

# Two Year Progress Report for Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Program

## November 2015

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### Introduction

The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program in the School of Social Work at Renison University College was externally reviewed in November 2013 by the Commission on Accreditation (COA) of the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE). The self-study that was prepared for that was used for the internal report of the University. Two reviewers from the COA were joined by a third reviewer who was internal to the University but external to the School.

The site visit was conducted on October 21-22, 2013. The review team included two assessors representing the CASWE's COA (Dr. Ross Klein, Memorial University, Newfoundland and Dr. Siu Ming Kwok, Kings University College, London) and a University of Waterloo faculty member (Dr. Nancy Waite, School of Pharmacy). The review team's report was received on November 11, 2013, and the School's response and implementation plan were received on March 4, 2014. The Principal of Renison University College indicated his endorsement of the plan on March 5, 2014, adding that the addition of full time faculty will require approval of the Renison Board of Governors.

Since that time, there have been no major changes in the BSW program beyond those outlined below. We hired an additional tenure-track assistant professor who started July 1, 2015. Edwin Ng teaches in both the BSW and the MSW programs. More recently, we are restructuring the School of Social Work and have eliminated the position of Director, Program and Field. We are in the process of hiring new administrative and field positions.

### Response to Requirements and Recommendations from the 2013 Review of the BSW

Several elements in the Social Work field program were out of compliance with accreditation standards. The re-accreditation report stated three requirements must be met:

**Requirement 1:** That the School of Social Work formally convey to students the parameters of responsibility in the process of locating, arranging, and implementing a field placement. Difference parameters based on the location of the desired placement (e.g., a placement in Toronto or out-of-province) should also be stated.

**Response:** We recognize the importance of this clarification and the work was undertaken immediately. Both the BSW student and the practicum manuals were simplified and we ensured that both manuals accurately reflect the parameters of responsibility. A separate field document that clearly outlines

procedures was used at the 2014 information session and the orientation to highlight the changes. This document was then incorporated into the practicum manual. In addition, our website was updated to reflect this. The text and the link are below. The manuals are reviewed yearly to ensure that they remain up to date.

### *Do I choose my own practicum?*

No- Students do not select their own practicum settings. Practicum settings and field instructors are chosen according to the criteria outlined earlier in the Practicum Manual. However, the School of Social Work is open to learning about new settings to negotiate and approve for future placements.

**Full-time** students have the opportunity to learn about potential field placements through a Placement Fair and pre-placement interviews. Students identify their learning goals and choices of potential practica with the School of Social Work. The School determines the placement of students.

**Part-time** students may suggest potential settings that interest them and meet for pre-placement interviews with such settings. The School of Social Work determines the placement of students.

From: <https://uwaterloo.ca/school-of-social-work/frequently-asked-questions-faq-bsw-field-education>

**Requirement 2:** That the School of Social Work set minimum standards for frequency and type of contact between the Faculty Field Consultants and agency-based field instructors.

**Response:** We recognized that these standards were inconsistently communicated in the practicum manual and the contracts of the part-time (then) Faculty Field Consultants. We have since then changed the position title to Field Consultant and are grateful that this requirement has underlined the need to be clearer about these requirements with both the Field Consultants and our agency-based field instructors. Now the contracts for this important role specify telephone and in-person visits. A telephone call is given at the very beginning of the practicum to establish contact and an in-person visit happens within the first month. Following that, one more phone call and one more visit occur. The timing of these varies according to the choice of the agency in which the practicum is taking place: some choose to have the additional in-person visit in the Winter term and others, during Spring term. In addition, the contract clearly outlines that other visits may be necessitated if problems arise in the practicum.

**Requirement 3:** That the School of Social Work have a formal policy with regard to the protocol for supervision of field agency supervisors who do not possess a BSW (Section 3.2.22 of the CASWE Accreditation Standards).

**Response:** We recognize the importance of meeting this standard. The BSW Practicum Manual now specifies ([https://uwaterloo.ca/school-of-social-work/sites/ca.school-of-social-work/files/uploads/files/bsw\\_practicum\\_manual\\_2015-2016.pdf](https://uwaterloo.ca/school-of-social-work/sites/ca.school-of-social-work/files/uploads/files/bsw_practicum_manual_2015-2016.pdf) on page 10) the following:

In exceptional circumstances, if a professional social worker (i.e., BSW, MSW or RSW) is not available at the agency; special arrangements will be made to provide the required social work instruction for the student.

For instance, we have a group of students who are placed at an agency in the community. In this agency, the placement students work with social workers with various degrees but are supervised by someone with a Master of Divinity. Additional social work supervision is provided once a month for two hours by the School's BSW Field Education Coordinator, who holds an MSW. In another instance, we have hired an external field instructor, who has an MSW, to provide social work supervision to a student placed in a long term care facility that does not have social workers.

In addition to the above requirements, the review team made seven recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** A formal structure be established for the process to be followed for revision or change of a social work course in SDS whereby the School of Social Work actively participates in those changes (Section 2.17 of the CASWE Accreditation Standards).

**Response:** The Chair of SDS and the Director of the School of Social Work met with the Dean to discuss options. A subcommittee consisting of two faculty members from each department was established. One SDS faculty member subsequently withdrew; the remaining three considered various options and developed a proposed procedure, which was then presented to SDS and School of Social Work meetings. It was approved by both departments and then presented to Academic Council for information in 2015. The approved procedure is attached in Appendix One.

**Recommendation 2:** A formal structure of collaboration be established (a common curriculum committee, for example) for the purpose of mutual understanding of social work courses in SDS versus the School of Social Work, and how these courses fit together as a curriculum.

**Response:** The Chair of SDS and the Director of the School of Social Work met with the Dean to discuss options. A subcommittee consisting of two faculty members from each department was established. One SDS faculty member subsequently withdrew; the remaining three considered various options and developed a proposed procedure, which was then presented to SDS and School of Social Work meetings. It was approved by both departments and then presented to Academic Council for information in 2015. The approved procedure is attached in Appendix One.

**Recommendation 3:** That the School of Social Work hire a senior social work academic (Associate or junior-Full Professor) who is able to support and mentor junior colleagues.

**Response:** This continues to be recognized as an urgent need. When we were hiring in both 2013 and 2014, we advertised for an assistant or associate professor but were unable to hire at the associate level. When the MSW program was approved in partnership with AHS, an agreement was made to seek a faculty member who would be joint between the School and the AHS. This could be senior level position. The joint position is still in process. We recently applied to have Dr. Wendy Fletcher's cross-appointment transferred to the School of Social Work. This would provide additional support and mentorship for the junior colleagues.

**Recommendation 4:** That the School of Social Work hire one additional tenure stream faculty member in order to reduce the large reliance on sessionals/per-course instructors.

**Response:** Edwin Ng joined the School July 1, 2015. He teaches in both the BSW and MSW programs.

**Recommendation 5:** That the School of Social Work continue to work to standardize course content and student learning across multiple sections of the same course.

**Response:** We recognized the need for this, both from this recommendation and from student feedback. In the Fall of 2014, a program of mentorship was put in place. For each of the three BSW courses taught to the full-time cohort, one full-time faculty member worked with a sessional. This assured that there was consistency across sections as they worked closely together. In addition, it had the added benefit of ensuring that the full-time BSW students were getting more exposure to the full-time faculty members. There has been an additional effort to coordinate the full-time offering with a part-time offering when they occur in the same term (which does not always happen). We also now hold an orientation session for the teaching staff in the School after the students have been oriented. This ensures that all instructors, both full-time and part-time, get to know one another and who is teaching what.

**Recommendation 6:** That the School of Social Work undertake an evaluation with students to determine what they are learning in what courses (and what they are not learning), perceived overlap between courses, and to ensure adequate macro-practice content per Core Learning Objectives for Students #7 and #8.

**Response:** Current practice of getting feedback from students verbally to a fellow student who sits on the curriculum committee is in revision already as we recognize the need for better mechanisms. We have instituted collection of this data via online mechanisms. An additional question about overlap of courses has been added. The curriculum committee student representatives are now responsible for promoting this activity rather than gathering the actual data on paper. The student reps will continue to be involved in the curriculum committee meetings. The model of PT and FT faculty teaming, as

described above, will aid in ensuring adequate macro practice coverage.

**Recommendation 7:** That the School of Social Work ensure policies and practices with full-time students and part-time students are the same. Where they must vary, this should be clearly stated in the Student Manual and in admission materials.

**Response:** This recommendation principally centered around the practice of the Reduction of Hours for part-time BSW students. The possibility of reducing practicum hours has now been eliminated for part-time BSWs as it had never been available to full-time students. The change in this offering was highlighted in the offer letters that went out to incoming students as well as in the Practicum manual. In addition, all other procedures were reviewed in order to ensure that all were aligned.

## Appendix One

### **Proposal for a formalized, inter-departmental mechanism for identification, review and resolution of SDS-BSW prerequisite curriculum and accreditation issues**

**Submitted for SDS Department Meeting (Jan. 16, 2015) by Robert Case** (on behalf of the ad hoc interdepartmental working group: Robert Case (SDS), Colleen MacMillan (SSW) and Alice Schmidt Hanbidge (SSW)). **Submitted for SSW Meeting January 21. Approved by both bodies.**

#### **Context**

This proposal specifically concerns the 10 SOCWK/SWREN courses taught in SDS that are prerequisites for Renison's BSW program. The CASWE Commission on Accreditation had 3 requirements and several recommendations concerning Renison's BSW program, two of which relate to the relationship between SDS and SSW in regards to these 10 courses:

Recommendation (not requirement) 1: A formal structure be established for the process to be followed for revision or change of a social work course in SDS whereby the SSW actively participates in those changes.

Recommendation 2 – A formal structure of collaboration be established (a common curriculum committee, for example) for the purpose of mutual understanding of social work courses in SDS versus the SSW, and how these courses fit together as a curriculum.

#### **Proposed mechanism and process**

1. The Chair ("the Chair") of Social Development Studies and the Director ("the Director") of the School of Social Work will meet *annually* to review the 10 SDS courses that are BSW pre-requisite courses (the "pre-requisites") in relation to BSW accreditation standards and the overall BSW curriculum.

Prior to each annual review meeting, the Chair and Director will consult relevant faculty members in each department to identify any possible conflicts, gaps or overlaps in curriculum between the prerequisite courses and BSW courses, and to identify any possible BSW accreditation issues associated with the pre-requisites.

Issues identified at the annual review meeting as in need of action will be resolved either directly by the Chair and Director or through an *ad hoc* inter-departmental committee convened at the discretion of the Chair and Director:

a) In the case of SDS-BSW prerequisite courses identified as possibly not meeting CASWE *accreditation standards*, the *ad hoc* committee will be chaired by the Chair of SDS and comprised of the SDS faculty member(s) responsible for the course, at least one SSW faculty member, and the SSW's accreditation resource person (in an *ex officio*, advisory capacity). This committee identifies the changes that are required and the SDS Chair submits the proposed changes to SDS department for approval and implementation. (Recommendation 2)

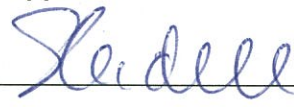
b) In the case of conflicts, gaps or overlaps in *curriculum between the prerequisite courses and BSW courses*, the *ad hoc* committee will be chaired by a SSW faculty member, and will be comprised of the SDS and SSW faculty members teaching the particular courses identified as problematic. This committee identifies the changes needed to the courses in question. The relevant committee members submit the proposed course changes to the relevant department(s) for approval and implementation. (Recommendation 1)


2. The Chair of SDS will notify the Director of the School of Social Work of any changes being made to any of the 10 SDS courses prior to submission for approval at the Curriculum Committee or Academic Council. (Recommendation 1)


Date of next program review: July 1, 2019

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**Signatures of Approval:**

  
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Chair/Director Jan 20/16  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty or Administrative Dean Jan. 20/16  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Vice-President, Academic  
(For undergraduate and augmented programs) Jan 21, 2016  
Date

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Associate Provost, Graduate Studies  
(For Graduate and augment programs) Date