

“Can I use the SBS degree to become a **social worker**?”

Yes! The Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) major at USM’s Lewiston-Auburn College is a terrific background with which to become a social worker.

There are basically two routes to do so:

1. to practice social work in Maine at the Bachelor’s level, SBS graduates can receive a *Conditional Licensed Social Worker* (referred to as *LSX*)¹ license with which they can then go on to earn their *LS (Licensed Social Worker)* license, or
2. to practice clinical social work as an independent practitioner in Maine an *MSW (Masters in Social Work)* degree and a *Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LC)* license are required. SBS graduates are strong candidates for *MSW* programs and many of our graduates have gone on to earn their *MSW*.

Route 1: **Conditional Social Work Licensure:**

With an SBS degree, AND EVIDENCE OF EMPLOYMENT OR INTERNSHIP in a social work setting, graduates can apply for and receive a *Licensed Social Worker, Conditional (LSX)* license from the state of Maine. This license allows SBS students to receive the supervised practicum experience necessary(3200 hours of work within a 2-4 year period under a *Licensed Social Worker*) to receive the *Licensed Social Worker (LS)*.

The *Licensed Social Worker* is the bachelor’s level social work licensure which allows basic social work practice in case management, intake assessments and other basic social work practice under supervision or with consultation of master’s level social workers or with a social service organization.

Once students have completed the supervised social work experience under their conditional license, they can sit for the Bachelor’s Social Worker examination and, upon passing it, apply to be a *Licensed Social Worker*.

Route 2: **Master’s Level Social Work practice** [continues on reverse side of this sheet]:

¹ A few years ago the Board of Social Work licensure changed the abbreviations for the licensure levels so that *LS* is now the official abbreviation for the license to refer to *Licensed Social Worker* (which used to be *LSW*) and *LC* is now the abbreviation for *Licensed Clinical Social Worker* (which used to be *LCSW*). The Board’s own website interchanges these abbreviations.

Route 2: **Master's Level Social Work practice**

Independently practicing clinical social work in Maine requires an MSW and licensure as a *Licensed Clinical Social Worker* (LC). In order to be licensed as a *Licensed Clinical Social Worker*, the only licensure in Maine under which a social worker can individually “hang-a-shingle” and conduct clinical practice independently or without supervision, all of the following are required:

- 1) an MSW from an accredited institution, as well as
- 2) 96 hours (over 3200 of work time) of supervision
- 3) successful passage of the Master's level Social Work exam

MSW (Masters in Social Work):

As in other counseling areas, a Master's degree will be the likely desired academic preparation you'll want in addition to your SBS degree. SBS graduates have been very successful gaining admission into and graduating from MSW programs, including MSW programs in Maine (USM, UNE, UMO) as well as in other states (Barry University in Florida, UNH, Boston College). Note that SBS students do not require any additional classes to apply for MSW programs and some of our students have even been accepted into and successfully completed Advanced Standing MSW programs (accelerated MSW programs usually completed in 18 months and usually reserved for students with BSWs or substantial social work/social service background with their Bachelor's work).

Other Levels of Social Work Licensure in Maine:

There are two other gradations of Social Work licensure in Maine between the Bachelor's level LS and the independent clinical level LC, which require a mixed combination of supervision and an MSW.

In Maine, there is no Social Work licensure available for less than Bachelor's level preparation and that Bachelor's degree must be in a field “sufficiently related” to social work for conditional licensure – the SBS degree is officially one of those “sufficiently related” degrees.

For more information on SW licensing in Maine:

Call Board of Licensing and Regulation at (207) 624-8603 or

Website: http://www.maine.gov/pfr/professionallicensing/professions/social_workers/index.htm

For more information on the SBS degree and associated social work-relevant career options: Contact Prof. Michelle Vazquez Jacobus at (207) 753-6534 or mjacobus@usm.maine.edu