

**Trent University**  
**Bachelor of Social Work**  
**Professional Years**  
**Full-time and Part-time**  
**Admissions Package**  
**2026-2027**



\*Please note: the information in this package is only applicable to the 2026-2027 admissions process.

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## **SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT SOLIDARITY STATEMENT**

Trent University's Social Work department is committed to upholding the values of ethical social work practice, anti-/decolonization, and the pursuit of social justice.

In addition to these values, we are committed to the pursuit of truth-telling, as the first step toward repair and reconciliation. We therefore acknowledge, in this statement and in our work, that social work in this country was developed on stolen Indigenous land and part of our profession's heritage is the colonial, white-supremacist nation building project of Canada, which included genocide. Social workers and our agencies were complicit and active in perpetrating the Sixties Scoop, and have continued to uphold colonial, racist and other oppressive systems in our work.

In our role as social work educators, and guided by our values, we therefore seek to identify, hold our profession accountable for, teach about, disrupt, and dismantle the harms of colonialism and other forms of systemic oppression, through our teaching, research, and other academic work.

On this basis, the social work education offered through our Department prioritizes:

- Inclusion and respect for critical, non-western, and Indigenous ways of knowing. We acknowledge members of equity-deserving groups as experts on their own lives. We also embrace the importance of including or centering marginalized voices when choosing teaching materials such as course readings;
- Promoting inclusivity and sense of belonging for all students, by striving toward accessible, collaborative and creative problem solving for students with marginalized ways of learning and knowing;
- Critical reflection about power, privilege, oppression, including around Eurocentric epistemologies, systems, beliefs and practices;
- Teaching practice that is consistent with the CASW Code of Ethics, The Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action, the Canadian Human Rights Act, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the objectives of the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent;
- Being co-conspirators in efforts to confront and disrupt oppressive systems, by supporting or joining movements for emancipation, self-determination, and sovereignty ("land back") of oppressed groups wherever possible;
- Teaching theories, modalities, and skills that promote critical social work practice, including critical self-reflection and reflexivity, harm reduction and other collaboration-focused practices, structural and other macro-level social work, and practices that respond to the critiques of intersectionality;
- Continually updating curricula with the most current information and innovative approaches to practice, including topical political, social justice and policy issues, emerging critical modalities, and authors from marginalized communities;
- Supporting staff and instructors from equity-deserving groups, within an institutional setting that has an enduring history of marginalization;

- Supporting Indigenous, racialized, queer, and disabled students as they progress through the program.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Students who successfully complete all of the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program degree requirements will be eligible to graduate with an Honours Bachelor of Social Work degree and eligible to register with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. During this time, students are expected to acquire the knowledge, values, and skills to become effective **generalist** social work practitioners. The word “generalist” in the context of social work means that students will acquire a comprehensive set of knowledge, values, and skills that are transferable across a range of fields of practice and a range of social work roles. The program provides students with many opportunities to expand their experiences, apply their knowledge in real-world situations, and to prepare for success in a social work career. Students will learn how to provide essential supports to vulnerable, at-risk, and marginalized people through an interdisciplinary curriculum grounded in social justice, human rights and cultural awareness and humility. This includes practical experience through a minimum of 700 hours of supervised field education.

The professional years of the social work program (Years 3 and 4) are offered on a full-time (2 consecutive years) or part-time (2.5 consecutive years) basis.

**For more information on full-time and part-time course sequencing, please see [our website](#).**

The Department of Social Work seeks to attract a diverse and intellectually engaged body of students. We are seeking students who have and exhibit the following personal characteristics:

- critical thinking from a critical theory and decolonizing lens, including but not limited to a commitment to The Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' Calls to Action, the Canadian Human Rights Act, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the objectives of the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent
- a commitment to de-colonization, social justice, and service to individuals, their communities, and society
- a commitment to all of the values indicated in the Canadian Association of Social Work Education's (2024) and the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers' (2021) codes of ethics
- Strong collaboration and leadership skills
- Strong oral and written communication skills and organizational skills
- Flexibility, openness, humility, and curiosity
- Compassion

- Intentionality and ethical decision-making skills
- Professional, ethical, and responsible practice

## ADMISSION CYCLE

- The online application opens March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, via the myTrent portal.
- The online application (via the Academics/Admissions section of the myTrent portal) closes at 11:59 pm, May 1, 2026.
- All final grades to be used to meet requirements for admissions to the professional years must be available by May 15, 2026.
- Decisions go out by mid-June to students' Trent University email address (@trentu.ca) only.
- The deadline to accept will be noted in the offer of admissions email.

## ADMISSIONS' DETAILS

- Students applying to the BSW professional years will only be eligible for admission to 3<sup>rd</sup> year. The professional years only have one starting term, which is September. Students admitted to the professional years cannot start in any other term.
- There is a **non-refundable application fee of \$60 payable on myTrent. To pay the application fee, follow these steps:**
  - Log in to MyTrent
  - Finance
  - Make a Payment
  - Payment Centre
  - Make Payment
  - Additional Items- Social Work Application Fee)
- Fulfillment of the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission.
- Overall GPA, individual grades in SWRK courses, supplemental application essay/un-essay, extenuating circumstances declaration (if included) and equity declaration (if included) will be considered.
- Students can apply to their preferred campus, or both. On the online application form, students will indicate: "Peterborough campus only", "Durham campus only", "either campus prefer Peterborough", or "either campus prefer Durham."
- Offers of admission will indicate the student's assigned campus. Students must attend the assigned campus for all required professional years' courses.
- Offers cannot be deferred (students must reapply).
- The same application is used for full-time and part-time students. Applicants can indicate their interest in the part-time study option when completing their

online application. The application will have options for “Full-time only,” “part-time only,” and “part-time preferred but open to full-time.”

- Only students who have received a transfer of credit for SWRK-3000Y are eligible to complete the professional years on a part-time basis.
- For each admissions cycle, there are 30 full-time spots (2 consecutive years) per campus (60 total) and 10 part-time spots (2.5 consecutive years) per campus (20 total).

## **MINIMUM ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**

To be considered for admission to the professional years, students must have:

- earned a minimum grade of 70% in each of SWRK 1000H, 1001H, 2001H, and 2004H;
- completed 10.0 credits used to meet the admission requirements for applying to the professional years (see below - SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED IN ORDER TO APPLY TO THE PROFESSIONAL YEARS)
- earned a minimum cumulative average of 70% in the 10.0 credits listed below.
  - If 10.0 credits are made up of a combination of courses taken at Trent and transfer credits, only the grades of the courses taken at Trent will be used to determine the cumulative average.

**These requirements must be met by May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

## **SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED**

**See Academic Calendar for complete details. Equivalent transfer credits may be applied to satisfy any of the credit requirements below.**

### **Year 1**

- 1.0 SWRK credit consisting of SWRK 1000H and 1001H
- 3.0 credits in Psychology and/or Humanities and/or Social Sciences at the 1000 level or beyond
- 1.0 credit in addition to the above at any level

### **Year 2**

- 1.0 SWRK credit consisting of SWRK 2001H and 2004H
- 3.0 credits in Psychology and/or Humanities and/or Social Sciences at the 2000 level or beyond
- 1.0 credit in addition to the above at any level

If students are applying with more than 10.0 credits, the best 8.0 credits that meet the admission requirements for applying to the professional years, plus the four SWRK

courses will be used in the calculation of the cumulative average. If students have transfer credits that are used in the 10.0 credit count, only the credits taken at Trent will be used in the calculation of the cumulative average.

## **COMPLETING YOUR ONLINE APPLICATION**

The Supplemental Application must be submitted online by 11:59 pm, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026. This is a mandatory, essential part of the admissions process; therefore, applicants who do not submit by the deadline will not be eligible for admission consideration.

The application will consist of student information, a voluntary equity declaration, a supplemental essay or un-essay, an optional extenuating circumstances section, and accommodation requests.

**Please do not submit additional information (e.g. resume, references, or cover letter) as it will not be considered.**

After you submit your application, you will receive an email confirming that it has been received.

### **OPTION 1: SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY**

Considering your courses SWRK1000H (or equivalent), SWRK1001H (or equivalent), SWRK2001H, and SWRK2004H, and lived experiences, demonstrate your critical thinking and *relational reflexivity* skills in a 1000-word essay, sharing:

- a new learning that occurred for you in one or more Trent social work courses that led to a shift in your worldview, being, theoretical framework, and/or way of relating to others; and
- how you anticipate this shift impacting your work in this program and your work with others as a future social worker.

#### **Definitions relating to reflexivity (the expectations)**

*Relational reflexivity* means “challenging one’s assumptions, biases, and practice, recognizing their own construction of these in the context of the impact that the worker’s power has when working with service users (Parton & O’Byrne, 2000 as cited in Calderwood, forthcoming).

*Reflexivity* (also known as other terms such as *self-reflexivity* and *critical reflexivity* and *critical self-reflexivity*) is a term that goes even deeper than critical reflection and can be explained as, a critical approach to professional practice that questions how knowledge is generated and, further, how relations of power influence the processes of knowledge generation.... consistent with the Indigenous value of relationality and the notion of ethical space, Parton and O’Byrne (2000) refer to *relational reflexivity* which refers to reflexivity

but adds a relational component in the context of social workers conveying their constructed knowledge about service users with those service users. In this instance, it is important for social workers to challenge their biases and assumptions, recognizing where those biases and assumptions come from in relation to how they perceive and are perceived by service users. Aligned with both an Indigenous Medicine Wheel (mind, body, spirit, heart) and a biopsychosocial-spiritual approach, relational reflexivity includes reflecting on one's behaviours, emotions, thoughts, spirituality and so on, plus one's assumptions, biases and patterns of thinking. (Calderwood, forthcoming)

You are being assessed on your:

- ability to demonstrate humility and open-mindedness (including non-judgment, respectful engagement, and an openness to revising your viewpoint)
- demonstration of self-awareness, insight, critical thinking, and reflexivity
- ability to provide a rationale, support or justification for your views, grounded in your social location and background experience
- demonstrated integration of theories and other course material, including terms used in your courses to discuss concepts related to social work
- ability to connect your shift in thinking to potential impacts on your work with others
- demonstrated academic communication skills, including the ability to effectively use APA 7th edition formatting.

**Maximum length is 1000 words, excluding your References page. Provide a word count at the end of your document. Do not include a title page.**

**Please name your essay file in the following format and upload it as part of your application: Lastname\_Firstname\_AdmissionsEssay.**

**Other than the file title, DO NOT include your name within the essay document.**

## **OPTION 2: UN-ESSAY**

To acknowledge that a formal written essay may not be the ideal format for some applicants to express themselves; applicants have the option to submit an un-essay.

An un-essay is a more flexible, creative alternative to a formal essay that can take any form, so long as it satisfies the same assessment criteria as the formal essay option (outlined below). Some examples of un-essay formats may include: an oral presentation/conversation, a digital story, a zine (small, personal booklet presenting meaningful personal experiences, activism, etc.), artistic expression with written or oral accompaniment, podcast, etc.

In a format of your choosing, considering your courses SWRK1000H (or equivalent), SWRK1001H (or equivalent), SWRK2001H, and SWRK2004H, and lived experiences, demonstrate your critical thinking and *relational reflexivity* skills, sharing:

- a new learning that occurred for you in one or more Trent social work courses that led to a shift in your worldview, being, theoretical framework, and/or way of relating to others; and
- how you anticipate this shift impacting your work in this program and your work with others as a future social worker.

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- demonstration of self-awareness, insight, critical thinking, and reflexivity
- ability to provide a rationale, support or justification for your views, grounded in your social location and background experience
- demonstrated integration of theories and other course material, including terms used in your courses to discuss concepts related to social work

- ability to connect your shift in thinking to potential impacts on your work with others
- demonstrated academic communication skills, including the ability to effectively use APA 7th edition formatting.

**Un-essays should not require more than eight-ten minutes to review.**

**If your un-essay is a file, please name and upload the file in the following format as part of your online application: Lastname\_Firstname\_AdmissionsEssay.**

**Other than the file title, DO NOT include your name in the un-essay.**

**If your un-essay is not a file, please email the Academic Coordinator ([socialwork@trentu.ca](mailto:socialwork@trentu.ca)) to arrange for your un-essay to be submitted to the admissions committee.**

## **PROMOTING EQUITABLE ADMISSIONS POLICY AND VOLUNTARY EQUITY SELF-DECLARATION**

The social work department values diversity, equity, inclusion, and de-colonization in accordance with our solidarity statement, and we seek to dismantle barriers that may prevent individuals from marginalized group from entering the field of social work. In alignment with these values, we have an admissions policy for applicants who meet admissions eligibility requirements and identify themselves as being part of the following equity-deserving groups:

- Black or Racialized
- Indigenous
- 2SLGBTQIA+
- Disabled (visibly or invisibly)

Members of these equity-deserving groups are encouraged to apply to the professional years of the BSW program. Applicants have the option to complete a voluntary equity declaration as part of their application.

## **EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

If you are concerned about low (but eligible) grades in SWRK courses or a low (but eligible) cumulative average, you may provide more information about factors that impacted your grades in the Extenuating Circumstances section of the online application form. If you have questions about this section or need guidance, please contact the Academic Coordinator.

## **APPLICATION ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The admissions committee consists of all full-time faculty in the Social Work Department and the Social Work Academic Coordinator. The Academic Coordinator processes applications and compiles grades but does not make admissions decisions. The admissions committee reviews cumulative averages and grades in social work courses. Every applicant's essay/un-essay is assessed by everyone on the admissions committee using the assessment criteria above and every application receives careful consideration.

## **OFFERS OF ADMISSION**

Admission will be competitive. All admission decisions are final, and cannot be appealed. Offers will be sent out by mid-June. Offers will be sent to students' Trent University email address (@trentu.ca) only. Students cannot defer the offer of admission. The offer letter will state the assigned campus. The deadline for acceptance will be noted in the email offer. Please be sure to check your Trent email regularly.

## **TRANSCRIPTS**

Students are not required to submit transcripts. By submitting their online application, students grant the Department of Social Work permission to access their grades on their unofficial transcripts.

## **FAQ - QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

### **1. How do I write and format my admissions essay?**

You have already been learning how to write an integrative relational reflexive essay in your second-year social work courses. We expect you to use the same skills and formatting and to incorporate the feedback you have received from your instructors in those courses. Be sure to carefully review and adhere to the “Definitions relating to reflexivity” section in this package above.

### **2. How competitive is admission to the professional years?**

We received 76 applications for the 2025-2026 admissions cycle. On average, 80-90 people apply for the professional years each admissions cycle.

### **3. I am taking courses in the summer term. Will these credits count towards the eligibility requirements for professional years?**

All requirements for admissions must be completed by May 15 of the year you are applying. Courses taken during the summer semester will not be considered during the admissions process.

### **4. When does the BSW professional years start? Can I begin the professional years in the second term (i.e., January) or during summer sessions?**

The professional years start in September. There are no entry points for January or summer.

### **5. Is it possible to pursue the BSW professional years part-time?**

Yes, students with a SWRK 3000Y transfer credit can apply to the professional years on a part-time basis. Spots are limited (10 per campus.) The application process is the same for those wishing to pursue part-time study.

### **6. How do I apply for the part-time program?**

All applicants will use the same application on myTrent regardless of if they want to pursue full-time or part-time studies. You will have the opportunity to indicate your preference for full-time or part-time study.

### **7. Can I apply to both the Peterborough campus and the Durham campus?**

Yes. You will have the choice to apply to Peterborough only, Durham only, either campus prefer Peterborough, or either campus prefer Durham. By selecting either campus, it improves your chances to be accepted into the Program; however, students must attend their assigned campus for all required courses.

**8. Why did my essay file name change after I uploaded it to the application portal?**

You may notice that the file name of your essay changes after you upload it (e.g. e123456d\_StudentNameAdmissionsEssay.pdf). This is normal and will not impact your application.

**9. What courses are included in my cumulative average?**

The 10.0 credits required in years 1 and 2 as outlined in the Academic Calendar are used to calculate your cumulative average. (70% minimum cumulative average is required). Transfer credit grades do not contribute to cumulative averages; only courses taken at Trent will be used to calculate your cumulative average. If you have more than 10 credits, your best grades will be used to calculate your cumulative average.

**10. Can I apply to the professional years a second time?**

Yes. If you have applied once and did not get an offer of admission, you can apply again. You must pay the fee again and complete the online form by the applicable deadline.

**11. If I don't get into the professional years, what can I do?**

You can continue your studies at Trent and complete your degree in a different major, or you can re-apply to the professional years the following year. After graduating from Trent, you might consider applying to a one-year post degree BSW or a two-year MSW.

**12. Who do I contact if I have questions?**

If you have questions, please contact the Social Work Academic Coordinator at 705-748-1011 x 7618 or email [socialwork@trentu.ca](mailto:socialwork@trentu.ca)

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