

SOCIAL WORK, BACHELOR OF (B.S.W.)

The Bachelor of Social Work requires completion of 120 credits, including 46 credits in the major. The curriculum of the baccalaureate program is specifically designed to prepare students for beginning-level generalist social work practice. This practice model requires a broad base of knowledge about individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations and an appreciation of cultural diversity. General education courses provide an essential foundation for the upper-level professional curriculum and are required for admission to junior and senior social work courses.

Learning outcomes

Upon completing this program, students will know and know how to do the following:

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice
3. Advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice
5. Engage in policy practice
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities

Academic policies

Transfer students

Students who transfer to VCU from another institution as social work majors are not required to complete the UNIV 111 and UNIV 112 sequence. Instead, these students must transfer three credits in writing and composition course work with a grade of C or better (approved by the program director) in lieu of UNIV 111. Students may also transfer three additional credits in writing and composition course work with a grade of C or better (approved by the program director) in lieu of UNIV 112 or complete UNIV 200 at VCU with a grade of C or better. The remaining three credits from the UNIV 111, UNIV 112 and UNIV 200 sequence requirement may be completed as general electives. This policy applies only to students who transfer to VCU after their freshman year and may not be used by students who began their studies as freshmen at VCU.

Transfer of credits from other colleges or universities or from other programs at VCU is determined on an individual basis.

Application process

Students eligible to register for upper-level social work courses need to make an appointment with their adviser to review and complete the "Application for Admission to the B.S.W. Professional Preparation Program" form. This form is available from your student success adviser. Although the B.S.W. program can be completed on a part-time basis,

it cannot be completed exclusively in the evening because of field practicum requirements and the scheduling of some classes.

Course restrictions

Practice (SLWK 332, SLWK 441 and SLWK 442) and field education (SLWK 393, SLWK 494-SLWK 495) courses and the senior seminar (SLWK 499) are restricted to social work majors only. Students minoring in social welfare, or other students with permission of program director or course instructor, may take the following:

Course	Title	Hours
SLWK 311	Social Work and Oppressed Groups	3
SLWK 313	Person in Society I	3
SLWK 330	Person in Society II	3
SLWK 380	Foundations of Social Work Research I	3
SLWK 381	Foundations of Social Work Research II	3
SLWK 422	Social Welfare Legislation and Services	3
SLWK 431	Person in Society III	3

In all cases, however, prerequisites must be satisfied.

Field placements require students to spend 14 hours a week in an agency and cannot be completed on nights and weekends.

Honors in social work

Undergraduate social work majors may earn honors in social work by excelling academically and completing a research-based honors thesis under the supervision of faculty mentors. Students apply for honors in social work in the second semester of their junior year (spring or summer). To graduate with honors in social work, students must satisfy all of the following conditions:

- Earn a 3.5 cumulative grade point average.
- Earn a grade of A in SLWK 380 and SLWK 381 and a minimum grade of B in all other social work courses.
- Complete six to nine credits of independent study (SLWK 492) with a minimum grade of B to propose and implement a research project under the supervision of a faculty mentor.
- Present and successfully defend in writing and orally the findings from the research project in the form of an honors thesis to a committee of three faculty members (one of whom is the student's mentor).

Students who meet these requirements and all other graduation requirements of the university will have honors in social work noted on their transcripts. For further information about the application process and detailed instructions for completing the honors thesis, students should contact the B.S.W. program director.

Special requirements

To complete lower-division requirements and begin the professional preparation curriculum of the B.S.W. program, students must:

1. Complete the following specific courses (38 credits):

Course	Title	Hours
ANTH 103	Introduction to Anthropology	3
BIOL 101	Biological Concepts	3
BIOZ 101	Biological Concepts Laboratory	1

MATH 131	Introduction to Contemporary Mathematics	3
PHIL	from approved list	3
PSYC 101	Play course video for Introduction to Psychology	4
PSYC 304	Life Span Developmental Psychology	3
SLWK 201	Introduction to Social Work	3
SLWK 230	Communication in the Helping Process	3
SOCY 101	Play course video for Introduction to Sociology	3
UNIV 111	Play course video for Focused Inquiry I	3
UNIV 112	Play course video for Focused Inquiry II	3
UNIV 200	Inquiry and the Craft of Argument	3
Total Hours		38

- Complete 16 additional credits from the general education requirements for a total of 54 credits to achieve junior status
- Achieve a minimum grade of C in UNIV 112 and UNIV 200
- Achieve a minimum grade of B in SLWK 201 and SLWK 230
- Achieve a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5
- Apply for admission with academic adviser to begin the professional preparation curriculum of the B. S. W. program.
- Agree to abide by the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics as students and emerging professionals

Other program requirements and guidelines:

- All 300 level SLWK prerequisite courses require a minimum grade of C before entering 400-level SLWK courses.
- Students must have a minimum grade of C in all required social work courses to graduate.
- A student who earns a grade of D or F in any required social work course may repeat the course once. If a grade of D or F is earned in the repeated course, the student will be terminated from the B.S.W. program.
- Credit is not given for life experiences.
- As a condition for graduation, students must submit in the spring term of a senior year a portfolio of selected assignments.
- There are additional policies that affect students' progression in the professional degree program. Students are responsible for compliance with these policies. They are listed in the Student Policy Handbook, which is available on the School of Social Work website at socialwork.vcu.edu (<http://socialwork.vcu.edu>).

Foreign language requirement: Students who place into or are waived out of the 101 level in a foreign language must complete the 102 level in the same language. Students who place into or are waived out of the 101 and 102 level in a foreign language must complete at least one college-level

foreign language course in any language. Credits earned by CLEP do not count toward the fulfillment of this requirement.

Degree requirements for Social Work, Bachelor of (B.S.W.)

General Education requirements

Course	Title	Hours
University Core Education Curriculum (minimum 21 credits)		
UNIV 111	Play course video for Focused Inquiry I	3
UNIV 112	Play course video for Focused Inquiry II	3
UNIV 200	Inquiry and the Craft of Argument	3
Approved humanities/fine arts		3
Approved natural/physical sciences		3-4
Approved quantitative literacy		3-4
Approved social/behavioral sciences		3-4
Total Hours		21-24

Course	Title	Hours
Additional General Education requirements		
Select one of the following:		3
Any ARTH (except ARTH 360)		
MHIS 243	Music Appreciation	
Any RELS		
Any English literature		
Any PHIL ¹		
Any foreign language at 200 level or above		
HIST 311/ RELS 308	High and Later Middle Ages	
HIST 336	History of Christianity II	
HIST 365/ GSWS 341	History of Gender and Sexuality in America I	
HIST 366	History of Gender and Sexuality in America II	
POLI 341	History of Political Theory: Classical to Modern	
POLI 342	History of Political Theory: Modern to Contemporary	
Any topical or honors course approved by program director		
Select one of the following:		3
BIOL 103	Environmental Science	
BIOL 201	Human Biology	
BIOL 217	Principles of Nutrition	
SOCS 340	Human Sexuality	
PSYC 401	Physiological Psychology	
PSYC 406	Perception	
PSYC 412	Health Psychology	
Select one of the following approved PHIL courses:		3
PHIL 201	Critical Thinking About Moral Problems	
PHIL 211	History of Ethics	
PHIL 212	Ethics and Applications	

PHIL 213	Ethics and Health Care	
PHIL 221	Critical Thinking	
PHIL 222	Logic	
Select nine elective credits from HIST, POLI or ECON		9
Foreign language at the 101 and 102 level (including ASL)		8
Total Hours		26

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Except PHIL 201, PHIL 211, PHIL 212, PHIL 213, PHIL 214, PHIL 221, PHIL 222

Collateral requirements

Course	Title	Hours
ANTH 103	Introduction to Anthropology	3
BIOL 101 & BIOZ 101	Biological Concepts and Biological Concepts Laboratory (satisfies University Core natural/physical sciences)	4
Select one of the following (satisfies approved quantitative literacy):		3
MATH 131	Introduction to Contemporary Mathematics	
MATH 141	Algebra with Applications	
MATH 151	Precalculus Mathematics	
MATH 200	Calculus with Analytic Geometry I	
PSYC 101 Play course video for Introduction to Psychology	Introduction to Psychology (satisfies University Core social/behavioral sciences)	4
PSYC 304	Life Span Developmental Psychology	3
PSYC 407	Psychology of the Abnormal	3
SOCY 101 Play course video for Introduction to Sociology	Introduction to Sociology	3
Select one of the following (satisfies University Core humanities/fine arts):		3
ENGL 215	Reading Literature	
PHIL 250	Thinking About Thinking	
RELS 108	Human Spirituality	
Total Hours		20

Major requirements

Course	Title	Hours
SLWK 201	Introduction to Social Work	3
SLWK 230	Communication in the Helping Process	3
SLWK 311	Social Work and Oppressed Groups	3
SLWK 313	Person in Society I	3
SLWK 330	Person in Society II	3
SLWK 332	Social Work Practice: Fundamentals	3
SLWK 380	Foundations of Social Work Research I	3
SLWK 381	Foundations of Social Work Research II	3
SLWK 393	Junior Field Instruction	3
SLWK 422	Social Welfare Legislation and Services	3

SLWK 431	Person in Society III	3
SLWK 441	Social Work Practice I	3
SLWK 442	Social Work Practice II	3
SLWK 494	Senior Field Instruction I	3
SLWK 495	Senior Field Instruction II	3
SLWK 499	Senior Seminar (capstone)	1
Total Hours		46

Open electives

Course	Title	Hours
Select 13 open elective credits		13

The minimum total of credit hours required for this degree is 120.

What follows is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements within a four-year course of study at VCU. Please contact your adviser before beginning course work toward a degree.

Freshman year

Fall semester	Hours
ANTH 103 Introduction to Anthropology	3
MATH 131 Introduction to Contemporary Mathematics (satisfies University Core quantitative literacy)	3
PSYC 101 Introduction to Psychology (satisfies University Core social/behavioral sciences)	4
SOCY 101 Introduction to Sociology	3
UNIV 111 Focused Inquiry I	3

Term Hours: 16

Spring semester

BIOL 101 & BIOZ 101 Biological Concepts and Biological Concepts Laboratory (satisfies University natural/physical sciences)	4
ENGL 215 or RELS 108 or PHIL 250 Reading Literature (satisfies University Core humanities/fine arts) or Human Spirituality or Thinking About Thinking	3
UNIV 112 Focused Inquiry II	3
Electives from HIST, POLI or ECON	

Term Hours: 16

Sophomore year**Fall semester**

SLWK 230	Communication in the Helping Process	3
UNIV 200	Inquiry and the Craft of Argument	3
Foreign language 101		4
Elective from HIST, POLI or ECON		3
Open elective		3
Term Hours:		16

Spring semester

PSYC 304	Life Span Developmental Psychology	3
SLWK 201	Introduction to Social Work	3
Foreign language 102		4
PHIL 201	Critical Thinking About Moral Problems (approved PHIL course)	3
or	PHIL 211 or History of Ethics	
or	PHIL 212 or Ethics and Applications	
or	PHIL 213 or Ethics and Health Care	
or	PHIL 213 or Critical Thinking	
or	PHIL 221 or Logic	
or	PHIL 222	
Open elective		1
Term Hours:		14

Junior year**Fall semester**

SLWK 311	Social Work and Oppressed Groups	3
SLWK 313	Person in Society I	3
SLWK 380	Foundations of Social Work Research I	3
Additional General Education course ¹		3
Open elective		3
Term Hours:		15

Spring semester

SLWK 330	Person in Society II	3
SLWK 332	Social Work Practice: Fundamentals	3
SLWK 381	Foundations of Social Work Research II	3
SLWK 393	Junior Field Instruction	3
Open elective		3
Term Hours:		15

Senior year**Fall semester**

SLWK 422	Social Welfare Legislation and Services or Person in Society III	3
or	SLWK 431	
SLWK 441	Social Work Practice I	3
SLWK 494	Senior Field Instruction I	3

BIOL 103	Environmental Science	3
or	or Human Biology	
BIOL 201	or Principles of Nutrition	
or	or Human Sexuality	
BIOL 217	or Physiological Psychology	
or	or Perception	
SOCS 340	or Health Psychology	
or	PSYC 401	
or	PSYC 406	
or	PSYC 412	

Open elective		3
Term Hours:		15

Spring semester

PSYC 407	Psychology of the Abnormal	3
SLWK 422	Social Welfare Legislation and Services or Person in Society III	3
or	SLWK 431	
SLWK 442	Social Work Practice II	3
SLWK 495	Senior Field Instruction II	3
SLWK 499	Senior Seminar	1
Term Hours:		13
Total Hours:		120

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Select one of the following: any ARTH, MHIS 243, any RELS, any English literature, any PHIL (except PHIL 201, PHIL 211, PHIL 212, PHIL 213, PHIL 214, PHIL 221, PHIL 222), any foreign language at 200 level or above, POLI 341, POLI 342, HIST 307, HIST 336, HIST 365, HIST 366 or any topical or honors course approved by program director.

The minimum total of credit hours required for this degree is 120.

SLWK 200. Building a Just Society. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Course will introduce students to social justice issues in a local context with a focus on expanding and deepening their knowledge and skills to effect change through active engagement in the community. Course promotes an understanding and critical analysis of multiple forms of oppression in social systems and in personal experience using professional social work perspectives and theoretical frameworks. Selected reference materials and experiential learning activities are designed to enhance student understanding of what constitutes a just community and a just society. The course may be offered as service-learning.

SLWK 201. Introduction to Social Work. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Systematic overview of the social work profession. Knowledge of the nature of social work, the fields of social work practice, target populations, overview of social work methods.

SLWK 230. Communication in the Helping Process. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. The study of the knowledge, skills and values of effective human communication and interpersonal relations. Includes observation, collection and description of data, verbal and nonverbal communication and the relevance of the above to social work practice. Integrates issues of human diversity in all course content. Emphasizes the demonstration and practice of communication through structured exercises.

SLWK 311. Social Work and Oppressed Groups. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Open only to majors or minors in social welfare with junior status or by permission of program director or course instructor. Examines forces leading to individual prejudice and institutional oppression. Focuses on impact of oppression. Provides students with an understanding of diversity and a general knowledge of social work strategies to alleviate oppression and to empower the oppressed.

SLWK 313. Person in Society I. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: ANTH/INTL 103; BIOL 101, BIOL 151 or BIOL 152; PSYC 304; and SOCY 101. Open only to majors or minors in social welfare with junior status or by permission of program director or course instructor. First of a three-semester sequence on human behavior and the social environment. Uses theoretical concepts and research findings from the behavioral sciences as background for understanding and assessing the functioning of individuals and families in their social environment. Facilitates integration of theory and research with assessment skills associated with basic social work practice. Emphasizes the social systems approach for analyzing the impact of various social problems on individual and family dynamics.

SLWK 330. Person in Society II. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: SLWK 313 with a minimum grade of C. Open only to majors or minors in social welfare with junior status or by permission of program director or course instructor. Second of three courses on human behavior in the social environment. Uses theoretical concepts from the behavioral sciences to understand the family and small groups as social institutions and social groups as context for human behavior over the life cycle. Designed to provide a theoretical foundation for practice with families and small groups.

SLWK 332. Social Work Practice: Fundamentals. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: SLWK 313 with a minimum grade of C. Corequisite: SLWK 393. Open only to social work majors with junior status. First of three semester practice sequence. Introduces students to basic concepts and skills of beginning-level professional generalist social work practice. Emphasizes application of concepts to the concurrent fieldwork experience.

SLWK 380. Foundations of Social Work Research I. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Open only to majors or minors in social welfare with junior status or by permission of program director or course instructor. First of two semester research sequence. Designed to provide an understanding and appreciation of a scientific, analytic approach to building knowledge for practice and for evaluating multilevel service delivery. Provides an overview of the research process, including problem formulation, sampling, design, measurement, data collection, data analysis and dissemination of findings. Presents ethical standards of scientific inquiry with special attention to research with vulnerable and oppressed populations.

SLWK 381. Foundations of Social Work Research II. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: SLWK 380 with a minimum grade of C. Open only to social work majors or minors in social welfare with junior status or by permission of program director or course instructor. The content includes a review of basic statistical univariate and bivariate descriptive and inferential tools for analyzing, interpreting and presenting data for decision-making in generalist social work practice. It also introduces methods for analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and further develops critical-thinking skills in translating empirical research findings into generalist social work practice principles.

SLWK 391. Topics in Social Work. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; variable hours. 1-3 credits. An in-depth study of a selected topic relevant for professional social work practice. See the Schedule of Classes for the specific topic to be offered each semester.

SLWK 393. Junior Field Instruction. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 field experience hours. 3 credits (70 contact hours per credit). Prerequisite: SLWK 313 with a minimum grade of C. Corequisite: SLWK 332. Enrollment is restricted to social work students with junior status. Students will complete 210 hours (14 per week in spring or 21 per week in summer) in a community agency under the supervision of an agency-based field instructor. Intended to facilitate student's understanding of agency structure and community context, ability to engage in professional relationships, to assess strengths, define problems, set goals and utilize beginning-level practice skills with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Promotes identification as a professional social worker.

SLWK 422. Social Welfare Legislation and Services. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: completion of SLWK 311, 313, 332, 380, 381 and 393, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment restricted to majors or minors in social welfare with junior status or by permission of program director or course instructor. Analyzes social welfare policy as related to social values, social problems and social structures. Examines frameworks for policy analysis and for evaluation of programmatic outcomes of policy, with application to contemporary social service and income maintenance policies and delivery systems. Considers the economic, political and ideological factors and processes that affect social welfare legislation, financing and implementation.

SLWK 431. Person in Society III. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: SLWK 313 with a minimum grade of C. Open only to majors or minors in social welfare with junior status or by permission of program director or course instructor. Third of three courses on human behavior in the social environment. Builds on the theoretical concepts from the behavioral sciences discussed in SLWK 230 and 313. Focus on understanding organizations and how their purposes, auspices, structure, processes and environment affect the delivery of social services to diverse groups. The community context of social services, including that of the consumer, is emphasized from an open systems theoretical perspective. Students will be expected to integrate course content with their field experience or other agency with which they are familiar. Required of all undergraduate social work majors.

SLWK 441. Social Work Practice I. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: SLWK 332, 381 and 393, each with a minimum grade of C. Open only to majors with senior standing. Second of a three-semester practice sequence. Review of interviewing and problem-solving for generalist social work practice with diverse populations. Emphasis on agency structure and function, skills of engagement and problem definition, assessment, planning for intervention, and evaluation. Use of material from concurrent fieldwork practice to facilitate integration of learning.

SLWK 442. Social Work Practice II. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: SLWK 441 and SLWK 494, each with a minimum grade of C. Open only to majors with senior standing. Third of a three-semester practice sequence. Emphasizes planning and implementing change with diverse populations, professional ethics, professional development, termination and evaluation of generalist social work practice. Use of case material from concurrent fieldwork practice to facilitate integration of learning.

SLWK 492. Independent Study. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; 1, 2 or 3 lecture hours. 1, 2 or 3 credits. Prerequisites: junior or senior standing, and permission of instructor. Under supervision of a faculty adviser, whose consent is required to register, study of a topic of concern to the student. Each student must present his or her findings in writing or pass an oral examination.

SLWK 494. Senior Field Instruction I. 3 Hours.

Semester course. 3 credits. Prerequisite: completion of SLWK 332, 381 and 393, each with a minimum grade of C. Corequisite: SLWK 441. Open only to majors with senior status. Fourteen hours per week in a community agency under the supervision of an agency-based field instructor. Intended to develop knowledge, values and social work practice skills appropriate to entry-level generalist practice in human service agencies.

SLWK 495. Senior Field Instruction II. 3 Hours.

Semester course. 3 credits. Prerequisite: completion of SLWK 494 with a minimum grade of C. Corequisite: SLWK 442. Open only to majors with senior status. Fourteen hours per week in a community agency under the supervision of an agency-based field instructor. Intended to develop knowledge, values and social work practice skills appropriate to entry-level generalist practice in human service agencies.

SLWK 499. Senior Seminar. 1 Hour.

Semester course. 1 credit. Corequisites: SLWK 442 and 495. Typically to be taken in the last semester of the student's senior year. This course serves as an academic culmination of the undergraduate social work program. The student will compile a portfolio of B.S.W. program academic materials, complete a professional self-assessment and resume and participate in the development of a comprehensive generalist intervention plan with regard to a specified social problem.