



HKU
SWSA

Department of Social Work and Social Administration
The University of Hong Kong
香港大學社會工作及社會行政學系

BSocSc

Major Minor Programmes

Counselling

“Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It’s a relationship between equals... Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity.”

- Pema Chödrön,
*The Places That Scare You: A Guide to
Fearlessness in Difficult Times*



Programme Characteristics

In a globalised and multicultural world, **relational and helping skills** are essential in various work settings. These skills are recognised as powerful tools for **effective communication and decision-making**.

This programme offers a comprehensive curriculum, including a wide range of elective courses. Its **practical learning approach** enables students from diverse disciplines to master the science of compassion. Through a variety of activities—from self-reflective exercises to group-based experiential learning—students will gain both intellectual and emotional insights into themselves and their relationships with others. Such **social and emotional competence** is crucial not only in healthcare-related professions but also in education, community development, and business. Although it is not a professional degree, this programme establishes **a solid foundation for further professional training in counselling or psychology-related fields**.

The teaching team prepares students to be:

1. Effective in team work and conflict resolution while practising compassion towards themselves and others.
2. Able to integrate knowledge, skills, and personal awareness, thereby enabling them to work in a wide variety of people-oriented careers.
3. Ethically minded in their primary role, utilising counselling knowledge and helping skills to foster relationship and facilitate decision-making with others.

By completing this programme, students will gain:

Basic knowledge for further
training to become a
COUNSELLING PROFESSIONAL



A foundational understanding
of the importance of **ETHICAL
PRACTICE** in counselling

SELF-AWARENESS regarding
their own values, beliefs, and
philosophy of life

Roadmap for Mandatory Coursework

FOUNDATION

INTRODUCTORY COURSE

1

**SOWK1004 HUMAN
BEHAVIOUR AND
THE SOCIAL
ENVIRONMENT I**

OR

**SOWK1012
COMMUNICATION
AND COUNSELLING
SKILLS IN
EVERYDAY LIFE**

IMMERSION

ADVANCED COURSES

2

**SOWK2137
THEORIES IN
COUNSELLING**

(PRE-REQUISITE:
SOWK1004 OR
SOWK1012)

**SOWK2138
FOUNDATION IN
COUNSELLING**

(PRE-REQUISITE:
SOWK2137)

**SOWK3116
A SELF-REFLECTIVE
JOURNEY**

(PRE-REQUISITE:
SOWK2137 OR
SOWK2138)

CONSOLIDATION

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

3

**SOWK4009
CAPSTONE
PROJECT**

(PRE-REQUISITE:
SOWK2137 AND
SOWK2138 AND
SOWK3116)

*Only required for
students pursuing a
major in Counselling*

Elective Coursework



Programme Structure

COMPONENTS	NO. OF CREDITS	
	MAJOR	MINOR
INTRODUCTORY COURSES		
DISCIPLINARY	6	6
PRE-REQUISITES	12	-
ADVANCED COURSES		
CORE COURSES	18	18
DISCIPLINARY ELECTIVES	30	12
CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE	6	-
TOTAL NO. OF CREDITS	72	36

Capstone Experience

SOWK4009 Capstone Project in Counselling

The capstone project is a mandatory course that students majoring in the subject undertake in their final year of study. This project offers an opportunity for students to consolidate their knowledge and skills related to key communication and counselling concepts through experiential learning. In this course, students work collaboratively in groups with community organisations to address significant issues facing specific communities in Hong Kong. Students reflect on and analyse their learning through writing, developing a public exhibition using creative methods, and delivering an oral presentation. The project emphasises the integration of compassionate communication in teamwork throughout the process. Below are some themes and communities that our students have served.

THEMES	COMMUNITIES SERVED
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empowerment by discovering hidden potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children with special educational needs, marginalised youths, and their parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultivating social and emotional competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People with mental health conditions and intellectual disabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building hope and resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals experiencing homelessness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthening intergenerational communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elderly individuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fostering awareness and prevention of sexual violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• University students

Career Opportunities

This programme prepares students to thrive in human-oriented professions. The holistic learning approach fosters a deep understanding of oneself, communities, and broader societal contexts. Graduates acquire transferable skills, including strong observation and listening abilities, effective communication and decision-making skills, empathy and compassion, as well as an awareness of individual and cultural differences. These skills enable graduates to build rapport with individuals from diverse populations and to promote collaboration and positive outcomes.

SECTORS	SETTINGS
Child and Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrated Family Service Centres• Child protective organisations• Schools
Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hospitals• Counselling clinics• Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness
Community Development and Reintegration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-governmental organisations• Rehabilitation centres• Halfway houses
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public relations companies• Consulting firms• Employee training and development
Counselling and Clinical Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Universities• Mental health research institutes

Further Studies

Further study opportunities provided by the Department of Social Work and Social Administration:

Master of Social Work

A professional training programme for non-social work first-degree holders who are dedicated to develop their career in social services. Graduates are qualified for registration as Registered Social Workers (RSW).

Master of Social Sciences

Master of Expressive Arts Therapy

Master of Philosophy



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