



Social Work Related Experience

*Guidelines for the 50-hour
requirement for BSW students.*

Purpose

The social work related experience helps you:

- **Explore the field.** See first-hand what social workers do and the types of agencies and services they work in.
- **Test your interest.** Discover whether social work is the right fit for your goals and values.
- **Build experience.** Gain insight and confidence you can draw on in your social work classes.
- **Receive feedback.** Through your supervisor's reference, faculty learn more about your readiness and suitability for the social work profession.

This experience is meant to support your growth.

Starting early and communicating with the Social Work Office helps ensure a meaningful and successful experience.

Social Work Experience Requirements

BSW students complete 50 hours of social work related experience in human service settings through paid or volunteer work.

Getting Started

Plan to complete at least 25 hours by the end of the semester in which you apply to the BSW Program.

Example: If you apply in February, your 25 hours should be completed by the last day of spring classes.

Finish the remaining hours before registering for SWK 321 and SWK 375 (junior spring semester).

Planning Your Experience

You may count experience from no more than two sites toward the required hours.

Complete an Approval Form before you begin. This form provides a description of your site and anticipated responsibilities.

The Approval Form must be signed by your supervisor and approved by your social work advisor.

If your supervisor is someone you know personally or are related to, check with your advisor before starting.

Verifying Your Hours

Your supervisor must complete a Reference Form to verify your hours. References from peers or relatives are not accepted.

Students with relevant work experience may request approval to count that experience in place of volunteer hours.



Finding the Right Site

Choose a site that lets you interact with clients and learn how social service programs operate.

Great Options

- Crisis lines or domestic violence shelters (especially those with volunteer training)
- Child welfare programs
- Nursing homes or senior centers
- Community soup kitchens or food pantries

Usually Not Accepted

- Coaching youth sports
- Volunteering at day care sites
- Community cleanup events
- Sorority or fraternity fundraisers

Special Opportunities

Some experiences, such as alternative spring breaks or service trips, may count if they meet program standards.

- You must have a site supervisor (not a peer) who can verify your hours.
- Final approval is made by social work faculty on a case-by-case basis.
- Always check with your advisor before

Process

Follow these steps to document your social work related experience:

1. Find a Site

Talk with your social work advisor about possible, qualifying experiences.

The social work office also has a list of local volunteer sites to help you get started.

2. Get Approval

Complete an Approval Form after selecting an agency. Submit the form to the Social Work Office for review before you begin your hours.

3. Complete at Least 25 Hours

After completing 25 hours, ask your supervisor to complete the Reference Form for Social Work Related Experience.

Your supervisor must submit the form directly to the Social Work Office (not to you).

4. Write Your Reflection

After completing 25 hours, submit your Reflection Statement as part of the BSW application.

Reflection prompts are available from the Social Work Office or on the Social Work website and Blackboard shell.

5. Complete All 50 Hours

All 50 hours must be completed before starting SWK 321 and SWK 375 courses.

If you change sites:

- Submit a new Approval Form before beginning at the new site.
- Have your new supervisor complete a Reference Form to verify additional hours.



Forms

The Approval Form and Reference Form for the Social Work Related Experience are available:

- Outside the Social Work Office, Anspach Hall 034
- On the Social Work Website: class.cmich.edu/socialwork
- In the Social Work Blackboard Shell: blackboard.cmich.edu

Contact Us

Have questions or need help choosing a site? Contact our office to schedule an appointment with a social work advisor.

Social Work Program

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