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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS... Indigenous Social Work Degree (IBSW)

Is this program recognized? At Blue Quills we believe the most important recognition comes from our people, and we develop our programs with Elder guidance, input, and support. The degree is issued jointly by University nuhelot'ine thaiyots'j nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills and First Nations Higher Education Consortium, a partnership of Indigenous Institutes which facilitated the development of this Social Work Degree.

This delivery of this program is an act of **sovereignty** — our ancestors took over this school with the firm conviction that we can do this for ourselves, that we have a responsibility for the education of our people and for the preservation of our knowledge and life-ways. It is expected that our Graduates will be acknowledged and accepted to teach at major public universities as has been our experience with other sovereign programs delivered at Blue Quills.

At the same time, we recognize the challenges inherent in taking a sovereign position and the Elders have directed us to request an agreement with the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) to *affirm* the accreditation pathway that our IBSW has taken. Accreditation has been granted through the National Indigenous Accreditation Board (NIAB) and candidacy status was granted through World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC). In the same way that Canada (CASWE) has a mutual agreement with the United States accepting American degrees if they have been accredited through their state and national processes, we are asking for the same level of agreement between CASWE and NIAB for our Indigenous Social Work Degree.

What are the admission requirements? Preference will be given to students with Diploma of Social Work or equivalent credential from an Indigenous Institute (UnBQ or MCC). Social Work Diplomas from other Institutions are also eligible but will be reviewed to ensure that the Indigenous standards have been met. The nine approved Diploma programs in Alberta have evolved to meet these standards but earlier graduates may not have all the required course content as more recent graduates, and they may need to complete a learning requirement (such as review specific materials, research, write a paper) to address any curriculum gaps.

Applicants are invited to print and complete the **application** form available on-line <http://www.bluequills.ca/admissions/> or at the Registrar's office, and to

attach a current resume along with the personal statement outlined in the application package. Following the submission of all paperwork, applicants will schedule a meeting with an interview panel for final selection into the program. We will accept up to 25 eligible applicants.

What about the class schedule? The first activity will be a four-day seminar in late August or early September (final dates to be determined) where students will collectively participate in a pipe ceremony and circle dialogue and prepare for the academic year. Another four-day seminar will occur at the beginning of the second academic year.

We are planning to offer a program schedule that accommodates the requests of students who are currently working and want to remain employed while taking the Degree. The course schedule is being proposed as two days every second or third week (Friday evenings and all day Saturday) for each term. Courses will be delivered in fall and winter terms of each year (September to April) with a practicum to follow in spring term (500 total hours required).

What can I expect for course work?

This is an academic program that entails typical course outlines, text books, and assignments. At the same time, there is considerable involvement of Elders and language speakers to facilitate the exploration of Indigenous content and concepts that are of critical importance in the work you are doing with individuals, families and communities.

Throughout the program, students will be reflecting on insights and mindfully creating selections for contribution into their personal portfolios which will be an expression of their learning journey and significant outcomes. At the conclusion of the program students will make a final presentation of their personal portfolio to a circle of witnesses including peers, instructors and Elders.

Who is my contact for more information?

The Program Lead is Shirley Hunter, MSW, RSW

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Enquiries and updates about your application package can be made with Corinne Jackson, Assistant Registrar at 780-645-4455, ext 121