



April 2010

Dear Prospective Social Work Student:

We welcome your interest in our Bachelor of Social Work Program. The social work program is a professional degree program that requires students apply to be accepted into the major. Attached is information about the application process. Please review the material carefully. We encourage you to meet with the social work advisor and/or faculty members to discuss your interest in the social work profession. If you decide to apply, please pay careful attention to the requirements and deadlines.

The social work advisor will conduct a mandatory workshop to answer questions and provide assistance on how to complete the application. Watch your email and the SW bulletin board for dates and times. A sign-up sheet for the workshop will be posted on the advisor's door. The required forms for the major application are located on the social work website at **www.wiu.edu/socialwork/admission.html** and most of them can be completed online. Once you have completed a form, print two copies – one for your application packet and one for yourself.

Information and updates about the application process are provided to students via their WIU email accounts and the Social Work bulletin board outside the office door. Also, letters regarding faculty interviews and major status are placed in student mail files located in the social work office. Make sure your WIU email account is active and your inbox is not full, watch the bulletin boards, check your mail, and ask questions! Failing to become informed is not an acceptable reason for missing information and deadlines. Do not jeopardize your anticipated graduation date by turning in a substandard application. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed; late applications will not be accepted.

If you have any questions about the application process, do not hesitate to contact the social work advisor, Cindy Dadello, C-Dadello@wiu.edu, (309)298-2484. Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Karen Zellmann
Chair, Admissions Committee

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

BEFORE YOU APPLY

You must have completed the following requirements in order to apply to the social work major:

- Cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better
- 45 semester hours of credit to include:
 - Social Work 100 with a grade of C or better (3 hrs.)
 - Psychology 100 (3 hrs.)
 - Biology 100 or currently enrolled (4 hrs.)
 - English 180 (3 hrs.)
 - Sociology 100 (3 hrs.)
- 100 hours of volunteer or work experience
 - 100 hours of volunteer or work experience in human services which must be documented and verified in the application process; **OR**
 - 50 hours of volunteer or work experience in human services which must be documented and verified in the application process AND a plan to complete the remaining 50 hours and submit verification before the last day of the next semester after conditional acceptance. If verification is not received by this time, you will not be allowed to enroll in any SW 400 courses and graduation will be delayed for one year.

For questions about specific course requirements, please contact the social work advisor.

WHEN YOU APPLY

You must complete the following the semester you apply to the social work major:

Prior to Submitting Application

- Meet with Social Work Advisor
- Complete Social Work Assessment

Application Packet (to be submitted in the following order)

- Cover Page
- Applicant Information & Eligibility form
- Personal Narrative
- Volunteer/Work Experience Verification
- Completion Plan for Remainder of Volunteer Hours (if needed)
- Policy on Student Problematic Behavior, Ethical Misconduct, Impairment, and Incompetence
- Code of Ethics Statement of Understanding
- Background Information Statement of Understanding

Ward Report

APPLICATION TIMEFRAME

Fall Semester

Application Workshop	Application Deadline	Personal Interview	Notification
2 nd Friday of September or 2 nd Saturday of September	1 st Friday of October	2 nd Friday of October thru 1 st Friday of November	3 rd Friday of November

Spring Semester

Application Workshop	Application Deadline	Personal Interview	Notification
1 st Friday of December or 2 nd Saturday of February	1 st Friday of March	2 nd Friday of March thru 1 st Friday of April	3 rd Friday of April

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Advising

If you have not already met with the social work advisor about your upcoming classes and to develop a student curriculum plan, schedule an appointment to do so. A calendar is posted outside the advisor's door for making appointments. You will need your WARD report to complete the Personal Information & Eligibility form (discussed below) for any courses required for admission that you have not yet taken.

Social Work Assessment

The mandatory social work Entrance Assessment (majors' exam pre-test) evaluates your current knowledge and understanding of social work. No studying, preparation, or materials are needed. Your score on the exam does not affect your eligibility for the program. However, you should take the exam seriously and give thought to your responses. You will take the same exam your senior year prior to graduation from the program and your scores will be compared as a teaching/learning assessment tool. This exam is part of the application process and must be completed by the application deadline. If it is not, your application will not be reviewed.

Plan to take the exam during your Human Behaviors in the Social Environment (HBSE) I class. If you are not enrolled in HBSE I, you must contact the social work advisor to sign up to take the exam.

Be sure you **note the date** you take the exam. It is required on the Application Cover Page of the application packet.

Application Components

Applicant Information & Eligibility for Admission

If you are currently enrolled in Bio 100 and/or have not completed either Eng 180 or Soc 100, you will need your 4-year plan that was developed during your appointment with the advisor to list the term in which you will complete those required courses. Complete the Personal Information & Eligibility form. Do **not** leave blanks.

Personal Narrative

You will write a personal essay as part of your application. The purpose of the essay is to give you an opportunity to express your interest in and commitment to the social work profession as well as demonstrate your writing and critical thinking skills. Your paper should be carefully and thoughtfully prepared. A list of questions is provided in the application packet.

Volunteer/Work Experience

Complete the Volunteer/Work Experience Summary form. The volunteer/work experience for the 100 hour requirement must have been completed in a human service setting within the past **three** years. A **separate** form is required for **each** experience you are documenting. Obtain verification from the agency where you received your experience. Verification should include **signature, date, title, and contact phone number** of your supervisor (or authorized alternate in your supervisor's absence). Verification can be submitted one of two ways:

Submit your Volunteer/Work Experience Summary form to the supervisor listed on the form. S/he may complete the bottom of the form confirming the information you provided on the form. The form can be delivered via fax, mail, or in person.

OR

The supervisor/alternate may provide a letter on agency letterhead containing the following information: the number of hours completed, a brief description of your responsibilities, supervisor's signature, title, phone number, and date. Attach the letter behind your corresponding Summary form in your application packet.

Additional Components

Policy on Student Problematic Behavior, Ethical Misconduct, Impairment, and Incompetence

Code of Ethics Statement of Understanding

Background Information Statement of Understanding

Ward Report

Read and complete the instructions provided for each of these forms. Sign as needed.

Submitting Your Application

Review the application instructions to be sure you have not missed anything. All requirements should be complete and application materials should have a professional appearance. Assemble the materials in the order listed on the application checklist sheet and staple or clip together. Please do **not** use binders, folders, or other covers as they do not fit in your student file. Turn in your completed application to the social work office manager by the due date. Applications **must** be date stamped. Any social work faculty/staff can stamp your application. Within 1 week after the application due date, check your WIU email account and student mail file in the social work office. If your application has incomplete information or other deficiencies, it will be in your mail file and you will be notified via email. Incomplete applications **will not** be processed. Late applications are **not** accepted.

Faculty Interview

Approximately one week after the application deadline, if your application has not been returned to you a memo will be placed in your mail file notifying you about which faculty member has been assigned to conduct your personal interview. Interviews are normally required to be completed within 3-4 weeks following notification. This allows flexibility with both student and faculty schedules. The actual deadline will be noted in your memo and interviews must be completed by that date. Faculty interviews are **part of the application process**. Failure to schedule and/or attend your interview will result in an **incomplete application**. An incomplete application will not be reviewed and you will not be admitted to the major.

Contact faculty directly to schedule your interview.

Formal attire is not required. However, you should take your interview seriously and **dress appropriately** for an informal meeting with a faculty member. For example, dressing as you would for dinner out with your family (nice jeans or pants, etc.) is ok; Saturday morning loungewear is not. Also, holes, tears, stains, wrinkles, clothes with unprofessional pictures or words, etc. would not be appropriate.

Be prepared to discuss the items in the Statement of Understanding you submitted with your application packet as well as why you are interested in the social work profession.

Admission to the Program

Approximately 1-2 weeks following the interview deadline, the department will meet to review applications and faculty interviews. Final decisions regarding readiness for and admission to the program are made by the department as a whole. Approximately one week after the departmental meeting, a letter will be placed in your mail file notifying you of your admission status based on the following requirements:

Social Work Major Admission Requirements:

Cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better

45 semester hours of credit to include:

Completion of Social Work 100 with a grade of C or better (3 hrs.)

Biology 100 (4 hrs.)

English 180 (3 hrs.)

Psychology 100 (3 hrs.)

Sociology 100 (3 hrs.)

Documented completion of 100 hours of volunteer or work experience in human services

Critical thinking and writing skills as demonstrated in coursework and application essays

Interpersonal skills as demonstrated in classroom and group interaction and faculty interview

Successful completion of all components of the major application process by the due dates

Admission Status

If you have completed the application process, you will receive one of the following admission letters:

Formal admission: All social work admission requirements have been met and you have been accepted into the program as a full social work major. You will also receive a Declaration of Academic Program with your letter which you must sign and return to the social work advisor as soon as possible. Your major change from pre-social work (PSW) to social work (SCLWK) will not become official until the form is returned and processed.

Conditional approval: **Most** of the admission requirements have been met and you will be formally admitted to the major once you have completed the remaining requirements by the stated deadline. Failure to complete the conditional admission requirements by the given deadline will result in the need to **reapply** to the major.

Denied Admission: If faculty have concerns regarding your readiness for the major or you do not meet the minimum admission requirements, you may be asked to reapply after addressing these concerns; **or** faculty have determined that you are not suitable for the profession of social work.

Appeal of Admission Status

Students who are denied admission to the social work major are entitled to appeal the decision. The appropriate appeal procedure regarding major admission is:

Schedule an appointment with the department chair to discuss the grievance.

If discussion with the department chair does not resolve the issue, submit the following in writing to the department chair:

- the reasons for the appeal
- a request for review by the entire social work faculty.

BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM (BSW)
APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

Name: _____

Please Print

Application Packet Checklist

Major Exam completed on

Check to be sure each completed item below is included in your application packet and meets the criteria outlined in the instructions (e.g. minimum essay length, appropriate signatures)

- Cover Page
- Applicant Information & Eligibility form
- Personal Narrative
- Volunteer/Work Experience Verification
- Completion Plan for Remainder of Volunteer Hours (if needed)
- Policy on Student Problematic Behavior, Ethical Misconduct, Impairment, and Incompetence
- Code of Ethics Statement of Understanding
- Background Information Statement of Understanding
- Ward Report

The above materials are complete, accurate, and included in this packet. I understand that missing, incomplete, or inaccurate information or documentation will result in this packet being returned to me and my application and progress in social work courses being delayed.

Student Signature

Date

SW Office: Date stamp and initial in space at right

PERSONAL NARRATIVE GUIDELINES
Social Work Major Application

The purpose of the essay is to give you an opportunity to express your interest in and commitment to the social work profession as well as demonstrate your writing and critical thinking skills. Your paper should be carefully and thoughtfully prepared. The following guidelines must be adhered to:

- 12 point, Times New Roman font
- Double-spaced
- One-inch margins
- 5-6 pages

Please address each of the following questions in your essay:

1. Discuss what you consider to be one of the most pressing social problems facing the country. In your opinion: What is the cause of the problem? What does the social work profession have to offer toward the solution of this problem? What qualities, skills, and attributes do you have that would contribute to the solution of this problem?
2. Summarize your volunteer and employment history. What did you learn from these experiences that helped solidify your decision to become a social worker? What strengths and challenges did you bring to these experiences?
3. What are important values in your life? Provide examples illustrating how these values are present in your life. How will these values help or hinder you in your professional work? Discuss how your personal values are congruent with the NASW Code of Ethics.
4. Please provide any additional information that you feel would strengthen your application or is important for the Admissions Committee to consider when reviewing your application.

VOLUNTEER/WORK EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

Social Work Major Application

Student: _____

Agency/Organization: _____

Supervisor: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Dates of Service: _____ # of Hours: _____

Primary activities:

Supervisor Signature

Title

Date

**Policy on Student Problematic Behavior, Ethical Misconduct,
Impairment, and Incompetence**

(This policy draws on the policies of a variety of academic/educational programs at Seton Hall University, Penn State University, Yale University, University of Washington, The University of Iowa, and Texas Women's University.)

I. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to clarify and identify the level of professionalism and ethical conduct expected of the students in the Council on Social Work Education-accredited Social Work Program at Western Illinois University, and to describe the procedures for identifying, assessing, and addressing issues related to problematic behavior, ethical misconduct, impairment, and competence.

The Department of Social Work at Western Illinois University has a responsibility to protect clients, students, faculty, and the public from harm. The Program also has a responsibility to protect students' rights. This policy has been developed with both of these principles in mind. The faculty and students are governed by the National Association of Social Workers'(NASW) Code of Ethics.

II. Definitions

Problematic Behaviors refer to a student's behaviors, attitudes, or characteristics that may require remediation, but are perceived as not excessive or unexpected for professionals in training. Performance anxiety, discomfort with clients' diverse lifestyles and ethnic backgrounds, and lack of appreciation of agency norms are examples of problematic behaviors that are usually remedied and not likely to progress into ethical misconduct, impairment, or incompetence.

Ethical Misconduct occurs when the NASW Code of Ethics is not followed. This code is intended to provide both the general principles and the specific decision rules to cover most situations encountered by professional social workers in their professional activities. It has as its primary goal the welfare and protection of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. It is the individual responsibility of each social worker to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct. Social workers promote social justice and social change, respect and protect human and civil rights, and do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

Impairment is defined as an interference in professional functioning that is reflected in one or more of the following ways:

- ✍ Inability or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one's repertoire of professional behavior;
- ✍ Inability or unwillingness to acquire professional skills and reach an accepted level of competency; or
- ✍ Inability or unwillingness to control personal stress, psychological disorder, or emotional reactions that may affect professional functioning.

Incompetence is defined as a lack of ability. This lack of ability may include inadequate professional or interpersonal skills, or academic deficiency. When students continue to provide social work services beyond their current level of competence they are violating the ethical standard of competence.

[Lamb, Cochran, & Jackson (1991). Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 22, 291-296.]

III. Procedures

Problematic behavior, ethical misconduct, impairment, and/or incompetence may be identified in a variety of ways and by a variety of persons, including but not limited to students, faculty, supervisors, clients, and/or members of the public. Any concern raised should be brought to the attention of the Chairperson of the Department of Social Work. Confidentiality must be assured. When a potential concern reaches the Chairperson, she/he will inform all permanent full-time members of the Social Work faculty (herein after *faculty* shall refer to permanent full-time faculty) and the academic/professional advisor. The issue will be discussed within one week unless, in the judgment of the faculty, it must be dealt with immediately.

Following this meeting, the student will be informed in writing by the Department Chairperson of the issues in her/his case and asked to meet with the Social Work faculty and the academic/professional advisor to discuss the situation. The academic/professional advisor will work with the student to help her/him understand the issue and the procedures and prepare for the meeting. The academic/professional advisor will provide the student with support throughout the process, unless she/he has raised the concern. In that case the chairperson will do so. Because of confidentiality issues, student representatives shall not be involved in these matters.

Areas to be reviewed and discussed at this meeting will likely include the nature, severity, and consequences of the student's actions. The following questions may be posed at this stage (adapted from Lamb, Cochran, & Jackson, 1991):

1. What are the actual behaviors that are of concern, and how are those behaviors related to the goals of the program and/or the work of the agency?
2. How and in what settings have these behaviors been manifested?
3. What were the negative consequences of the problematic behaviors for the program and/or the agency or others (e.g., clients, other students)?
4. Who observed the behaviors in question?
5. Who or what was affected by the behaviors (program, faculty, staff, students, clients, and/or agency)?
6. What was the frequency of the behaviors?
7. Has the student been made aware of the behaviors before the meeting and, if so, how did she/he respond?
8. Has the feedback regarding the behaviors been documented in any way?
9. How serious are the behaviors on the continuum of ethical and professional behavior?
10. What are the student's ideas about how the problem may be solved by remediation?

While each case is different and requires individual assessment, the following factors may indicate that the problem is more serious and may represent an impairment rather than a problematic

behavior. If it is impairment rather than problematic behavior, the student will not be able to or be willing to acknowledge, understand, or adequately address the following issues.

1. How the program, faculty, staff, and/or other students suffer from the behavior.
2. How the quality of academic work or service delivered by the student suffers.
3. How the problematic behavior interferes with professional and/or academic functioning.
4. That the problematic behavior has the potential for ethical or legal ramifications if not addressed.
5. That a disproportionate amount of time and attention by the faculty and/or agency field instructor is required for direct supervision and/or remediation.
6. That the problematic behavior does not change as a function of feedback.
7. That the problematic behavior negatively affects the public image of the program, the college, the university, or the agency.

Ample time will be allowed in this meeting for the student to present her/his view of the situation and to ask questions. She/he may ask another person, not involved in the situation, to accompany her/him as an observer at the meeting. The observer may not ask questions, present material, or serve as a witness.

After this meeting with the student, the faculty and the academic/professional advisor will meet to determine the next step. If they determine that action must be taken in this situation, they will develop a written plan for remediation or other appropriate course of action and will schedule a meeting to discuss this plan or action with the student within two weeks of their initial meeting with the student. Students may submit their own written ideas for remediation or course of action to the faculty, through the academic/professional advisor. The faculty and academic/professional advisor will consider the student's recommendations in developing their recommendations.

The student will be given the opportunity to accept the plan for remediation or course of action, to provide a written rebuttal, and/or to appeal. If the student chooses to provide a rebuttal, the faculty and academic/professional advisor will meet again to consider any new evidence presented by the student, and will provide written documentation of their decision within two weeks of the date the rebuttal was received. If the student wishes to appeal the decision, she/he may contact the Associate Dean of the College of Education and Human Services.

Regardless of the outcome of the meeting, the academic/professional advisor will schedule a follow-up meeting to evaluate the student's adjustment to the decision, to recommend available options, and to provide potential sources of guidance and assistance as necessary.

The remediation process will follow the written plan, which must include scheduled review dates and target dates for each issue identified. Examples of actions that may be included in the remediation plan include – but are not limited to – an increase in didactic instruction, a decrease in course load, a decrease in or temporary suspension of academic enrollment or Practicum responsibilities, increased faculty advisement and/or faculty and agency supervision, or leave of absence and mental health counseling/therapy. Faculty consultation with the counselor/therapist will be required before the student is readmitted.

Progress must be reviewed by the faculty and academic/professional advisor before the student is allowed to continue in the social work program or to graduate. The student will be given an opportunity to provide written comments on the written review document. After the review, a copy of the current remediation plan, and the final written review, including faculty, academic/professional advisor, and student signatures, must be placed in the student's file. If progress is viewed as insufficient, the faculty and academic/professional advisor may recommend either a change in the remediation plan or dismissal. The student will have an opportunity for rebuttal or appeal, as described above.

IV. Additional Points of Emphasis

- A. Clearly not every contingency can be covered in this policy. Exceptions may be made in unusual circumstances and/or if public/student welfare is at risk.
- B. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.
- C. This policy is subject to annual review/revision.

SIGNED:

Student

Date

Faculty Interviewer

Date

The student's signature on this document verifies that he/she has read the policy and agrees to its terms.

April 22, 2010

CODE OF ETHICS STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING
Social Work Major Application

Initial each statement below that you are in agreement with. If you have concerns or do not agree, leave the statement blank and be prepared to discuss the issue and any questions you have at your interview.

The National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics can be accessed online at <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>

COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL WORK VALUES

- _____ 1. I have read the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.
- _____ 2. I understand what it means to make a commitment to follow the NASW Code of Ethics, and I have no concerns regarding this commitment or I have raised these concerns with social work faculty.
- _____ 3. I understand I have a responsibility to follow the NASW Code of Ethics as a future professional social worker and commit myself to follow the NASW Code of Ethics as a student social work major, in my field practicum, and as a future professional social worker.
- _____ 4. I understand that failure to act in a manner in keeping with the NASW Code of Ethics could result in dismissal from the social work program.

FACULTY REVIEW

The above statements have been reviewed by the student and faculty and any concerns have been discussed.

Student Signature

Date

Faculty Signature

Date

BACKGROUND INFORMATION STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING
Social Work Major Application

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Have you ever been convicted of a crime other than a routine traffic offense? Yes No
(A DUI is not considered a routine offense and must be reported. A DUI does not automatically preclude admission to the major.)

Please list conviction(s) and year(s) received: _____

2. Have you ever been subjected to dismissal, suspension, probation, or other serious disciplinary or academic sanction by any educational institution, employer, professional associations?

Yes No

3. Have you ever served in the military?

Yes No

4. If yes, did you receive a dishonorable discharge?

Yes No

If you answered yes to questions 1, 2, or 4, please explain the circumstances on a separate piece of paper. An affirmative answer does not automatically disqualify you from admission into the social work major. Your answer will be reviewed in relation to your entire application.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Initial each statement below that you are in agreement with. If you have concerns or do not agree, leave the statement blank and be prepared to discuss the issue and any questions you have at your interview.

_____ 5. I understand that failure to previously disclose adverse information related to questions 1, 2, or 4 that is revealed during the course of the background check will be grounds for dismissal from the social work program.

_____ 6. I understand that some field placements and employment settings will require that I give consent to a criminal background check. I understand I may not be able to be placed in the agency I prefer because of any past criminal actions.

_____ 7. I understand that the Illinois Licensed Social Worker (LSW) exam application will ask me to indicate any felony convictions. I understand that it may be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for me to become a licensed social worker if I have a felony conviction.

FACULTY REVIEW

The above statements have been reviewed by the student and faculty and any concerns have been discussed.

Student Signature

Date

Faculty Signature

Date