



University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

SPONSOR: Edith Hillan
CONTACT INFO: edith.hillan@utoronto.ca

DATE: September 15, 2004 for the meeting on September 22, 2004

AGENDA ITEM: 11(j)

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

School of Graduate Studies: Proposal of the Faculty of Social Work to reduce the second year course load for students currently enrolled in the Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) Program, as specified in the attachment, effective September 2004.

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Committee has general responsibility for policy on, and for monitoring, minor changes within degree programs.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The School of Graduate Studies approved this proposal at its Council meeting on May 25, 2004.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The Faculty notes that there are several important reasons for the proposed reduction in course load, including: 1) The current second year course load requirements exceed the Canadian Associations of Schools of Social Work minimum standard of 42 course credit hours by 9 course credit hours, the equivalent of 3 half-credit courses at the Faculty. In addition, the U of T program exceeds the requirements of other Two-year MSW programs in Ontario by at least two half-course credits. 2) The reduction of course load would allow for more in-depth exploration and understanding of material. 3) As well, reducing the number of courses by one half-credit elective may result in a higher quality of work submitted for evaluation.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

There are no new/additional financial resources required to implement the program change.

RECOMMENDATION:

For Information.



School of Graduate Studies

University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

May 28, 2004

Professor Vivek Goel
Interim Vice-President and Provost
Room 225, Simcoe Hall
27 King's College Circle
University of Toronto

Dear Professor Goel:

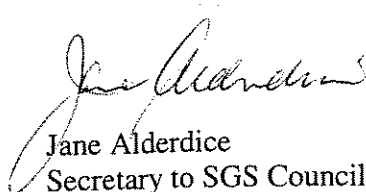
At its meeting of May 25, 2004, the Council of the School of Graduate Studies approved the following motion:

THAT SGS Council approve the proposal of the Faculty of Social Work to reduce the second year course load for students currently enrolled in the Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) Program, as specified in the attachment, effective September 2004.

The motion and supporting documentation are attached. Division II Executive Committee approved the proposal at its meeting of May 5, 2004.

On behalf of the Council of the School of Graduate Studies, I am presenting this item to Governing Council committees, for information.

Yours sincerely,



Jane Alderdice
Secretary to SGS Council
and Coordinator of Policy, Program and Liaison

Encl. (1)
/smr

c.c.	S. Acker	J. Barber	A. Drummond (attachments)
	U. George	C. Johnston	V. Makarovska
	L. Yee	S. Zaky (attachments)	

H:Council/FollowUp/2003-2004/May 25/Social Work M.S.W. 2nd Year Course Load Reduction

Motion

School of Graduate Studies Council Tuesday, May 25, 2004

Item 11.

11. Program Requirement Changes

11.10 Social Work, M.S.W.

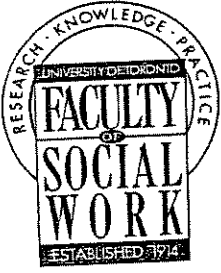
MOTION (/) **THAT** SGS Council approve the proposal of the Faculty of Social Work to reduce the second year course load for students currently enrolled in the Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) Program, as specified in the attachment, effective September 2004.

See attached.

NOTE:

Division II Executive Committee approved this proposal at its meeting of May 5, 2004.

With SGS Council's approval this item will go to Governing Council committees for information.



246 BLOOR ST. WEST
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5S 1A1
TEL (416) 978-6314 FAX (416) 978-7072

April 22, 2004

Dr. Sandra Acker
Associate Dean, Social Sciences
School of Graduate Studies
Third Floor
63 St. George Street
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2Z9

Dear Dr. Acker:

Re: Proposal to reduce course load

I am writing to request that a proposal to reduce the Second Year course load in the Two-year M.S.W. Program offered by the Faculty of Social Work be considered for approval at the May 5 meeting of the Executive Committee of Division II.

A document outlining the present requirements of the Program, the proposed change and the rationale for the proposed change is enclosed.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Malcolm Stewart, Ph. D.
Director, M.S.W. Studies

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE COURSE REQUIREMENTS OF THE TWO-YEAR M.S.W. PROGRAM AT THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK

PRESENT REQUIREMENTS

Currently, in order to graduate, students in the two-year M.S.W. program who do not hold a B.S.W. degree are required to take a total of 13 required half-credit courses and 4 half-credit electives, which is equivalent to 51 course credit hours. In addition, they must complete 3 half-credits of practicum for a total of 20 half-credits. These requirements must be met over the course of two academic years, as follows:

	Half-credit courses	Course credit hours	Field practicum
Foundation year	9	27	480 hours
Advanced year	8	24	560 hours
Total	17	51	1040 hours

These requirements exceed the Canadian Associations of Schools of Social Work (CASSW) minimum standard of 42 course credit hours by 9 course credit hours, the equivalent of 3 half-credit courses at the Faculty of Social Work. The CASSW standards for the number of credit hours required for the Masters program, for students admitted without a first level social work degree (i.e. B.S.W.) are as follows:

5.3.2.1 a foundation component of at least 24 credit hours of course work, and a field practicum of at least 450 hours such as to achieve a level of preparation sufficient to equip the student to engage in MSW studies at a level equivalent to their counterparts with the BSW;

5.3.2.2 an advanced study component of at least 18 credit hours of course work, a practicum of at least 450 hours and/or a thesis or memoire, as defined by the programme's university, such as to provide for the integration and demonstration of advanced social work skills in practice, policy analysis and research.*

* CASSW Accreditation Manual - October 2003. Available <http://www.cassw-access.ca/xACCR/pdf/2003%20Manual/Standards%202003.PDF>. Accessed April 23, 2004. pp. 18-19

PROPOSED REDUCTION OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

On March 16, 2004 a motion to reduce the required number of courses by two half-credit electives was passed by the MSW Studies Committee. This motion was put forward at the March 23, 2004 meeting of Faculty Council. Following discussion and amendment, the following motion passed:

“That students entering the 2nd year of the Two-Year M.S.W. program (in September 2004) may have the option to benefit from a reduction of courses by the removal of one half-credit elective course from the requirements of the current curriculum. Thus, the total course load for students entering the 2nd year would be reduced from 20 half-credit courses to 19 half-credit courses.”

N.B. The proposed change would ONLY affect students entering their 2nd year in September 2004. Students would have the OPTION of participating in this reduction, they would not be required to do so.

RATIONALE BEHIND THE PROPOSAL TO REDUCE COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Depth versus breadth

An informal survey of both First and Second year M.S.W. students suggests that many students are concerned about their level of engagement with course materials. The large number of courses required has left many students overwhelmed and unable to engage with their materials in a meaningful way.

A reduction in course load would allow for more in-depth exploration and understanding of material – goals that complement the Faculty’s and the University’s standards of excellence. As well, reducing the number of courses by one half-credit elective may result in a higher quality of work submitted for evaluation.

The program at the University of Toronto exceeds the requirements of other Two-Year MSW programs in Ontario by at least two half-course credits. For example, in comparison with the University of Toronto’s program, which requires 17 half-course credits plus practicum credits, Wilfred Laurier’s program requires 15 half-course credits plus practicum and Carleton University’s program requires 14 half-course credits plus practicum. As noted above, the CASSW accreditation standards set the course requirement for two-year M.S.W. programs at a minimum of 14 course credits plus practicum.

2. Financial burden

Since the second year of the M.S.W. program is especially onerous, many students would opt to enrol in summer courses to reduce the burden of course work in the second year. However, many students do NOT have the luxury of taking courses in the summer, as their financial situations dictate that they secure summer employment to provide a level of financial stability necessary for the upcoming school year. In addition, students from out of town face undue hardship, since taking summer courses is even less feasible for them.

3. Limited time to participate fully in practicum activities

Students have suggested that a reduction in course load by one half-credit elective, would likely increase the quality of their practicum experience. If students were required to take one less half-credit course, they would have more time to engage in activities (seminars, meetings, etc.) offered through their practica.