCenter - Developmental Services
- Community Associates (Counseling Service of Addison County)

# COURSES OF STUDY

## TABLES OF OPTIONS

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**Table 1**

### FULL-TIME, TWO-YEAR COURSE OF STUDY (60 CREDITS)

**Semester 1 (Fall)**

SWSS 212 (Practice I)	3 credits
SWSS 216 (HBSE I)	3 credits
SWSS 220 (Policy I)	3 credits
Foundation Elective*	3 credits
SWSS 290 (Field I) **	<u>3 credits</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>15 credits</b>

**Semester 2 (Spring)**

SWSS 213 (Practice II)	3 credits
SWSS 217 (HBSE II)	3 credits
SWSS 221 (Policy II)	3 credits
SWSS 227 (Research I)	3 credits
SWSS 290 (Field I)**	<u>3 credits</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>15 credits</b>

**Semester 3 (Fall)**

SWSS 314 Transform. SWK I	3 credits
SWSS 327 (Adv. Research)	3 credits
SWSS 390(Field II)**	3 credits
Focus Course	3 credits
Focus Course	<u>3 credits</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>15 credits</b>

**Semester 4 (Spring)**

SWSS 315 Transform. SWK II	3 credits
SWSS 316 Integrative Appl TSW	3 credits
SWSS 390 (Field II)**	3 credits
Focus Course	3 credits
Focus Course	<u>3 credits</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>15 credits</b>

**Summary**

Semester 1 =	15 credits
Semester 2 =	15 credits
Semester 3 =	15 credits
Semester 4 =	<u>15 credits</u>
4 Semesters =	60 credits

\* Specific courses may be required for assistantship recipients

\*\* Minimum of 15 hours each week for a total of 225 hours per semester

**Table 2**

**FULL-TIME, ADVANCED STANDING,  
ONE SUMMER & TWO SEMESTERS  
(39 CREDITS)**

**Summer**

SWSS 280 (Perspectives)	4 credits
Focus Course	3 credits
Elective/Focus Course	<u>3 credits</u>
Total:	10 credits

**Semester 1 (Fall)**

SWSS 314 Transform. SWK I	3 credits
SWSS 327 (Adv. Research)	3 credits
SWSS 390(Field II)*	4 credits
Focus Course	<u>3 credits</u>
Total:	13 credits

**Semester 2 (Spring)**

SWSS 315 Transform. SWK II	3 credits
SWSS 316 Integrative Appl TSW	3 credits
SWSS 390 (Field II)*	4 credits
Focus Course	3 credits
Focus Course	<u>3 credits</u>
Total:	16 credits

**Summary**

Semester 1 =	10 credits
Semester 2 =	13 credits
Semester 3 =	<u>16 credits</u>
3 Semesters =	39 credits

\* Minimum of 20 hours each week for a total of 300 hours per semester

**Table 3**

**PART-TIME, FOUR-YEAR COURSE OF STUDY  
(60 CREDITS)**

**Semester 1 (Fall)**

SWSS 216 (HBSE I)	3 credits
SWSS 220 (Policy I)	3 credits
Foundation Elective	<u>3 credits</u>
Total:	9 credits

**Semester 2 (Spring)**

SWSS 217 (HBSE II)	3 credits
SWSS 221 (Policy II)	3 credits
SWSS 227 (Research I)	<u>3 credits</u>
Total:	9 credits

**Semester 3 (Fall)**

SWSS 212 (Practice I)	3 credits
SWSS 290 (Field I)*	<u>3 credits</u>
Total:	6 credits

**Semester 4 (Spring)**

SWSS 213 (Practice II)	3 credits
SWSS 290 (Field I)*	<u>3 credits</u>
Total:	6 credits

**Semester 5 (Fall)**

SWSS 314 Transform. SWK I	3 credits
SWSS 390 (Field II)*	3 credits
Focus Course	<u>3 credits</u>
Total:	9 credits

**Semester 6 (Spring)**

SWSS 315 Transform. SWK II	3 credits
SWSS 390 (Field II)*	3 credits
Focus Course	<u>3 credits</u>
Total:	9 credits

**Semester 7 (Fall)**

SWSS 327 (Adv. Research)	3 credits
Focus Course	<u>3 credits</u>
Total:	6 credits

**Semester 8 (Spring)**

SWSS 316 (Integrative Appl TSW)	3 credits
Focus Course	<u>3 credits</u>
Total:	6 credits

**Summary**

Semester 1 =	9 credits
Semester 2 =	9 credits
Semester 3 =	6 credits
Semester 4 =	6 credits
Semester 5 =	9 credits
Semester 6 =	9 credits
Semester 7 =	6 credits
Semester 8 =	<u>6 credits</u>
8 Semesters =	60 credits

\* Minimum of 15 hours each week for a total of 225 hours per semester

# SOCIAL WORK GRADUATE COURSE OFFERINGS

## FOUNDATION CURRICULUM COURSES

### **SWSS 200 Contemporary Issues\***

1-6 credits

Content and structure may accommodate special issues not especially appropriate within the boundaries of an existing course. Prerequisite: Permission.

### **SWSS 212: Social Work Practice I**

3 credits

A comprehensive introduction to concepts and skills employed by social workers in interactions and interventions with individuals, families, and groups is provided.

Prerequisite: MSW standing or permission.

### **SWSS 213: Social Work Practice II**

3 credits

Knowledge and skills of social work practice with organizations and communities is emphasized.

Prerequisite: Completion of 212, MSW advanced standing or permission.

### **SWSS 216: Theoretical Foundations of Human Behavior and the Social Environment I (HBSE 1)**

3 credits

This course introduces students to the biological, psychological, cultural/social, and economic forces that influence human behavior and their implication for social work practice.

Prerequisite: MSW standing or permission.

### **SWSS 217: Theoretical Foundations of Human Behavior and the Social Environment II (HBSE II)**

3 credits

Focus is on theories regarding the nature and functioning of human service organizations and communities in relation to meeting human needs. Prerequisite: 216 or permission.

### **SWSS 220: Social Welfare Policies and Services I**

3 credits

An introduction to history and philosophy of social work and social welfare and the structure of service programs is provided.

Prerequisite: MSW standing or permission.

### **SWSS 221: Social Welfare Policies and Services II**

3 credits

Focus is on the analysis of the economic, political, and social forces that influence the development and implementation of social welfare policy.

Prerequisite: 220 or permission.

### **SWSS 224: Child Abuse and Neglect**

3 credits

An MSW foundation elective that considers child abuse and neglect from historical, cultural, sociopolitical and psychological perspectives and examines professional social work responses to them. Prerequisite: Matriculation in the foundation year of graduate study in social work or instructor permission.

### **SWSS 225: Transforming Ourselves and Our Communities: Social work perspectives**

3 credits

An MSW foundation elective that examines systems of oppression and social work strategies to decrease biased practices and create more equitable communities and institutions.

Prerequisite: Matriculation in the foundation year of graduate study in social work or instructor permission.

### **SWSS 226: Assessment Theories in Social Work**

3 credits

An MSW foundation elective analyzing competing and complementary assessment theories and their implications in social work in health/mental health and with children and families.

Prerequisite: MSW standing or permission

**SWSS 227: Foundations of Social Work Research**

3 credits

An introduction to qualitative and quantitative methods of applied social research including program evaluation and the evaluation of practice and application to social work is taught.

Prerequisite: MSW standing or permission.

**SWSS 228: Aging: A Strength & Human Rights Perspective**

3 credits

An examination of aging for social work policy and practice from the perspectives of strengths, social justice, human rights and critical social constructionism.

**SWSS 229: Social Work & Disability Rights**

3 credits

A multi-cultural, age, gender, economic and international exploration of having a disability in terms of language, labeling, rights, social location, legislation, services and personal narratives.

**SWSS 280 - Perspectives on Social Work**

4 credits

Taking a social constructionist stance, students explore guiding concepts of the MSW curriculum and their application to social work practice, policy, human behavior and research.

Prerequisite: Advanced MSW standing.

**SWSS 290: Foundation Year Field Practicum I**

3-4 credits

Supervised field-based learning of 15-20 hours per week. Students are placed in human service agencies and organizations and learn the purposeful application of generalist social work theory, ethics, and skills. Prerequisite: Permission of Coordinator of Field Education.

*\*Elective course offerings are determined each year at the discretion of the MSW Program Committee. A selected group of elective courses are offered each academic year and may not include all courses listed in this bulletin.*

**CONCENTRATION CURRICULUM COURSES**

**REQUIRED COURSES**

**SWSS 314: Transformative Social Work I**

3 credits

Advanced practice in transformative social work will focus on developing relational, profound, and generative meanings for change across populations, fields of practice and social issues.

Prerequisites: Completion of Foundation Year

**SWSS 315: Transformative Social Work II**

3 credits

Advanced practice in Transformative Social Work II will focus on practical applications across populations at risk, field of practice and social issues.

Prerequisites: Completion of Foundation Year

**SWSS 316: Integrative Approaches to Transformative Social Work**

3 credits

In this course students will synthesize their exploration of their area of focus in transformative social work through scholarly reading, research and classroom presentations.

Prerequisites: Completion of Foundation Year

**SWSS 327: Advanced Social Work Research**

3 credits

An analysis of social work research from methodological and theoretical perspectives is emphasized. The application of research to the student's concentration area is required.

Prerequisites: Completion of 227, a basic statistics course, and MSW advanced standing or permission

**SWSS 390: Concentration Year Field Practicum I & II**

6 credits

Supervised field-based learning of 15-20 hours per week. Students are placed in agencies to apply advanced social work practice related to their concentration. Prerequisite: Permission of Coordinator of Field Education.

## CONCENTRATION FOCUS COURSES

Focus courses provide opportunities for in-depth consideration of selected social work issues and populations at risk, expanding upon advanced research, policy and practice approaches. Further, they provide a context to explore intensive, critical analysis of related social work literature, and advanced level social work knowledge, ethics, and skills. Prerequisite: Completion of foundation year in the MSW program, advanced standing status, or permission of the instructor.

**Course offerings for elective or focus course requirements rotate each academic year. The following are examples of courses, which have been offered in prior academic years and may be offered during a current academic year. We expect to offer six or more focus courses during the academic year. Focus courses may also be offered during the summer.**

### **SWSS 296: Social Work in a Global Context – Finland.** 3 credits

Social work has become an international profession. This course, located at the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi, Finland, offers a unique opportunity to study social work with others from various parts of the world. We learn about social work in different countries, discuss similarities and differences regarding social issues and practices, participate in cultural events, and experience the magic of the midnight sun. Part of this course involves travel to social service agencies in northern Finland and a two-day stay near Utsjoki, the northernmost municipality in Finland where the majority population is indigenous Sami people.

### **SWSS 301: Social Work in Health**

3 credits

Based on examinations of current trends with clients of multiple ages, needs, and cultural perspectives, this course examines social work roles in delivering health services.

Prerequisites: Completion of foundation coursework, MSW advanced standing, or permission.

### **SWSS 302: Social Work in Mental Health**

3 credits

Advanced knowledge and skills in working with children with severe emotional disturbances and adults with persistent mental illness. Community-based services are emphasized.

Prerequisites: Completion of foundation coursework, MSW advanced standing, or permission.

### **SWSS 310: Social Work with Children & Families I**

3 credits

Focus is on families whose major task is child rearing and child caring. Covers advanced knowledge, concepts, and methods of contemporary child/family services within a family-centered approach.

Prerequisites: Completion of foundation coursework, MSW advanced standing or permission.

### **SWSS 311: Social Work with Children & Families II**

3 credits

Focus is on families with adolescents, families with no children and families with dependent adults. Advanced analysis of families from an adult member perspective and from a critical view of family ideology and myth. Prerequisites: Completion of foundation coursework, MSW advanced standing or permission.

### **SWSS 320: Advanced Social Welfare Policy Analysis & Practice**

3 credits

In depth analysis of social welfare policy with application to children and families or health and mental health is required. There is an emphasis on the skills of the policy practitioner.

Prerequisite: Completion of 220 and 221, MSW advanced standing or permission.

### **SWSS 330: Assessment in Social Work**

3 credits

An advanced MSW concentration elective that analyzes competing and complementary assessment strategies and their implications in social work in health/mental health and with children and families.

Prerequisite: Completion of MSW foundation course work or instructor permission.



### **SWSS 333: Social Work with Groups**

3 credits

An advanced MSW concentration elective that integrates professional history, conceptual overviews and direct experience with methods for group work distinctive to social work practice.

Prerequisite: Completion of MSW foundation course work or instructor permission.

### **SWSS 380: Professional Issues in Social Work**

3 credits

Designed to cover selected social work issues in depth. Major emphasis on intensive and critical analysis of the literature and practice in a given area.

Prerequisite: Permission.

#### **Supervision in Social Work**

3 credits

Focuses on direct practice issues in supervisory relationships with attention to narrative, dialogic and relational approaches to the supervisory relationship. It also considers supervision in a variety of social work settings with attention to social work issues particular to those settings and the supervision of staff with regard to those issues.

#### **Interdisciplinary Leadership & Research Seminar I and II**

2-4 credits

(cross-listed with CMSI 295, MVSR 381, and PSYC 380)

This seminar is linked to the VT-ILEHP Project (see details under “funding opportunities” in this Bulletin). Those selected for the traineeship must take both semesters of the seminar; those who are just taking the seminar may take it for either one, or both, semesters.

#### **Narrative Approaches**

3 credits

Students explore the concepts and practices of narrative therapy and their application in family therapy, groups, communities, organizations and schools.

#### **Practitioners' Own Stories**

3 credits

This course will explore how stories of who we are in our families, among our friends and to ourselves come into play in

our professional work and how they are embedded in the larger societal, political, historical tales and practices.

Prerequisite: Permission

#### **Transformative Social Work Approaches to Violence in Multiple Communities**

3 credits

This course will address sexual, “intimate partner” and collective violence and peace promotion with adults, teens and some of the vulnerable populations among them, it will focus directly on practices with adults and adolescents.

Prerequisite: MSW concentration standing or permission.

#### **Social Work in an Age of Individualism**

3 credits

This seminar focuses on the ideology of individualism and its implications for social work and explores the concepts of self, identity and personhood.

#### **Beyond Medical Models**

3 credits

While respecting the important roles of medical models. This course deconstructs through a critical social constructionist approach their limitations in terms of not also considering and promoting alternative approaches to health and mental health. Alternatives examined and studied include complementary, traditional, holistic and innovative treatments rooted in our own and other cultures which often can be helpful for social work clients as well as being potentially more accessible, costing less, and avoiding the power of huge profit focused corporations such as our contemporary medical insurance or pharmaceutical companies.

#### **Supporting Organizational Change and Transformation in Human Services**

3 credits

Organizational change refers to large scale transformative change within an organization which requires the relational, coordinated actions of many and impacts all of the organization, such as the

restructuring of the mission, restructuring how the organization will function operationally - internally and externally. The impact of the change reorients the way the organization functions through critical questioning of standing organizational discourse and practices. Topics will include personal and professional change, healthy organizations and the management of novelty/change, sense making in organizations, models of change, resistance to change, appreciative inquiry, considering social inequity and difference in the change process, challenges in the change process, why change efforts fail, and working with consultants in the organizational change process.

### **Social Work with Refugees**

3 credits

This concentration year focus course is designed to provide an in-depth exploration and knowledge around: the social construction of “refugees” and the discourses and practices that surround it; the impact of that construction on the lives of the people who inhabit that role; and the rich, generative opportunities and challenges of social work with refugees. The heart of the course focuses on the resilience and human struggles involved in the human experience of living the refugee journey across the person-environment context from conflict and war in the home country, to the experience of flight and temporary asylum, and the process of durable solutions which for less than three percent of those deemed refugees ends in resettlement. Within population diversity in the areas of race, class, gender and age are also explored.

### **Constructing Global Social Work: Perspectives and Possibilities**

3 credits

Social work is a global profession responsive to and affected by global issues and trends.

What are the implications of this context for social workers in the U.S.?

In this course, we use analytical frameworks from social constructionist and related perspectives to make sense of how a global social work is and could be conceived and practiced. Issues reflecting social work values such as human rights, power, and oppression and those central to constructionist perspectives such as language, dialogue, and discourse will be central to our discussions. Issues related to social work practice, policy and research also will be explored.

### **Addressing Substance Abuse in Social Work**

3 credits

In this course, we will critically investigate development (etiological & contributing factors), gender specific and culturally responsive treatment strategies of substance abuse with an emphasis on: Motivational Interviewing, family systems, narrative/postmodern approaches, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) techniques, recovery maintenance, and an integrative approach to treatment. Co-occurring mental health issues, violence and trauma among diverse populations as well as the relevant social policy issues will be discussed as it relates to social work practice.

### **SWSS 397: Independent Study in Social Work**

3 credits

Individual work on social work issues selected by the student in consultation with a faculty member. Prerequisite: Permission of advisor and instructor.

*\*Focus course offerings are determined each year at the discretion of the MSW Program Committee. A selected group of focus courses are offered each academic year and may not include all courses listed in this bulletin.*

# FINANCIAL AID

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MSW students at UVM fund their education through a combination of means including personal resources, subsidized low interest educational loans, unsubsidized education loans, community based scholarships, university sponsored fellowships and graduate assistantships, and department sponsored partnerships and grants.

Students who plan to apply for Federal Financial Aid are encouraged to contact the UVM Student Financial Services Office at (802) 656-5700 for information and guidance or go here to ask a question: <http://www.uvm.edu/~stdfinsv/>

**The deadline for FAFSA, the application for this type of aid, is March 1 for funding beginning the following fall.**

Students who want to be considered for financial support in the form of fellowships or assistantships available through the UVM Graduate College and Department of Social Work should indicate this on their graduate college application form and are urged to submit their general application to the MSW program no later than **February 1**, which is the department's priority deadline for application. (Applicants for *Advanced Standing* are encouraged to apply prior to **January 6**.) At the point of admission, applications for financial support are enclosed with the student's acceptance letter from the department.

Criteria for financial support awards vary depending on the source and requirements, but are typically based on the applicant's academic credentials, statement of purpose, references, work experience, and the fit with any particular requirements of an award, for example an interest in a particular practice area.

A list of current financial supports follows. Further information can be found at the Graduate College website:

<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/graduate/admissionfinancial/>  
or the on-line Graduate College Catalogue.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The MSW program offers opportunities for financial support in exchange for participation in designated educational and social work practice assignments. These opportunities include the assistantships offered by the Graduate College and other assistantships and traineeships developed by the Department of Social Work in partnership with other departments at UVM and/or state and community agencies. New and returning students are notified of these opportunities and are invited to apply as these become available. Selection criteria differ according to the purposes and nature of a specific opportunity. In all cases, students' academic performance, standing in the MSW Program, experience, aspirations, and rationale for applying are considered by the selection committees.

### GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS (GAS)

Each academic year, the Department of Social Work has several openings for part time graduate assistantship positions. These are filled by incoming and continuing MSW students. Sponsored by the Graduate College, these positions are competitive and are thus offered to highly qualified MSW students who are enrolled on a full time basis. Duties of the position vary and may include assistance with teaching an undergraduate social work course or conducting research, in both cases under the guidance and supervision of a faculty member. If assigned to help with course teaching, the graduate assistant may be expected to attend class, complete readings, assist undergraduate students, grade exams and papers, and participate in planning with the course instructor. If assigned to assist with research, the assistant may undertake literature searches, assist with the collection and organization of data, and perform organizational tasks to support a designated project. Both types of assistantships offer tuition remission of up to 12 credits per academic year, one quarter of the cost of the student health insurance fee, and a yearly stipend of approximately \$8000 in exchange for 10 hours of work per week during the fall and spring academic semesters.

## **GRADUATE COLLEGE FELLOWSHIPS**

Each academic year, the Graduate College awards fellowships to incoming graduate students with outstanding qualifications and recommendations for graduate study in programs throughout the university. The Department of Social Work recommends one or two candidates who are enrolled as full time MSW students for the Graduate College Fellowship each academic year. This fellowship traditionally consists of a tuition scholarship of 24 to 48 credits towards the tuition cost for the 60 credits needed to complete the MSW degree.

The Graduate College also administers Opportunity Fellowships to increase campus diversity in UVM's graduate programs. These fellowships are available to minority students pursuing advanced degrees in any subject area at UVM. Applicants may indicate an interest in these fellowships on the application form.

## **OUT OF STATE TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS**

Since 2003, the Graduate College has sponsored a tuition scholarship program for out of state residents pursuing graduate study at the University of Vermont. These scholarships are intended to help offset the difference in tuition between in and out of state students. Each year, the Department of Social Work offers several of these scholarships of between \$5,000 and \$10,000 in tuition support to entering MSW students. These scholarships are generally for one academic year.

## **PARTNERSHIP GRANTS, TRAINEESHIPS, AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS**

In addition to the financial support available through the University, the department consistently seeks outside sources of funding for research and service that includes financial support for students' education. At present, this includes the Anti-Violence Partnership, Vermont's Child Welfare Partnership, and Vermont Interdisciplinary Education for Health Professionals (VT- ILEHP).

## **TITLE IV-E CHILD WELFARE PARTNERSHIP**

In 1993, the Vermont Child Welfare Partnership was established between the University of Vermont and Vermont's Department for Children and Families (DCF) to provide social work education and training to current and prospective employees in public child welfare practice at DCF. The Partnership receives funding through Title IV-E of the federal Social Security Act, also known as the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act (PL 96-272), which provides matching funds to states to support eligible children in foster care. In addition, Title IV-E allocates funding for training child welfare staff, foster parents, and childcare staff, as well as bachelor and master degree preparation for employment in public sector child welfare.

Title IV-E funding currently supports two Child Welfare Partnership projects which are housed in UVM's Department of Social Work: the Child Welfare Trainee Project and the Staff Training and Development Project. In addition to providing training and education to employees at Vermont's Department for Children and Families (DCF), both projects support scholarship in the Department of Social Work and provide support for student involvement. The projects and opportunities for students are described below.

### **CHILD WELFARE TRAINEE PROJECT**

Each academic year, several UVM social work students interested in a career in child welfare are awarded the Title IV-E Child Welfare Traineeship. The Traineeship offers significant financial support for social work education in exchange for a contract to work for the Vermont Department of Children and Families (DCF) following graduation. Typically, student trainees are offered a contract that provides financial support to cover their tuition and some living expenses for two academic years in exchange for employment at DCF for three years after graduation. While enrolled in the MSW Program, student trainees agree to undertake coursework that supports social work practice in child welfare and to complete their concentration year field practicum in one of the DCF district offices for 20 hours per week.

These requirements are designed to prepare trainees for employment as professional social workers in public child welfare practice.. Student trainees who enter the MSW program as current DCF employees may be offered contracts with different terms as a continuation of their employment with DCF.

Further information about the Title IV-E Trainee Project may be obtained by contacting the Project Coordinator JB Barna at 802-656-8800 or [jbarna@uvm.edu](mailto:jbarna@uvm.edu)

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT ACTIVISM AND LEADERSHIP**

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In addition to funded opportunities, the Department offers several options for students who are interested in developing and applying their activism and leadership in the Department, University, community, and profession.

### **STUDENT MEMBERSHIP IN THE DEPARTMENT**

All students in the MSW Program are considered by the Department of Social Work faculty to be members of the Department and the profession with privileges, rights, and responsibilities. Consequently, their initiative in contributing to department and professional affairs is welcome. This participation can be informal, as when one or a group of students requests a “town meeting” of all students and faculty members, or more formal, as in student participation as members of Department committee or as members of the Vermont Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

In order to enhance communication among members of the Department, all students, faculty members, and staff members have mailboxes and e-mail addresses that are used regularly. In addition, the Department provides a small student lounge for undergraduate and graduate student use.

### **REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL MEETINGS**

A variety of events are scheduled each year for the MSW Program community-at-large, including fall orientation meetings, workshops, and open discussion town meetings. These events are usually co-planned and co-facilitated by faculty members and students in the Program. Some occur annually, while others are the product of the creativity and preferences of the particular students and faculty members and the circumstances of a given year. Just as collaborative practices are promoted in classes and field practica, they are given added expression and emphasis through the initiative for community life carried out by the faculty, staff, and students in the Department.

### **MSW PROGRAM COMMITTEE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Each year, some MSW students represent student viewpoints as members in the regular Department faculty meetings, on a standing committee, the Community Advisory Council (comprised of social workers and other practitioners from state and community-based human service organizations), and ad hoc committees. Student representatives are elected by their peers, or if necessary, appointed by the faculty for a one-year term.

Student representatives have voting privileges in these meetings and must establish a viable approach to becoming informed of student positions and disseminating information to all students in the Program. Thus, the time commitment includes: reading the minutes and agendas, polling the student body when indicated, and otherwise preparing in advance to participate in the meeting; participating in the meeting; and disseminating information to students.

### **MEMBERSHIP AND STUDENT REPRESENTATION IN THE VERMONT CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS**

Students are eligible to join the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), which is the largest and most influential membership association of social workers in the United States. NASW is structured with statewide chapters, the level at which most social workers participate, and national governance offices, committees, task forces, centers, and caucuses. NASW works for the benefit of the profession at large, its members, and social work clients and client groups. It sets ethical standards for the profession in the form of the NASW Code of Ethics, defines standards for various types of social work practice, influences public policy, conducts social work research, sponsors an annual national social work conference, and publishes and distributes to all members a quarterly newsletter and a monthly professional journal titled Social Work.

#### **VT-AHEC (VERMONT AGENCY HEALTH AND EDUCATION CONSORTIUM)**

The VT-AHEC is an interdisciplinary educational project. The Department is one participating partner that relates to the training of healthcare professionals. The project has four goals:

- a. To build a network of interconnected regional and statewide educators who can assess local demand for services and quantify future resource needs;
- b. To increase the training in remote sites for five medical and health professional disciplines and five residency programs in an interdisciplinary model of practice guidelines and care management;
- c. To make rural Vermont the preferred practice site for primary care providers;
- d. To involve trainees in public health initiatives through education, research, and community action.

UVM training teams are intended to include dental health, nurse practitioner, nursing, medical, physical therapy, and graduate social work students; and family practice and pediatric residents.

#### **GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE**

In 2005, the Graduate Student Senate at UVM was formed for the purpose of cultivating both the academic and non-academic activities of the

graduate student body and enhancing all aspects of graduate school life at the University of Vermont. The Graduate Student Senate considers any matter that directly influences or affects the graduate student body as a valid item for its interest and deliberation and provides services that will directly address the needs of individual students.

The Graduate Student Senate works to increase the quality of life for graduate students on and off campus. Students interested in being a part of the senate can send an email to [gss@uvm.edu](mailto:gss@uvm.edu). For more information or to see what meetings and events are coming up, please visit the Graduate Student Senate website at:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~gss/>

For a copy of the "Pawbook: The Unofficial UVM Graduate Student Guide," written by graduate students for graduate students, please visit:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~gss/>

## **MSW ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESSES**

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Social work is a demanding profession requiring intellectual skill, emotional maturity, and a commitment to contribute to the public good. The admissions process is designed to help the admissions committee assess an applicant's ability to successfully complete the academic requirements of the MSW Program and an applicant's suitability for professional practice of social work. The process can also assist prospective students in making an informed choice for their graduate education. A broad range of criteria are considered, including academic accomplishments, writing ability, practical experience, references, congruence with the objectives, values, and curriculum of the Program, and a commitment to the profession of social work.

The Department of Social Work recognizes the profession's need for social workers from

diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds and particularly encourages applications and financial aid requests from a diversity of applicants.

**Currently no more than 30 regular track students enroll in the MSW program each year. This number includes up to 5 part time students. All regular track students are admitted for enrollment in the fall semester. The Department also offers an Advanced Standing option in which students enroll in the early summer.**

## **MSW PROGRAM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants must specify at the time of application whether they wish to be admitted as a full or part time student. Once a student is accepted, a change in admission status must be requested in writing to the MSW Program Coordinator and is subject to the approval of the MSW Program Committee.

### **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION**

- Baccalaureate degree completed in good standing from a college or university accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association.
- No minimum undergraduate grade point average (GPA) is established for admission, however, this is considered as an indicator of prior academic performance.
- Evidence of a strong liberal arts background including 18 credit hours of course work in **social sciences, behavior and life sciences, humanities, and psychology with an emphasis on human/social issues.** In general, the applicant's educational background and coursework should show adequate preparation to pursue graduate study in social work.
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is considered optional. However, there are several circumstances in which taking the

GRE is recommended: 1) If you are interested in being considered for competitive Graduate College funding (Teaching assistantships and fellowships) the GRE is required. 2) The GRE is also useful if you, as an applicant, feel that other parts of your application may be weak and the GREs would strengthen your application and be an additional indicator of your ability to successfully complete a graduate program.

- Prior work or volunteer experience in human services is preferred.
- International students must submit TOEFL scores of 550 (213 computer based) or higher.

### **LIBERAL ARTS BACKGROUND REQUIREMENT**

Students are required to complete a minimum of 18 credits, or the equivalent, of general liberal arts in their undergraduate education prior to their enrollment in the MSW program. Each application will be assessed with regard to adequate academic preparation for graduate study in Social Work by the Admissions Committee. In some cases, specific requirements for additional liberal arts course work may be made at the point of acceptance and will be identified in the student's letter of acceptance. As with all prerequisites, these requirements must be completed **prior** to enrollment in the MSW program.

### **GENERAL POLICIES REGARDING PREREQUISITES:**

- Courses taken to meet any prerequisite requirement cannot be counted toward the fulfillment of the MSW degree.
- It is highly recommended that applicants **obtain approval prior** to enrolling in any course they intend to apply toward prerequisite requirements.
- Prerequisite courses must be completed with a **grade of C- or higher.**
- All prerequisites must be completed **prior** to enrolling as a matriculated student in the program.

## ADDITIONAL APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

### Letters of Recommendation

Applicants need to provide **three letters of recommendation** along with **three completed recommendation forms**. (Paper forms can be downloaded from the Graduate College web site or completed online.)

<http://www.uvm.edu/~gradcoll/?Page=Admissions.html&SM=Prospectivemenu.html>

At least **one recommendation letter** should be **from an academic source**, such as a current or former professor or academic advisor. If this is not provided, the Committee may request such a reference and this may interfere with a timely admissions decision. Applicants are also encouraged to provide at least one recommendation from a professional who has supervised their paid employment, volunteer work, or internship in a human services agency or organization.

### Statement of Purpose

The statement of purpose is a critical component of the application. In this, applicants should address:

- Influences leading to the choice of a career in social work,
- Preparation undertaken for graduate study in social work,
- And the applicant's professional goals in relation to the program's mission and philosophy.

*Further, applicants should consider that this statement serves as **a sample of the applicant's written communication.***

### Human Service Experience and Resume

The Admissions Committee **prefers, but does not require** that an applicant have employment experience in Human Services. Experience can include work in social service agencies, hospitals, schools, or any other human service setting. In some instances significant staff responsibility as a continuous volunteer social worker or as a supervised intern in such a setting provides this experience. **A resume outlining work and related social work experience is required.**

### **Previous Work and Life Experience**

The faculty views life experience and previous work experience as valuable and helpful to prospective students. Nevertheless, the MSW Program **does not waive** its academic requirements, including field requirements, for these experiences.

### **ADVANCED STANDING STATUS**

Application for Advanced Standing status is an option *only for those prospective students who have successfully completed a Bachelor's of Social Work (BSW) degree from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), **within 7 years of intended enrollment in the MSW program.*** For those admitted with advanced standing status, the department offers an accelerated course of study in the MSW Program, which consists of 39 credits over one summer and two semesters in an academic year. This option permits advanced standing students to complete their MSW degree at UVM within one calendar year. Students currently enrolled in bachelors level social work programs who hope to begin their study in social work the following academic year should be prepared to have completed all bachelors' program requirements and to begin their MSW studies at UVM by late May. The start date for the summer session will vary each academic year. **Applicants for advanced standing are encouraged to apply to the MSW Program by January 2** and to be in contact with the MSW Program staff early in the application process to obtain information about prerequisite completion and dates for the summer session.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION TO ADVANCED STANDING STATUS**

To be considered for Advanced Standing, the prospective student needs to meet all of the general requirements for admission as listed previously **and the following requirements** for Advanced Standing.

- A BSW degree earned from a Bachelors Social Work Program accredited by CSWE (Council on Social Work Education) within 7 years of enrollment in the MSW program.
- Prior academic performance that supports graduate study in social work, requiring at



minimum undergraduate grades of B (3.0) or higher in all upper level social work courses.

- Satisfactory social work field practicum evaluations

As with all applications to the MSW program at UVM, admission as an Advanced Standing student is not automatically granted based on these requirements. The admissions committee also considers the quality of thinking, writing, professional understanding, and conduct as demonstrated in the application materials and in any other communications with the department. *In addition, the admissions committee prefers candidates for advanced standing to have post graduate employment in human services for a year or more prior to applying.*

## APPLICATION PROCESS

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### GRADUATE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS AND ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All applications are submitted to the Graduate College Admissions Office. The application process begins on-line at <https://www.applyweb.com/uvmg/menu.html>

**Applicants who are U.S. citizens or permanent legal residents** must submit the following materials:

1. An **application form** (completed on line) The **statement of purpose** which describes the applicant's reasons for pursuing graduate studies in social work at UVM (submitted on line);
2. **Optional** - Scores from appropriate **GRE tests** (Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytic Writing) taken within five years of the date of application. Official Scores are sent directly to UVM by the testing service. (**UVM code 3920**);
3. **Official transcripts** from **each** college or university attended (including UVM);

4. **Letters of recommendation** and recommender forms from **three** individuals qualified to assess the applicant's potential for graduate study and a career in social work;
5. A current **resume**;
6. **For Advanced Standing ONLY:** A copy of the applicant's bachelor's level social work **field practicum evaluation** or a letter of support from the Director of Field Education.
7. A **\$65 fee for on-line applications**, submitted electronically with a valid credit card.

Please note that most of the application can and should be completed and submitted electronically through the **online** application process to the Graduate College. Paper materials such as official transcripts with a seal or in a signed envelope, the applicant's current resume, and signed letters of recommendation may be submitted through postal mail. Applicants are highly encouraged to collect all paper materials to be mailed and send these in one envelope to the graduate college at:

**GRADUATE ADMISSIONS OFFICE  
332 WATERMAN BUILDING,  
85 S. PROSPECT ST.  
THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
BURLINGTON, VT 05405-0160**

\* Prospective students with exceptional circumstances can request paper applications. For further information, please contact the Graduate College by phone at **802-656-3160**.

**International applicants**, who are not U.S. citizens or permanent legal residents, must submit the following additional materials:

1. Scores from the Test of English as a Second Language (**TOEFL**) if English is not the student's native language, or if formal education has not been conducted in English (information about the TOEFL examination is available from the Educational Testing Service, Box 6144, Princeton, NJ. 08541-6155, U.S.A.). For admission to the Graduate College at UVM minimum scores

of 80 for Internet, 213 for computer based, or 500 for the paper based test are required. To qualify for consideration for university sponsored financial support, minimum scores of 100 for Internet based, 250 for computer based, or 600 for the paper-based test are required.

2. Evidence of independent financial support, in the form of a signed statement from a bank or scholarship source. (Forms are included with the application materials.)
3. The application fee in US dollars, by traveler's check or money order, made payable to The University of Vermont, or via credit card.

For further information about the Graduate College and the graduate application process follow the link:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~gradcoll/?Page=Admissions.html&SM=Prospectivemenu.html>

## APPLICATION DEADLINES

For Regular Track MSW, applications are due **February 1**.

For Advanced Standing, applications are due **January 6**.

Applications received by these dates are guaranteed consideration for enrollment the following fall or summer.

Applications to the MSW Program are reviewed beginning in late fall. ***Applications received after the priority deadlines listed above will be accepted for review as long as there are openings in the entering class.*** Applicants may contact the MSW Program staff about openings after the deadlines have passed.

Once an application has been received, the Graduate College Admissions Office scans the materials and stores these in a secure electronic file. The Department of Social Work has access to these materials as soon as they have been filed electronically. The MSW Admissions Committee reviews applications **only after all materials have been received.**

After reviewing each application carefully, the MSW Admissions Committee forwards its recommendations to the Graduate College. The Graduate College reviews these recommendations and sends out letters of acceptance or denial.

## MATRICULATION AND INTENT TO ENROLL IN THE MSW PROGRAM

Accepted students who intend to enroll as a student in the MSW Program **must complete and return all necessary paperwork, both** to the Graduate College and to the Department of Social Work. This includes:

- A biographical information card for the Graduate College,
- Intent to Enroll form and a non-refundable \$200 deposit towards tuition to the Department of Social Work.

In order to be guaranteed a place in the entering class for the following fall, **accepted students** need to return the above paperwork **within 3 weeks** of being notified of acceptance. Students may contact the department to request additional time if this is needed.

## REQUEST FOR DEFERRED ADMISSION

Applicants who have been admitted and offered enrollment in the program may request a **one-year deferral**. Requests should be submitted in writing and will be reviewed by the Admissions Committee.

## TRANSFER POLICIES

Written requests for transfer credit for graduate course work taken prior to admission are considered on an individual basis and subject to the standard policies of the Graduate College [see the 2016-17 on-line Graduate Catalogue]

<http://www.uvm.edu/~gradcoll/?Page=Admissions.html&SM=Prospectivemenu.html>

and the approval of the Department. Generally, course work completed in an accredited social work program **within seven years prior** to the completion of MSW degree requirements, may be transferred into the MSW Program.

Courses submitted for transfer credit must meet Graduate College and Department criteria for appropriateness and timeliness. Additionally, a **minimum grade of B is required for a course to be considered for transfer credit.**

**Students who have taken UVM MSW courses on a continuing education basis, may request transfer of their course credits at the point of matriculation.**

Applicants who wish to take elective courses outside the Department of Social Work in other departments at UVM or at other institutions for possible transfer credit should consult with the MSW Program staff prior to registration. They can assist potential applicants in assessing the likelihood that particular courses will successfully transfer. Applicants should consult the on-line Graduate Catalogue for further information on transfer credit policies.

<http://www.uvm.edu/~gradcoll/?Page=Admissions.html&SM=Prospectivemenu.html>

# DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK FACULTY AND STAFF

## FULL-TIME FACULTY

**JB Barna**, Senior Lecturer, Field Education Coordinator, and Liaison to Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Project, MSW, California State University  
Child/family social services; organizational cultures; program development and social work supervision practices.

**Susan Comerford**, Associate Professor, MSW Program Coordinator, MSW, Fordham University; Ph.D., Case Western Reserve University  
Multicultural education; participatory action research; supporting Asian refugees; global human rights; women's issues.

**Patten, Cyrus**, Lecturer  
LICSW, Colorado State University, Ed.D Candidate, University of Vermont  
Social enterprise, organizational change, program evaluation and development of clinical settings.

**Fiona Patterson**, Associate Professor  
MSW, University of Pennsylvania; D.S.W., University of Pennsylvania  
Multi-cultural aging; social work in health; immigrant women; public health; social work policy and history; women and aging; human rights for people with disabilities; literature of immigration; kinship families.

**Ann Pugh**, Senior Lecturer and Faculty Field Liaison  
MSW, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University; C.A.S. in Administration and Planning, University of Vermont  
Advocacy and social policy; child and family social services; social change; supervision.

**Susan Roche**, Interim Department Chair, Associate Professor M.S.S.W., University of Louisville; Ph.D. Social Work, Rutgers University  
Global feminisms and human rights; violence, oppression and social change; organization, community building and transformation; group work with adolescents and adults; linking theory and practice in social work and social work education.

**Brenda Solomon**, Associate Professor  
MSW, Syracuse University; Ph.D. Sociology, Syracuse University  
Welfare to work policies; child welfare services; school practices; institutional ethnography; intersections of oppression; theorizing social work practice from social constructionist and post-modern perspectives.

**Jessica Strolin-Goltzman**, Assistant Professor  
MSW and Ph.D., State University of New York at Albany  
Quantitative methodology; health and health care access for vulnerable children; intervention research with at-risk children and families; neurological effects of substance abuse and psychosocial interventions; school-based health services research.

**Stanley Witkin**, Professor  
M.S.S.W., University of Wisconsin; Ph.D. Social Work, University of Wisconsin  
Social constructionist perspectives on social work education, practice, and inquiry; global education; humor; ethics.

## **FIELD LIAISON FACULTY**

**Ann Pugh**, Senior Lecturer and Faculty Field Liaison MSW, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University; C.A.S. in Administration and Planning, University of Vermont

**Jean Sienkewicz**, Faculty Field Liaison MSW, University of Vermont

## **DEPARTMENT STAFF**

**Ken Bechtel**, Academic Support

**Jason Elledge**, Grant and Contract Administrator

**Kate Clem**, Department Office and Budget Manager

## **TITLE IV-E CHILD WELFARE TRAINEE PARTNERSHIP**

**Jessica Strolin**, PSP Grant Director

**Susan Roche**, Degree Program Director

**Sarah Ward**, Training Program Assistant Director

**JB Barna**, Project Coordinator

**Suzette Gagne**, Business Support Staff

**Jason Elledge**, Grant and Contract Administrator

## **VT-AHEC (VERMONT AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER) PROJECT**

The University of Vermont College of Medicine AHEC program is a statewide network of community and academic partners working together to improve access to quality healthcare, particularly for those who live in Vermont's most rural areas and Vermont's underserved populations.

**JB Barna**, Liaison for Social Work to the College of Medicine

## **DEWEY HOUSE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Dewey House is a residential learning community located at Harris Hall where students have the opportunity to create socially just change through service, learning and leadership.

**Kailee Brickner-McDonald**, Director

## **UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION**

President	E. Thomas Sullivan, J.D.
Senior Vice President and Provost	David V. Rosowsky, Ph.D., P.E., F.ASCE
Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate College	Cynthia Forehand, Ph.D.
Dean of the College of Education and Social Service	Scott Thomas, Ph.D.

## **DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK ADMINISTRATION**

Interim Chairperson	Susan E. Roche, Ph.D., MSW
MSW Program Coordinator	Susan Comerford, Ph.D., MSW
BSW Program Coordinator	TBD
Field Education Coordinator	JB Barna, MSW

## **HOW TO CONTACT US**

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