

Social Work Education

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The profession of social work is dedicated to meeting the diverse social service needs of special populations of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. As a practice oriented profession, social work deals with social concerns that range from societal oppression to people's emotional/behavioral problems. The social work practitioner helps at risk populations which typically include the poor and homeless, abused/neglected children and adults, people of color, women, recent refugees, chronically mentally ill, developmentally disabled, physically ill or disabled, substance abusers, criminal offenders, and the aged.

In focusing on disadvantaged groups, social workers use a range of traditional and non-traditional methods to promote well-being, personal growth, and social justice, e.g., client and systems policy advocating, brokering, consulting individual, family, and group counseling/psychotherapy, mediating, researching, supervising, and teaching.

While the discipline of social work is deeply rooted in a rich, 100-year history of service, what social workers "do" is no longer traditionally defined. The role of the social worker is constantly expanding into innovative service fields wherever a compassionate response to human need is indicated.

The Department of Social Work Education offers two degree programs to educate beginning and advanced social work practitioners who can meet complex client needs within a diversity of public and private human service settings and who can perform in a variety of roles using multiple social work practice methodologies. The Bachelor of Arts degree program prepares students for beginning generalist social work practice as well as for graduate study in the human service field, including social work. The Master of Social Work prepares the learner for autonomous social work practice at multiple levels of intervention as well as for doctoral study in social work and related human service arenas. Both the B.A. and the M.S.W. programs are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.



Faculty and Facilities

The faculty of the department represent a wide spectrum of theoretical orientations and approaches to professional social work practice. All have substantive practice experience and many have extensive research and social policy interests. In addition to the on-campus facilities of the university, the department uses the San Joaquin Valley's unique urban-rural configuration of people, agribusiness and social-political institutions, and the accompanying host of social service needs as the setting for in-the-field learning. Numerous public and private social service agencies in our region make their facilities and professional social work staff available for the internship/practicum element of the department's program. A representative sample of these settings include: Atascadero State Hospital; California State Department of Corrections, Human Resources Development, Social Services, Youth Authority; Fresno Community Hospital; St. Agnes Hospital; Valley Children's Hospital; Veterans Administration Hospital; Vietnam Outreach Center; and Area Agency on Aging. Internship/practicum experiences are also available in the schools, as well as the mental health, probation, and social services departments in the counties of Fresno, Kings, Madera, and Tulare.

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B.A. in Social Work

M.S.W., Master of Social Work

Certificate in Alcohol/Drug Studies

Certificate in Cross-Cultural Competency

Career Opportunities

Graduates from the B.A. program typically find employment as social workers in county or state departments of social services; private agencies offering individual, group, or community services; poverty and mental health programs; social rehabilitation programs; human resources development programs for services to the handicapped, aged, and special population groups, medical and hospital programs, correctional programs, primary, secondary and higher education settings, and employee assistance programs in businesses and governmental agencies.

M.S.W. graduates can expect to hold additional responsibilities, but more advanced clinical, case management, training, administrative, program development or policy making/administrative positions in a broad spectrum of human service organizations.

The U.S. Department of Labor *Occupational Outlook Handbook 1994-95* projects the employment of social workers to increase faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2005 in response to the needs of a growing and aging population, especially in the Central California region. Special mention must be made regarding increased job opportunities in child welfare, mental health, substance abuse programs, school systems, and services for the elderly, as well as increased opportunities in rural areas.