

# UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

## **DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK**

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## **SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK GRADUATE PREPARATORY CERTIFICATE**

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION:** The **SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK GRADUATE PREPARATORY CERTIFICATE** provides specialized educational preparation for social workers who have graduated with an MSW degree in other concentrations or specializations and want to come back to the university to gain the prerequisite coursework for to be able to be certified as a school social worker from the Professional Teaching Standards Board of Wyoming (and possibly certified through other School Boards in the U.S.).

**RATIONALE:** Working in the K through 12 school environments hold great challenges and demands for social workers. Educational policies and procedures mandate extensive social service options for children and families. Social workers often are responsible for major aspects of meeting the supportive services for students and their families. Ultimately, the school provides supports to allow students to achieve their educational potential. School social workers are a vital member in the primary and secondary educational arena. These social workers must learn about the educational issues that surround this area of practice. Issues include mainstreaming, access to educational resources, “no child left behind,” and educational assessments that support the individualized educational planning for children and youth. Since 1978, the National Association of Social Work (NASW) has established guidelines for School Social Work Services. Social workers can apply to NASW for a certificate for school social work and can learn more through their official website.

The Division of Social Work at the University of Wyoming is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and within its current program offerings for matriculated graduate students has stipulated requirements to meet the preparatory requirements for school social work. This preparatory coursework has been evaluated by the Wyoming Department of Education (Professional Teaching Standards Board) and deemed sufficient for graduates of our program. From time to time, however, graduate students do not anticipate working in the school setting, and, thus, while attaining their graduate social work degree, they do not choose to enroll in school social work preparatory coursework. Thus, later, after graduation, the Division gets requests from post-graduates (often our alumni as well as MSW graduates of other social work programs) to access our school social work curriculum so they can readily gain employment in the school environment. In addition, the Wyoming Department of Education often refers post MSW professionals to our Division to attempt to obtain the requisite coursework.

The goals for this preparatory certification for school social workers are as follows: (1) prepare post-graduate MSW social workers who can help children and their families overcome the barriers to learning through interventions in the home, school, and community; (2) enable qualified post-graduate MSWs professionals to meet the Professional Teaching Standards Board requirements for school social work certification in Wyoming, and, (3) secondarily, encourage communities through the state to develop and maintain effective school social work services.

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS:** Preparation for the certificate will require students to successfully complete the following courses:

SOWK 5810	School Social Work	3 credits
SOWK 5975	Independent Study: School Social Work Practicum	3 credits

**APPLICATION, ELIGIBILITY PROCESS, ADVISOR ASSIGNMENT:** MSW post-graduates may apply for this preparatory certificate program. Persons applying for this certificate program must have a completed MSW from an accredited social work program. Applicants must

- Apply through the UW Admissions Office by completing the UW on-line graduate application, and paying the required application fee to UW. Applicants should indicate that they will be applying for a certificate program. Official college transcripts must be submitted to the Registrar directly.
- Each applicant must send their 1) Resume and 2) a Letter of Application to the Division of Social Work. In this application letter, the student should indicate the reasons for their interest in applying for the program and what they hope to gain from this area of study.

Admissions to the program are accepted throughout the year. Applicants must have a 3.0 or better in MSW courses. When accepted into the certificate program, the student will be assigned a faculty advisor who will provide assistance in planning the student's course of study. The faculty member will approve all elective classes. Students in graduate certificate programs are required to submit a program of study, a graduation/title form and completion of requirements form when the student is ready to complete the certificate program. The certificate will be noted on the student's transcript and certificate awarded by the Office of the Registrar. The faculty advisor or Division Director will sign the program of study, graduation/title form, and completion form in lieu of the committee.

### **BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:**

**SOWK 5810 (3 credits) Working with Children and Families in the Schools** (Traditional grading) School Social Work courses includes the following content: School Law, Disabilities (IEP, Transition Services, Resources), School history, Consultation and Collaboration, Applied Child Development, School safety, Disciplinary practices, Child Welfare and Family Services and information specific to School Social Work in Wyoming.

### **SOWK 5975: Independent Study: School Social Work Practicum (3 credits)**

(Grading: Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory)

*Supervised Practicum (minimum of 120 hours)*

Submit a request to field coordinator and school social work faculty 6 months prior to desired completion.

- Identify school where student anticipates engaging in service learning project
- Student initiates contact with a school via principal and or social worker
- Student identifies an MSW with at least 2 years of post MSW experience to act as a field instructor and provide a minimum of 12 hours of supervision
- Student designs project based on needs of that particular school as identified by school social worker or principal
- Student writes a proposal for project to gain approval of principal, MSW field instructor, and Practicum Coordinator.

Project options can include the following:

- Program Evaluation
- Group experience (Student, Parent, Work Group)
- Intervention with children or children's family members

- Policy development activity
- Working with individual students developing treatment plans, IEPs, intervention strategies, and/or outcomes
- Other projects as identified by the student
- Design learning activities to meet objectives on the School Learning Contract
- Student will determine whether the school requires completion of an internship certificate via PTSB or other means of registering as an intern or volunteer and complete this process.

Tied to the service learning experience, each student will create a professional paper (*equivalent to one credit hour of coursework or 30-45 hours of time commitment to paper's development and completion*). This paper will be reviewed and graded (either "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory") by the Field Coordinator and Faculty Advisor. The paper must examine social work practice, policy, program development, or practice-related research. The paper should be approximately 15 pages in length, following APA guidelines.

### **CERTIFICATE REVIEW FOR AWARD OF PREPARATORY CERTIFICATION COMPLETION**

**LETTER-** Before final approval for the preparatory certificate, the faculty advisor and the UW faculty liaison must affirm that the applicant has met the objectives specified in the school learning contract. Learning will be documented and evaluated through:

- Hours logged and signed by supervision
- Earned "satisfactory" for coursework in SOWK 5975: Independent Study: School Social Work Practicum
- 60 hours (mid term) visit to the student and field instructor by the faculty liaison to review progress upon School Learning Contract
- 120 hours (final) visit by the faculty liaison

If a student of this post-graduate preparatory certificate program has had previous social work practice learning experience(s) in a K-12 school environment, that student may request a waiver of SOWK 5850. The procedure for this request requires that the student provide the Field Evaluation from the practicum as well as the learning plan or goals with a narrative that identifies competencies for school placement have been met via original practicum.

**ANTICIPATED COURSE DELIVERY SCHEDULE:** The Division of Social Work anticipates delivery of SOWK 5810 in the Fall semester. The SOWK 5975: Independent Study: School Social Work Practicum (Practicum experience and professional paper) will be available for students to register in the Fall and Spring semester. Students could anticipate completing a certificate in no fewer than 2 semesters, and could remain enrolled each semester with one course until they have completed the program.