



STUDENT HANDBOOK

Niagara University Social Work Department



SEPTEMBER 25, 2018

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HISTORY OF NIAGARA UNIVERSITY'S ACCREDITED BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK (BSW) DEPARTMENT

The social work program was initiated and developed by two professors in the Sociology Department, Dr. Roslyn Gerard and Dr. Stuart B. Whitney, in the early 1970's. At this time, many sociology students expressed interest in careers in social work and there was a strong need in the community for child welfare practitioners. At that time, students only had the opportunity to enroll in sociology electives with a social work practice emphasis. These courses were often taught by faculty with a Master's in Social Work degree which strengthened student interest in the profession. The results of a feasibility study among sociology alumni, current students, and community agencies strongly indicated that the development of a separate social work degree was desired and that the program would serve an unmet community need.

In 1974, the late sociology professor, Dr. Nicholas Caggiano, submitted a proposal to the University's Board of Trustees to create a new social work degree program that would be housed within the sociology department. There was great enthusiasm in the university community for this initiative because the establishment of a professional degree program would serve and assist the poor and oppressed in the surrounding communities and it would help fulfill the University's Vincentian mission.

The proposal was approved and in 1975 Steve Knezevich, M.S.W. became the first social work program chair. Two other faculty members joined him, Larry Mallakie, M.S.W., and Ann Scheffer, M.S.W., who was appointed as the Field Coordinator. Approximately 20 students enrolled in the program.

Later in May of 1976, the social work program was approved by the New York State Education Department as a registered degree program. In 1980, under leadership of Professor John Hickey, the social work program became an independent academic department within the College of Arts and Sciences. This autonomy was perceived as an asset as the new program sought to meet the standards for accreditation of BSW programs established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Dr. Roslyn Gerard was the main author of the first self-study.

The social work department was successfully accredited by CSWE in January of 1982. The NU BSW Program has been fully accredited ever since, most recently being reaccredited in 2012. The program will undergo review by CSWE for reaffirmation in 2020.

Over time, the department has undergone many changes. The number of students enrolled in the department has expanded (on average 75 students each year). This number includes traditional and non-traditional students and American and Canadian students, who attend on either a full-time or part-time basis.

The social work department has three-full time faculty members, all of whom have Ph.D.'s and M.S.W.'s. In 2008 the University appointed a "professional in residence", to assist with the practicum experience in the department. The social work department was awarded one of those full time positions and the position is filled by the Coordinator of Field Practicum.

University and the Social Work Department's Mission Statements (EPAS 1.0, 1.0.1, & 1.0.2)

The University and its Mission

Niagara University educates its students and enriches their lives through programs in the liberal arts and through career preparation, informed by the Catholic and Vincentian traditions.

Enabling goals:

As a university, Niagara prepares its students for positions of responsibility in the professions and in the broader society. Through teaching, research and service in programs of study at the baccalaureate and graduate levels, Niagara seeks to develop within its students a passion for learning.

The university's commitment to the Catholic faith provides perspective in the search for truth and meaning. Catholic doctrine and its moral code inspire respect for the God-given dignity of every person and all faith traditions. Students experience the vision and reality of a gospel-based, value-centered education.

As a Vincentian university, Niagara draws inspiration from St. Vincent de Paul, who organized his contemporaries to respond compassionately to people's basic needs. Continuing this tradition, Niagara seeks to inspire its students to serve all members of society, especially the poor and oppressed, in local communities and in the larger world.

Overall, through its curricular and extracurricular programs, Niagara University seeks to develop the whole person, mind, body, heart and soul, for the benefit of one's personal and professional life.

Niagara University Department of Social Work Mission Statement (EPAS 2.0.1)

The Social Work Department at Niagara University is committed to the creation of a just and compassionate world, where human dignity and cultural diversity are restored, preserved and celebrated, and where social and economic choices and opportunities are fairly distributed among all members of our diverse and interconnected world. Education for social work is accomplished through a curriculum that combines a solid liberal arts perspective with social work foundation courses. Within the social work curriculum, our special concern is for poor and at-risk populations living in our region and beyond.

Given this commitment, the mission of the Social Work Department at Niagara University is the preparation of competent generalist social work practitioners capable of empowering practice with diverse client systems of all sizes and types, who act ethically, who think critically, who participate actively within the community, and who are committed to social and economic justice. Consistent with the Vincentian tradition of Niagara University, students and faculty engage in social service and social action activities to benefit at-risk populations and impoverished communities. In addition, social work

faculty acts on the mission through the development of knowledge for social work and as social work leaders at university, local, state, and national levels.

The Social Work Department's Goals (EPAS 1.0.3 & 2.0.1)

Within the liberal arts tradition and following the Missions of Niagara University and the Social Work Program, the program aims to:

1. Prepare competent generalist practitioners as confirmed by demonstrated competence in 9 CSWE required competencies and 31 related associated behaviors;
2. Prepare graduates who are grounded in liberal arts and who integrate social work knowledge, values and skills with diverse client systems of various sizes and types;
3. Prepare graduates with special skills and knowledge to empower populations-at-risk and those living in poverty;
4. Provide a foundation for graduates to demonstrate commitment to social and economic justice through active citizenship, social policy activism, and through improving social service delivery systems;
5. Provide a foundation for students to demonstrate concern for those living in poverty and other at-risk populations in service learning, field practicum, and extracurricular service activities;
6. Prepare graduates for employment in entry-level generalist social work practice and graduate education.

Departmental Educational Policies (EPAS 3.0-3.2.7)

Social Work Department Social Media Policy

This policy provides guidance for students, staff, and faculty of the Niagara University Social Work Department for the use of social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a contemporaneous manner.

The following principles apply to professional use of social media on behalf of the Niagara University Social Work Department as well as personal use of social media when referencing Niagara University and the Social Work Department.

- Students need to know and adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics, NASW, ASWB, CSWE , & CSWA Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice (available via links on the NU Social Work Web pages), and other Niagara University policies and procedures when using social media in reference to Niagara University.
- Students should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their images, as well as Niagara University's image. The information that students post or publish may be public information for a long time.
- Students should be aware that Niagara University may observe content and information made available by students through social media. Students should use their best judgment in posting material that is neither inappropriate nor harmful to Niagara University, the Social Work Department, its employees, alumni, or current students.
- Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment.
- Students **are not to** publish post or release any information that is considered confidential or not public. If there are questions about what is considered confidential, students should **avoid posting** it and check with their advisor, NU Human Resources Department and/or the Department's Program Director.
- Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. Students should refer these inquiries to the Department's Program Director who will involve authorized spokespersons.
- If students find/encounter a situation while using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, students should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of their advisor or the Department's Program Director.
- Students need to get appropriate permission before referring to or posting images of current or former students, faculty members, NU employees, vendors or suppliers. Additionally, students should get

appropriate permission to use a third party's copyrights, copyrighted material, trademarks, service marks or other intellectual property.

- Subject to applicable law, online activity that violates Niagara University's or NASW's or other appropriate Code of Conduct or Code of Ethics may subject a student to disciplinary action.
- It is highly recommended that students keep Niagara University related social media accounts separate from personal accounts, if practical.

Social Media and Field Practicum

The following guidelines are specifically related to the field practicum:

- **Consider Field Placement Policies**, and ask if your field site has a policy on social media? If so, review this policy with your field instructor. If not, what expectation does the agency have regarding the use of social media?
- **Any Negative posts/comments** about clients, your field placement or work environment are inappropriate and disrespectful.
- **Discussions about clients are always off-limit**, even when speaking generally. Such discussions are a breach of confidentiality, a primary professional value of social workers. Additionally, your group of friends could easily include an acquaintance of your client, especially in our increasingly inter-connected world.
- **Avoid taking and sharing photographs (identified or blurred) or content that could violate client confidentiality.** Observe all state and federal regulations such as HIPAA as well as agency, department, and university policies.
- **Avoid using social media during class or in field settings**, unless part of the curriculum or the agency placement. In general, your time in field and the resources provided to you in your field placement are to be used for field related matters. Before using social media communication tools on behalf of your agency, be sure to seek approval of any messages or posts. Be careful not to endorse or promote a product, cause or position without prior approval of the agency. If you have personal sites, it is best to maintain them on your own time using your own computer.

Social Media and Faculty

- In General, faculty will refrain from "friending" you on social media for as long as they have any oversight or supervisory responsibility toward you; typically 3-6 years.
- Faculty adhere to the social media guidelines in the NASW Standards as well as to NU Policy and Procedures.

Educational Policy 3.0—Diversity

The program's expectation for diversity is reflected in its learning environment, which provides the context through which students learn about differences, to value and respect diversity, and develop a commitment to cultural humility. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/ spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. The learning environment consists of the program's institutional setting; selection of field education settings and their clientele; composition of program advisory or field committees; educational and social resources; resource allocation; program leadership; speaker series, seminars, and special programs; support groups; research and other initiatives; and the demographic make-up of its faculty, staff, and student body.

Accreditation Standard 3.0—Diversity

3.0.1 The program describes the specific and continuous efforts it makes to provide a learning environment that models affirmation and respect for diversity and difference.

3.0.2 The program explains how these efforts provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

The goals and mission of Niagara University create the overarching learning context for Niagara's social work students. Catholic doctrine inspires respect for the God-given dignity of every person and all faith traditions. Continuing in the tradition of St. Vincent de Paul, the University seeks to inspire students to respond compassionately to the needs of all people, especially those who are poor and oppressed. Consistent with the Catholic mission, the University has strong policies in place that prohibit the discrimination of any individual in educational and employment opportunities because of race, gender, national origin, religious preference, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a veteran. The intent of the University is to create a welcoming community and a place of deep respect for all its members.

Niagara University has made specific and continuous efforts to create a learning environment, which respects all persons and viewpoints regarding diversity and its influences on students, faculty, administrators and staff. It is critical to the social work faculty that students feel respected, affirmed and supported and that they are provided with learning opportunities in the classroom, in the agency settings, and in organized activities on the campus.

3.0.3 The program describes specific plans to continually improve the learning environment to affirm and support persons with diverse identities.

The Social Work Department's Outcome Assessment Plan is described in detail later in this manual (see pages....). Included in the Department's Outcome Assessment is an ongoing evaluation of CSWE Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice along with three related component behaviors:

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences;
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies;

Data collected on competency 2 and related behaviors is analyzed annually by the faculty (see Outcomes Assessment reports on the Department's main web pages) and is used to evaluate the success of our learning environment and pedagogy as they relate to diversity. In turn, the analysis is used to make continuous improvements.

Educational Policy 3.1—Student Development

The following sections describe the Department's policies and procedures for admission to the Social Work major (EPAS 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.4, & 3.1.5), Advisement, retention, and termination (EPAS 3.1.6, 3.1.7, & 3.1.8), and student participation in the operations of the Department (EPAS 3.1.9 & 3.1.10)

Admissions (EPAS 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, & 3.1.5)

Niagara University Social Work students are separated into two groups: Pre-professional Foundation students and Professional Sequence students. The transition from Pre-professional to Professional Sequence occurs during the fall semester of the student's junior year. The SWK 310 (Basic Helping Skills) course is used to complete an overall assessment & evaluation of student progress and readiness for movement forward into the professional sequence of courses.

Admission to the Social Work Program (EPAS 3.1.2)

Declaring a Social Work Major and Initial Interview

All prospective social work majors have an initial interview with the Chair of the Department of Social Work or a designated faculty member prior to being officially recognized as a social work major by the department and before enrolling in any classes beyond SWK 100 (Introduction to Social Work). Freshman students are usually interviewed during the admissions process or during the summer orientation days. However, incoming freshmen can enroll in SWK 100 without an interview. All students must be interviewed before taking any further social work courses, excepting social work electives.

Transfer students meet with the Chairperson during the application process.

During this initial interview, prospective students have the opportunity to discuss their interest in the social work profession, they can share their volunteer experiences as a helper and their academic accomplishments. There is plenty of time to ask questions about the program at Niagara University. Students who successfully complete the initial interview are allowed to register for social work courses in the pre-professional sequence. This includes the SWK 310 (Basic Helping Skills) course. SWK 310 is the primary gatekeeping course (see Admission to the Professional Sequence).

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ADMISSION TO THE PROFESSIONAL SEQUENCE

The social work profession is not suited for everyone. Students who are accepted as social work majors are initially in the pre-professional sequence. This includes transfer students who may enroll in SWK 310 (Basic Helping Skills). During this phase, students are strongly encouraged to explore their level of commitment to, ability for, and ideological compatibility with social work practice by taking courses in the Pre-professional Foundation Sequence. Indeed, an intended purpose of the social work classes included in the Pre-professional Foundation Sequence (namely, SWK 100 - Intro to Social Work; SWK 200 - History of Social Services and Policy; and SWK 210 Diversity and Social Justice, SWK 211 & 212 - Human Behavior and the Social Environment, I & II and a Social Work Elective) is to guide the student through a process of self-examination. This is accomplished by the presentation of course content which features the nature, scope and focus of social work practice; the value-based history and traditions of the profession; the interface of practice-related concerns with the human person's developmental progression from birth to death; and provisions for both observation and service experiences in local agencies throughout the first two years of study. Individually and collectively, these experiences are designed to help students assess their degree of fit with the social work profession. Transfer students have often completed a similar pre-professional sequence, but may also be challenged to fully explore their true interest in and compatibility for social work during their first semester in the program.

The pre-professional social work student that is a candidate for progression through the professional foundation sequence must demonstrate that they can meet the academic and professional performance standards.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS TO THE PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATION SEQUENCE (Accreditation Standard 3.1.1 & 3.1.2)

SWK 310 (Basic Helping Skills) is offered only in the fall semester. Throughout the fall semester, while enrolled in SWK 310, students will complete a series of assignments (see below) that form their Portfolio of Competence (POC). Performance on these 13 assignments along with faculty observations of the student's performance in class and in other situations (e.g., annual poverty simulation, work on various student committees, involvement in Student Social Work Association, and service learning) are used to evaluate/rate each student on each of the 9 competencies and 31 related behaviors (see rating form below). All four members of the faculty evaluate all students. In addition, students will complete Appendix 14 of the Social Work Skills Workbook (Cournoyer, 2017): Self-Assessment of Proficiency in the ASWB Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (Bachelor's Level). More information is provided by your SWK 310 Instructor.

At a faculty meeting held in December each student's readiness to move forward is discussed. Students are not expected to be competent at this point in their development, but rather to show good progress and potential to become competent (see outcomes assessment and the Senior Portfolio/Capstone requirements for more information) while enrolled in the Professional Sequence of courses.

There are four potential outcomes to the faculty assessment of readiness to move forward:

1. Student is ready to move forward without any concerns;

2. Faculty have concerns, but feel the student can make progress and should be allowed to move forward. In these cases, a specific plan for improvement in the areas of concern is developed with the student. The student will then work with a member of the faculty (usually his/her advisor) to address areas of concern;

3. Significant concerns that make attaining competence challenging and potentially unlikely. In these cases, the student is not typically allowed to move forward until some or all of the areas of significant concern are addressed. A specific plan for improvement in the areas of concern is developed with the student. This plan might include repeating courses or other types of academic remediation and may also include counseling or other interventions that focus on non-academic areas. The student will work with a member of the faculty (usually his/her advisor) who will monitor the student's progress. Other options, e.g., changing majors, taking some time off, etc. may also be discussed/advised;

4. Unable to move forward/dismissal from the Social Work major. We hope this to be a rare decision, but in some situations a student may be so far away from competence in many areas as to make graduating as a competent beginning generalist social worker unrealistic. While we will make every effort to help students succeed, we also have an obligation to clients and agencies to graduate competent professional social workers.

Portfolio of Competence/Application to the Professional Sequence Assignments:

1. Reflections on the Mission of Social Work
 - a. Includes reflection on personal commitment to the mission of social work
2. Reflections on Professionalism
3. Reflections of Critical Thinking and Life-Long Learning
4. Reflections on Diversity and Difference; Human Rights; Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice; and Policy–Practice
5. Reflections on Social Work Values and Ethical Decision Making
6. Reflections on Talking and Listening: The Basic Interpersonal Skills
7. Reflections on Preparing
8. Reflections on Beginning
9. Reflections on Exploring
10. Reflections on Assessing
11. Reflections on Contracting
12. Reflections on Working and Evaluating
13. Reflections on Ending

The SWK 310 instructor grades these assignments. Students **MUST** score a minimum grade of 80% on 10 of the 13 assignments **AND** have a final average of 80% or better on all 13 assignments. In some cases, a given student may be offered the opportunity to redo some of the POC assignments.

In addition, students will complete Appendix 14 of the Social Work Skills Workbook (Cournoyer, 2017): Self-Assessment of Proficiency in the ASWB Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (Bachelor's Level). More information is provided by your SWK 310 Instructor.

POC/Assessment of Readiness for movement into Professional Sequence Evaluation Form:

POC Assignment	Student
Reflections on the Mission of Social Work a. Includes reflection on personal commitment to the mission of social work	
Reflections on Professionalism	
Reflections of Critical Thinking and Life-Long Learning	
Reflections on Diversity and Difference; Human Rights; Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice; and Policy–Practice	
Reflections on Social Work Values and Ethical Decision Making	
Reflections on Talking and Listening: The Basic Interpersonal Skills	
Reflections on Preparing	
Reflections on Beginning	
Reflections on Exploring	
Reflections on Assessing	
Reflections on Contracting	
Reflections on Working and Evaluating	
Reflections on Ending	
Final average (Must by 80% or higher)	

Students **MUST** score a grade of 80% or better on 10 of the 13 POC assignments **AND** their final average for all 13 assignments **MUST** be 80% or higher.

CSWE Competency and related component behaviors rating form. Rate each student on each competency and related behavior using a 1-4 scale. 1=Serious Concerns; 2=Concerns, 3=Basic readiness —no major concerns, 4=No Concerns—student is ready to move forward.

See standards in the next section.

Student

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical & Professional Behavior

make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;	
use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;	
demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;	
use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes;	
use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior;	
Competency 2: Engage Diversity & Difference in Practice	
apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;	
present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences;	
apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies;	
Competency 3: Advance Human Rights & Social, Economic, & Environmental Justice	
Apply their understanding of social, economic, & environmental justice to advocate for human rights at individual & system levels;	
Engage in practices that advance social, economic, & environmental justice.	
Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research & Research-informed Practice	
use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;	
apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings;	
use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery;	
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice	
Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;	
assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;	
apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice;	

Competency 6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations & Communities	
apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies;	
use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies;	
Competency 7: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, & communities	
collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;	
apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;	
develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies;	
select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies;	
Competency 8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, & communities	
critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;	
apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;	
use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;	
negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies;	
facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals;	
Competency 9: Practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, & communities	
select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes.	
apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;	
critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and	
apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.	

B3.1.1 The program identifies the criteria it uses for admission to the social work program.

B3.1.2 The program describes the policies and procedures for evaluating applications and notifying applicants of the decision and any contingent conditions associated with admission.

B3.1.7 The program submits its policies and procedures for evaluating student's academic and professional performance, including grievance policies and procedures. The program describes how it informs students of its criteria for evaluating their academic and professional performance and its policies and procedures for grievance.

B3.1.8 The program submits its policies and procedures for terminating a student's enrollment in the social work program for reasons of academic and professional performance. The program describes how it informs students of these policies and procedures.

Academic and performance standards are built around the CSWE 9 competencies and 31 component behaviors.

Faculty members of the Department of Social Work have a duty to the social work profession to make appropriate efforts to ensure that its graduates are prepared for beginning generalist practice through the acquisition of social work knowledge, practice skills and ethics and that they are professionally, cognitively and emotionally competent in all 9 competencies identified by CSWE.

The faculty recognizes that the mastery of the knowledge, values, cognitive/affective and other skills for becoming a competent, ethical and effective social work professional is a gradual and ongoing process. However, a student in the Social Work Program who does not meet the department's academic and professional performance criteria will be evaluated to determine if he/she should continue in the program and, if so, what recommendations must be made to ensure that he/she is prepared for professional practice.

In order to be admitted into the Professional Foundation Sequence, the faculty evaluates the academic and professional performance in the following areas:

1. Student demonstrates that basic abilities necessary to acquire professionals' skills as established by the required CSWE 9 Competencies and related 31 component behaviors are present;

2. Student demonstrate commitment to the values and expectations of the social work profession, including the strengths perspective of social work practice and respect for diversity,

3. Student demonstrates that basic emotional and mental abilities necessary for performance in the program and professional practice are present;

4. Student demonstrates that basic professional performance skills necessary for work with clients and professional practice are present;

5. Student demonstrates that scholastic performance standards are met; *

6. Student demonstrates involvement in departmental and/or community activities;

7. In some cases, students are asked to provide up to three reference letters recommending admission, without reservations.

All four of the faculty comprise the Admissions Committee. Each candidate will be reviewed using the established criteria (see below) during a meeting specifically designated for the purpose of the admissions review. Following this meeting, the Chair of the Department or designee will notify all candidates in writing regarding their admission status in the Department of Social Work. The policy and procedures to appeal an unfavorable decision for acceptance into the major are described in the following sections.

Policies for Academic & Professional Standards

The pre-social work major that is a candidate for progression through the professional foundation sequence must demonstrate that they can meet the academic and professional performance standards.

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Evidence of meeting the academic and professional performance criteria includes the following:

1. Knowledge Standard: Sufficient basic abilities necessary to acquire professional skills.
 - a. Indicators:
 - i. GPA of at least 2.5;
 - ii. Demonstrates sufficient written and oral skills to comprehend information and communicate ideas and feelings;
 - iii. Demonstrates the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals;
 - iv. Demonstrates sufficient cognitive abilities such as the abilities to conceptualize, integrate and apply knowledge;
 - v. Exhibits sufficient motor and sensory abilities and participate in class and practicum placement with or without accommodations;
 - vi. Exhibits knowledge of how one's own values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships.
2. Skills Standard: Sufficient professional performance skills necessary for work with clients and professional practice.
 - a. Indicators:
 - i. Exhibits behaviors that are in compliance with CSWE's 9 competencies and 31 component behaviors;
 - ii. Works effectively with faculty, staff, peers and professionals;

- iii. Advocates for him/herself in an appropriate manner;
 - iv. Uses proper channels for conflict resolution;
 - v. Attends class regularly, observes deadlines, keeping appointments, accepts supervision and criticism in a positive manner;
 - vi. Shows awareness of self and is aware of how one is perceived by others;
 - vii. Shows willingness to examine and change behavior when it interferes with classroom performance, in working with clients and other professionals.
3. Professional Readiness: Sufficient integration of knowledge, skills, and commitment to the values, ethics and standards of the profession.
- a. Indicators:
 - i. Exhibits strong commitment to the goals of professional social work;
 - ii. Demonstrates adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics and or Canadian (CASW) Code of Ethics;
 - iii. Demonstrates a commitment to the advancement of the social work profession through activities such as research, continuing education and social action.
4. Personal Readiness: Sufficient emotional and mental abilities necessary for performance in the program and professional practice.
- a. Indicators:
 - i. Demonstrates ability to use appropriate coping mechanisms to deal effectively with current life stressors;
 - ii. Demonstrates appropriate self-care and develops supportive relationships with peers, friends, professionals and others;
 - iii. Uses sound judgment to handle and solve problems;
 - iv. Seeks and effectively uses help/counseling/support for medical or emotional problems that interfere with academic and/or professional performance.

5. *SCHOLASTIC PERFORMANCE

A QPA of 2.5 or better is required both in the social work major and for your overall University average to be considered for admission and to continue in the program. For example, having an overall QPA of 2.3 and a QPA of 2.6 in the social work major (or vice versa) means that you will need to take further action. Each semester the Program Director notifies all students in writing who (1) fall below the required GPA and (2) who fail to pass a course. A copy of the letter is given to the academic advisor.

It does not matter which semester your QPA, either in the Social Work Department or overall for the University, falls below 2.5 (i.e., it can be in the final semester of your senior year). Regardless of when it happens, one or more of the actions described below will be required.

Students should also make themselves aware of Niagara University's Grade Appeals Policies and Procedures, as well as the University's course retake policy and procedures. Information regarding both of these policies is available via MyNU.

Pre-Professional Sequence students whose QPA falls below 2.5

1. Retake courses. Please refer to the University guidelines for the retaking of courses and discuss your options with your academic advisor.
2. Students will be placed on probation by the Department for one semester, provided that you have a reasonable chance of obtaining a 2.5 or higher with a better overall academic performance in the upcoming semester.
3. Exploring with your advisor other academic options available to you.

Professional Sequence students whose QPA falls below 2.5

1. Retake courses. Please refer to the University guidelines for the retaking of courses.
2. Students will be placed on probation by the Department for one semester, provided that you have a reasonable chance of obtaining a 2.5 or higher with a better overall academic performance in the upcoming semester.
3. Exploring with your advisor other academic options available to you.
4. Students whose QPA falls below 2.5 at the conclusion of their final semester have to return to the University for an additional semester in order to retake or to take enough courses to raise their GPA to 2.5 or better.

Appeal Process for Students Denied Entry into the Professional Foundation Sequence

The Pre-Professional student deemed ineligible for acceptance into the social work major is referred to his/her academic advisor within the Department of Social Work to:

1. Construct a remedial plan of action;
2. Familiarize the student with two mechanisms of appeal;
3. Explore alternative career paths and facilitate referral to resources within the University, i.e. the Counseling and Career Development Center, Department Chairs of other majors, etc.

Every effort is made to help the student succeed.

To appeal an unfavorable decision, the candidate is entitled to a formal hearing with the faculty of the Department of Social Work. At this time, the faculty will review with the student the reasons for the denial of admission into the major. The candidate will be entitled to request reconsideration and to submit additional materials in support of such action (e.g. revised personal statement, additional letters of reference, change of grade updates). Collectively, the faculty will review the newly submitted materials and will notify the candidate in writing of their decision within 10 days of the Formal Appeal.

A candidate who remains dissatisfied with the results of the hearing may appeal this decision by consulting with the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. The Baccalaureate Program Director will furnish the Dean with copies of all pertinent application materials and will be available to meet with the Dean and the candidate upon request.

Policies and Procedures for Review of a Student in the Social Work Program for Reasons of Academic and/or Professional Performance (Accreditation Standard 3.1.8)

Throughout the semester, at regular faculty meetings, the Program Director and faculty members review the **academic progress** of students. Faculty members are alerted to a failing performance by a Social Work student in several ways:

- through the student's performance in Social Work courses or non- Social Work Courses,
- through written notification by the Records Office, of D and F mid-semester grades earned by Social Work students,
- through written notification from the Dean's office at the end of the semester; and through a student's own report to his or her faculty advisor.

Throughout the semester, during regular faculty meetings, the Program Director and faculty members review the **professional progress** of students. Faculty members are alerted in several ways to professional performance issues among students: through students' behaviors and demeanor in the classroom, in the field practicum setting, and through personal reports from faculty, field instructors, staff and students.

When concerns about a student's performance have been noted, either the Program Director or faculty designee (usually the student's academic adviser) contacts the student having academic and/or professional problems. Every effort is made to work with the student such that the challenges can be addressed. The Program Director and the academic advisor will make recommendations regarding the student's continuation in the Department of Social Work. In some situations, if the recommendation specifies a need for remediation and/or correction, a written plan of remediation and/or correction is often prepared and will be signed by the student (if the student agrees), the advisor, and the Program Director. This plan may include attendance at the Office for Academic Support (for academic tutoring) or participation in programs sponsored by the Counseling Center (time management and study skills groups, personal and/or group counseling, etc.). This document will be placed in the students' confidential file established for this purpose. Compliance and progress with the stated remedial plan is necessary for continuation in the Social Work Program. The Program Director will monitor the student's progress. If the resolution specifies indefinite or temporary withdrawal from the Social Work Department, a plan, often written, for consideration for reinstatement will be prepared, including the specified elapsed time before the student can reenter the Department. If a written plan has been

developed, it will be signed by the student, the advisor, and the Program Director and be placed in the student's confidential file.

Evaluation of student academic and professional performance in the Field Practicum occurs midway through the semester and again at the end of the semester. The Coordinator of Field Practicum and field instructors complete specific evaluation forms that evaluate a student's progress in the field. (See the Field Practicum Manual).

The Appeal Process

If the student does not agree that there is an academic and/or professional problem or does not agree with the proposed recommendation for remediation or correction, the student may, within 10 calendar days, request that the Program Director appoint a committee to review the issues raised and recommend a resolution. The committee consists of at least two full time social work faculty members (with the exception of the Program Director) or one full time and one part time social work faculty member, one field supervisor and one student. The student who is initiating the appeal chooses one of the social work faculty members. The Social Work Student Association selects the student representative.

The committee will conduct a hearing that addresses factual matters and perceptual differences surrounding the case. The committee may make one of the following recommendations:

1. The student will be allowed to continue their education in the program without consequences.
2. The student will be apprised of the specific problem(s) identified and will be advised concerning their remediation and/or correction.
3. The student will be required to withdraw temporarily or indefinitely from the program, for the reasons specified in writing. The decision of the committee will be presented to the student within 7 calendar days of the hearing. The student will be allowed a final appeal review of the social work program's decision to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Procedures for Termination from the Program related to Academic and/or Professional Performance. (Accreditation Standard 3.1.8)

When the remedial plan of action is unsuccessful due to a student's inability and/or unwillingness to meet the academic and/or professional performance standards, termination from the program may be initiated. Faculty, staff, field practicum instructors and/or students may present a written statement to the Program Director describing their concern that a student fails to meet the academic and/or professional performance standards. All information relevant to the unresolved problem(s) should be detailed as thoroughly as possible, including specification of the sources of the information presented.

The Program Director will notify the student and his/her academic advisor in writing that a termination process has been initiated. The Program Director will arrange a meeting with the student and his/her academic advisor to discuss evidence-requiring termination from the program. The program Director will call a meeting of all fulltime faculty to review the evidence submitted. In the event that the Program Director wishes to initiate termination of a student, she/he will appoint a full-time social work faculty member to fulfill the responsibilities of the Program Director regarding the termination procedures.

If the evidence is deemed to be valid the Program Director will notify the student in writing that they are being terminated from the program.

3.1.4 The program describes its policies and procedures concerning the transfer of credits.

3.1.5 The program submits its written policy indicating that it does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience. The program documents how it informs applicants and other constituents of this policy.

Curriculum Requirements

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK

The following requirements apply to be both incoming freshmen and to transfer students. **However, transfer students will meet these liberal arts foundation requirements differently, depending on the articulation agreement with the institution(s) from which they are transferring credits.**

The Liberal Arts requirement consists of two components totaling 20 course units (or 60 credit hours). These two components are listed below.

1. *The General Education Component* is comprised of courses in Religious Studies (3), Philosophy (3), History (1), Writing (1), English Literature (1) and HIS 199 (NU specific course that cannot be transferred in from another institution).

2. *The Distribution Component* consists of courses selected from each of the following areas:

2 Analytical Skills Courses;

1 Social Science;

1 Cultural Diversity (for SWK majors this has to be in addition to SWK 210--Diversity);

1 Humanities;

SWK majors are required to take the following general education courses:

MATH 102 (Introduction to Statistics or equivalent);

BIO 101 (which counts as the required Natural Science);

Additionally, the student must choose 4 course units of free electives.

Other Requirements:

1. There will be 5 writing intensive courses (WI) required of each student (ENG 100, WRT, one course in the major and two additional designated WI courses).

3. No courses bearing the students major course designation (SWK) should appear on the GENED, left side of the Curriculum card.

4. One course fills only one requirement- i.e. no double dipping.

Social Work curriculum requirements are divided into two groups totaling 20 course units (or 60 credit hours). These two groups and their relationship to gatekeeping policies are listed below.

1. *The Pre-professional Foundation Sequence (for pre-social work majors)*

SWK 100 Introduction to Social Work (open to all students regardless of major),

SWK 200 History of Social Services & Policy,
SWK 210 Diversity and Social Justice,
211 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I,
SWK 212 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II,
SOC 101 Introduction to Sociology,
PSY 101 Introduction to Psychology,
1 SWK elective.

Primary Gatekeeping Course

SWK 310 is a pivotal/gatekeeping course. SWK 310 demarks the pre-professional social work student from one who has been admitted to the professional sequence. To go forward in the program students MUST successfully complete SWK 310 with a grade of C or better AND complete the Application/Portfolio of Competence (See section: Admission to Social Work Major and Application to Professional Sequence).

2. The Professional Foundation Sequence (for majors)*

SWK 300 Policy Analysis,
SWK 320 Social Work Practice Methods I,
SWK 420 Social Work Practice II,
SWK 330 Research Methods,
SWK 425, 426, 427 and 428 Social Work Internship and Seminar,
1 SWK elective,
1 Advised elective -i.e. a course that contributes/enhances social work knowledge,
SWK 430 Capstone course.

*** Note:** Students must successfully complete SWK 310 with a grade of C or better AND successfully complete the Portfolio of Competence, along with receiving the approval of the faculty. Faculty evaluate the student's POC and progress toward competence before they may register for courses in the Professional Foundation Sequence. For detailed information, carefully read the pages, which explain the admission process, procedures and requirements.

A more detailed description of the baccalaureate degree requirements is found in the Niagara University Undergraduate Catalogue. Students may also request a meeting with their academic advisor in the Social Work Department to clarify any questions they may have regarding degree requirements.

SUGGESTED SEQUENCING OF COURSES FOR INCOMING 1st YEAR STUDENTS

see attached PDF

[SUGGESTED SEQUENCING OF COURSES FOR INCOMING 1st YEAR STUDENTS.pdf](#)

TRANSFER STUDENTS (EPAS 3.1.4)

Niagara University accepts transfer students and credits from a range of colleges and universities in the U.S., Canada and elsewhere. Students are encouraged to consult NU's policies and procedures for specific information and criteria regarding standards for the acceptance of transfer credits.

Transfer students, even those with a degree from a 2 year (or even 4 year) institution may not be able to complete all their course requirements at Niagara University in 4 semesters. *Completion in 4 semesters depends on:*

- how many credits the student is able to transfer in to meet the General Education Foundation and Distribution courses;
- how many of the following courses are successfully completed in the Pre-Professional Foundation Sequence -- SOC 101, PSY 101, BIO 101 and SWK 100;
- whether the student starts at Niagara University in the Fall semester; and
- whether the transfer student is able to go to summer school to complete courses on or off campus.
- *NOTE:* Transfer students, including those with an AA degree and/or Diploma, will not receive transfer credit for courses in the following foundation areas: HBSE; Social Welfare History and Public Policy Analysis, Research; Practice Methods sequence and Field Practicum. To be awarded transfer credits in any of the social work areas requires that courses were completed at a CSWE or CASWE accredited program.

Niagara University and the Social Work Department *DO NOT* grant social work social work course credit for life experience or any work experience. There are no exceptions to this policy. (EPAS 3.1.5)

Students who have completed the Canadian Social Service Worker diploma may receive up to 20 courses (60 credit hours) of transfer credit. Students in this transfer stream **MUST** complete a specific set of General Education courses at Niagara University to insure that all CSWE liberal arts foundation standards have been met. Please see the Chair/BSW Program Director for more information.

[SUGGESTED SEQUENCING OF SOCIAL WORK COURSES FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS.pdf](#)

Academic Minors, Double Majors and Other Ways to Augment Your BSW Degree

If you have room in your schedule, a minor (typically 5 courses in a major area such as poverty studies, sociology, gerontology, psychology, political science, history) is a nice addition to your knowledge and skills. Many social work majors will minor in a second language such as Spanish or Sign Language. Concentrations in areas such as pre-law are also available. Some students may also find they can double major, completing the degree requirements for a second bachelor's degree at the same time they complete their BSW requirements.

Students interested in these opportunities need to talk with their advisor to best explore which option may work best for them.

One area of particular note: Niagara is a founding member of the Shepherd Higher education Consortium on Poverty (SHECP). This is a group of 24 institutions that offer undergraduates the opportunity to study poverty in America in depth. Selected NU students participate in a national summer poverty internship (see link below). For more information, contact Dr. Kevin Blair.

Internship <https://www.niagara.edu/shepherd-alliance-summer-poverty-internship-opportunities/> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.);

SEMESTER ABROAD

Students have several opportunities to study in another country and many social work students have enjoyed the learning experience. Students interested in pursuing a study abroad should discuss the options available to them with their academic advisor and the Director of Study Abroad. However, it is important that social work students schedule a semester abroad during their **sophomore year** and in the **Spring** semester. Students are still completing foundation courses in the pre-professional sequence. Students need to be present on the campus for the sequenced practice courses SWK 310 and SWK 320.

Transfer students will most likely need to explore a semester abroad during the summer. A semester during the regular academic year may add an extra 3rd year to complete the major social work requirements.

Advisement and Retention

3.1.6 The program describes its academic and professional advising policies and procedures. Professional advising is provided by social work program faculty, staff, or both.

Extensive information regarding advisement at NU in general is found on the College of Arts & Sciences Advisement web pages. Here is a link to the main page: <https://www.niagara.edu/coas-advisement/> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

The COAS Advising web pages contain important information & resources that can greatly enhance the advisement process and overall student experience and success.

Social Work Department Advisement

Each social work major is assigned a faculty advisor. Students can find the name of their adviser via MyNY & Webadvisor and also by looking at the lists of advisees posted on the doors of faculty offices. Students can also ask the Department's Administrative Assistant.

Please note: ALL social work majors are listed as advisees of the Departmental Chair and Program Director. This allows the Program Director access to every social work major's degree audit and related information.

If you see two faculty members listed as your advisor in Webadvisor, then your advisor is the second person listed (Dr. Skiba, Dr. Ward, or Professor Carter). If you see only Dr. Blair's name listed, then he is your advisor.

Preparing to Meet with Your Advisor: How to use WebAdvisor and Degree Audit

All students can access Webadvisor and Degree Audit via their MyNU account. Training and instruction on how to access MyNU, Webadvisor and Degree Audit occurs during orientation sessions and in the NUB orientation and student success course for freshmen. If you have any questions, please ask any member of the faculty or the Department's Administrative Assistant.

Degree Audit:

Degree Audit is a tracking tool that is used to track your progress toward graduation. It is vital that you regularly (at least once every semester) check your progress via Degree Audit.

Transfer students in particular need to check Degree Audit to make sure all of their transfer credits have been properly awarded and that transfer credits have been placed in the correct locations. Bring any questions or concerns to your advisement session.

Steps in preparing to meet with your advisor:

1. Check Degree Audit;
2. Check the suggested curriculum plan for either incoming freshmen or transfer students (**ADD LINK!!!**);
3. Check the Course Offerings web pages at <https://www.niagara.edu/courses/>;
4. Build your schedule--write down which courses you believe you need/want to take in the upcoming semester. Be careful to check prerequisites (these are courses that you must take before taking some courses, i.e., you CANNOT take SWK 310 until you have completed SWK 100) and to look out for scheduling conflicts (e.g., day & time when courses meet, any work requirements or other commitments you already have);
5. Check the door of your faculty advisor. Several weeks before advisement begins, faculty will have placed a sign-up sheet for advisement on their door--select a time that works for you.

BE SURE TO KEEP YOUR APPOINTMENT! Advisement is a very busy time for faculty and if you miss your appointment, it can be difficult to schedule a new time.

6. **Be aware: Many courses fill up very quickly, thus any delay in advisement or registration can result in you not getting into a course you need!**

Making the Most of Your Advisement Time

1. See above, the better prepared you are, the better faculty advisors can help you. The more ready you are with courses and basic scheduling, the more time you'll have to discuss career options, Master's Degree Programs, Summer Internship opportunities (e.g., See the Shepherd Poverty Internship <https://www.niagara.edu/shepherd-alliance-summer-poverty-internship-opportunities/> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.);
2. Faculty meet with social work students at least once per semester. Advisement meetings are generally 30 minutes long.
3. Bring a set of questions/topics you want to discuss. Some examples include: study abroad, summer internship opportunities, graduate programs, case situations you'd like to discuss in more depth, and so forth.

Advisement & Registration Options (the following is taken from the COAS Advisement web pages)

Advisement & Registration

- Meet with your advisor once the [course offerings \(Links to an external site.\)Links to an external site.](#) are published. Many advisors have sign-up sheets outside their door during advisement.
- Get unlocked by your advisor so that you can register online.
- Update your [myNULinks to an external site.](#) profile and check for any holds.
- Register for courses when your [registration window \(Links to an external site.\)Links to an external site.](#) opens.

Online Registration: Directions to register through Web Advisor are posted in myNU. This option is available until your classes begin. Please note that you cannot force into a course or register for an independent study online.

Express Registration

1. Write down the Syn # for each course ahead of time from the course offerings printout or Course Offerings online
2. Input the Syn # for each class you want to add to skip additional inputs.

Search & Register for Classes

1. Browse through courses to find major related courses, open sections, or courses available at certain time slots

In-Person Registration: Once your registration window opens, you can take your signed registration or drop/add forms to the Records Office in the Butler Building.

- Registration through Records is required once classes begin
- Records has forms required to help you: force into a course or get instructor permission form to enroll in a course after the first week of classes.
- This is recommended if you have difficulty with online registration.

Alternate Forms of Registration:

- An Independent Study Form is required for courses not offered as part of the regular schedule (i.e. most internships, honors theses, some senior seminars). These are available on myNU or in the deans' offices.
- A co-op contract is required for co-op. These are available in the co-op office on the lower level of Seton Hall.

Advisement & Registration Options**Advisement & Registration**

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- A co-op contract is required for co-op. These are available in the co-op office on the lower level of Seton Hall.

Student participation

3.1.9 The program submits its policies and procedures specifying students' rights and opportunities to participate in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs.

3.1.10 The program describes how it provides opportunities and encourages students to organize in their interests.

Students' Rights & Responsibilities -- Social Work Department

Governance of the Department of Social Work is the responsibility of the appointed Program Director, faculty and students. The Program Director is responsible for assuring an appropriate system of student governance and student participation in the formulation of academic policy and curriculum. Student participation in the governance of the Department is vital to its success. Participation provides the students with a voice in how their Department is governed. It is an empowering practice for students to be active participants in decision-making, program planning, and the general operation of the Department. Faculty want students to be active, to provide a "student point of view" on matters such as Program goals and objectives, course content, course scheduling, field practicum options, and so forth. Departmental Committees, described in detail below, provide students with a structured opportunity to develop professional behaviors through practicing leadership, communication skills and through participation in organizational analysis, change and democratic decision-making.

The major opportunities for student involvement are through participation on Social Work Department committees and at Town Hall meetings. Social work students can nominate themselves to serve on a committee. Students are encouraged to contact student representatives to express their concerns regarding curriculum, field practicum, admission, and evaluation of the Program, library, and faculty affairs.

Recruitment Committee adds faculty on all matters pertaining to recruitment of prospective students.

Advisory Board serves as a liaison between the Social Work Department and the professional social work community. Two students serve on the advisory board.

Town Hall Meetings are chaired by the Program Director. The town hall meetings are designed to assure participation of faculty, staff and students in the governance of the program. The program's committees report their findings and make recommendations to the faculty, staff and students in attendance. The President of the Social Work Student Association reports on activities, ideas and concerns of the students. Town Hall meetings are scheduled at least once during the academic year.

Students' Rights & Responsibilities – Niagara University

The University respects the traditions of justice and due process in students' rights. The Student Code of Conduct and its guiding principles, hearing procedures and student rights, student grievance procedures in the event of alleged sexual assault, violations of discrimination laws and/or policies, the appeals process, and procedures for appealing grades appear in the Niagara University Student Affairs Web pages. It is the policy of Niagara University that students are represented on the University Judicial Board.

Also information around the Academic Integrity Policy and procedures in the event of an alleged violation is provided in the Niagara University web pages to be found at: <https://www.niagara.edu/academicintegrity/>

Lastly, information on students' rights under FERPA is widely publicized.

Students are provided with many opportunities to participate in student programs and organizations such as Student Government, Resident Hall Association, Academic Senate, and the University Judicial Board. The Lévesque Institute for Civic Engagement and the IMPACT Office offer students a wide range of opportunities to work and volunteer in the community. A listing of University sponsored student groups, organizations, and activities is found at the Life On Campus menu via the University's main web page. Students are daily informed through myNU about current events.

Various social work students have participated or are presently participating in the Residence Hall Council, in the Niagara University Student Government Association, class governance, the Multicultural and International Student Affairs Board and NUCAP. There is always one social work student representative on the Advisory Board of the Dean of Arts and Sciences. As discussed, social work students have been active participants in various on campus student support groups such as NU Alliance, active and returning veterans, and the Diversity Advocates.

The Social Work Department encourages students to organize in their interests. The Social Work Student Association (SWSA) is an officially recognized group on campus and receives funding from the Niagara University Student Government. SWSA is open to all Social Work students. Students join by contacting one of the Association's officers. There is a small membership fee. Officers (president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer) are elected annually by the membership. Meetings are usually held in the Social Work Department Student Lounge.

The purposes of the *Social Work Student Association* are: to promote interest in social work and social work issues through association with others who are committed to a career in social work; to provide supplemental educational experience for students; to act as an advocate for students in academic and administrative matters; and to enhance social interaction among the students. Students are encouraged to become active in this Association. SWSA sponsors social service and social action activities on and near the Niagara University campus. A sampling of projects that SWSA has sponsored over the past years includes: The Shoe Box Project to benefit children and adolescents in need, the Backpack drive to benefit local elementary school children, a Giving tree event to benefit agency clients,

and a drive to collect toys and school supplies for children in an orphanage in Guatemala, Relay for Life, College against Cancer, the Breast Cancer Walk and March of Dimes.

Many of our social work students become member of *Phi Alpha* (Delta Gamma Chapter) Members of Phi Alpha and the Social Work Student Association often work together on sponsorship of community projects. In the past years Phi Alpha adopted one of the girls' bedrooms in a local shelter for runaways. The room was freshly painted and spruced up with new bedcovers and curtains, posters and study lamps. Student members went to local stores to obtain materials, negotiating deep discounts for the materials.

Academic Honors: University and Departmental

Honors at Graduation and Dean's List

To be eligible for graduation with honors, a student must complete half of the degree requirements at Niagara University.

A student with a GPA of 3.25 is graduated Cum Laude;

A student with a GPA of 3.50 is graduated Magna Cum Laude;

A student with a GPA of 3.80 is graduated Summa Cum Laude.

Students who transfer more than half of their degree requirements and graduate with a 3.25 or higher, graduate with distinction.

To be eligible for the Dean's List students need to complete a minimum of 12 hours of credit-bearing courses and have a GPA in that semester of 3.25.

Social Work Department awards the Academic Achievement Award to two seniors graduating with the highest overall GPA. This award is handed out during the annual Art7s Sciences Day of Recognition.

Phi Alpha Honor Society-Delta Gamma

Phi Alpha Honor Society-Delta Gamma Chapter

Phi Alpha is a national social work honor society for undergraduate social work majors, faculty and local practitioners. The purposes of Phi Alpha Honor Society are to provide a closer bond among students of social work and promote humanitarian goals and ideals. Phi Alpha fosters high standards of academic excellence and training for social workers.

Niagara University's Delta Gamma Chapter was founded by Dr. Carolyn Morell and a group of social work students in the Spring of 1993. The National Council granted permission to start a chapter on the campus 11 February 1993. The first Induction Ceremony was held April 28, 1993. Twenty three students were inducted and three members from the professional community.

A student is eligible for active membership when he or she has:

1. Been admitted to social work as a major;
2. Achieved sophomore status;
3. Completed 9 credit hours in required social work courses, at N.U.;
4. Achieved an overall grade point average of 3.0;
5. Achieved a 3.25 grade point average in major (core) courses.

Students who receive an invitation are asked to fill out the application form that can be downloaded from this site. A faculty member is appointed to serve as an advisor. Officers are elected annually by the membership.

Application and Membership Fee

Every Spring Semester the Social Work Department will send a letter to the social work majors that are eligible for induction. Our academic assistant will calculate who is eligible. The eligibility standards are explained in previous section.

Applications need to be submitted by:

Fee

You will be asked to pay an one time membership fee of \$50¹, which is processed with the application form. The fee includes: Life-time Membership, certificate, honor cord and extra the National Organization may send us.

New Form with more detail [Application Form.doc](#)

¹ Fee is accurate as of 9/25/2018, but could change; It is always best to double check that the amount listed in the Handbook is still accurate.

Record Retention Policy

1. In general, students and graduates are responsible for retaining copies of important documents pertaining to their education at Niagara University (NU) that are not typically retained by NU's Office of Records.
2. Given the differing requirements between graduate programs, as well as differences between the United States (and even between various states) and Canada (and between the various provinces), the NU Social Work Department cannot guarantee that we will retain all of the required documentation for any specific need.
3. The NU Social Work Department will make every effort to retain important documents of a student's social work education but offers no guarantees beyond the policies as stated below.
4. Once a student has graduated from the NU BSW Program, the program will retain the student's complete hard copy file and all documents therein for 3 years.
5. For years 4-7 post-graduation, the Social Work Department will retain IN DIGITAL FORMAT OF OUR CHOOSING only those documents that may pertain to completion of field work as may be required for such things as licensing and graduate school applications. These retained documents will include:

Degree Audit (maintained by the Records Office);

Documentation of field placement;

Documentation of field hours completed;

Field instructor evaluations (all);

Portfolios or other assignments that demonstrate competency as required by the Counsel on Social Work Education (CSWE) in 9 specified competency areas and associated practice behaviors.

6. After the 7th year post graduation, all documents held in the graduated student's social work file will be destroyed.
7. These same guidelines will apply to students that leave the department and/or university without graduating., i.e.,

The Social Work Department will retain the student's complete file in hard copy and all documents therein for three years following their final semester of enrollment;

8. For years 4-7 post-enrollment, the Social Work Department will retain IN DIGITAL FORMAT OF OUR CHOOSING only those documents that may pertain to completion of field work as may be required for such things as licensing and graduate school applications. These documents will include:

Degree Audit (maintained by the Records Office);

Documentation of field placement;

Documentation of field hours completed;

Field instructor evaluations (all);

Portfolios or other assignments that demonstrate competency as required by the Counsel on Social Work Education (CSWE) in 9 specified competency areas and associated practice behaviors.

9. After the 7th year post enrollment, all documents held in the former student's social work file will be destroyed.