

Academic Guide Social Work 2025-2026

Bachelor of Social Work, THUAS



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International Semester Social Work

**Social inequality and social exclusion,
inclusion and prevention**

2025-2026

Semester 1

THE HAGUE
UNIVERSITY OF
APPLIED SCIENCES

Academic Guide Social Work 2025-2026

Bachelor of Social Work, THUAS

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Semester 1 at the Faculty of Social Work and Education at The Hague University of Applied Sciences (THUAS)

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Content

Introduction to the programme	4
Structure of the programme	5
Courses	7

Introduction to the programme

Social workers have an important task in identifying (at an early stage) social developments and investigating the significance of these developments with regard to the social position, social vulnerability and quality of life of various individuals and groups within society. To that end, problems of poverty, inequality and social exclusion have long been major areas for attention; they comprise a common thread running through the history of the social work profession.

The social worker examines issues of poverty, social inequality and exclusion from a variety of perspectives and identifies both the possibilities and limitations of each of these perspectives. Where necessary, he draws public attention to social issues, puts it on the institutional and political agenda, envisions and develops proposals for improving professional practice, and gains support for these improvements.

At the same time, social workers must stay informed of current developments in professional practice, both at home, in their own country, and internationally, exploring new perspectives and approaches, along with new potential solutions and inspiring examples.

Today, developments often cut across borders and require an international perspective of both the developments and professional practice. As such, this requires the relevant skills and expertise to be able to operate in an international and multicultural environment. It requires the ability to change perspective: between an institutional perspective and a client perspective, between a local and a global perspective, but also to develop and apply new frameworks of reference and to discover opportunities for new strategies and interventions.

In this international semester you will work with students from different countries and different backgrounds to explore different theories and concepts related to poverty, social inequality and social exclusion, to research current developments, their impact in different national and local contexts and the way that social workers respond to them within their national and local contexts.

Structure of the programme

Modules

The international semester Social Work consists of two 10-week study periods. Welcome of our international students is on August, 28th, the introduction week with the whole class starts September, 1st 2025.

The first 10-week unit (Period 1) consists of 4 subjects with 5 classes in total:

1. Knowledge track:
 - a. An introduction to Social Work in The Netherlands (part 1.)
 - b. Social inequality, poverty and social exclusion
2. Project 1 & Research skills: Applying different approaches to a Social Work topic
3. Skills track: Training Intercultural sensitivity
4. Professional development track: Mentorship/Personal development/Dutch insights

The second period of 10 weeks (Period 2) consists of 4 subjects with 5 classes in total:

1. Knowledge track:
 - a. An introduction to Social Work in the Netherlands (part 2.)
 - b. Inclusion
2. Project 2 & Research skills: Applying different approaches to a Social Work topic
3. Skills track: Training motivational interviewing
4. Professional development track: Mentorship/Personal development/Dutch insights

Learning methods

Both the first and second parts of the international semester have a theoretical and practical component.

The theoretical part uses lectures and seminars to explore different theories and concepts of social inequality, poverty and social exclusion and to analyse current developments in society, in social policy and in professional practice. This will include site visits and guest lecturers from the field.

The practical section brings in individual and group assignments, with weekly guidance from lecturers from various disciplines.

Learning goals

Upon completion of the international semester, students will have acquired the following knowledge and skills:

- knowledge about different theories of social inequality, poverty and social exclusion

- the knowledge and skills to analyse current developments in the field of inequality and poverty and their implications for social work practice;
- insight in the theories that explain the processes and mechanisms of social exclusion and their impact on the position of various groups in society;
- the development of international and intercultural competences, in particular:
 - the development of a broad international perspective on the social work profession;
 - an understanding of the context-related character of social work practice;
 - the development of critical cultural awareness;
 - the ability to cross over disciplinary and professional boundaries, languages and cultural backgrounds and to work with colleagues with a range of cultural backgrounds and frameworks of reference.

Assessment / Credits

• Introduction to Social Work in the Netherlands	individual paper	3 ECTS
• Social inequality, poverty and social exclusion	individual written exam	4 ECTS
• Inclusion	individual assignment	3 ECTS
• Project 1 & Research Skills period 1	individual/group assignment	5 ECTS
• Project 2 & Research Skills period 2	individual/group assignment	5 ECTS
• Training Intercultural sensitivity	individual/group assessment	3 ECTS
• Training Motivational interviewing	individual assessment	3 ECTS
• Professional development	individual presentation	4 ECTS

Course title	ECTS		Semester 1 Term 1	Semester 1 Term 2
Introduction to Social Work in The Netherlands	3		X	X
Social inequality, poverty and social exclusion	4		X	
Inclusion	3	optional		X
Project 1 & Research skills period 1	5	(optional*)	X	
Project 2 & Research skills period 2	5	optional*		X
Training Intercultural sensitivity	3		X	
Training Motivational interviewing	3	optional**		X
Professional Development: Mentorship/Personal development/ Dutch insights	4		X	X

* Exchange students are expected to take part in at least one of the projects, ideally the first one. **Check with THUAS about this course. As we need a certain balance of students for it to work we prefer all exchange students to take part in it. Exceptions are possible sometimes.

Courses

Below you will find, as an example, a short description of some of the courses within the International Semester. These courses are offered in English. Also, the courses are compulsory, unless indicated it is optional, see list above. We do prefer if students follow the whole program.

More detailed information about all course modules will be available by April 2025.

1. Knowledge track: Introduction to social work in the Netherlands	
Title & language	Introduction to Social Work in the Netherlands English
Organising department/ program	Faculty Social Work & Education Social Work
Contact person / lecturer	Daniël Rambaran a.j.d.rambaran@hhs.nl
Cycle	1
Number of ECTS	3
General objectives	The overall goal of the course is to offer international students a short introduction to social work in the Netherlands, its history and its national context.
Summary of contents	During eight classes an introduction will be offered to social work in the Netherlands, its history, its main characteristics and socio-political context. In addition to the lectures, students will visit a number of local organisations in the field of social work and write a short reflection about their observations.
Indication of target group	2 nd and 3 rd year bachelor students who have affinity with social work and its related issues.
Entry requirements	None
Competency levels	Upon completion of this course, students will have acquired: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an understanding of the history, main characteristics and current context of social work in the Netherlands; • a first insight in professional practice; • an understanding of the main features of the Dutch welfare state and current social policy developments in the Netherlands; • understanding of the context-related character of social work practice.
Description of tests and minimum pass rate	Individual written assignment Minimum pass rate: 5.5 or more on a 10-point scale.
Teaching methods + study load	- lectures - field visits - individual assignment Study load: 84 hrs. (3 ECTS)
Contact hours	1.5 hours / week.
Study aids	Reader

Partners	Local organizations in the field of social work.
Minimum- and maximum participation	Minimum: 10 Maximum: 25
Term	Semester 1, period 1 + 2 Sep. 2025 – January 2026
Miscellaneous	This module is part of the International Semester Social Work 2025-2026
OSIRIS code	SW-HV1KSEP-20

2. Knowledge track: Social inequality, poverty and social exclusion

Title & language	Social inequality, poverty and social exclusion English
Organising department / program	Faculty Social Work & Education Social Work
Contact person	Milena Kärtner & Gioia Mentink M.L.Kartner@hhs.nl & G.Mentink@hhs.nl
Cycle	1
Number of ECTS	4
General objectives	<p>The overall goal of the course is to equip students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze current developments and trends in the field of social inequality and poverty and their significance for the social work profession and professional practice; • analyze processes and mechanisms of social exclusion; • develop their own vision on the social function and positioning of the social work profession; • develop a broad international perspective on social work.
Summary of contents	<p>In a series of 7 lectures and 5 working group meetings different theoretical perspectives on social inequality, poverty and social exclusion will be introduced as well as their meaning for the positioning and professional practice of Social Work.</p> <p>We will begin to explore these concepts and how they interrelate with one another. In doing so, we will focus on questions such as: What is poverty? What is social inequality? What are the causes? How can these be addressed and by whom?</p> <p>The course will additionally address various visions on poverty and inequality and explore how different perspectives affect efforts to combat poverty and inequality. Attention will then be paid to current developments in society, including those concerning the welfare state and social policy, and the significance of these developments with regard to the social position of vulnerable groups within society.</p> <p>We will also, based on the international definition of social work, reflect on the positioning and role of the social worker in relation to issues of poverty, social inequality and exclusion. We will explore current developments and new initiatives in international social work practice, such as, for instance, working from a human rights perspective.</p> <p>We will then explore mechanisms behind social exclusion. The relationship between established groups and outsiders plays a major role in creating social exclusion, as do the dominant discourses that contribute to negative sentiments regarding certain groups.</p>

	As preparation for each class, students are expected to study the reading materials assigned for that week.
Indication of target group	2 nd and 3 rd year bachelor students who have affinity with social work and its related issues.
Entry requirements	None
Competency levels	<p>Upon completion of this course, students will have acquired the knowledge and skills to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe and apply different theoretical perspectives on social inequality, poverty and social exclusion; • describe the meaning of these different perspectives for the social function and professional practice of Social Work in relation to issues of social inequality and poverty; • have an understanding of various policy measures to combat poverty and social inequality; • analyse current (international) developments, involving the welfare state and social policy, to determine how they affect the social position and the quality of life of various groups in society; • apply international frames of reference and guidelines in defining the specific contribution and positioning of social work with regard to issues of poverty, social inequality and exclusion; • apply theories in order to analyse the processes and mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion and their impact on a person's quality of life.
Description of tests and minimum pass rate	Individual written exam Minimum pass rate: 5.5 or more on a 10-point scale.
Teaching methods + study load	7 weekly lectures, 5 working group meetings Study load: 112 hrs. (4 ECTS)
Contact hours	2.5 hours / week.
Study aids	Reader
Minimum- and maximum participation	Minimum: 25 Maximum: 50
Term	Semester 1, period 1 August – Nov. 2025
Miscellaneous	This module is part of the International Semester Social Work 2024-2025
OSIRIS code	SW-HV1KSEPE-21

3. Project: Analysing different approaches of dealing with poverty (topic will be specified later)

Title & language	Project: Analyzing different approaches of poverty reduction English
Organising department/ program	Faculty Social Work & Education/ Social Work
Contact person / lecturer	Karym Leito k.b.b.leito@hhs.nl
Cycle	1
Number of credits	5
General objectives	<p>The overall goal of the course is to equip students to analyze and take a critical stand in relation to current developments and professional practices in the field of social inequality and poverty by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyzing current responses of local organizations active in the field of poverty and social inequality; • compare these responses to different theoretical perspectives on social inequality and poverty (reduction) • developing their own vision on the social function and positioning of the social work profession; • developing a broad international perspective on social work.
Summary of contents	<p>Social workers make an active contribution to the (early) identification of social developments and circumstances that influence the quality of life and well-being of individuals and groups of people. The social worker examines social issues from different angles, investigates which factors are important and which possibilities are available to deal with these issues and arrive at a solution. Where necessary, the social worker puts social issues on the agenda and thinks of and develops proposals to improve the existing range of facilities and activities.</p> <p>In the context of this project, students will conduct research into the social issue chosen for the project. They will analyse the issue from a sociological perspective, professional literature and practical information to gain insight into the issue. They will then create a manifesto with their project group to put the social issue on the agenda.</p>
Indication of target group	2 nd and 3 rd year bachelor students who have affinity with social work and its related issues.
Entry requirements	None
Competency levels	<p>Upon completion of this course, students will have acquired the knowledge and skills to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe and analyze current responses in the field of social inequality and poverty and your issue;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and understand the meaning of underlying assumptions and perspectives in professional practice and social policy in the field of your issue; • select relevant current developments and initiatives in international professional practice with regard to your issue; • analyse the significance of these developments in relation to (the improvement of) the policy and activities of their own organisation; • express a clear vision on the social function of Social Work in relation to issue; • refer to important international frames of reference in the field of human development, human rights and social justice; • cooperate and share knowledge with colleagues who think and act from a different frame of reference.
Description of tests and minimum pass rate	Group assignment with individual part Minimum pass rate: 5.5 or more on a 10-point scale.
Teaching methods + study load	Weekly working group meetings Field visit, interviews with local professional and/or service user Study load: 84 hrs. (3 ECTS)
Contact hours	1.5 hours / week.
Study aids	Reader
Partners	Local organizations active in the field of social inequality and poverty
Minimum- and maximum participation	Minimum: 15 Maximum: 30
Term	Semester 1, period 1 August – Nov. 2025
Miscellaneous	This module is part of the International Semester Social Work 2025-2026
OSIRIS code	SW-HV1PAVAE-20

4. Skills track: Training Intercultural Sensitivity

Title & language	Training Intercultural Sensitivity English
Organising department / program	Faculty Social Work & Education Social Work
Contact person	Milena Kärtner M.L.Kartner@hhs.nl
Cycle	1
Number of credits	3
General objectives	The overall goal of the course is to equip students to contribute to the development of the profession by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on the influence of their own socialization and frame of references and those of colleagues and clients on acting in private context as well as Social Work situations • Practicing intercultural communication, in a way that socialization, frame of references and cultural elements are being reflected in the way of making contact with people
Summary of contents	In a series of 7 training sessions and several field assignments basic skills of intercultural communication and sensitivity will be trained. For the training sessions and the field assignments active participation of each student individually and in groups is mandatory. Additionally, as preparation for each training session/assignment, students are expected to study the reading materials assigned for that week. Also an exchange day with the University of Antwerp is part of the program.
Indication of target group	2 nd and 3 rd year bachelor students who have affinity with social work and its related issues.
Entry requirements	None
Competency levels	Upon completion of this course, students will have acquired the knowledge and skills to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognize situations where different cultural frames of reference are underlying to conflicts and misunderstandings; • show appropriate behavior in these situations, referencing to a broad interpretation of the term culture and applying basis skills of intercultural sensitivity taking into account their professional context and the context of colleagues as well as clients.
Description of tests and minimum pass rate	Portfolio with group assignments and individual assignments Minimum pass rate: 5.5 or more on a 10-point scale.
Teaching methods + study load	- 7 training sessions, 1 lecture - 2 field assignments Study load: 84 hrs. (3 ECTS)
Contact hours	2 to 3 hours / week

Study aids	Reader and book
Partners	tba
Minimum- and maximum participation	15 – 25
Term	Semester 1, period 1 August – Nov. 2025
Miscellaneous	This module is part of the International Semester Social Work 2025-2026
OSIRIS code	SW-HV1VSEPE-20

5. Professional development: mentorship, Dutch insights, Personal development	
Title & language	Professional development English
Organising department / program	Faculty Social Work & Education Social Work
Contact person	Milena Kärtner M.L.Kartner@hhs.nl
Cycle	1
Number of credits	4
General objectives	The overall goal of the course is to equip students to contribute to the development of their professional identity by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on the professional standards in light of their own socialization, frame of references and those of colleagues and clients on acting in private context as well as Social Work situations • Reflecting on everyday study- teamwork and exchange-life experiences while increasing the critical knowledge of Dutch habits during several group activities
Summary of contents	In a series of 8 training sessions and several special activities (such as e.g. the Sinterklaas lunch) spread over the whole semester experience and reflection will take place. For the sessions in varying group constellations active participation of each student individually and in groups is mandatory.
Indication of target group	2 nd and 3 rd year bachelor students who have affinity with social work and its related issues.
Entry requirements	None
Competency levels	Upon completion of this course, students will have acquired the knowledge and skills to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and reflect on their knowledge, attitude, and skills which are relevant for their studies and future practical work • Reflect and act on learning moments that were and are going to be essential in this exchange semester and one point that they are going to take with them as future learning moment. • link their socialization and frame of reference, i.e. their norms and values, as well as the culture shock theory to this experience.
Description of tests and minimum pass rate	Creative individual presentation, summarizing and reflecting on the whole exchange experience. Minimum pass rate: not relevant
Teaching methods + study load	- 8 training sessions - 4 evaluation/teamwork/cultural activity sessions Study load: 84 hrs. (3 ECTS)
Contact hours	2 to 3 hours / week

Study aids	Reader
Minimum- and maximum participation	15 – 25
Term	Semester 1, period 1+2 August 2025 – Jan. 2026
Miscellaneous	This module is part of the International Semester Social Work 2025-2026
OSIRIS code	SW-HV1POE-20

International Semester Social Work (Summary)

Faculty: Social Work and Education

Period: Semester 1, Thursday, 28th August 2024 – Monday 2nd February 2025. Until 30th January students should have accommodation in The Hague, as resits of exams are in this last week.

Welcome international students: Thursday 28th August 2025

Cycle: 1st

Total number of credits: 30 ECTS

Language: All modules are taught in English

Program:

Period 1 (1st september – Nov. 2025)	Period 2 (Nov. 2025 – end of January 2026)
1. Knowledge track: Social inequality, poverty and social exclusion (exam 4 ECTS)	1. Knowledge track: Inclusion (exam 3 ECTS)
2. Knowledge track: Introduction to Social Work in the Netherlands (exam end sem. 1 = 3 ECTS)	
2. Project 1 (exam 5 ECTS)	3. Project 2 (exam 5 ECTS)
4. Training intercultural sensitivity (exam 3 ECTS)	3. Training Motivational interviewing (exam 3 ECTS)
5. Professional Development: Dutch insights & Mentorship (exam end sem. 1 = 4 ECTS)	

More information about the program of the International Semester Social Work:

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Further information about The Hague University of Applied Sciences and registration:

<https://www.thehagueuniversity.com/programmes/other-courses/exchange-programmes>