

Overview

In response to an articulated need expressed by the owner bands and community members, University nuxelhot'ine thaa?ehots'j nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills developed and is now delivering a wholistic Indigenous Masters of Social Work program that incorporates Indigenous knowledge systems. UnBQ has been through the accreditation process with the Alberta College of Social Workers for our Diploma of Social Work. In the fall 2019 UnBQ along with the National Indigenous Accreditation Board (NIAB) signed a recognition agreement with the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) recognizing both our Indigenous Bachelor of Social Work (IBSW) and our Indigenous Masters of Social Work (IMSW).

Sovereign Graduate Social Work Degree:

The delivery of this program is an act of **sovereignty** — to act on the conviction that Indigenous Post-Secondary Institutions have a responsibility for the education of Indigenous people and for the preservation of Indigenous knowledge and life-ways.

The program commits to the following attributes within our Indigenous MSW degree:

- Provide students with enhanced opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills by making substantive contributions to community wellness initiatives;
- Provide a comprehensive exploration of Indigenous research methodologies which includes:
 - mentorship experiences with local Indigenous scholars/Knowledge Keepers/Elders;
 - an exploration of related scholarship;
 - development, implementation, and assessment of a community-based research project
- Assess past and current community, provincial, and federal responses to specific wellness issues including critiques of social policy;
- Examine the role of social work, social workers, and social work education re: the restoration of community wellness

Program Objective:

The objectives of the IMSW program are interrelated and when woven together will support the attainment of the four central project goals; learning through land, language, ceremony and relationships.

The structure of the IMSW degree will provide for:

- An accessible delivery site for seven (7) First Nations communities and four (4) Metis communities;
- Curriculum which is grounded within Indigenous knowledge systems;

- Course offerings which deconstruct the historical impact of colonial expressions of social work with Indigenous peoples thereby addressing intergenerational trauma and restoring health in families and communities;
- The contextualization of social issues through Indigenous research of complex social, political and economic forces;
- Learning activities that are informed by Indigenous epistemology, thereby ensuring that students are provided with an abundance of dynamic experiential learning opportunities;
- Regular and meaningful opportunities for students, faculty and community members to interact with Elders in a variety of learning settings;
- The creation of learning environments which support learners, faculty and staff as they engage in continuous personal and professional development;
- Coursework which supports in-depth student interaction with community organizations and agencies; and
- Student support services which include access to ceremony, personal counseling, tutoring services, and a vibrant University community.

Programs at the Master level provide learners with opportunities to deepen and animate prior knowledge and skills for the purpose of making substantive contributions to the wellbeing of people, families, communities, and nations. The Program provides learning opportunities related to the student's selected area of study and practice including:

- application of local and Indigenous values and processes;
- critical assessment of relevant theories, policies, practices, and scholarship;
- exploration and assessment of a wide range of research approaches;
- use of Indigenous research methodologies including mentorship experiences with local Knowledge Keepers;
- development of leadership skills required for the building of healthy relational contexts which support transformative action; and
- critical examination of the roles and responsibilities of social work, social workers, and social work education in addressing the core issues related to the selected area of study.

MSW Programs identify any areas of advanced study or specialization and demonstrate that these specializations are responsive to local needs and resource capacities; Applicants with an IBSW may be admitted to a two-year MSW program; A two-year MSW comprised of 14 courses (48 credit hours) and 500 community learning hours and a capstone
A minimum passing grade of 65% or a GPA of 3.0 is required to meet graduation requirements

Attaining a Graduate studies Degree Close to Home:

Program objectives are closely interconnected and one objective may support the attainment of more than one project goal. For example, locating the IMSW within University nuxelhot'ine thaa?ehots'į nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills allows students to complete their studies while enjoying the supports offered by family and community members. These circumstances will translate to increased student success and retention. When considering issues related to enhancing access to post-secondary education and optimizing retention rates, it is important to note that Indigenous students may seek out programs which affirm Indigenous knowledge systems. The program delivery continuously revisits our objectives on a regular basis and provide necessary modifications as we strive to meet the needs of our students.

Admission Requirements:

- Applicants for admission into the Indigenous MSW require a BSW degree from a recognized university.
- Must have at least three years' work experience with Indigenous families and communities
- Require a B+ (3.0 GPA) or better average in your last (or last two semesters) academic year.
- A foundational understanding of an Indigenous language and philosophy would be considered an asset.
- Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission. The complete application is taken into consideration during the application review process. All complete applications submitted by the deadline are reviewed and given consideration.

Admission Process:

- Admission Package and Application with noted fee information is available online at www.bluequills.ca or by contacting our registrar's office at (780)645-4455
- Three references are required (must be professional and/or academic)
- Submit all post secondary transcripts -identifies conferred BSW degree
- Provide evidence of academic writing by submitting a 1500-word paper demonstrating your commitment to affirming Indigenous knowledge and practice in social work.
- Consideration of potential candidates will be based on commitment to address community wellness and healing by deconstructing western system thinking.
- Submission of Criminal and Child Intervention Record Checks
- Resume or Curricula Vitae
- Deadline for Applications: May 1, 2022

Where is the IMSW being offered?

University nuhelot'ine thaiyots'į nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills (University nn Blue Quills, formerly Blue Quills Education Centre and Blue Quills First Nations College (BQFNC)) is a First Nations owned and operated university in Canada, the first of its kind in the country.

The university is jointly owned by seven First Nation band governments: Beaver Lake, Cold Lake, Frog Lake, Whitefish Lake, Heart Lake, Kehewin, and Saddle Lake.

Blue Quills is a member of the National Association of Indigenous Institutes of Higher Learning and the First Nation Adult and Higher Education Consortium, a non-profit organization in Western Canada, which coordinates the efforts of its members to provide quality adult and higher education, controlled entirely by people of the First Nations.

Located near St. Paul, Alberta our Indigenous Master of Social Work students experience an on-campus where classes take place over two weekends per month. Students carry up to four courses per term in the fall and winter semesters. For the spring term our students focus their studies in community learning and research.

IMSW Course Overview ([create link](#))