

SOCIAL WORK

<http://chhs.gmu.edu/sw/index>

Name and description of the field.

Social Work is a field that is concerned with assisting and advocating for people in their environments (community, cultural, familial). Graduates work with individuals, groups, families, and community client systems.

What special skills or abilities are needed to succeed in this major?

- Good oral and written skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Ability to work with clients who are experiencing various level of personal distress
- Ability to accept people who are different from oneself
- Maturity
- Self-awareness
- A minimum of a 2.5 GPA
- Adherence to National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics
- Critical thinking skills
- Ability to work under pressure

If both B.A. and B.S. degrees are offered, what are the differences in career/graduate school opportunities?

Only the B.S. is offered. However, completion of the B.S.W. from an accredited program makes graduates eligible for advanced standing at the graduate level, enabling students to complete a M.S.W. in one year rather than two.

Is it possible to minor in Social Work?

Yes. An 18 credit Child Welfare Certificate is also available.

A M.S.W. degree is offered and prepares students for advanced social work practice.

What are recent graduates doing?

Over 33% of our graduates are attending graduate school, most in Master's in Social Work (M.S.W.) programs. Others are working in diverse agencies such as group homes, shelters, schools, foster care/adoption, hospitals, department of social services, juvenile courts, child protective services, substance abuse agencies, case management, state and local governments, national organizations, and others.

Sample job descriptions:

Child or Adult Protective Service Worker: investigate reports of abuse or neglect and intervene if necessary. Where appropriate, institute legal action to remove children from homes and place them temporarily in an emergency shelter or with a foster family.

Mental Health Social Worker: provide services for persons with mental or emotional problems, such as individual or group therapy, outreach, crisis intervention, social rehabilitation and training in skills for everyday living. Help plan for supportive services to ease patients' return to the community.

School Social Worker: diagnose students' problems and arrange needed services, counsel children in trouble, and help integrate disabled students into the general school population. Work with problems such as student pregnancy, misbehavior in class and excessive absences. Advise teachers on how to deal with problem students.

Criminal Justice Social Worker: make recommendations to court, do pre-sentencing assessments, and provide services for prison inmates and their families.

Hospital Social Worker: Help patients and their families cope with chronic, acute or terminal illnesses and handle problems that stand in the way of recovery or rehabilitation. Organize support groups for families of patients suffering from cancer,

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AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, or other illnesses. Advise family caregivers, counsel patients, and help plan for their needs after discharge from the hospital.

What kinds of practical experience are recommended to explore Social Work further?

Volunteer work or internship under the supervision of a professional (M.S.W.) supervisor.

Other opportunities are available through Career Services:

- Students can also gain practical experience through paid or unpaid internships, part-time career related positions and cooperative education opportunities.
- Information re part-time career related jobs, paid internships and cooperative education opportunities is available by registering in the PatriotJobWeb computerized data base option. <http://careers.gmu.edu/patriotjobweb>.
- Information on summer jobs and unpaid internships is located in Career Library.
- **Externships** are a unique opportunity to "shadow" a professional who is George Mason Alum to gain information about an occupation or organization. To access a network of professionals in the field, use Career Network Online at careers.gmu.edu/cc.

Career Library Resources – Go to <http://careers.gmu.edu/careerlibrary/wheretostart/socw.pdf> to see resources located in the Career Services Library in room 348, SUB I

Major, Career & Job Hunting Information Online (links to the academic department, associations and other useful sites) – Go to <http://careers.gmu.edu/careerlibrary/wheretostart/socw.pdf>

Whom should students contact for further information?

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