

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

Undergraduate Social Work Degree

Degree in Three Program Option

The social work program could potentially provide the Degree in Three as an option for our students. Two flow charts are submitted in the designated UNT portal to provide examples of how students could potentially flow through such a degree option as an undergraduate social work major.

In addition, below are some issues or concerns to be considered in finalizing any plans as follows:

1. A potential Degree in Three could most easily accommodate students who have completed a large portion of their core requirements (approximately 20 credit hours left). These students would have easy access to their needed courses during the long semesters as well as the summer or other options as needed.
2. The Degree in Three would also be possible for students who have a substantial number of core hours to complete. However, this option would require that students take core courses most semesters. This includes requiring core courses added into students' schedule while they are immersed in the social work curriculum. In addition, students would need to take core courses in the summer or other alternative options.
3. The department has no control over the availability of core courses, therefore the university would need to take the lead in ensuring that significant course offerings are available for students in the summers or other alternatives.
4. The success of the Degree in Three for the department would be dependent on students knowing and understanding its requirements upon admission to UNT. Students would need to be committed to taking the mandatory number of credit hours per semester and enrolling in summer sessions.
5. Another challenge for this degree option is that it would depend extensively on students adhering to any sequencing requirements. Failure to do so could easily add an additional semester for the students to fulfill their degree requirements.
6. The social work program rarely offers courses in the summer. If social work courses were to become necessary for the Degree in Three option, this would become an additional resource need. It could require the availability of faculty to teach or program administrative support in the summer.

7. The Degree in Three may possibly impact the size of our social work classes if we find a need to add more students to courses each semester instead of having students wait until they have completed a significant portion of their core courses (*which is what we now do*). This again would become a resource issue that would need to be resolved. A possible resolution could be providing more than one section of a course if necessary.
8. Another concern is that there is not a guarantee that students interested in the major will be accepted into the program. Students must first take the pre-major courses, perform well in these specified courses, and demonstrate beginning level competence in identified professional skills. This is necessary due to the limited number of students we can accept into the program to meet social work accreditation standards. Students must submit an application to become a social work major – which may be denied. Students need to understand this as a possibility since they may then need to change their major if they are not accepted. This could delay a student's expectation of finishing a Degree in Three as the student would need to start over to identify a different major.
9. One possible outcome of the Degree in Three option is it could impact our compliance with our accreditation body, CSWE. CSWE requires a faculty ratio of 1 faculty to 25 students. It will be essential for the department to ensure that we stay compliant and address any potential issues of non-compliance as they are identified.
10. Social work is a field that works with society's most vulnerable populations; therefore it might be a concern to have young, immature individuals in the profession too early. This could have a negative impact on potential clients as well as any students who may not yet have the maturity to deal with the challenges faced in practice. The level of maturity of students may also be a concern as our department must provide professional liability insurance for students during their internship which occurs in the final semester of the program. The internship provides an experiential opportunity for students to demonstrate skills learned in the classroom. As such, students will be working with approved agencies to serve real-life clients in the community. These agencies have the authority to approve or deny the opportunity of an internship for our students. Issues may be raised related to such issues as difficulty in obtaining liability insurance for younger students or other concerns regarding students' maturity levels as appropriate for vulnerable clients. The department would need to explore any potential difficulties with agencies related to these concerns.