

# SOCIAL WORK, MSW

The MSW program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Full-Time MSW Program students attending on a full-time basis generally complete the program in two academic years. Part-time students, both in the Part-Time MSW Program and Full-Time MSW Program attending part-time, complete it in four.

This program page is for students who have not previously completed a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW). Students who completed or anticipate completing a degree from a CSWE-accredited undergraduate social work program should refer to Social Work Advanced Standing, MSW (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/social-work/social-work-advanced-standing-msw/>).

## MSW PROGRAM GOALS

- Provide an MSW curriculum that builds on a liberal arts base, grounded in a person-in-environment, empowerment, and strengths perspective that promotes the values, ethics, and purposes of the profession.
- Prepare students for generalist and autonomous advanced generalist practice that is transferable across diverse contexts, locations, and problems by providing knowledge, values, and skills training regarding:
  - Populations and related social problems/issues;
  - Social, health, and/or human services systems and policies;
  - Systems of oppression, privilege, and power;
  - Multilevel and multimethod approaches based on scientific inquiry and best practices;
  - Ethical advocacy and social, economic, and environmental justice;
  - Reflective leadership;
  - Research-informed practice, and practice and program evaluation methods that contribute to the profession's knowledge base.
- Develop and maintain an inclusive environment that will attract, nurture, and support diversity within the School, among students, faculty, and staff.
- Cultivate and maintain partnerships with a variety of social, health and/or human service organizations to provide meaningful field experiences and supervision while respecting and contributing to their respective mission.

## THE MSW CURRICULUM

The school's curriculum is generalist social work practice in orientation. In courses across the curriculum, faculty interweave:

- content about social work values and ethics;
- content that promotes understanding, affirmation, and respect for people from diverse backgrounds;
- content on populations-at-risk, including strategies to respond to and strategies to redress risk factors; and
- content on social, economic and environmental justice grounded in an understanding of distributive justice, human and civil rights, and the global interconnections of oppression.

MSW students complete a generalist year(s) and a specialization year(s).

### Generalist Practice

The generalist practice year curriculum emphasizes direct practice across system sizes (micro-to-macro). Students take courses in social welfare policies and services, human behavior and the social environment

(including social work with ethnic and racial groups; and psychopathology for generalist practice), research methods, social work practice (including generalist practice with individuals, families, and groups; and generalist practice with organizations and communities), and a field course that includes a social work practice integrative seminar and social work field placement.

### Advanced Generalist Specialization

The advanced curriculum offers an advanced generalist specialization with optional areas of focus in:

- aging (full-time only);
- child, youth, and family welfare;
- health (full-time only); and
- mental health.

Students complete the advanced generalist specialization by taking courses in advanced practice, policies and services, advanced macro practice, and advanced generalist social work field practice, which include an integrative seminar and field placement. Students also have multiple elective opportunities.

Planned sub-focuses are available, as well as individualized sub-focus areas constructed with assistance from the academic advisors.

## PART-TIME MSW PROGRAM

The Part-Time MSW Program is designed to allow students who are not able to pursue full-time study to work toward an MSW degree on a structured, time-extended basis with classes delivered in a hybrid manner (using in-person sessions and online technology).

- In-person sessions offered every other Saturday. Students should plan to be on campus each semester.
- Fieldwork options may be offered in your home community.
- Traditional and advanced standing options are offered.
- Focus Areas in child, youth and family welfare or mental health are offered.

Applicants must meet the School of Social Work admission requirements to be accepted into the program.

## FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM

The field units are organized around a social problem area, a field of practice, or a major intervention method. Each unit has a range of field placement agencies and settings appropriate to its theme. The emphasis for generalist-level placements is on a generalist perspective and direct practice experience. The focus is on learning and applying analytic and interventive skills within an ethically-based, problem-focused approach. Specialization-level field emphasizes practice from an advanced generalist perspective with either direct or indirect practice experience. The focus is on autonomous practice and advanced practice knowledge and skills in an area of focus.

The following field units are generally available to generalist practice year and/or specialization year MSW students in the full-time program. These units represent more than 100 placements in agencies and organizations throughout Dane and its contiguous counties.

- Social work practice in community agencies
- Social work practice in intellectual and other disabilities
- Social work practice in educational settings
- Social work practice in health

- Social work practice in mental health
- Social work practice with older adults
- Social work practice in policy and administration
- Social work practice in public and private child welfare
- Social work practice in public child welfare

Field units offered in the part-time MSW program are:

- Social work practice in community agencies
- Social work practice in child and family welfare: public, private, and educational settings
- Social work practice in mental health

## CHILD WELFARE TRAINING

Federal Title IV-E funding is available to MSW students in both full- and part-time programs for training in public child welfare. After applying to the MSW program, generalist year or advanced practice year students may apply to this special program designed to prepare advanced practitioners for practice in public child welfare. Students complete a specialized curriculum within the child, youth, and family welfare focus area. MSW students accepted into the training program receive tuition, a book & mileage stipend, and a monthly stipend each year they are in field. In return child welfare trainees sign a contract agreeing to work, after graduation, in a public child welfare position in the State of Wisconsin for a prescribed amount of time. For complete details, contact the Title IV-E program coordinator (contact information available on the program website (<https://socwork.wisc.edu/programs/iveprogram/>)).

## BACKGROUND CHECKS

Social work applicants should be advised that state statutes require background checks on all potential field students prior to the field experience. Information regarding this process is provided to students after they are accepted into the School of Social Work.

- Social Work: Full Time, MSW (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/social-work/social-work-msw/social-work-full-time-msw/>)
- Social Work: Part Time, MSW (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/social-work/social-work-msw/social-work-part-time-msw/>)

## ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The Sandra Rosenbaum School of Social Work at UW–Madison is consistently ranked among the best schools of social work in the country. Faculty prepare social work professionals at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. Through the preparation of social work practitioners, scholars and educators, faculty and students explore and seek to understand the nature of social problems, their impact on vulnerable populations, and ways to critically analyze and promote the achievement of a just, equitable, healthy, and productive society.

Social work faculty are noted for their scholarly work in developing a conceptual understanding of social work practice and policy, and in producing research in important social problem areas. For example, faculty took a leadership role in the development of the generalist model of practice that is now used by most social work programs. Faculty members have made valuable research contributions in the fields of aging, child welfare, developmental disabilities, and family and inter-generational caregiving, as well as in educational attainment and life-course decision-making, end-of-life care for older adults and palliative care, health disparities, homelessness, poverty, social policy, welfare reform, and

child support. Drawing on strong faculty, excellent students, and the resources of a world-renowned university in a community rich with social and human service programs, there is much to offer prospective students: individualized, faculty-taught field education for master's students, nationally renowned faculty with a strong interdisciplinary focus, and hands-on research training in a highly individualized program of study for doctoral students.

The school offers unique opportunities for students to receive state-of-the-art professional training through its field education program. Student practice opportunities range from experiences in institutional and community-based settings to working with families and other significant care-givers, with individuals and groups, and in policy and service delivery issues.

**Mission.** The mission of the School of Social Work is to enhance human well-being and promote social and economic justice for people who are disadvantaged to achieve an equitable, healthy, and productive society. The school aims to:

- Create, advance, strengthen, and integrate interdisciplinary knowledge for students and the profession through research, scholarship, and practice.
- Educate students to become highly-skilled, culturally-competent and ethical practitioners who will provide leadership for the profession of social work within the state of Wisconsin and nationally.
- Promote change at levels ranging from the individual client to national, including empowering communities and populations that are disadvantaged and developing humane service delivery systems.
- Create and disseminate knowledge regarding the prevention and amelioration of social problems.

The School of Social Work is a professional school in the College of Letters and Science. As part of the college, the school maintains relationships with the other social studies and professional schools within the university system through interchange of faculty and students and through joint research and publication endeavors.