

# Master of Social Work



Program Book

graduate  
studies

YORK 

# Director's Letter

The School of Social Work is located in one of the most diverse universities in the world and in one of the most diverse cities in the world. One of the particular strengths of our School is the diversity of our faculty, staff and students, which ensures that a rich array of knowledge and experience is brought into our classrooms.

The School of Social Work is also considered a leader in critical social work and one of the most progressive schools of social work in Canada. The School is committed to social work education that seeks to develop practice strategies for social justice and equity, affirming that personal experiences are embedded in social structures. Our mission is to seek to address oppression and subordination as experienced and mediated through race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual identity and ability. Our faculty members work closely with marginalized communities and engage in a wide range of research areas. The knowledge that they generate serves to address social issues and inform policy and practices at all levels and in ways that promote social justice and equity. Our faculty members encourage students to recognize the ways that reality is socially constructed and how values and ideologies construct social problems, and, thus, responses. Through such critical pedagogy, the School prepares students to become critical practitioners who seek social transformation.

The School has longstanding partnerships with over 1000 community organizations and social service agencies. As such, the School offers a wide range of practicum options, from hospitals and direct practice settings to policy and community development and research. These valuable learning opportunities enable students not only to learn from other social work practitioners, but also to critically examine theory and its connections to practice. Most York Social Work graduates are hired within the field shortly after graduating in a broad range of social work contexts. We invite you to join us and launch your journey towards social justice and social transformation.

## Maurice Poon

Associate Professor  
Director  
School of Social Work, York University



# School of Social Work

## Graduate Program Director's Message

Hello! As the GPD of the School, having taught here for a decade, and as a graduate of our MSW myself, I can attest that there is no better place to pursue a critical social work education in Canada than the MSW program at the School of Social Work at York University!

The School is distinguished across Canada for its critical approach to social work—an approach that encourages students to recognize and address power structures in society that uphold and perpetuate inequality. Our curriculum is designed to help students recognize the interdependence of micro and macro social processes. It also promotes a concept of social work practice as flexible – on one end of the spectrum, social workers respond to immediate distress and material needs of individuals, families, or groups, and on the other end, they work in communities, organizations, and through policy development and political activism to transform society based on principles of social justice, equality, and anti-oppression. Our MSW program also welcomes and encourages students to bring their own knowledge and interests to the program and, through in-depth study, to specialize in their chosen areas. You will be able to explore your interests through core and elective courses taught by knowledgeable, world-class professors who will inspire and move you. The practicum will give you crucial experiential education, and the Practice-based Research Paper will give you the theoretical and conceptual depth that you need to set your career on solid and meaningful foundations.

Furthermore, all of our faculty, administration and staff are committed to providing a school space in which diversity and equality are respected and students feel welcome and safe, and a sense of community and belonging.

If your goal is to make meaningful social justice change in the world and in individuals' lives, you will never regret making York your first choice.

## Chris Chapman

Associate Professor  
Graduate Program Director  
School of Social Work, York University



## Our Strength is Our Critical Approach to Social Work

As a School we are committed to social justice and social change. Our distinct focus is not on changing the individual but recognizing the ways that individual problems are shaped by social structures that reflect deeply inequitable power relations in society.

We are committed to giving students critical thinking and practice skills enabling them to recognize and expose the often-hidden ideology embedded in existing practices and structures and to develop alternative approaches to practice – ones that both give greater dignity and voice to individuals and advance social justice and equality.

We prepare our students to work towards meaningful change at multiple levels whether it's individual counselling or change at the community, institutional, policy, or political level.

## Our Faculty and Staff: Committed, Caring, and Diverse

Our faculty are acclaimed scholars in their field and are dedicated to human rights and social justice. Together they represent a diverse range of research interests including, but not limited to, homelessness, immigration, racism, violence against women, Indigenous issues, sexuality and gender diversity, mental health, counselling and therapy, community development, community organizing, social policy, and political activism.

Our faculty are leaders in critical theory and practice and are committed to teaching in ways that increase understandings of how these dimensions are interrelated. Faculty and staff care deeply about our students by providing a welcoming and inclusive environment both in and outside the classroom.



# “ The Voices of Faculty and Staff Members

“The School of Social work offers a well-rounded education in theory, practice and principles of Social Work from key scholars and practitioners in the discipline and their application in everyday life through a balanced combination of cutting-edge courses. A rich array of field practica opens up the doors to future practice.”

—Professor Soma Chatterjee

“What I think is most impressive about our MSW program is that it offers deep engagement with critical perspectives, taught by extraordinary faculty in the company of amazing students, all of whom are personally committed to social justice.”

—Professor Barbara Heron

“This environment is so friendly providing a warm and welcoming space.”

—Staff Member

“As a past student and current staff I could not be prouder to be part of this social work family. I truly love every aspect of my job. Working with such passionate staff that deeply care about the students, take pride in their work, and have such big hearts, make coming into the office feel like a home away from home.”

—Staff Member

# Courses and Classes

Our student cohorts in the program are small, which allows for a sense of community within the school. The smaller class sizes encourage deeper discussions amongst students and allow them to gain a better grasp of course content.

The core and elective courses provide students with an in-depth knowledge on how critical social work theory is implicated in social work practice.

Students are also encouraged to choose elective courses in other departments and faculties at YorkU to further explore their areas of interest.



## The Voices of Our Current Students

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“Great critical program that centers discussions of power and avenues for transformative action.”

“The program is small, and our cohort spent almost the first year travelling in the same classes. This built up cohesion and intimacy such that we were able to engage in deeper, more challenging and productive work together.”

“The Social Work program has excellent professors that are supportive of the student’s learning process and encourage collaboration and critical thinking. My colleagues were incredibly passionate and engaged students that I enjoyed learning alongside.”

“The strengths of the social work program are the variety of professors who come with lived experience and field experience. They enrich classes which helps students connect better to the material.”

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# Practice-Based Research Paper

The Practice-Based Research Paper, or PRP, is an important part of the MSW program. It provides students an opportunity to pursue a research project on a topic of their interest and to refine their skills in theory and research. The experience gives students a depth of experience and knowledge to complete complex research projects.

All MSW students are required to complete the PRP within the context of two sequential courses: The Graduate Research Seminar (GRS) and the Practice Research Paper Seminar (PRS). One course builds on the other, providing students with the tools and the support needed to complete their PRP. This research paper is not a thesis and so students do not need to seek out a supervisor to oversee the process.

**“The program uses the very foundations of critical social work as well as its contemporary transformations to support students in their academic and professional growth. I’m particularly proud of our students’ research output. Their Practice Research Papers (PRPs) are of excellent quality and many students not only go on to publish their work but also pursue careers that bridge research and practice. Research-driven social work practice is essential for the growth of the field and for the development of effective interventions. I am proud that our MSW students take an active interest in this process.”**

—Professor Shamette Hepburn



## Placements

In the practicum, students use the theories, skills, and knowledge they have gained in the classroom and put them into action within a field placement setting. There is a wide range of practicum opportunities and settings including policy and research, community development and outreach, and direct practice.

Securing a placement is a collaboration between the student and the Field Education Team. Students complete a placement application outlining areas of interest and goals for practicum learning which is used to outreach and secure a placement opportunity.

**Full-time and Part-time Advanced Standing MSW students** are required to complete a placement of 450 hours.

**Two-Year MSW students are required to complete two placements.** In Year 1 students complete 550 hours and in Year 2 they complete 450 hours.

## What Our Students Had to Say on the Practicum

“I got the opportunity to interact with clients, learn approaches to addiction treatment, and implement theory into practice”

“Although this placement was challenging both mentally and emotionally, it was a great learning opportunity to broaden my experience in a hospice setting”

“The field education office worked with me to ensure that I secured a placement that was best for me, my goals and learning objectives”

“learning opportunities were amazing ... I attended care conferences for residents with the multi-disciplinary team”

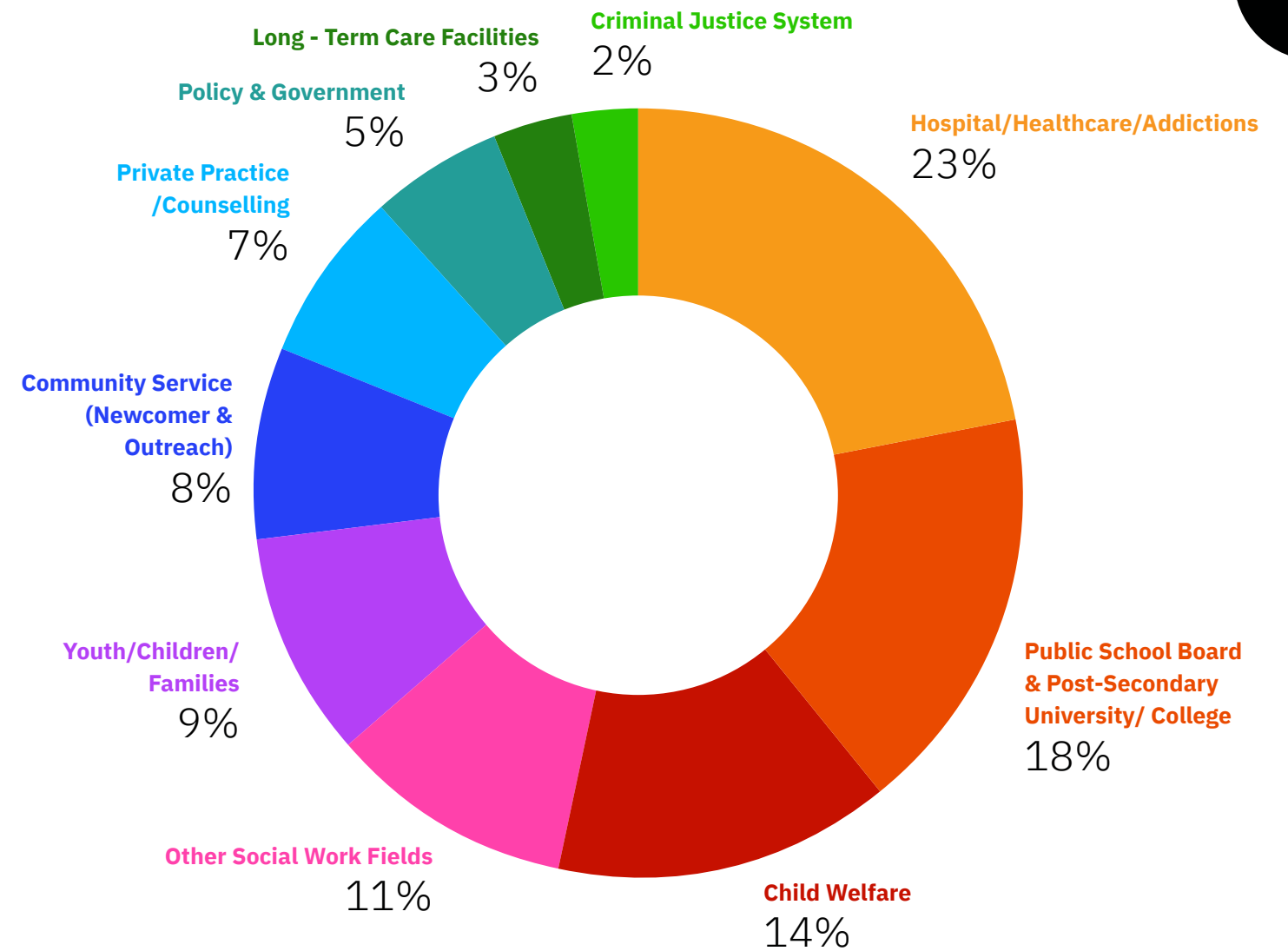


## Student Engagement

Every year the school actively engages with students by hosting two research conferences, multiple orientation sessions, and meet and greets for new students to meet faculty, staff, and other students. The school also hosts Town Halls, workshops, and social work alumni events for current students to connect with alumni.

Students are also encouraged to participate in School Governance such as: Adjudication Committee, Field Education Committee (Practicum), Graduate Executive Committee, Research and Ethics Committee, Global-Local Community Engagement Committee, Social Action Social Change Working Group, Communication Working Group, and Alumni Committee. Students' involvement ensures that the school is responsive to the specific needs of our students. In addition, it is an opportunity to strengthen skills in negotiating, advocating, effective listening, etc.

# Where Our Alumni are Employed



\*Stats pulled from YorkU's Office of Alumni on Jan 2020 (Total Respondents 509).

# What our former students say about the value of their critical education once they are in jobs:

“Critical perspectives ... helped me to understand the role of the organization and how its’ objectives were often at odds with my “patient-centered” perspective. I was then able to find ways to negotiate these differences and find spaces for advocacy and empowerment while at the same time advocating for broader organizational change.”

“The work I do in child welfare requires major critical thinking to better help and protect the children and families from harm in the community.”

“In my clinical practice I have been able to challenge the binaries that operate in our practice, stimulate dialogue on the multi discursive perspectives and natures of our clients, challenge report writing to reflect strengths-based perspectives and help in forming a Health Equity social committee.”

“Navigating systemic barriers within the health care system and how policy and politics intersects with patient care is better understood from a critical perspective. Community work without critical perspectives will leave the practitioner irrelevant.”

## Master of Social Work

### MSW Programs

Advanced Standing MSW Program (Full Time), Advanced Standing MSW Program (Part-Time), Two-Year MSW Program

#### Dates and Deadlines

Applications for all MSW programs will open in October and will close mid-December for a commencement date the following Fall.

The School of Social Work will start sending out offers as early as mid-March and will continue until the programs are full.

## Advanced Standing

### Advanced Standing MSW Program Structure (Full-Time & Part-Time)

The Advanced Standing MSW program is completed over 3 terms and students are required to complete 4 core courses, 2 electives, and 1 placement of 450 hours.

The Part-Time Advanced Standing MSW Program is completed over 6 terms and students are required to take their evening core courses as scheduled.

### Core Courses (for Full-time & Part-Time Advance Standing MSW Students) Include:

- Critical Perspectives in Social Work
- Graduate Research Seminar
- Practice Research Paper Seminar
- Indigenous Worldviews and Implications to Social Work





## Two-Year MSW Program Structure

The Two-Year Full-Time MSW Program is completed over 5 terms and students are required to complete 10 core courses, 4 electives, and 2 placements (year one placement = 550 hours & year two placement = 450 hours)

### Core courses (For the Two-Year MSW Students) include:

- Introduction to Social Work Theories and Critical Practice Skills Part I & Part II (2 courses)
- From Charity to Social Transformation
- Social Welfare and Social Policy
- Understanding Organization for Social Work Practice
- Oppression and Intersectionality
- Graduate Research Seminar
- Critical Perspectives in Social Work
- Practice Research Paper Seminar
- Indigenous Worldviews and Implications to Social Work

## Electives may include:

- Spirituality and Critical Social Work
- Narrative Therapy for Social Work
- Critical Gerontological Social Work
- Globalization and Social Welfare
- Critical International Social Work
- Mindfulness and Just Relations in Social Work
- Contesting Children's Mental Health
- Perspectives on Gender and Sexual Diversity
- Changing Nature of Community Work
- Race and Knowledge Production
- Advanced Social Work Practice
- Critical Social Work and Animals
- Critical Perspectives in Mental Health
- Group Facilitation and Social Justice
- Studies in Social Policy
- Social Administration
- Critical Perspectives on Child Welfare
- Evaluation and Social Work
- Social Work with Immigrants and Refugees
- Family Mediation
- Ethics in Social Work Practice
- Violence in Families
- Social Work Professional Development Skills

\*\*\* Please note: Only certain courses will be available each year\*\*\*



# Admissions

## Funding packages

York University offers various funding packages for our full-time and part-time MSW students. For more information, please go to the Faculty of Graduate Studies – Funding and Awards

## Admission Requirements

The Advanced Standing (Full-time or Part-time) Master of Social Work program is open to graduates who have:

- A BSW from an accredited school or a social work degree recognized by the Canadian Association of Social Work Education;
- A minimum B+ average in the last two years of study;
- A minimum of two years of related social work experience (paid and/or voluntary) is preferred.

The Two-Year (Full-Time) MSW program is geared towards applicants with a passion for working in human rights and social justice within social work who have:

- An honours degree from a recognized University in a related discipline such as: Social Sciences, Sociology, Political Science, Public Policy, Gender Studies, Journalism, Education, International Development Studies, Health-related Studies, etc.
- A minimum B+ average in the last two years of study.
- Successfully completed an undergraduate research methods course in a related discipline.
- Relevant professional, volunteer, and/or personal experiences that demonstrate a commitment to social justice.
- A minimum of two years experience in social work/social justice work (paid and/or voluntary).



## All applicants will need to provide:

- A written statement (2 double-spaced pages i.e. 500 words) addressing the following questions: Why are you applying to the social work program at York University? What are your areas of interest in relation to practice and research?
- Curriculum vitae
- Supplementary Information Form - Social Service Experience Form (download on the website)
- 3 reference letters, one academic, one professional, and the third either academic or professional
- Unofficial copies of transcripts (Grade reports are not accepted).
- If you receive an offer, you will need to submit your official transcripts directly to York Graduate Admissions



## Contact information

### Graduate Program Team

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