

Social Work

Bachelor of Social Work

2025-2026

Nature of Work: Social work is a profession for those with a strong belief in social justice. Many social workers specialize in serving a particular population or working in a specific setting such as mental health, substance abuse, medical, public health, schools, geriatrics, developmental disabilities, corrections, child welfare, counseling, administration, research, policy development, and community organization. Some social workers help clients who face disabilities, life-threatening diseases, or social problems, such as inadequate housing, unemployment, or substance abuse. Social workers also assist families that have serious domestic conflicts, sometimes involving child or spousal abuse. Additionally, they may conduct research, advocate for improved services, or become involved in planning and policy development.

Professional Training: A bachelor's degree in social work (BSW) is the minimum requirement for entry into the occupation. Many social workers pursue a master's degree (MSW) to achieve greater career options and higher pay. Bachelor degree programs prepare graduates for direct service positions, such as a case manager, mental health worker, group home manager, and residential counselor. The BSW program includes courses in social work values and ethics, and humility. In addition, it advocates for social and economic justice. Courses cover human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy and services, social work practice skills, social research methods, and field education. A minimum of 400 hours of supervised field experience is required.

Job Outlook: According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Overall employment of social workers is projected to grow 9 percent from 2021 to 2031, faster than the average for all occupations. About 74,700 openings for social workers are projected each year, on average, over the decade... (See www.bls.gov)

Earnings: The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the median annual wage for social workers in 2023 in the Seattle area is over \$90,000, and the average pay for a social worker in California is over \$72,000. Child, family, and school social workers average earnings were \$49,150. For health care social workers, the median annual wages were reported as \$60,840 and mental health and substance abuse social workers' average as \$49,130. (See www.bls.gov)

Note: Major electives in SOWK, SOCI, CORR, ANTH, and PSYC.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK & SOCIOLOGY

Winter Educational Complex
(509) 527-2273

Websites

[Walla Walla University](#)
[University Bulletin](#)

[School of Social Work & Sociology](#)

Faculty

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Professional Organizations
[Council on Social Work Education, Inc.](#)

[National Association of Social Workers](#)

Additional Sources
[U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Social Work Occupations](#)

Suggested Degree Path

TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED: 192 cr. GENERAL STUDIES REQUIREMENTS: 64-69 cr. [See the Undergraduate Bulletin for Details](#)

The chart below details one suggested path a student may take to complete a bachelor's degree in Social Work.

Cognates are listed in *italics*.

Freshman Year

Fall Courses	Hours
Intro to Social Work (SOWK 264)	4
General Studies Math	4
General Studies	8
Total	16

Winter Courses	Hours
<i>General Sociology</i> (SOCL 204)	4
Intro to Analytical Writing (ENGL 121)	3
General Studies	9
Total	16

Spring Courses	Hours
<i>Privilege & Oppression</i> (SOCL 236)	4
Intro to Research Writing (ENGL 122)	3
General Studies	5
Total	16

Sophomore Year

Fall Courses	Hours
Social Work History, Theory & Ethics (SOWK 265)	4
Research Writing (ENGL 223)	3
General Studies/General Electives	9
Total	16

Winter Courses	Hours
Social Welfare Policy (SOWK 266)	4
Human Behavior & the Social Environment I (SOWK 260)	4
General Studies/General Electives	8
Total	16

Spring Courses	Hours
Human Behavior & the Social Environment II (SOWK 261)	4
<i>Current Social Problems</i> (SOCL 234)	4
General Studies/General Electives	8
Total	16

Junior Year

Fall Courses	Hours
Social Work Practice with Individuals (SOWK 371)	4
SOWK Electives	4
General Studies Electives	8
Total	16

Winter Courses	Hours
Social Work Practice with Couples & Family (SOWK 373)	4
Policy & Advocacy Practice for Social Justice (SOWK 375)	3
General Studies	9
Total	16

Spring Courses	Hours
Social Work Practice with Small Groups (SOWK 372)	4
SOWK Electives	4
General Studies	8
Total	16

Senior Year

Fall Courses	Hours
*Field Practicum (SOWK 490)	4
Research Methods I (SOCL 451)	4
Comparative Theories of SOWK Practice (SOWK 466)	3
General Studies/General Electives	5
Total	16

Winter Courses	Hours
*Field Practicum (SOWK 490)	4
Research Methods II (SOCL 452)	4
Social Work Practice with Org. & Communities (SOWK 465)	4
SOWK Electives	4
Total	16

Spring Courses	Hours
*Field Practicum (SOWK 490)	4
Social Work Capstone (SOWK 491)	2
SOWK Electives	4
General Studies	6
Total	16

+ Offered even years only

- Offered odd years only

*Field Practicum 400 clock hours arranged in senior year.