
Social Work

[Dr. Lisa E. McGuire](#), Department Head

Phone: (540) 568-6980

Email: mcguirle@jmu.edu

Location: Health and Behavioral Studies Building, Room 2084

Website: <http://www.jmu.edu/socwork>

Professors

B.J. Bryson, L. McGuire

Associate Professors

C. Hunter, N. Poe, H. Yeom

Assistant Professor

K. Myers

Lecturer

L. Trull

[Print Version of Catalog](#) ■

Department of Social Work

Mission Statement

The Department of Social Work prepares generalist social workers committed to strengthening community life for diverse individuals, families and organizations and promoting social justice through advocacy and action. It offers a program, accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, which leads to the B.S.W. degree. In addition, the department offers minors in family studies, gerontology and nonprofit studies.

The Department of Social Work is committed to the following:

- Preparing students to work effectively in a broad spectrum of social service agencies by providing an environment geared to addressing poverty, multiple forms of oppression, social injustice and other human rights violations.
- Preparing students for advanced academic study by providing an environment geared toward achieving academic excellence.
- Advancing excellence and integrity through the development of high quality academic programs as well as contributions to professional knowledge and service.
- Responding to the professional and the university's service region by providing supportive services and continuing education opportunities.

Career Opportunities and Marketable Skills

Career Opportunities

- Aging services
- Child and adult day care centers
- Children and youth services
- Community action agencies
- Criminal justice agencies
- Domestic violence programs
- Family service agencies
- Homeless shelters
- Hospitals/home health programs/hospices
- Income maintenance programs
- Legal services agencies
- Behavioral and mental health services
- Services to people with developmental disabilities
- Nursing homes and residential communities
- Public child welfare/child protection services
- Residential treatment facilities
- School programs
- Substance abuse programs
- Vocational rehabilitation services

Marketable Skills

- Advocacy
- Assessment
- Case management/brokering
- Communication
- Community outreach
- Crisis intervention
- Group facilitation
- Intake/referral
- Intervention/service planning
- Interviewing
- Networking
- Policy analysis
- Problem solving
- Program development/evaluation
- Recording/writing
- Relationship-building/interpersonal
- Research
- Service provision
- Team/group/collaborative

Co-curricular Activities and Organizations

The Social Work Organization (SWO) offers the opportunity to socialize, meet professionals and volunteer in the community. Membership in SWO is open to any student interested in a career in the helping professions.

Phi Alpha Honor Society for Social Work's purpose is to promote academic excellence among social work students. Membership in Phi Alpha is by invitation to students with a minimum of nine credit hours in required social work course, holding a major grade point average (GPA) of 3.25 and a cumulative GPA of 3.0.

National Association of Social Workers serves the critical and diverse needs of the entire social work profession. The National Association of Social Workers-Program Unit, a student unit of this nationally recognized organization, is under the auspices of the Whitney Young District, Virginia NASW. Membership is open to all social work majors and provides opportunities for both social and professional enrichment.

Admission Requirements

Social Work Program

Students may declare a major in social work at any time; however, they must apply for admission to the social work program the semester following completion of [SOWK 287](#), Introduction to Social Work and [SOWK 288](#), Social Welfare. For unconditional admittance, students must have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 with no single grade lower than a "C" (2.0) in [SOWK 287](#) and [SOWK 288](#), and have completed the 20 hours of community service work required in [SOWK 287](#). Students are evaluated on the basis of community service and life experiences, academic performance, communication skills, work related habits, ability to work with others, motivation, value orientation and career plans. Students must complete this process or admission to upper-level courses will be restricted. See the Social Work Handbook or the social work website for guidelines.

Applications are reviewed by two or more social work faculty members who make a recommendation to the head of the social work department. The student will be notified of the decision in writing. Decisions are to admit, to admit conditionally, not to admit or to defer decision. You will have one opportunity per semester to resubmit the application. If you fail to submit or resubmit a document that is still incorrect, you will be required to wait until the next semester deadline to resubmit. While this could potentially slow your progression in the major, it acknowledges your role of accountability in the process, a quality that will be essential for professional practice.

If admitted conditionally, the conditions for acceptance will be described. If the decision is deferred, the student will be notified in writing as to why. If not admitted, the student may appeal the decision to the head of the Department of Social Work.

Field Practicum Application

Students admitted into the social work practicum are seniors who have completed the core social work requirements, with no grade lower than a "C" (2.0) in [SOWK](#)

[287](#), [SOWK 288](#), [SOWK 305](#), [SOWK 317](#), [SOWK 320](#), [SOWK 335](#), [SOWK 465](#), [SOWK 466](#) and [SOWK 467](#), have an overall GPA of 2.0, and who have completed 50 community service hours related to human services after [SOWK 287](#), are eligible for field practicum.

During the field practicum, students spend four days a week for one semester completing a minimum of 472 hours of directed field practice. Students seeking admission to [SOWK 481](#), Social Work Field Practicum I and [SOWK 482](#), Social Work Field Practicum II must complete a field placement application and interview with the director of field placement. The field placement director, with the assistance of social work faculty members, will determine the acceptance and placement of students.

See the Social Work Student Handbook or the social work website for the field application, documentation of community service guidelines and guidelines for the placement process. Students must have no grade lower than a “C” (2.0) in [SOWK 481](#), [SOWK 482](#) and [SOWK 494](#), which is taken concurrently with the field practicum.

Degree and Major Requirements

Bachelor of Social Work

Degree Requirements

Required Courses	Credit Hours
General Education courses ¹	41
Social Work core courses	43
Social Work electives	6
Electives	31-34
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1 The General Education program contains a set of requirements each student must fulfill. The number of credit hours necessary to fulfill these requirements may vary.

Major Requirements

Core Courses	Credit Hours
SOWK 287 . Introduction to Social Work	3
SOWK 288 . Social Welfare	3
SOWK 305 . Social Work Research Methods	3
SOWK 317 . Skills for Generalist Social Work	3
SOWK 320 . Human Behavior in the Social Environment	3
SOWK 335 . Social Policy	3

SOWK 465 . Social Work Practice in Mezzo Systems	3
SOWK 466 . Social Work Practice in Micro Systems	3
SOWK 467 . Social Work Practice in Macro Systems	3
SOWK 481 . Social Work Field Practicum I	6
SOWK 482 . Social Work Field Practicum II	6
SOWK 494 . Senior Seminar in Social Work	3
SOWK Electives: Elective courses are offered on a rotating basis.	6
IPE 415 . Ethical Decision Making in Healthcare: An Interprofessional Approach	1
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The minimum requirement for the B.S.W. degree is completion of the General Education requirements, 42 credit hours of core social work courses, prerequisite courses as specified in course descriptions and elective hours, six of which must be in social work, for a total of 120 credit hours. If a grade of "C" (2.0) or above is not achieved the first time a social work course is taken, the student may repeat the course only once. All social work majors are expected to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics. Additionally, all majors participate in social work student outcome assessment measures.

Recommended Schedule for Majors

First Year	Credit Hours
Cluster One: Skills for the 21st Century	9-12
General Education courses ¹	18-21
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Second Year	Credit Hours
SOWK 287 . Introduction to Social Work	3
SOWK 288 . Social Welfare	3
General Education courses ¹	10-13
Electives	11-14
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Third Year	Credit Hours
SOWK 305 . Social Work Research Methods ²	3
SOWK 317 . Skills for Generalist Social Work	3
SOWK 320 . Human Behavior in the Social Environment ²	3
SOWK 335 . Social Policy ²	3
SOWK elective	3
Electives	15
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Fourth Year	Credit Hours
SOWK 465 . Social Work Practice in Mezzo Systems ²	3
SOWK 466 . Social Work Practice in Micro Systems ²	3
SOWK 467 . Social Work Practice in Macro Systems ²	3
IPE 415 . Ethical Decision-Making in Health Care	1
SOWK elective	3
Elective	3
SOWK 481 . Social Work Field Practicum I ²	6
SOWK 482 . Social Work Field Practicum II ²	6
SOWK 494 . Senior Seminar ²	3
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1 Certain General Education courses may also meet prerequisite requirements for social work courses. Pay close attention to General Education requirements when selecting the following courses: [MATH 220](#), Cluster 3; [ANTH 195](#), [POSC 225](#) and [SOCI 110](#), Cluster 4; [PSYC 101](#) or [PSYC 160](#), Cluster 5.

2 Check prerequisite requirements.

Minor Requirements

Family Studies Minor

Minor Adviser: [Zanetta Ford, fordzs@jmu.edu](mailto:fordzs@jmu.edu)

The cross disciplinary minor in family studies is designed for undergraduates seeking enhancement of their major, desiring to increase understanding of self and relationships, and seeking to make a positive contribution to society. For a full description of the requirements for this minor, see Cross Disciplinary Programs.

Gerontology Minor

Minor Adviser: [B.J. Bryson, brysonbj@jmu.edu](mailto:brysonbj@jmu.edu)

The cross disciplinary minor in gerontology is designed for any undergraduate major desiring a concentration of study of aging for personal understanding or career preparation. For a full description of the requirements for this minor, see Cross Disciplinary Programs.

Nonprofit Studies Minor

Minor Adviser: [Karen Ford, fordka@jmu.edu](mailto:fordka@jmu.edu)

The nonprofit studies minor prepares students from a variety of disciplines to understand the unique role of nonprofit organizations in American society today. Emphasis is placed on history, theory, legal issues and management topics. The minor includes a capstone seminar and a field experience in a nonprofit agency with the focus to be determined in conjunction with the adviser. For a full description of the requirements for this minor, see Cross Disciplinary Programs.