



Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and Diaconia

Program Overview

The Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and Diaconia at the Universidad Católica Americana (UNICA) is a comprehensive educational proposal that unites the Christian tradition of service (diakonia) with its practical application in human contexts where the Church exercises its prophetic mission.

In the biblical and ecclesial tradition, *diaconia* is service as an expression of faith. In the early Church, deacons were instituted to serve those in need (Acts 6:1–6), giving rise to a ministry of charity that has endured throughout the centuries. This vocation of service is renewed in contemporary contexts through social work, an academic and professional discipline dedicated to human well-being, social justice, and community transformation.

UNICA Bachelor's in Social Work and Diaconia offers an interdisciplinary formation that integrates social sciences, psychology, theology, and pastoral ministry—preparing professionals capable of:

- Understanding social realities from a critical and Christian perspective.
- Intervening in social issues with pastoral sensitivity and methodological rigor.
- Accompanying community and ecclesial processes by uniting social action and evangelizing mission.
- Leading projects for social service, reconciliation, and peacebuilding in local and global contexts.

Thanks to its virtual and blended modality, the program is accessible to students from diverse contexts, allowing them to complete community and pastoral internships within their own regions or in partner institutions. Its bilingual offer (Spanish and English) also enables graduates to serve in multicultural communities and international environments.

Through this degree, UNICA reaffirms its commitment to the mission of the Church and society: to form professionals who embody faith in action, in the spirit of the Gospel and the Social Doctrine of the Church.

Institutional Identity

P.O. Box 16088, Houston Tx 77222
(correspondence), and 627 Rocky Mountain Dr.,
Houston, TX 77037
contacto@uca-virtual.us



The Universidad Católica Americana (UNICA) is an ecclesiastical institution inspired by the Christian-Catholic tradition, committed to integral formation in the light of the Gospel and the living tradition of the Church. UNICA integrates faith and reason, fosters spiritual life, and prepares its students for intellectual, social, and pastoral service in contemporary society.

Mission

To train professionals in social work and diaconia with academic, ethical, pastoral, and spiritual competencies, prepared to accompany communities, promote social justice, and foster integral human development, in fidelity to the evangelizing mission of the Church.

Vision

To be recognized as a Catholic university of reference in the formation of social workers and agents of diaconia, with impact on social transformation, reconciliation, solidarity, and the promotion of human dignity in the Americas and worldwide.

Values

Truth, Charity, Excellence, Holiness, Unity, and Service.

Technical Program Sheet

Field	Description
Program Name	Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and Diaconia
Academic Level	Undergraduate / Bachelor
Duration	8 semesters (curricular structure organized by semesters)
Total Credits	160 credits (average of 20 per semester)
Modality	Virtual and blended (synchronous/asynchronous classes, intensive in-person workshops, and community/pastoral practice)

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Language Options	Spanish / English / Bilingual (according to student selection)
Location	State of Texas, USA
Degree Awarded	Bachelor of Social Work and Diaconia — Universidad Católica Americana (UNICA)

Admission Requirements (Profile and Documentation)

- Recognized High School Diploma (or equivalent GED).
- Secondary school transcript or academic record.
- Personal essay (motivation and vocational discernment letter).
- Admission interview (academic and vocational).
- One pastoral or academic recommendation.
- Proof of language proficiency according to program modality (see language section).
- For international students: compliance with current migration and visa requirements.
- The university may establish additional requirements according to institutional and accreditation regulations.

Educational Purpose

To train professionals in social work and diaconia with solid scientific, ethical, and theological preparation, capable of promoting human well-being, social justice, and community transformation from a Christian and pastoral perspective.

Learning Outcomes

Upon graduation, the Bachelor of Social Work and Diaconia graduate will be able to:

1. Critically analyze social, economic, and cultural issues in diverse contexts.
2. Apply social work methodologies in community and ecclesial programs.
3. Integrate biblical, theological, and Catholic Social Teaching principles in professional practice.
4. Design and lead social and pastoral intervention projects.
5. Promote reconciliation, social justice, and human rights advocacy.
6. Develop counseling and accompaniment skills in vulnerable contexts.
7. Use digital and technological resources for community and pastoral work.

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8. Research and evaluate social programs from a humanistic and Christian approach.

Competencies

- Generic: Critical thinking, oral and written communication, social leadership, teamwork, intercultural sensitivity, digital competence.
- Specific: Social intervention, community management, pastoral diaconia, basic counseling, social research, project planning and evaluation, Catholic Social Teaching, pastoral and community animation.

Language Offer and Requirements

The program is offered in three modalities: Spanish, English, and Bilingual. Language certification requirements are equivalent to those of the other degree programs (TOEFL/IELTS, DELE, or institutional exams).

Curriculum by Semester (8 semesters — 160 credits)

Semester	Code	Course	Credits	Description	Prerequisites
1	TSD-101	Introduction to Social Work and Diaconia	6	Historical, conceptual, and biblical foundations of Christian service and social work.	None
	TSD-102	Foundations of Theology and Social Doctrine	6	Theological and social principles of the Church's mission.	None
	TSD-103	General Psychology	4	Psychological foundations of human behavior.	None
	TSD-104	Academic Writing and Communication	4	Academic and professional writing, argumentation, and communication.	None
		Total Credits:	20		

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2	TSD-201	Sociology and Social Anthropology	6	Study of society and culture as contexts for intervention.	None
	TSD-202	History of the Church and Diaconia	6	Historical development of diaconia and its connection to the social mission.	TSD-101
	TSD-203	Developmental Psychology	4	Human growth processes and their impact on social intervention.	TSD-103
	TSD-204	Digital Competencies for Social Action	4	Technological tools applied to community management.	None
		Total Credits:	20		
3	TSD-301	Methods and Techniques of Social Work I	6	Principles of individual and community intervention.	TSD-101
	TSD-302	Christian Ethics and Social Justice	6	Ethical foundations applied to social and pastoral action.	TSD-102
	TSD-303	Psychology of Religion	4	Religious experience and its impact on human life.	TSD-103
	TSD-304	Fundamental Pastoral Theology	4	Principles of pastoral action in the Church.	None
		Total Credits:	20		
4	TSD-401	Methods and Techniques of Social Work II	6	Advanced strategies for intervention and accompaniment.	TSD-301
	TSD-402	Liturgy and Pastoral Service	6	Relationship between sacraments, liturgy, and community action.	TSD-102
	TSD-403	Basic Pastoral Counseling	4	Counseling tools for faith-based contexts.	TSD-103
	TSD-404	General Elective I	4	Elective course in humanities or social sciences.	As applicable
		Total Credits:	20		



5	TSD-501	Planning and Management of Social Projects	6	Design, implementation, and evaluation of intervention projects.	TSD-301
	TSD-502	Social and Community Pastoral Ministry	6	Pastoral action in contexts of poverty and vulnerability.	TSD-304
	TSD-503	Public Policy and Social Welfare	4	Analysis of social policies and assistance programs.	TSD-201
	TSD-504	Social Practice I (Supervised)	4	Initial field experience in social or ecclesial institutions.	TSD-301
		Total Credits:	20		
6	TSD-601	Social Research	6	Research methodologies in social work and pastoral contexts.	TSD-204
	TSD-602	Catholic Social Teaching (Advanced)	6	In-depth study of the Church's social doctrine.	TSD-102
	TSD-603	Crisis Intervention and Conflict Resolution	4	Accompaniment strategies in emergency situations.	TSD-403
	TSD-604	Social Practice II (Intensive)	4	Intensive experience in social and pastoral programs.	TSD-504
		Total Credits:	20		
7	TSD-701	Social Work with Families and Groups	6	Intervention in family and community dynamics.	TSD-301
	TSD-702	Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue	6	Interfaith relations and joint social action.	TSD-202
	TSD-703	Community and Pastoral Leadership	4	Leadership competencies for social and pastoral projects.	TSD-502
	TSD-704	Advanced Elective in Social Work and Diaconia	4	Specialized course in social or pastoral intervention.	As applicable



		Total Credits:	20		
8	TSD-801	Integrative Seminar and Final Thesis	10	Preparation and defense of an applied final project.	TSD-601
	TSD-802	Professional Ethics and Social Responsibility	6	Ethical principles in professional practice.	TSD-302
	TSD-803	Pastoral and Community Animation	4	Strategies for pastoral and social engagement.	TSD-502
		Total Credits:	20		

Methodology and Evaluation

- Blended methodology: synchronous/asynchronous classes, practical workshops, intensive seminars, and fieldwork in social and ecclesial institutions.
- Continuous evaluation: case studies, community projects, academic essays, supervised practices, applied research, and thesis defense.
- In the bilingual modality, social and linguistic competencies are assessed in both languages.

Institutional Observations and Compliance

UNICA will adapt documents and admission requirements in accordance with the State of Texas regulations and the authorization/accreditation conditions applicable to religious institutions and programs in virtual/hybrid modalities.