

Bachelor of **Social Work**



BSW Program Information Packet



UNION UNIVERSITY
School of Social Work

From the Desk of the Dean

We are excited that you are looking at the School of Social Work at Union University. Our Christian commitment allows us to offer an integration of faith and social work practice. Students, faculty, and staff work collaboratively in a positive and supportive learning environment. An ecological and justice perspective exposes learners to a holistic approach in working with vulnerable persons.

Faculty members bring a variety of professional experiences and expertise to the classroom setting and a challenging curriculum encourages students to engage with peers and professors.

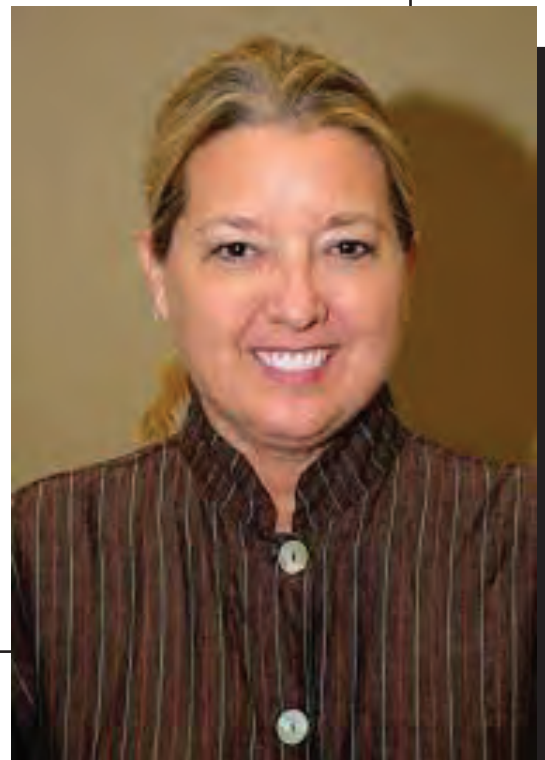
The School of Social Work at Union offers opportunities for students to be successful in and out of the classroom. Through hands-on experiences in class and an internship during their senior year, students are prepared to make a difference in their chosen field.

A sense of community is built as classes are small thus providing students ample space to freely engage while practicing skills that transfer to real world practice in internship and work settings. Students learn best practices, professional competencies, and ethical decision-making skills that further enhance work with clients whether at a micro, mezzo, or macro level.

The faculty and staff in the School of Social Work would be honored to work with you on your goal of obtaining your BSW.

Please let us know how we can be of further service.

Nita Mehr, Ph.D., LCSW
Dean, School of Social Work





About Union University

A private, Christian, four-year, coeducational, liberal arts-based university offering bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees.

Founded in 1823, Union is the oldest institution affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Located in Jackson, Tennessee, Union is approximately 80 miles east of Memphis and 120 miles west of Nashville. Union also has extension campuses in Memphis and Hendersonville, Tennessee.

Our Mission: Union University provides Christ-centered education that promotes excellence and character development in service to Church and society.

About the School of Social Work

Social Work is about helping people—children, families, older adults, and whole communities. The social work program prepares students for leadership as professional social workers in a diverse range of public and private settings, including child advocacy and welfare, children and youth counseling, marriage and family therapy, school social work, medical social work, church social work, missions, foster care and adoptions, geriatric social work, and mental health.

The program prepares students to empower people, particularly those who are vulnerable, to achieve a better "fit" with their world and to help the world to be more responsive to the needs of people. The program emphasizes the importance of a liberal arts foundation and of Christian and social work values that promote service and the importance of human relationships.

The mission of the Union University Bachelor of Social Work program is to prepare competent and effective professionals for leadership in advanced practice. In a context of Christian higher education, **the program fosters compassionate service, promotes social and economic justice, and equips students for excellence in social work practice.**



Accreditation

The Bachelor of Social Work program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Union University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

Social Work Frequently Asked Questions

**Social workers are
the leading
providers of mental
health care.**

What can I do with a degree in social work?

A degree in social work provides a foundation for a wide variety of careers. Social workers can find their place in a variety of settings including hospitals, schools, non-profit organizations, and churches. Those with a degree in social work can go on to be therapists, educators, and leaders in government and non-profit organizations. The social work degree opens doors to many career paths.

What can I expect from my social work classes?

Our social work classes are taught by faculty members with a wide variety of practice experience. The faculty set high expectations for students as they prepare them to go into the field of social work when they graduate. Students will engage in role-plays, simulations, and group projects that help them develop their social work skills.

Are their GPA requirements in the social work program?

In order to go into the field placement during their senior year, students must have a 2.5 social work GPA and a 2.5 cumulative GPA.

Do students have to apply for the BSW program?

Yes. Students will submit an application for the BSW program prior to starting their practice classes. This application gives students an opportunity to explain their interest in social work to the faculty. Applications are reviewed by the BSW Program Director for official acceptance into the BSW program.

Will I have an advisor from the School of Social Work?

Yes. Every student who has declared social work as their major will have a faculty advisor who will help them register for classes, discuss long-term goals, and ensure that they are prepared for graduation.

Will I have to complete an internship as part of the program?

Yes. Students complete a 424 hour field placement during the spring of their senior year in the social work program. More details can be found about the field placement on the Field FAQs page of this packet.

Looking Ahead:

What is the 4+1 option for students interested in the MSW Program?

Students who successfully complete the BSW program with a GPA of 3.0 or higher are eligible for the Advanced Standing MSW program. The MSW program can be completed in as little as one year.

Students who do not have a 3.0 GPA or that graduate with a degree other than Social Work can complete the Traditional MSW Program.



Current Student Perspective

"The School of Social Work has impacted me by teaching me what it means to be a social worker: to be empathetic and understanding of every kind of situation anyone could be in. It has taught me to love everyone I come across as they might be in a difficult place, being impacted by so many factors, many of which may be out of their control."

Leah Campbell ('23)





Alumni Perspective

“The School of Social Work has opened my eyes to how many areas and groups of people are in need of social work. My classes have taught me so much about justice, compassion, and human dignity, especially in light of the Bible. I’m grateful to learn about social work from professors whose faith informs their teaching.”

Madalyn Tate ('22)

Course Requirements

In addition to the required core course requirements established by the University, BSW students take social work specific courses. These classes are designed to provide hands-on experiences within the classroom through role-plays, simulations, and group projects.

Students will spend time learning about human behavior in the social environment from birth to death, social and economic justice issues that social workers target, and hands-on practice classes that teach students how to work with individuals, groups, and communities.

BSW Required Course Work

SW 200 Intro to Social Work
SW 300 Human Behavior in the Social Environment I
SW 301 Human Behavior in the Social Environment II
SW 305 Psychopathology
SW 310 Social & Economic Justice
SW 315 Practice I: Foundations
SW 335 Social Policy
SW 401 Practice II: Individuals, Families, & Groups
SW 400 Populations at Risk
SW 402 Practice III: Organizations, Communities, & Government
SW 409 Field Seminar
SW 421 Research
SW 423 Senior Seminar
SW 490 Field Practicum

Social Work Certifications

The DCS Child Welfare Certificate is for social work majors who intend to work with children and families served by DCS after graduation. DCS administers this program to better meet the challenges of child welfare by professionalizing its workforce within frontline trained staff. Students who pursue this certification will complete an application, take 2 child welfare courses, and complete their field placement with DCS. Employees of DCS who completed the Child Welfare Certificate may be eligible for a higher starting pay rate and require less on-the-job training for their position.

Students can also pursue the School Social Work license in the State of Tennessee. In order to obtain this license, students must take the elective course, Social Work Services in Schools, complete their field placement with in a setting with child and families (preferably in a school) and submit an application to the State of Tennessee upon graduation.

Social Work Program Minors

The School of Social Work offers two minors that students are encouraged to consider: Mental Health Services and Church & Community Social Ministries.

Mental Health Services

The goal of the Mental Health Services minor is to prepare students for work in the mental health field (i.e., a specialized field) by providing foundational knowledge and skills in mental health services which encompasses a broad range of jobs & tasks (with some examples including: psychotherapy, case management, advocacy, crisis intervention, psychoeducation, programming).

Church & Community Social Ministries

The goal of the Church & Community Social Ministries minor is to prepare students for work in a congregational or faith-based setting by providing foundational knowledge and skills to meet biological, psychological, social, emotional and spiritual needs within the church, but also equip & mobilize the church to meet those (holistic) needs in the community.

Discipline Specific Honors: School of Social Work

The School of Social Work's Discipline Specific Honors program will provide a space for students to critically reflect upon social work theories, skills, and interventions, and strengthen their research skills in order to facilitate change in generalist social work practice. Honors students will gain a depth of knowledge and skills that is beyond a typical undergraduate in the BSW program.

Each student in the honors program will be assigned an honors advisor within the School of Social Work to guide the student throughout the program, collaborate with the student and professors in the creation of the honors contract, communicate with the Director of the honors community, and advise the student on his/her research or community project.

In order to pursue the honors program, students must meet these requirements:

- 3.5 GPA in required social work courses for the major
- Completion of SW 200, 300, 301, and 310
- Transfer students must complete at least one semester at Union University prior to their application (this includes one course in the social work major)
- Students interested in the honors program must submit their applications to the BSW Program Director prior to the beginning of their junior year. The application will be reviewed by faculty and if approved, forwarded to the Honors Community.

The final product of the School of Social Work Discipline Specific Honors track will be either:

1. A high quality research project
2. A project or program that the student creates for a social service agency or other approved setting

All students will present their final product at one of the following:

1. Union University Spring Scholarship Symposium
2. A social work academic conference (e.g., NACSW, NASW, CSWE, TCSW, etc.)
3. If the project or program option is selected, present the finished product to a meeting of stakeholders or community leaders

Field Placement Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Field Placement?

A Field Placement is an opportunity for students to take the knowledge and skills they have gained in the classroom and put it into practice. Field is a required course in the BSW Program.

When do Traditional BSW students complete the field placement?

For students in the Traditional BSW program, the field experience is completed during the students' final spring semester as a block placement. Students can start the placement in early January and complete the placement during late April. Students spend 32-36 hours per week in their field placement.

What types of field placement agencies have the School of Social Work established partnerships with?

We have over 100 field placement partnerships that cover a wide range of social work services. Some examples of our partnerships include many non-profit organizations, counseling offices, Jackson-Madison Co. General Hospital, the Jackson-Madison Co. School System, the Department of Children's Services, the City of Jackson Mayor's Office, TN Baptist Children's Homes and the United Way of West Tennessee.

Do students have to set up their own field placement?

No. Students will meet with the BSW Field Director prior to starting their field placement to determine where the student will complete their internship. The Field Director will determine which agencies might be a good fit for the student and contact those agencies directly. The goal is to find an internship that suits the student's long term goals while also stretching them outside of their comfort zone to learn new skills.

Are their field placement agencies that provide stipends to students?

It is uncommon for stipends to be provided to students by agencies as the primary focus is educationally-based. There are some agencies that will provide stipends and this can be discussed with the BSW Field Director when reviewing placement options.



Contact Us

BSW Program office hours are from 8:00-4:30 (CST) on Monday-Friday.



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Check out our website at www.uu.edu/bsw.

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