The UC Berkeley School of Social Welfare is an international leader in social work practice, social policy and research. Our MSW program is ranked third in the country. Our faculty are consistently ranked the top thinkers in their chosen areas of study, challenging conventional wisdom by producing new thinking, practices and scholarship. Our graduates are leaders of the social work profession in California and throughout the nation. We offer active joint graduate degree programs in public health and public policy, a pupil personnel services (school social work) credential, a certificate in social work with Latino communities and a certificate in aging services.

Great change is afoot in our society, and many people are feeling the unequal ways in which these developments are occurring. As social workers, we have a responsibility to help shape these changes and, as our School’s mission states, “transform the systems that perpetuate poverty and social disadvantage.” These disparities are now a part of our national dialogue, and we have a major role to play in pointing the way forward to a more just society.

This coming decade will likely be a time of significant transition that disrupts many of our assumptions about how the future of our communities, our profession and even our own lives will unfold. While these disruptions will be painful, they also present an opportunity to rethink our approaches to social services, social change, higher education and scholarship. The mission of our MSW program is to “develop future leaders of the profession who are deeply prepared for multi-level social work in specific areas of practice.” We hope you become leaders who challenge conventional wisdom with new ways of thinking and practice. What better place to consider, study, gain new skills and help shape these changes than at UC Berkeley — a vibrant intellectual community that is the top public university in the world — and at Berkeley Social Welfare, which also consistently ranks among the top social work schools.

I look forward to this journey together. Even in our unpredictable world we can work hard to help create maximum access for those among us who are often ignored, left behind or pushed out. By doing so we will build a better place for all to live our lives.

Jeffrey Edleson
Dean and Professor, Berkeley Social Welfare
LEADERSHIP FOR SERVICE.
LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL CHANGE.
LEADERSHIP FOR EVIDENCE-INFORMED AND COMPETENCY-BASED PRACTICE.

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The first graduate-level social work curriculum at Berkeley was established in 1918 in the Department of Economics by Berkeley’s first woman faculty member, Jessica Blanche Peixotto. The graduate Certificate in Social Service was established in 1927 and was accredited by the American Association of Schools and Social Work the next year. Berkeley Social Welfare with its MSW degree was established in 1944. Since then we have prepared over 11,000 social work professionals for leadership positions in public and nonprofit human service sectors.

Our students are trained and equipped with the knowledge of professional practices, policies and programs required to address a wide range of contemporary societal problems. They use empirical evidence to inform practice and transform lives. Through our field education program, our 200 master’s students contribute over 130,000 hours of vital support to over 150 human service agencies and their disenfranchised clients through the San Francisco Bay Area each year.
Founded in the wake of the Gold Rush by leaders of the newly established 31st state, the University of California’s flagship campus at Berkeley has become one of the preeminent universities in the world. Its early guiding lights, charged with providing education (both “practical” and “classical”) for the state’s people, gradually established a distinguished faculty (with 22 Nobel laureates to-date), a stellar research library and more than 350 academic programs.

Berkeley became a catalyst of economic growth and social innovation — the place where vitamin E was discovered, a lost Scarlatti opera found, the flu virus identified and the nation’s first no-fault divorce law drafted. Scholars at Berkeley have conducted groundbreaking research on poverty and on basic human nutritional requirements, identified why wartime supply ships were failing at sea, invented technologies to build faster and cheaper computer chips and imaged the infant universe. It also spawned the Free Speech Movement in 1964 that was a model for other social movements that have fundamentally changed our society.

The University of California is widely considered the nation’s premier public university system and Berkeley ranks consistently as the nation’s and world’s leading public university. The goal of graduate study at Berkeley is to inspire independence and originality in the pursuit of knowledge.

“Berkeley has an institutional influence that makes you unique when you go out in the world.”

Thabani Nyoni (MSW ’16)
The Master of Social Welfare (MSW) is a two-year, full-time degree program that trains students for a range of social work leadership and practice roles. Students are prepared to practice with specialized skills at specific intervention levels and are thoroughly grounded in knowledge of social and psychological issues, social policies and social service organizations.

Berkeley Social Welfare’s MSW program mission is to develop future leaders of the profession who are deeply prepared for multi-level social work in specific areas of practice. We achieve this through an education built on the strongest available evidence, oriented to advancing social justice and responsive to changing needs of local and global communities.

Social work is a growth profession in the United States.

Social worker employment is continuing to increase across all categories, and social work occupations are projected to exceed the national job growth rate much faster than the average for all occupations.

Berkeley Social Welfare’s fully-accredited MSW Program provides an education built on the strongest available evidence, oriented to advancing social justice, and responsive to the changing needs of local and global communities.

3 Specialized Practice Areas
Advancing Health and Well-being across the Adult Lifespan
Strengthening Children, Youth and Families
Strengthening Organizations and Communities

3 Certificate Programs
Graduate Certificate in Aging
School Social Work Credentials
Social Work with Latinos

2 Concurrent Degree Options
Concurrent Degree in Public Health (MSW+MPH)
Concurrent Degree in Public Policy (MSW+MPP)

Average ratio of student to faculty support:
- 30:1 Instructor
- 15:1 Field Consultant
- 8:1 Faculty Advisor
MSW specializations

Advancing Health and Well-being Across the Adult Lifespan

PROMOTING PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FOR ALL ADULTS.

Students specializing in Advancing Health and Well-being Across the Adult Lifespan (“A-WELL”) are prepared for leadership in social work practice with a broad range of vulnerable adult populations.

A-WELL students are educated and trained in the assessment and intervention skills necessary to address a range of complex psychosocial, health and mental health issues affecting individuals and families throughout adulthood. Specialized training provides state-of-the-art knowledge for effective multilevel practice with adults, the elderly, and their families.
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN AGING

The National Institute on Aging estimates the need for 70,000 social workers in older adult services by 2020.

Social work professionals require special knowledge about a broad range of fundamental issues experienced by older adults and their families, as well as how to address these issues. Berkeley Social Welfare offers the Berkeley Graduate Certificate in Aging, focusing on ameliorating the physical, psychosocial, familial, cultural, ethnic, racial, organizational, and societal factors which serve as barriers to physical and emotional well-being in later life.

Students seeking the Certificate gain expertise in conducting holistic bio-psycho-social geriatric assessments, which attempt to untangle interconnected physical, psychological, and social factors that affect health outcomes and well-being. Students also learn strategies for prevention and crisis intervention, and other treatment modalities to strengthen coping, social support, rehabilitation, and problem-solving.

Learn more! www.socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/Certificate_in_Aging

Adrian Aguilera
Associate Professor

“Students will receive comprehensive theoretical and practical training from expert faculty and excellent field placements for work with adults in health and mental health settings. In particular, there is a high demand for work in behavioral health settings with diverse populations, and participants in the Advancing Health and Well-Being Across the Adult Lifespan specialization will be well poised to play leadership roles in this area.”
Students specializing in Strengthening Children, Youth and Families ("SCYF") are prepared for leadership to support families in raising healthy children.

SCYF students acquire a full range of individual, family, group, and community intervention strategies and practice skills used with and on behalf of children and families. Specialized training provides state-of-the-art knowledge for effective multilevel practice with vulnerable children, adolescents, and families.
CHILD WELFARE FELLOWS PROGRAM

Become a leader in public child welfare.

Public child welfare social workers serve some of the most vulnerable children, youth and families in need in California. In service to the goals of diversifying and professionalizing the workforce, the Child Welfare Fellows Program prepares selected Berkeley MSW students for careers in public child welfare. Child Welfare Fellows receive an annual training stipend of $18,500 for up to two years in exchange for a post-graduation work commitment of at least two years in a California county public child welfare service agency. Prospective Child Welfare Fellows submit an application to the program along with their application for admission to the Berkeley MSW Program.

Berkeley Child Welfare Fellows complete their MSW degree in the specialization area of Strengthening Children, Youth and Families.

- Academic classes and internships emphasize working with children and families who have incidents of abuse and neglect. Special field seminar sections and course work address the unique challenges that families in this system endure and present to their workers.

- World-renowned policy and practice instructors and researchers expose students to the most current research being conducted in public child welfare. Clinical instructors with significant employment experience in public child welfare provide practice courses and coordinate internships.

To learn more about the Child Welfare Fellows Program, eligibility requirements and how to apply, visit www.socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/child-welfare-fellows-program.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK CREDENTIALS

Change lives as a school social worker.

School social work is one of the fastest growing areas of social work practice. Since 1907 school social workers have been instrumental in helping schools provide a setting for teaching and learning that optimizes student potential. Berkeley Social Welfare offers a fully accredited School Social Work Program that educates master’s-level social workers to assist public schools in achieving their educational and developmental missions.

Students who complete the curriculum and required field placements are eligible for a recommendation for the Pupil Personnel Services Credential in School Social Work (“PPSC”), issued by the State of California. The PPSC is usually a requirement for employment as a school social worker in California K-12 public schools. Learn more about school social work and the PPSC Program: www.socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/ppsc.

Robert Ayasse
MSW, PPSC Field Consultant and Lecturer

“School social work demands skills in multiple levels of practice. Obtaining a PPSC in School Social Work at UC Berkeley will prepare you to not only help children with social and emotional difficulties in school, but to also help the school system become more responsive to their needs.”

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Jill Duerr Berrick
Zellerbach Family Foundation Professor

“An increasing body of evidence suggests that children’s experiences in their homes and communities have profound effects on the life course. Adverse experiences in childhood can affect children’s and youth’s development, their academic success, their social context and even their biology. Research also shows that children and youth have wells of resilience that can be identified and fostered and that strong families and communities are an important source of strength.

MSW students who have an interest in serving children, youth and their families will find in the Strengthening Children, Youth and Families specialization, an opportunity to explore practice and policy issues germane to children’s mental health, child welfare, children’s health or family well-being. With a focus on vulnerable and marginalized populations, students will learn a range of skills necessary to support children and youth in the context of their families and communities.”
Students specializing in Strengthening Organizations and Communities (“SOC”) are prepared for leadership in the public and nonprofit sectors as program managers, agency directors, policy analysts, program evaluators, and community organizers.

SOC students learn the techniques needed to create, maintain, and enhance client-serving institutions and to empower communities; and gain skills in community and program development; agency management; legislative and policy analysis; financial and information systems management; program evaluation; and service specialization. Specialized training provides state-of-the-art knowledge for effective multilevel practice with clients, organizations and communities.
Strengthening Organizations and Communities

“Prevention is the act of stopping something before it occurs, which requires an evolution of the dominant social service system to one where intervention occurs before a person meets the eligibility criteria for most clinical or direct services. In the Strengthening Organizations and Communities specialization, we strive to collaboratively strengthen communities to optimize wellbeing endemically and to build strong, participatory, and responsive institutions that leverage both scientific advancements and self-determination to promote the welfare of all people. We prepare transformative leaders to address seemingly intractable or invisible grand challenges with critical thinking, competence, compassion, and creativity.”

Associate Professor

Valerie Shapiro

Field Consultant and Lecturer

“There are so many directions that a degree in social welfare can take you. Strengthening Organizations and Communities students leave Berkeley Social Welfare to work in many different contexts and settings, depending on their interests. Some choose this specialization because they are passionate about working with community residents and stakeholders. Some focus on policy advocacy or policy development. Others specialize in evaluation of program effectiveness, while some creatively blend program development with opportunities to work directly with people who receive services.

The SOC specialization has flexibility so that students can be focused on a given area or it can allow them to learn about a variety of areas to help them decide on a future career direction. There is no singular definition of what a SOC student will go on to do, but the common thread is that students typically want to work at a mezzo or macro level in the social work sector.”

Field Consultant and Lecturer

Andrea Dubrow

Associate Professor

Valerie Shapiro

Field Consultant and Lecturer

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Field Consultant and Lecturer

Andrea Dubrow

Associate Professor

Valerie Shapiro
With a prestigious faculty and excellent students committed to public service, Berkeley Social Welfare’s top-ranked MSW Program develops future leaders of the profession who are deeply prepared for multi-level social work in specific areas of practice. Since 1944, we have prepared over 11,000 social work professionals, dedicated to serving the most vulnerable members of society, for a wide range of social work leadership and practice roles.

**INCOMING CLASS STATS**

- **31%** Significant International Experience
- **39%** First-Generation College Graduates
- **3.7** Median GPA
- **2** Average Years Social Work Experience
- **51%** Proficient in More Than One Language
“I wanted to focus on making the jobs of folks who went into direct practice easier by looking at the systems in which they and their clients function. The connection between the classroom and the field placement was most useful to me; my field placement was like my own personal case study. A lot of my success is attributed to the fact that I felt prepared to go into the workforce even at a young age.”

Alexis Fernandez (MSW ‘10)
Established in July 2017, Berkeley Social Welfare’s Latinx Center of Excellence (LCOE) aims to address the shortage of Latinx students in graduate-level social work education. Our goal is to promote success among Latinx social work students through enhanced training and educational opportunities in behavioral health. 

The LCOE offers opportunities to:

- Increase the academic and professional success of Berkeley Social Welfare’s Latinx students
- Enhance the knowledge and skills of behavioral health professionals who work with Latinx communities to employ effective and culturally responsive practices and interventions with those communities
- Participate in cross-cultural service learning activities such as Sin Fronteras, a summer program that takes place in Oaxaca, Mexico.

To learn more, visit www.socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/latinx-center-excellence

While the demand for culturally and linguistically competent MSWs continues to grow, California’s public mental health systems simultaneously struggle with barriers that limit access to care, including a shortage of qualified mental health professionals able to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services. This shortage of culturally competent providers correlates to a significant underutilization of mental health services, leading in turn to inadequate care and overall poorer mental health outcomes, particularly for populations already impacted by increasing health disparities.

Berkeley Social Welfare is committed to addressing this unmet need by creating a dedicated program of study in our MSW program, leading to eligibility for the Social Work with Latinos Certificate (SWLC). The SWLC Program offers a learning environment and professional network to enhance the skills of social work graduate students in culturally competent practices that improve the lives of Latino individuals, families, and communities.

To learn more, visit www.socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/SWLC
Berkeley Social Welfare and the School of Public Health offer a concurrent degree plan option for interdisciplinary preparation in the fields of social welfare and public health, leading to the **Master of Social Welfare (MSW)** and **Master of Public Health (MPH)** degrees.

This three-year program option allows students to enter both degree programs simultaneously, and is designed to permit students the maximum amount of flexibility while fulfilling the requirements for both degrees. Students gain the knowledge and skills necessary to **promote health, prevent disease, reduce disparities in health outcomes and enhance the delivery of health social services** in the community.

Berkeley Social Welfare and the Goldman School of Public Policy offer a Concurrent Degree program option that blends the substantive focus and professional social work training of the **Masters in Social Welfare (MSW)** with the rigorous methodological tools and policy breadth of the **Masters in Public Policy (MPP)**.

Leaders who will guide societies - the United States and elsewhere - to effective solutions for today’s serious social problems will require a range of skills, many of which can be found in a blending of the Social Welfare and Public Policy core competencies. This concurrent degree program is **designed to meet the pressing need for creative and skilled leaders in the human services field** to tackle large and seemingly intractable social problems in the United States and globally.
in the field

Berkeley MSW students develop advanced practice and leadership skills through 1,100+ hours of hands-on experiential learning at an extensive variety of agencies in the highly diverse San Francisco Bay Area. Our field faculty recruit, train and maintain the best available field placements and instructors. MSW Field Education emphasizes preparation for practice with and on behalf of the most disenfranchised groups in our society.

**Foundation and Advanced Field Placements** provide students with opportunities to apply conceptual learning to real-life practice situations, and to develop and refine skills in intervention and professional functioning. **Cohort-based Concurrent Field Integration Seminars** offer students opportunities to cultivate self-reflection, develop an enduring sense of authentic professional identity, and examine how to strategically approach learning in agency contexts in order to become professionally competent and creative social workers.

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**Greg Merrill, LCSW**  
Director of Field Education

“You’ve got to learn your instrument. Then, you’ve got to practice, practice, practice. And then, when you finally get up to the bandstand, forget all that and just wail.”  
— Charlie Parker, American Jazz Saxophonist and Composer

“Social workers are a lot like jazz musicians to me. We go out into the world, harmonize with a wide range of voices and instruments, and we invent and innovate through collaboration. The Berkeley classroom will certainly teach you the history and theory of music, how to analyze music and the fundamental tenets of innovative harmonizing. It’s the field experience, however, where students learn to play live in the unparalleled arena of the San Francisco Bay Area.”

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**Susanna Fong**  
Field Consultant and Lecturer

“Remembering my days as a student, I learned so much about what it means to be a social worker. At various points of my career, I’ve had great role models and mentors. They helped me learn not only about clinical practice, but the greater world of social work and cultural/societal impact on the individual. Most importantly, they helped me gain a better sense of my own identity and role as a social worker. I hope to have a similar impact on students as they prepare to go into the field.”
A sample of agencies providing field placements in the Bay Area:

Administrative Office of the Courts
Alameda County Behavioral Health Care
Alameda County Family Justice Center
Alternative Family Services
Alzheimer’s Services of the East Bay
Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center
Bay Area Community Services
Berkeley Mental Health
Berkeley Unified School District
Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco
Casey Family Programs
East Bay Agency for Children
East Bay Children’s Law Office
Family Caregiver Alliance
Family Service Agency of San Francisco
Fred Finch Youth Center
Glide Community Housing
Hospice by the Bay
Huckleberry Youth Programs
Institute on Aging
Kaiser Permanente
La Clínica de la Raza
Larkin Street Youth Services
Marin County Community Mental Health
On Lok Senior Health
Rainbow Community Center
Richmond Area Multi Services, Inc.
San Francisco Department of Public Health
San Francisco General Hospital
San Francisco Human Services Agency
San Francisco Unified School District
Seneca Family of Agencies
UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospitals
University Health Services
VA Palo Alto Healthcare System
Youth Engagement Advocacy Housing
(YEAH)
To be eligible for admission to the Berkeley MSW Program, applicants must meet the following minimum requirements:

- **Possession of a bachelor’s degree** or recognized equivalent from an accredited institution.
- **A satisfactory scholastic average**, generally a minimum grade-point average of B or better (3.0 on a 4-point scale).
- **Sufficient undergraduate preparation** and training for graduate study in social welfare.
- **A course** in research methods, statistics or quantitative reasoning.
- **The equivalent of one full year** of paid employment or volunteer experience related to social welfare or human services. For applicants to the Management and Planning (MAP) Concentration, the recommended minimum experience requirement is two years.

Applicants to joint degree programs (e.g., MSW/MPH; MSW/MPP) must meet eligibility requirements and admissions standards of both the School of Social Welfare and the respective joint program, including any exam requirements. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is **not** required for the MSW-only program.

For international applicants from a country or political entity where English is not the official language, a satisfactory score on the TOEFL exam or other acceptable equivalent evidence of English language proficiency to do graduate work is required.

**VISIT US!**
Contact us to schedule an admissions advising visit: swadm@berkeley.edu; or (510) 642-9042.
BEFORE YOU APPLY

EXPLORE BERKELEY SOCIAL WELFARE
Visit our programs online at www.socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/academics. Review “Curricula-at-a-Glance,” Areas of Specialization, Sample Programs of Study, and more! Compare similar documents from MSW, MFT, and other programs to aid you in your decision-making process.

EXPLORE BERKELEY GRADUATE COURSES
Get a feel for the type of work and classes you would be taking here! Course descriptions are viewable online in the Berkeley Academic Guide: www.guide.berkeley.edu/.

CONSIDER FINANCIAL ASPECTS
Begin planning for any needed financial assistance arrangements as far in advance of enrollment as possible. Check out tuition information, along with the variety of support resources available to graduate students at www.socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/student-funding.

Visit www.socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/msw-admission for these helpful resources:
- MSW Admissions Checklist
- Experience and Résumé Guidelines for Applicants to the MSW Program
- Preparing Your MSW Admission Application Statements
graduate student support

Berkeley offers an array of financial support resources for graduate students.

About 70% of Berkeley MSW students receive some type of departmental support over the course of their graduate career.

128 out of 181 students received fellowships or stipends in 2017.

See our Student Funding Catalog (socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/student-funding) for more information about financial support possibilities including:

- Child Welfare Training Fellowships
- External Fellowships and Awards
- Graduate Student Academic Employment
- Support for Student Parents
- Veteran’s Benefits
The Financial Aid and Scholarships Office administers federal loans and work-study awards for graduate and professional students. Federal Student Loan Programs provide the major source of need-based financial aid funding for graduate professional degree students, and most graduate students easily qualify for federal aid. Social workers with educational debt may also be eligible for certain loan forgiveness or payment modification programs post-graduation. Check out our Student Loans and Work-Study website (www.socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/studentloans) for information on how to apply for federal student aid.

**Departmental Restricted Fellowship** awards are given on the basis of academic distinction and merit, demonstrated financial need, or a combination of both. Eligibility for restricted awards is determined by the donor(s), and many are designated specifically for MSW students. All applicants to graduate study at Berkeley Social Welfare are automatically considered for all available awards during the admissions review process.

**Departmental Training Stipend** awards provide support for eligible MSW students in certain fields of study. Some stipend programs are offered in exchange for a contractually obligated, post-graduation employment commitment for a specified time period.

Berkeley Social Welfare administers or awards over **$1.2 million** in departmental fellowships and awards to graduate students.

Four strategies for financing your graduate education:

1. **Understand** costs and budget
2. **Plan** ahead for your educational financing needs.
3. **Expand and diversify** your financial resource base
4. **Manage** finances effectively

Learn how by visiting our online guide to strategies, options, and resources for financing your graduate or professional degree! www.socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/financing-your-graduate-education
Berkeley Social Welfare students represent a core of diverse leaders practicing social justice, advocacy, leadership and scholarship. They actively shape the community within the School and University by participating in a variety of student-led organizations and events.
A sample of Berkeley Social Welfare graduate student organizations and activities:

- Asian and Pacific Islander Social Worker Caucus
- Cal Anti-Racism Collaborative
- Caucus for International Awareness
- Latin@ Caucus of Social Welfare
- NASW Annual Lobby Days in Sacramento
- PRO (Privilege, Racism and Oppression) Dialogue
- (RE)generation: Indigenous Social Welfare Caucus
- Social Justice Symposium
- Social Welfare Graduate Assembly
- Students of Under-Represented Cultures and Ethnicities (S.O.U.R.C.E)
- Therapy Role-Play Group

A sample of Berkeley Social Welfare graduate student campus resources:

- American Indian Graduate Program
- Berkeley International Office
- Cal Independent Scholars Network
- Cal Veterans Student Services
- Career Center
- Counseling & Psychological Services
- Disabled Students Program
- Graduate Diversity Program
- Recreational Sports Facility
- Student Parent Center
- Transfer, Re-entry, Student Parent Center
- University Health Services

Rachel Hahn (MSW ’14)

“My favorite thing about UC Berkeley’s Social Welfare program was the cooperative and supportive community. The formal and informal study groups, support groups, and social events I participated in all were instrumental in my MSW experience, and helped solidify for me the importance in this field of relying on colleagues for emotional support and different perspectives. I think I learned just as much from my fellow students in the program as I did from the formal curriculum.”
frequently asked questions

How do I apply to the MSW Program?
All applicants to graduate study at Berkeley apply for graduate admission online, through the UC Berkeley Graduate and Professional Application for Admission (grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/apply). A separate application to the School of Social Welfare is not required. Berkeley Social Welfare does not participate in the Social Work Centralized Application Service (SocialWorkCAS).

When should I apply for admission?
The online application becomes available in early September each year, and the application deadline is typically on or around December 1 each year (see our website for specific dates). Berkeley Social Welfare only admits for the fall semester each academic year; we do not offer spring or summer admissions.

Do you offer admission deferrals?
No. Offers of admission are valid only for the year they are made. Successful applicants who accept an offer of admission and then must later decline or withdraw must reapply in a future admissions cycle.

Do you require the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) for admission to the MSW Program?
No. The GRE is not required for admission to the MSW-only program. The GRE is required, however, for admission to the MSW/MPH and MSW/MPP Concurrent Degree Programs.
What kind of experience are you looking for in applicants? What counts as “experience related to social welfare or human services?”

Since successful experience in the human services field provides a good test of commitment and aptitude, we seek to admit students who have begun social work or related careers, and demonstrate both professional promise and leadership potential. We are looking for experience working directly with and on behalf of people and communities in need, including those experiencing social and emotional distress, vulnerable or marginalized populations, and those who are historically underserved.

How do Social Welfare graduate students pay for school?

Educational financing needs are diverse and will vary according to individual circumstance. In addition to a personal contribution to pay for graduate school, most graduate students receive some form of financial assistance through a combination of resources described in our Student Funding Catalog (socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/student-funding). At Berkeley, 90% of all graduate students receive some form of financial support (including loans).

How do I apply for financial aid?

To apply for need-based fellowships and federal student aid, complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by the priority deadline. To get started, visit https://fafsa.gov.

How do I apply for a departmental fellowship or stipend training award?

All applicants to graduate study at Berkeley Social Welfare are automatically considered for all available awards during the admissions review process. To ensure consideration for all possible awards, all applicants to graduate study should complete the “Economic Background” section of the online Graduate and Professional Application for Admission.

Where do graduate students live? What housing is available?

Berkeley's location in the highly desirable Bay Area means housing costs can be high, especially for students. Most graduate students live in off-campus rental housing in Berkeley or one of the surrounding communities. University owned and operated housing is also offered on and off campus, for both individuals and families. For more information, please visit https://housing.berkeley.edu/graduate.

See more frequently asked questions and answers online!

MSW Admissions FAQ:
www.socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/msw-admissions-faq

Financial FAQ:
www.socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/financial-faq