

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK (MSW)

Program Description

The Master of Social Work provides advanced professional study for women and men in social work. The program prepares social work practitioners for clinical social work practice and leadership. The MSW program is jointly offered by St. Catherine University and the University of St. Thomas. The regular standing graduate program requires 56 semester credits, including 1,000 hours of field practica and the completion of a clinical research paper. Advanced standing admission (requiring 38 credits) is available for students with an undergraduate degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program. Foundation and advanced courses include study in human behavior and the social environment, social policy and services, research, generalist and clinical social work practice and fieldwork. Courses are offered in the late afternoon and evening format and a weekend cohort format to accommodate graduate students who are working professionals.

The MSW program emphasizes the development of the individual student. Its focus on clinical social work practice with individuals, small groups and families, deals with problems including poverty, discrimination, mental illness, developmental disabilities and oppression. The MSW curriculum emphasizes demonstrated mastery of knowledge and practice skills and is rooted in a philosophy of social responsibility and respect for human rights. The development of areas of expertise can be explored through selection of electives, field placements and the clinical research project.

The mission of the School of Social Work is: Drawing from the Judeo-Christian traditions of social caring, we prepare students to use social work knowledge, values and skills to demonstrate the intrinsic value of all humankind as they serve those in need and promote social justice and human rights.

The following serves as the mission statement for the Master of Social Work program: "Grounded in the principles of dignity and respect for all persons we prepare clinical social workers for reflective practice, supervision, leadership and practice-focused research with a commitment to critical inquiry, cultural responsiveness and social justice."

As a reflection of this mission, the overall goals of the program are to:

- prepare students to develop a strong clinical social work identity grounded in social work values and ethics
- prepare students to develop skills in actively engaging diverse client populations and adapting their practice to particular groups as needed
- prepare students to develop critical thinking, reflective practice skills and substantive knowledge essential for competent clinical social work practice
- prepare students to develop the capacity for leadership and supervision in multiple settings
- prepare students to develop the capacity to critically interpret and conduct social work research in order to increase the body of knowledge, assess the effectiveness of clinical interventions and improve social work practice

Accreditation

The MSW program is accredited at the graduate level by the Council on Social Work Education: Commission on Accreditation. In June 2012, the Council in Social Work Education: Commission on Accreditation reaccredited the program for the full eight-year cycle. For more information on this organization, visit www.cswe.org (<http://www.cswe.org>).

St. Catherine University and University of St. Thomas are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and are members of the North Central Association: www.ncahlc.org.

Licensure

In 2007, Minnesota State Legislature passed a law, effective August 1, 2011, requiring 360 hours of clinical coursework in six clinical knowledge areas for everyone applying for LICSW licensure. Applicants for the independent license are subject to the new law. Students will get most of this mandated content through coursework in our MSW program.

For specific information regarding social work licensure, contact the Minnesota Board of Social Work, 2829 University Ave. SE, Suite #340, Minneapolis, MN 55414, 612-617-2100, or visit <http://mn.gov/health-licensing-boards/social-work/>.

Note: Effective August 1, 1997, all new applicants for licensure must have a criminal background check completed as part of their application.

Effective July 1990, an individual who desires to practice as a school social worker must be licensed by the Minnesota Department of Education. For more information regarding school social work licensure, contact the Minnesota Department of Education, 1500 Hwy 36 W., Roseville, MN 55113, 651-582-8691, or visit <http://www.education.state.mn.us/>.

Degree Requirements

The regular standing graduate program requires 56 semester credits, including 1,000 hours of field practicum and the completion of a clinical research project. The advanced standing graduate program requires a minimum of 38 semester hours, including 600 hours of field practicum and completion of a clinical research project.

Years to Complete the Program

The program must be completed within four years from the initial term of enrollment in the MSW program. You may pursue program requirements during the regular academic year and summer sessions on a full- or extended-time status.

For regular standing students who do not have an undergraduate degree in social work, the MSW degree can be completed in the weekday format in a two-year, four-semester program. Students enroll in a minimum of 13-15 credits each semester, including field practicum. This two-year MSW program will allow regular standing students who carry 13-15 credits per semester to complete the 56 credits required for graduation.

Graduates of undergraduate social work programs accredited by the CSWE will be considered for advanced standing and will be required to complete a minimum of 38 semester credits to receive the MSW degree. Full time students admitted to the advanced standing one-year program in the weekday format take four courses during the summer sessions and graduate the following May after two semesters of full time study.

The MSW program at St. Kate's - St. Thomas also offers an extended-time curriculum for those students who are unable to enroll on a full time

basis. In the weekday format, regular standing students can apply to complete the program on extended-time status on either a three-year or four-year plan. Advanced standing students in the weekday format can apply to complete the program on extended-time status, on a two-year or three-year plan. The degree requirements are the same as the full-time programs.

The MSW program is also offered in a regular standing and advanced standing weekend hybrid formats, where students come to the St. Paul campus three Saturdays a semester for in-person classes; in addition, required courses are held three Saturdays in the summer. The regular standing weekend hybrid is designed to be completed in three years. The advanced standing weekend hybrid program is designed to be completed in two years. The degree requirements are the same as the full-time programs.

Dual Degree Programs

Innovative program options are available for students interested in furthering their religious, holistic health or legal knowledge while also obtaining an MSW degree. These collaborative programs with the School of Social Work are called dual degree programs¹ and are offered through the Theology Department and the Holistic Health Studies Department at St. Catherine University; and the School of Law at the University of St. Thomas.

These programs were developed to reinforce and support a professional perspective that serves the multiple and complex needs of clients. To participate in a dual degree option, students must be independently accepted into both graduate programs. Applicants should express their intent to complete the dual-degree program when applying for admission. Once accepted, you will develop a plan for completing both degrees with the support of an adviser from each program. For social work students, their advisor will be the MSW program director. Upon completion, students will have two degrees.

¹ Please note: The dual degree program offers two separate degrees from two separate programs. The institutions may articulate transfer/elective credits that students can count toward both degrees. Each institution is responsible separately for the administration of the program and has its own policies and procedures regarding admission, registration, billing, student advising and graduation requirements.

Additional Information

Advising

Upon admission to the MSW program, each student is assigned an academic advisor from among the full-time faculty. Advisors assist students in selecting appropriate elective courses and reviewing requests for changes in program sequence. Advisors also assist in developing greater understanding of the program and the profession, and in providing consultation about other issues that may arise related to the student's participation in the program. Advisors also serve as student advocates. The MSW program does not require students to obtain academic advising as a condition of registration, but students are strongly encouraged to contact their advisors at least once a semester. Students may request a change of academic advisor by writing to the MSW program director.

Independent Study

An independent study course provides an opportunity for students who wish to undertake a well-defined research project or clearly outlined and carefully delineated course of study. Independent study courses are

restricted to students of proven ability who have sufficient background in the subject and are able to complete their work under the guidance of a faculty member. They conduct the project in an independent manner without attending regular class meetings. Independent study is characterized by a reduction in formal instruction and an increase in the individual student's responsibility and initiative in the learning process.

Approval of an independent study course by the faculty sponsor, MSW director and the dean attests to the academic value of the study and to the ability of the student to master a body of knowledge with minimal faculty guidance. Field practicum experiences may not be taken as independent study. Independent studies may not substitute for an elective course offered in the School of Social Work. Independent study arrangements are generally limited to one or two students per course and must be accompanied by an MSW Program Change form if it impacts their course sequencing.

Normally, independent studies are offered for three credits. However, independent studies are also offered for less than three credits in cases where a student is one or two credits short because of transfer of courses from another institution. Approval for an independent study is not complete until the faculty sponsor, MSW program director and the Dean have signed and approved the form.

An Independent Study Form may be obtained from the MSW program manager. Registration for an independent study course is done through the MSW program manager at the University of St. Thomas. The MSW program manager maintains a copy of the completed contract.

Progression Policy

Students must earn a grade of C- or better in each social work course. Students must also maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00. If a student has cumulative GPA of less than 3.00, they will automatically be placed on academic probation. If a student earns more than one grade of C or lower, they may be suspended or asked to withdraw from the program.

Students must comply with the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the Minnesota Licensing Code of Ethics, as well as the Standards of the MSW Social Work program as detailed in the MSW Student Handbook.

Conditions for Probation, Suspension or Termination

There are six categories of academic standing, one related to admission status and five that are assigned at the end of each grading period.

At admission:

Provisional Admission – A student is considered a provisional admit if the student 1) has unmet prerequisites or 2) was admitted with an undergraduate cumulative GPA below 3.0. A student may move off of provisional status by 1) completing the required prerequisite coursework or 2) earning a 3.0 or higher GPA in the first 12 credits of the MSW program.

After each semester and final grading period:

- Good Standing – To maintain good standing in the MSW program a student must achieve a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and successfully complete all field practicum requirements
- Probation (academic or disciplinary) – A student who is not maintaining the requirements of Good Standing will be placed on academic probation. Disciplinary probation may be assigned for conduct or other non-academic related behaviors

- Suspension – A student on academic probation for more than two semesters may be placed on suspension. A student who earns more than one grade of “C” or lower may be suspended from the program. A suspended student is not allowed to register for future terms or seek field placement until the conditions of the suspension have been addressed in a satisfactory manner
- Academic Dismissal (termination) – Any student who fails a required course twice or receives more than one “F” and/or “R” on their transcript may be terminated from the MSW program
- Non-Academic Dismissal (termination) - Any student who fails to meet the non-academic standards as addressed in this handbook may be terminated from the MSW program

Terms for readmission to the program after suspension or dismissal are outlined in the *Retention in the MSW Program* policy section and communicated, along with specific conditions, to the affected student in the academic standing notification letter.

Readmission to the Program

Students who have been dismissed are not eligible to register for courses or seek field placement, but may apply for readmission after the lapse of at least one semester or as specified in the dismissal letter. To be readmitted, students must submit a petition to the dean of the School of Social Work via the MSW program director describing why they will be successful if readmitted and address the conditions of the probation, suspension or termination.

If readmitted, students are automatically placed on probation, and the terms of probation will be provided in writing to them. A readmitted student must achieve a minimum GPA of 3.0 in the next 12 credits of course work taken. Should the student fail to achieve a 3.0, she or he will be terminated from the program with no option for readmission. If a student is placed on probationary status, dismissed or terminated, she or he may use the institutional grievance policy and procedures of the University of St. Thomas to appeal any decision. This policy does not supersede or replace any applicable Institution-wide process or policy.

There may be circumstances that warrant immediate discipline including termination from the program. The School of Social Work has the right to discipline or terminate a student during the course of or in lieu of the processes described.

Curriculum

The following courses are required for the MSW program:

Code	Title	Credits
Foundation Courses		
GRSW 5000	History and Philosophy of Social Work	3
GRSW 5010	Theory and Practice of Social Work I	3
GRSW 5020	Theory and Practice of Social Work II	3
GRSW 5050	Field Practicum and Seminar I	3
GRSW 5060	Field Practicum and Seminar II	3
GRSW 5400	Human Behavior and the Social Environment	3
GRSW 5800	Social Work Research Methods	3
Clinical Concentration		
GRSW 6030	Methods of Clinical Social Work I	3
GRSW 6040	Methods of Clinical Social Work II	3
GRSW 6070	Field Practicum and Seminar III	4
GRSW 6080	Field Practicum and Seminar IV	4

GRSW 6250	Social Policy and Program Development	3
GRSW 6450	Psychopathology and Human Behavior	3
GRSW 6500	Clinical Supervision and Program Management	3
GRSW 6810	Social Work Practice Research	3
Electives		
Select three of the following:		
GRSW 5150	Social Work And The Law	9
GRSW 5230	Practice with Older Adults and Their Families	
GRSW 5340	Practice with Service Members, Veterans and Their Families	
GRSW 5410	Family Resilience and Diversity: Immigrants and Refugees	
GRSW 5903	Topics	
GRSW 6090	The Spiritual Dimension of Social Work Practice	
GRSW 6120	Grief Counseling and Therapy	
GRSW 6140	Clinical Practice with Children	
GRSW 6150	Clinical Practice with Couples and Families	
GRSW 6160	Clinical Practice with Groups	
GRSW 6180	Cognitive Interventions	
GRSW 6190	Integrative Psychotherapy	
GRSW 6210	Brief Dynamic Psychotherapy	
GRSW 6220	Clinical Practice with Adolescents	
GRSW 6230	Clinical Practice with Older Adults	
GRSW 6240	Mental Illness: Clinical Issues and Practice	
GRSW 6260	Clinical Practice for the Treatment of Trauma	
GRSW 6270	Clinical Practice in Schools	
GRSW 6280	Clinical Practice with Immigrants and Refugees	
GRSW 6290	Clinical Social Work Practice in Integrated Healthcare	
GRSW 6330	Dialectical Behavioral Therapy	
GRSW 6340	Clin Pract in Military Soc Wrk	
GRSW 6820	Applied Research Seminar (Clinical Research Paper)	
GRSW 6903	Topics	

Total Credits 56

Field Practicum and Seminar

Regular standing students are required to complete a 400-hour supervised field practicum during the foundation year of the program. The foundation practicum must be taken concurrently with GRSW 5010 Theory and Practice of Social Work I and GRSW 5020 Theory and Practice of Social Work II.

All students are required to complete a clinical field practicum of 600 hours. The clinical field practicum must be taken concurrently with GRSW 6030 Methods of Clinical Social Work I and GRSW 6040 Methods of Clinical Social Work II.

In some cases, students may be able to arrange placements at agencies where they are employed (“practicum in place of employment”), or agencies which were not previously listed with the school (“self-

initiated"). Students interested in exploring alternative placements should attend the field orientation for complete information and guidelines and consult with the director of MSW field education, before contacting any agencies directly.

Block placements (generally full-time between June-August) must be approved by the Director of MSW Field Education and the academic advisor. Block placements take place **after** the corresponding practice courses have been completed: GRSW 5010 Theory and Practice of Social Work I & GRSW 5020 Theory and Practice of Social Work II must be completed prior to foundation practica; GRSW 6030 Methods of Clinical Social Work I & GRSW 6040 Methods of Clinical Social Work II must be completed prior to clinical practica. Only one placement can be completed in a Block format.

Elective Courses

The MSW program requires all students to take nine elective credits. Only three elective credits may be taken outside the School of Social Work and must be from a CSWE accredited institution. See Transfer of Credit policy section in the MSW handbook for further information.

Students are not guaranteed registration in a particular elective as part of their program in the weekday or weekend cohort program tracks. Registration is first-come, first-serve and once elective courses are filled, students must choose a different elective.

The Master of Social Work Program will no longer be a joint program between St. Catherine University and the University of St. Thomas, effective Fall 2019. For information about the St. Catherine University program, please go to the Henrietta Schmoll School of Health: Social Work (<http://catalog.stkate.edu/graduate/health/social-work>) section of this catalog.