

# International Social Work

Child Protection (Switzerland)

Social Policies in Europe (Sweden)

Religious and Cultural Diversities (Germany)

(18 ETCS) - semesters 5/6 (full-time) / semesters 7/8 (part-time)

## Practical information

### Description

The University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland Valais, School of Social Work in Sierre, the Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Business Management and Social Sciences (Germany), and the Department of Social Work at the Malmö University (Sweden) offer three two-week modules in “International Social Work”. The aim of this specialisation is to reflect upon and compare international theories and practices on selected topics in social work in Germany, Sweden and Switzerland. It includes modules with students from other universities, innovative lectures in English, also by visiting professors of the participating universities, and institutional and/or agency visits.

International Social Work focusses on three aspects. Each of these themes is covered in a two-week module at one of the participating universities.

- Module 1: Child Protection, 28 June (arrival) to 9 July (departure) 2021, Sierre (Switzerland)
- Module 2: Social Policies in Europe, 31 January (arrival) to 11 February (departure) 2022, Malmö (Sweden)
- Module 3: Religious and Cultural Diversities, 5 September (arrival) to 16 September (departure) 2022, Osnabrück (Germany)

### Module 1 - Child protection in Sierre (Switzerland)

The Child Protection module deals with the international, historical and legal framework of child protection (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, national laws etc.). It presents the challenges for children needing protection (historically, sociologically, legally, and pedagogically), the current national and international situation for families (family forms, social policies, substance abuse, violence, child abduction) and the specific situation of migrant children. It considers specific local institutional developments and social work practice and allows for international comparisons of case studies in child protection. It includes visits of international research facilities, political institutions and social work facilities in the field of child protection. More information: [www.hevs.ch/internationalsocialwork](http://www.hevs.ch/internationalsocialwork)

### Module 2 - Social Policies and Welfare Studies in Malmö (Sweden)

Module 2 deals with social policy and social work organisation in different situations based on a comparative perspective. The practice of social work in an international environment is discussed. Moreover, it focuses on knowledge of various welfare systems in terms of social policy and social work. The course is discussed through different themes, such as children and family, ageing, migration and drug addiction, profession, and education. Furthermore, the course helps to develop the students’ reflections based on their professional identity. Students are expected to reflect critically, analyse, and discuss different aspects of the welfare system, such as social policy, organisation, challenges, and social work in a Swedish and/or other welfare context. [More information](#)

### Modul 3 - Religious and Cultural Diversities in Osnabrück (Germany)

Migration is one of the social problems that occur in the field of international social work, not only in Europe but worldwide. In that respect awareness about cultural diversity is pivotal. The module provides the opportunity to reflect issues concerning cultural diversity in a group of students from different European countries. A lot of problems regarding cultural diversity refer to religious diversity. These issues are in the focus of the seminar discussion. The seminar also provides the opportunity to explore the practice of interreligious learning during field trips. [More information](#)

### Who can participate?

Participation is open to fifth semester students (full-time) and seventh semester students (part-time) enrolled in a Bachelor’s in social work at one of the schools of social work of the HES-SO (Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne, Sierre). Please note that participation is limited to a maximum of 10 students. Interested students must be willing to travel abroad and have experience in intercultural communication or in international exchanges.

### How many ECTS credits are the modules worth?

18 ECTS will be awarded for the successful participation in the three two-week modules. These 18 ECTS can be considered equivalent to the successful participation in a “module d’approfondissement / Schwerpunktmodul” (15/12 ECTS), a “module libre / frei gestaltbares Modul” (5/3 ECTS) or “credit libre/freie Credits” (3 ECTS), depending on the applicable framework curricula.

### What about the exams?

Active participation in all three modules is required. Additionally, students are asked to present a specific topic during each of the two-week modules and submit a written paper of 10-15 pages. The papers are evaluated by the professors of the home university. The oral presentations are evaluated by the participating professors of all three universities.

### What are the language requirements?

Working language is English (classes, presentations, written papers). Students must have good oral and written English skills (at least level B1/B2, in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Language skills other than English such as French, German or Swedish are an asset.

### What about the travel and accommodation costs?

Participating HES-SO students must pay CHF 600 in total (CHF 200 per module) for travel and accommodation, which will be arranged by the organisers (except within Switzerland). Please note that no meals other than breakfast are included in these costs.

### How can I apply?

Interested students must send a one-page motivation letter and their CV in English to Barbara Waldis and Stefanie Kurt by 11.01.2021. An interview may be organised to assess the students’ motivation and language skills. Students will be notified of the professors’ decision after 8.02.2021.

### Any questions?

Please do not hesitate to contact Prof. Dr Barbara Waldis ([barbara.waldis@hevs.ch](mailto:barbara.waldis@hevs.ch)) and Prof. Dr Stefanie Kurt ([stefanie.kurt@hevs.ch](mailto:stefanie.kurt@hevs.ch)) if you have any questions.

### Responsible professors for the HES-SO Valais-Wallis and contact information

Prof. Dr Barbara Waldis, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland Valais, HES-SO Valais-Wallis, School of Social Work, Sierre, [barbara.waldis@hevs.ch](mailto:barbara.waldis@hevs.ch)

Prof. Dr Stefanie Kurt, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland Valais, HES-SO Valais-Wallis, School of Social Work, Sierre, [stefanie.kurt@hevs.ch](mailto:stefanie.kurt@hevs.ch)

[www.hevs.ch/internationalsocialwork](http://www.hevs.ch/internationalsocialwork)