

Tulane's doctor of social work program among first in nation to earn national accreditation

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Tulane University School of Social Work underwent a rigorous peer-review process to become one of the first doctor of social work programs in the nation to be accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. From left to right, DSW graduates Tonya Sims, Jamila Reese- Perry and Robin Richards celebrate at the school's graduation ceremony.

Tulane University's Doctor of Social Work (DSW) program has earned full accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education, making it one of the first programs in the country to achieve this distinction under a new national

accreditation pilot.

The Council on Social Work Education, founded in 1952, is the leading organization for social work education in the United States and the national accrediting body for social work programs.

“The CSWE identified Tulane's DSW program to be among the first to be accredited because they believed that our program exhibits the standards of excellence that can be a model for others who will participate in the process in the years to come,” Tulane Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Robin Forman said. “This is a wonderful testament to the extraordinary work being carried out by the faculty, staff and students at the Tulane School of Social Work and we could not be prouder.”

To achieve accreditation, Tulane University School of Social Work underwent a rigorous peer-review process, validating the program's excellence in curriculum, faculty expertise and student outcomes. The accreditation is valid for eight years through 2033.

“This is more than just a seal of approval—it's a national recognition of the exceptional quality and innovation in Tulane's Doctorate of Social Work program,” said Susan Davies, interim dean of Tulane University School of Social Work. “We're proud to be among the first programs in the U.S. to meet and exceed the Council's new standards for professional practice doctorates.”

The DSW program at Tulane is one of only four programs nationwide selected to participate in the council's pilot accreditation initiative and is currently the only program among them with on-ground cohorts. It is the second-largest DSW program in the country.

What sets Tulane's program apart is its emphasis on rigorous research and advanced clinical practice. Unlike many other programs, Tulane requires students to produce two scholarly manuscripts, reflecting its strong research orientation.

“Our students are not only seasoned clinicians—they are emerging scholars, educators and organizational leaders,” said Ngawang Legshe, assistant director of the program and clinical assistant professor at the Tulane University School of Social

Work. “Nearly 30 percent of our graduates enter academia, and many others rise to executive roles in agencies and organizations across the country.”

The program offers both online and on-ground options, with in-person classes meeting once a month in New Orleans. On-campus cohorts are intentionally small—averaging fewer than 15 students—to provide a close-knit, mentorship-focused learning environment. Tulane’s location in New Orleans adds another unique dimension, immersing students in a community known for its resilience and rich cultural context.

Designed for working professionals, Tulane’s DSW program offers flexible scheduling, giving students the ability to complete the degree in just two and a half years. It also offers the only on-ground DSW program in Louisiana. “This accreditation affirms our commitment to preparing leaders in social work who are driven by research, grounded in real-world experience, and dedicated to creating meaningful change in their communities,” Legshe said.

For more information about the program, visit <https://tssw.tulane.edu>.