YOUR PATH to COLUMBIA
Dear Prospective Student,

Thank you for your interest in applying to earn a Master’s of Science in Social Work (MSW) at the Columbia School of Social Work (CSSW). I look forward to meeting you in the near future at one of our information sessions or events.

Until then, I hope you will find this publication useful. It outlines **7 recommended steps** for submitting a successful application.

I speak on behalf of the entire Admissions team in urging you to contact us at any time with questions about the application process. Our contact information is listed on the inside back cover.

**Debbie Lesperance**  
Director, CSSW Admissions

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**APPLY TO CSSW**

**7 RECOMMENDED STEPS**

1. **DISCOVER** how our school defines social work

2. **EXPLORE** the range of careers you can pursue with a social work degree

3. **UNDERSTAND** the process of earning an MSW at Columbia School of Social Work

4. **CONFER** with current and former students about their field education experiences

5. **MEET OUR FACULTY**, who are among the most distinguished scholars and practitioners in the nation

6. **ACQUAINT** yourself with our student life

7. **LEARN** how to apply
“Social workers are passionate in their dedication to making waves and moving mountains on behalf of people and communities. There is a range of approaches and specializations within our profession, but the shared goal is ultimately to change or transform lives. Transformation is pursued by applying professional knowledge and skills in clinical settings and in nearly every sector of our global, national, and local communities—government, advocacy groups, health care and nonprofit social service organizations, and corporations.”

“One of the great things about Columbia is how broad our definition of social work is. Many of our students and faculty are doing clinical social work: they’re interested in working directly with individuals and families. Many people are working at the organizational level, so that’s their definition of social work. And still others are working in social policy, which is a long and distinguished tradition within social work.”

“Social work is about how to help people in the right way. It’s not so easy to help someone, even if you have the best of intentions. I wanted to study social work so that I could better serve people.”
I had my second-year field placement at Riverdale Mental Health Association and loved it from the very beginning. They have now hired me. I am so excited that I’m going to be staying on there.”

LAURA LUCIANO (MSW’15)

“Thanks to my social work training, I am running trauma healing programs for genocide survivors and perpetrators in Rwanda through an international organization called Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities.”

MELANIE CHERY (MSW’15)

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of social workers is projected to grow 19 percent over 10 years to 2022, faster than the average for all occupations, due to increased demand for health care and social services.

Robust areas of social work employment include child welfare, direct services, gerontology, medical/public health, substance abuse, mental health, veterans and military, justice and corrections, and schools.

Emerging areas of social work include adolescent health, corporate social work, developmental disabilities, and environmental crises.

EXPLORE the range of careers you can pursue with a social work degree
“Right out of school, I found a job working as a Social Science Research Analyst for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in the Administration for Children and Families. On a daily basis, I use a combination of my clinical and policy social work skills, including reflective listening, consensus building, policy analysis, and program evaluation.”

“I work at StreetSquash in Harlem, helping young people by giving them access to sports as well as a range of social services. I love being able to combine my social work training with my interest in athletics. I am also the field supervisor for CSSW interns.”

“I was hired as a full-time social worker at Brooklyn Defender Services, which was where I did my first-year placement. We provide legal representation to 45,000 people each year who have been charged with crimes or are facing child welfare proceedings but are too poor to afford an attorney.”

The Columbia School of Social Work ...

- has a dedicated career services office.
- has the highest pass rate for the social work licensing (LMSW) exam in the tri-state (New York-New Jersey-Connecticut) area.
- offers a network of 16,000+ alumni who can help with job leads.
Social Work Specializations:

**4 CONCENTRATIONS**
- Advanced Clinical Social Work Practice
  - Advanced Generalist Practice & Programming
  - Policy Practice
- Social Enterprise Administration

**7 FIELDS OF PRACTICE**
- Aging
- Contemporary Social Issues
- Family, Youth & Children’s Services
- Health, Mental Health & Disabilities
  - International Social Welfare and Services to Immigrants and Refugees
  - School-based and School-linked Services
  - World of Work

**Programs/Platforms:**

**FULL-TIME PROGRAMS**
- Two-Year
- Transfer
- Advanced Standing
- 16-month

**PART-TIME TO FULL-TIME PROGRAMS**
- Reduced Residency
- Extended

**ONLINE PLATFORM**
An online option is offered for three CSSW programs, in the metro areas of several major U.S. cities. Check our admissions site for more information.

Available to online students

The majority of CSSW students are in our Two-Year Program.

Students have more than 28 different specializations available.

UNDERSTAND
your MSW degree options

Available to online students
Dual Degrees and Minors:

DUAL DEGREES
- M.Ed., Bank Street College of Education
- M.B.A., Columbia Business School
- J.D., Columbia Law School
- M.S., Urban Planning, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation
- M.A., Jewish Studies, Jewish Theological Seminary
- M.P.H., Mailman School of Public Health
- M.P.A., School of International & Public Affairs
- M.I.A., School of International & Public Affairs
- M.Div., Union Theological Seminary

MINORS
- Business Administration
- International Social Welfare
- Law
- Public Policy and Administration

The most popular dual degrees are in public health and international affairs.

Foundation Year: Complete your foundation courses and field internship; finalize your method and field of practice for Year Two.

1st semester
- Foundations of Social Work Practice
- Social Welfare Policy
- Social Work Research
- Human Behavior and the Social Environment I
- Field Education

2nd semester
- Direct Practice II
- Advocacy in Social Work Practice
- Human Behavior and the Social Environment II
- Field Education

NOTE: If you are in the Extended or Reduced Residency programs, you begin field education and foundation practice courses in your second year.

Year Two: Complete a specialized program (courses and field internship) for your chosen method and field of practice.

NOTE: If you are in the Advanced Standing or Transfer programs, you enter as a second-year student. Second-year students complete classes in their concentration area and field of practice, while also working in an advanced field setting.
Field education is a vital part of earning an MSW. It is where you learn how to apply social work theories from the classroom to social work practice.

**RACHEL BURTON** (MSW’15)
“During my second year, I interned at Young Athletes Incorporated, where my supervisor gave me the flexibility to design my own experience. I did some clinical work and also helped to develop a large-scale community initiative, for which I sought funding. The experience in grant-writing was invaluable.”

**MICHELE GEHR** (MSW’15)
“I was placed in the South Bronx at one of the toughest schools in the country. It was intimidating, but by the time I was done we’d increased attendance by 85 percent.”

**AMITA LAL** (MSW’15)
“I found myself very fulfilled working with newly arrived immigrants in my field placement in my first year. As the daughter of immigrant parents, I felt a personal connection to the work.”

**CONFER**
with current and former students about their field education experiences

**DANIEL KAMINS** (MSW’08)
“During my second year, I interned at Young Athletes Incorporated, where my supervisor gave me the flexibility to design my own experience. I did some clinical work and also helped to develop a large-scale community initiative, for which I sought funding. The experience in grant-writing was invaluable.”

Each semester, social work students spend three days, or 21 hours a week, working at a placement site. The hours are usually from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

At each field placement, a supervisor meets with you face-to-face once a week and evaluates your work for the term.
EBONI PRESTON (MSW’15)
“I was in a field placement at the National Urban League. I loved being part of a team that makes it a priority to get clients the services they need.”

KELSEY REEDER (MSW’15)
“Working with the LGBT community in my placement, I learned a lot. I was able to bring awareness about gender issues to my classroom discussions and trainings.”

Students have access to a field education network of 600+ social service agencies, including in all the cities comprising our online campus.

Advanced Standing, Transfer and Reduced Residency students complete one year of field education. Two-year students complete 1,200 hours at two different placement sites.

Typical field settings include schools, hospitals, substance abuse clinics, courts, corporations, prisons, community mental health programs, and senior centers.

Field learning opportunities include case management, crisis intervention, program development, and policy intervention and administration.

RICHARD HARA, MSW (CSSW’99), PH.D.
Assistant Director, Field Education
“The Field Education Department works with a wide-ranging and ever-growing network of community and public agencies to support students in getting the most out of their field placements. Students are individually matched with agencies and field instructors, and we work to ensure that a student’s learning objectives are met through a detailed educational plan. The first (foundation) year, the focus is on generalist social work practice. In the second (advanced-practice) year, the focus is on the student’s chosen method concentration. Field is intense, but our students invariably find it rewarding.”
Our policy faculty are engaged in high-level research on poverty and social policy.

We have a newly opened Center on Poverty and Social Policy, being led by Michell I. Ginsberg Professor Irwin Garfinkel (left) and research scientist Christopher Wimer, which is building on the work of our policy faculty as well as on the work of the Columbia Population Research Center, also housed within our School.

Several of our policy faculty have written books that are used in social work schools across the country:

Our faculty is dedicated to conducting research, training, and advocacy on behalf of vulnerable populations. And they are equally committed to training the next generation of social work practitioners and scholars.

MEET OUR FACULTY
They are among the most distinguished scholars and practitioners in the nation

NEERAJ KAUSHAL, M.A., PH.D.
Professor of Social Work

“The best thing about working at CSSW is the chance to interact with students. I enjoy it tremendously. I learn a lot from them. Our students know why they are here and what they want to be. Social work is a very satisfying profession. It can also be challenging. I have a lot of respect for my students.”
Several of our faculty are pioneers in engaging in social work research in other countries.

Professor Fred Ssewamala runs the International Center for Child Health and Asset Development, which aims to empower HIV/AIDS-impacted children in sub-Saharan Africa.

Willma and Albert Musher Professor Nabila El-Bassel and Associate Professor Louisa Gilbert are the founders of the Global Health Research Center of Central Asia (GHRCCA), which conducts studies that lead to interventions for populations at high risk of contracting infectious diseases in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries.

Our clinical faculty specialize in cutting-edge areas of social work practice.

Marion E. Kenworthy Professor M. Katherine Shear has developed a pioneering 16-step clinical treatment for complicated grief, a condition that occurs when the natural response to bereavement gets stalled. Professor Shear directs the Center on Complicated Grief that is housed within our School. It offers training workshops for bereavement professionals.

Professor André Ivanoff runs the Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Lab within our School, which holds DBT training programs for social work professionals and also offers a program for students in the Advanced Clinical track.

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SHOLPAN PRIMBETOVA, MSW (CSSW’09) Deputy Regional Director, Global Health Research Center of Central Asia

“After earning a degree in pharmacology in my native Kazakhstan, I was able to attend CSSW and earn a master’s in social work as a fellow with the Open Society Institute Social Work Scholarship Program. I was placed with the Social Intervention Group, run by Professor Nabila El-Bassel. I helped with setting up GHRCCA’s regional office in Almaty, where I now work.”

ERIN OLIVO, MSW (CSSW’95), MPH (MSPH’95), PH.D. (TC’01) Assistant Clinical Professor of Medical Psychology, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University

“My career in integrative medicine began with taking a class on DBT with Professor Ivanoff. She was the first person who introduced me to the idea that you could incorporate mindfulness into treatment. That just really spoke to me.”
Beyond The Bars

Annual Conference

Beyond the Bars is led by the Criminal Justice Caucus and the Justice Initiative at Columbia University and will bring together current efforts and future ideas to transform the criminal justice system. It is a collaborative effort from students, faculty and community members across New York City.

Register here for the conference:
beyondthebars2014.eventbrite.com

For updates and more information, please visit criminaljusticecaucus.wordpress.com or ji.columbia.edu

Columbia University Presents
BEYOND THE BARS
Annual Conference
March 7–8, 2014

Friday, March 7th Kickoff Event Featuring:

Saturday, March 8th
Conference Panels and Workshops:

Angela Davis
Fania Davis
Beth Richie
Impact Repertory Theatre
Bryonn Bain
Soffiyah Elijah
Transforming Systems
Exploring Alternatives
Examining Practice

Columbia University
The Justice Initiative
PDSA
Professional Development & Self-Awareness

MARCH 7–8
BEYOND THE BARS
2014
BREAKING THROUGH


Student Support

Advising
Enrollment & Student Services
Career Development

Field Education
Financial Aid
Writing Center

ACQUAINT yourself with our student life

Events

BEYOND THE BARS Annual Conference

Substance Abuse and Recovery CAUCUS EVENT
Book Talk by CHEF JESSE SCHENKER

IN AN IDEAL WORLD Film Screening

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER
By Edna B. Foa, Ph.D.

VISITING SCHOLAR LECTURE

PoRTFOLIO

VISITING SCHOLAR LECTURE
Student Activities

25+ STUDENT CAUCUSES

JOEL LIVINGSTON (MSW’14): “I joined the Black Caucus because it’s important for students of color to have more of a voice at CSSW and to strive to give back to the Harlem community.”

ESTRELLITA ALVARADO HERNANDEZ (MSW’14): “The Latino/a Caucus helped me transition from Arizona to New York City and Columbia University. It’s my family away from home.”

SELF-CARE DAY

CHRIS EAGAR-FINNEY (MSW’13): “My favorite part of Self-Care Day was the chance to interact with other students informally, something I don’t have time to do when I’m in field, studying, or working on assignments.”

SPRING GALA

Once a year, students come together for Community Day. At the 2015 event, the Rev. James Singletary, M.Div. (UTS’10), MSW (CSSW’10), talked with students about integrating spirituality into social work practice.
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
At a minimum, candidates must meet the following criteria:

• B.A. or B.S. degree from an accredited college or university, which includes 60 semester hours or credits in the liberal arts, of which at least nine are in the social or biological sciences.
• Academic record suggesting the ability to do graduate-level work.
• Serious commitment to the profession of social work and the capacity to meet the demands of professional training, often demonstrated by internships and life experiences.
• TOEFL: (combined score) 98; IELTS: 7.0

FINANCIAL AID
The Columbia School of Social Work is committed to working with every student who qualifies for admission to make it possible to attend. Students may be considered for need-based institutional scholarships and/or federal aid by submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The Office of Financial Aid helps students navigate this process and keeps them informed of funding options.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST
☐ Complete the application form online: swadmissions.columbia.edu/apply
☐ Submit a resume/CV (three pages maximum).
☐ Compose three essays in response to program-specific questions.
☐ Acquire three letters of reference.
☐ Request and submit academic transcripts for schools where you have earned 12 or more credits.
☐ Prepare for a Skype interview (online platform & international applicants only).
☐ Pay application fee: US$75.

NOTE: Our MSW program does not require GRE scores.
Dear Prospective Student,

Thank you for your interest in our MSW program. I hope this booklet has helped you learn more about the School, and has clarified the application process. Please feel free to contact us with questions. That’s why we are here.

Debbie Lesperance  
& the Admissions Team

Make waves.  
Move mountains.  
Change lives.