

What can I do with a degree in... **SOCIAL WORK?**

What is **SOCIAL WORK?**

Social workers help people solve and cope with problems in their everyday lives. Clinical social workers diagnose and treat mental, behavioral, and emotional issues. WCU's Department of Social Work offers undergraduate (BSW) and graduate degrees (MSW) that present students with a variety of career options from working in child welfare, integrated care, mental health, and substance abuse settings to working in private practice, non-profit, and social service administration.

The undergraduate Social Work Program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and its principal educational goal is to prepare students for beginning generalist social work practice.

What are the **DEGREE OPTIONS?**

Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.)
Master of Social Work (M.S.W.)

What is the **UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION PROCESS?**

A student's declaration of a major in social work does not guarantee admission to the BSW program. Students will be invited to apply to the program once they have met all criteria to do so. Students initially declare Pre-Social Work (PSWK) as a major and are eligible to apply and be formally admitted to the Social Work major when they have:

- Attained an overall 2.8 or higher GPA
- Completed a minimum of 35 credit hours including SOCW 151: An Introduction to Social Work
- Completed or are currently en-



rolled in SOCW 251: Social Policy and SOCW 253: Interviewing

- Acknowledge and illustrate their capacity to meet the Professional and Technical Standards of the Social Work Program.

Students are required to maintain an overall GPA of 2.8 or better each semester in order to remain in the program.

What **JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?**

Our graduates enjoy a wide variety of careers within the Social Work field including School-Based Social Worker, Child Protection Services, Youth Services, Health and Wellness Education, Mental Health Counseling, Refugee Services, Community Development, Social Planning, Foster Care Social Worker, Clinical Social Worker, Parole and Probation Officer, Marriage and Family Therapist, Rehabilitation Counselor, Career Counselor, Substance

Abuse Counselor, Behavioral Disorder Counselor, Social Activist, and General Therapist. Please note some professions may require a Master of Social Work degree. Please see the [Master of Social Work program](#) for more information.

Who employs **SOCIAL WORK** graduates?

Our graduates work in a variety of environments including hospitals, medical centers, nursing homes and senior centers, social service agencies, child welfare agencies, adoption agencies, military services agencies, private and public schools, Head Start and day care centers, group homes, counseling centers, international aid agencies, public health agencies, federal, state, and local governments, prison/courts/police/victim services, and corporation/business/labor unions.

MAJOR MAP

How to use this map: Review the four categories and suggestions of activities and when you should consider engaging in them. Remember, these are just suggestions! There is a fillable space for you to add in any other ideas you have to set yourself up for success in life after college.

1st YEAR

2nd YEAR

EXCEL IN ACADEMICS

Most students will focus on liberal studies and general electives their first year. Check out the [8-semester plan](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

In addition to completing liberal studies requirements, students consider Social Work should also enroll in Introduction to Social Work (SOCW 151), Social Issues, Policies and Programs, (SOCW 251,) and Interviewing and Ethics (SOCW 253) before applying to the program. Check out the [8-Semester Plan and consult with your advisor](#).

GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Check out [WCU's DegreePlus program](#) and choose which events in any of the four categories you want to attend. Categories include: Professionalism, Teamwork, Leadership, or Cultural Responsiveness.

If you are thinking about attending a graduate school, start engaging in hands-on experiences required in professional school admissions.

See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to JobCat via your MyWCU.

Engage deeper with [DegreePlus](#); choose an additional competency to complete

BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Connect with the [Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning](#) and ask about the [Spark Award](#), a program aimed to encourage and recognize students who are connected with their community.

Develop deeper relationships with the organizations for which you volunteer. Ask for special projects or responsibilities that you can highlight on a resume.

Join the student Social Work Club.

If you want to [study abroad](#), this is a good year to have that experience. You might also consider a global internship such as [World Endeavors](#) and [GoAbroad](#).

PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER COLLEGE

Further explore your career options or career interests using the [Center for Career and Professional Development's](#) online resources, [Focus 2](#), and [Onet Online](#).

Check out [CCPD's list of career-building activities](#) and participate in an activity this year, such as attending Career Fair Plus.

Connect with a career counselor early on to explore opportunities and experiences you can do while in college to further develop your professional resume.

Start a spreadsheet of graduate schools you wish to apply to in a few years and review their admission requirements so that you are aware of the expectations.

Looking for a minor? Consider these options:

Communication
Criminal Justice
Inclusive Education

Philosophy
Psychology
Sociology

3rd YEAR

Students in the Social Work program will focus heavily on Social Work courses their third year Research and Evaluation (SOCW 335), Diversity (SOCW 402) and Case Management (SOCW 360). Be sure to check the [8-Semester Plan and your advisor](#) for more information.

Begin planning for your Social Work field placement.

Volunteer with relevant nonprofits such as [Eliada Homes, Community Action Opportunities, Haywood Pathways](#), and dive deeper into more responsibility.

Consider networking with professionals in your field at national or regional professional conferences such as the [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\) annual conference](#) or the [North Carolina Chapter of NASW](#)

Continue to build relationships and volunteer with area organizations in your field.

Connect with alumni in your field through [LinkedIn](#)

Visit the CCPD to hone your professional resume and cover letter. Apply for internships. Use [Big Interview](#) to learn more about professional interviews.

Schedule a visit to tour graduate schools of your choice, if applicable.

4th YEAR

Courses in your final year will continue to focus heavily on SOCW topics such as Community Practice (SOCW 364), Practice III: Interventions (SOCW 362), and Research II (SOCW 435). Students will complete their field practicum their final semester. Be sure to review the [8-semester plan](#), make an appointment with your advisor, complete your degree audit, and [apply for graduation!](#)

Investigate requirements for full-time jobs. Assess what skills or experiences you're lacking and invest time in seeking additional opportunities such as certification programs, classes, or professional development workshops during your last year to fill that gap. Connect with your faculty advisor or career counselor.

Join professional organizations such as the [National Association of Social Workers](#).

Network with employers and non-profits at the annual Career Fair Plus event, held each October and February.

Apply to graduate schools, if applicable.

Look for and apply for jobs between 4 and 6 months before graduation.

Polish your resume, cover letter, and interview skills by visiting the [CCPD](#).

Internships are still the number-one educational experience employers look for in a recent college graduate resume. (Chronicle of Higher Education's study on 59,000 employers)

DID YOU KNOW?

MORE INFORMATION

FIELD WORK Information

Field practicum is a vibrant component of professional learning and will provide students with excellent experience through “the signature pedagogy of Social Work Education.” The WCU Social Work Department has 125 community partners, which are agencies providing many professional services to a wide range of clients. Students can develop and master skills in areas of case management, individual, family and group clinical practice, integrated health care, community advocacy and outreach, resource brokering, mediation and research. Community agencies, hospitals, substance abuse treatment centers, in-patient mental health units, homeless shelters, schools, area agencies on aging, and health and human services with the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indian are examples of the types of settings where students will learn and practice. [Learn more about WCU’s field work requirements](#)

SKILLS LEARNED in the classroom

The core competencies will center on developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes such as:

- leadership
- person-first language
- problem solving
- written and oral communication
- professional teamwork
- curiosity and creativity
- critical evaluation
- research skills
- strengths-based perspective
- active listening
- empathy
- cultural humility

KNOWLEDGE Base

This program will prepare students to:

- Apply knowledge of social work ethical principles to guide professional practice
- Think critically to inform and communicate professional judgments
- Engage in diversity and difference in practice
- Advance human rights and social, and economic justice
- Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research
- Apply theories and knowledge of human behavior and the social environment
- Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services
- Recognize and respond to the changing contexts that shape all levels of practice
- Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

Professional RESOURCES

- National Association of Social Workers: www.naswdc.org
- Council of Social Work Education: www.cswe.org

QUESTIONS?

For questions, please call the Social Work program at 828-227-7112 or visit socialwork.wcu.edu.

To schedule an appointment with a career counselor, contact the Center for Career and Professional Development, 828-227-7133 or careerservices@wcu.edu.