INTRODUCTION TO THE MAJOR

The Social Welfare major provides undergraduate students with a broad-based introduction to America’s social welfare problems and social policies within a social science context. The curriculum focuses both on the history and institutions of social work as a field of activity, and on the welfare state as a collective enterprise addressing human need. Students gain knowledge of organized networks of public and private social services, and the basic practice methods associated with the social work profession.

The major is a designated “group major” grounded in the liberal arts, rather than specialized training in the profession of social work. Students who successfully complete the major program are awarded the Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree.

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

Social Welfare is a capped major and prerequisites and enrollment controls for required courses are in place to manage student demand. Students interested in declaring should complete the prerequisite entry requirements as soon as possible. In order to declare, students must complete all prerequisites with a C or better, have a minimum GPA of 2.0, and have taken less than 80 units (including in progress classes).

Students should also be aware of application deadlines and complete the e-form as soon as all of the prerequisites have been completed.

AMPLIFY YOUR MAJOR

- Get involved with our undergraduate organization, the Social Welfare Association for the Greater Good
- Enroll in a Social Welfare DeCal or facilitate one!
- Explore a social problem, intervention, or theory in-depth through the Honors Program in Social Welfare
- Join Social Welfare students across the state for Lobby Days

My favorite thing about the Social Welfare major is the people I’ve met along the way. It’s great to be around people who are knowledgeable about the field and love what they do!”

– Monica Poblano, Class of 2022
FIRST YEAR
Meet with your major and college advisor to discuss your academic plan.
Familiarize yourself with major and college requirements.
Start working on prerequisite entry requirements (L&S Reading and Composition and Quantitative Reasoning, Introductory Psychology, and Introductory Sociology).

SECOND YEAR
Complete prerequisite entry requirements by the end of your third semester and petition to declare the major.
Get a head start on degree requirements by completing upper division social science electives.
Review major guidelines for study abroad.

THIRD YEAR
Enroll in SOC WEL no once your petition to declare the major has been approved.
Focus on upper division requirements and social science electives.
Review your degree progress with your major and college advisors.
Consult with your major advisor about the Honors Thesis Program.

FOURTH YEAR
Continue to complete SOC WEL core courses and upper division social science electives.
Do a degree check to ensure you are on track to graduate.
Complete any "bucket list" courses and remaining major, college, and campus requirements.
Participate in the Social Welfare commencement.

WHAT CAN I DO WITH MY MAJOR?
Social work addresses the barriers, inequities and injustices that exist in society. It responds to crises and emergencies as well as to everyday personal and social problems. Social work utilizes a variety of skills, techniques, and activities consistent with its holistic focus on people and their environment.

Jobs and Employers
Administrative Amt., Interface
Advisor, UC Berkeley
Business Development Coordinator, Oracle
Community Health Worker, MLK Hospital
Community Organizer, LAUSD
Counselor Support, Alta Mira
Recovery Centers
Family Advocate, YMCA
Healthcare Operations, Kaiser Permanente
Home Health Aide, In-Home Support Services
Residential Counselor, Larkin Street Youth Services
Youth Specialist, Americorps

Graduate Programs
Clinical Psychology
Educational Administration
Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences
Hospitality Administration
Public Health
Public Policy
Social Welfare
Sociology
Speech-Language Pathology

Examples gathered from the First Destination Survey of recent Berkeley graduates.

Updated: 06.04.24