Nebraska Wesleyan University

Social Work (Graduate)

Catalog

2024-2025

About the Program

MSW Program Mission

The Master of Social Work Program at Nebraska Wesleyan University prepares students for trauma conscious advanced social work practice with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations. We are committed to preparing our students to engage in critical thinking in order to integrate knowledge of systemic oppression to promote social justice, apply ethical standards and principles, and enhance strengths and resiliency among diverse populations.

MSW Curriculum

The program's curriculum is split into a generalist curriculum and a specialized curriculum. The generalist curriculum consists of 32 credits hours, including the completion of a 400-hour practicum experience. Once students have completed the generalist curriculum, they will be allowed to progress to the specialized curriculum, which consists of 34 credit hours of advanced coursework, including a minimum of 500 hours of practicum experience. Students who have completed an undergraduate degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program may be able to begin the program with advanced standing and start directly into the specialized curriculum.

Admissions Criteria

- Undergraduate Degree (3.0 GPA) from an Accredited College/University with previous coursework in statistics as well as at least 9 credit hours of coursework in the social sciences, to include sociology, psychology, political science, and similar disciplines.
- Submission of a resume documenting previous volunteer, internship, and/ or work experience.
- 2 references (1 academic reference from previous faculty member [if possible]).
- Writing sample formatted in APA style with the use of citations. The sample should demonstrate sufficient writing skill needed for graduate level coursework. The writing sample should be no more than 5 pages of writing with a title page and reference page (no more than 7 pages total). Applicants will be provided with prompts that should guide their response.

Determination of Advanced Standing:

Students who have earned an undergraduate degree in social work degree from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited educational institution or program recognized through its International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service, or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors, may apply for the Master of Social Work (MSW) program and enter into advanced standing. Applicants must have received the undergraduate social work degree within 5 years prior of applying at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Students who completed an undergraduate degree in social work more than 5 years previous are eligible to apply for Advanced Standing and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Consideration will be made for social work coursework previously completed on its fit under the current CSWE standards and coursework required at the generalist level of the program. Students seeking Advanced Standing may be required to complete bridge content, not previously achieved in the student's baccalaureate education, to fulfill the requirements at the generalist level. No student with a baccalaureate degree in social work will be required to complete content previously achieved in their undergraduate social work education.

Advanced Standing Admissions Criteria:

- Undergraduate degree in social work from a CSWE Accredited Program (3.0 GPA) from an Accredited College/University with previous coursework in statistics as well as at least 9 credit hours of coursework in the social sciences, to include sociology, psychology, political science, and similar disciplines. ** Degree must have been obtained within the past 5 years. For candidates who do not meet this criteria, applications will be reviewed and considered on a case-by-case basis.
    - NWU MSW Program may require students to complete courses prior to admittance into the program.

- For students who have completed an Undergraduate Degree in social work within the last 5 years, a practicum evaluation must be provided.
- Submission of a resume documenting previous volunteer, internship, and/ or work experience.
- 2 references (1 academic reference from previous faculty member [if possible]).
- Writing sample formatted in APA style with the use of citations. The sample should demonstrate sufficient writing skill needed for graduate level coursework. The writing sample should be no more than 5 pages of writing with a title page and reference page (no more than 7 pages total). Applicants will be provided with prompts that should guide their response.

Majors, Minors & Degrees

Majors

1. Social Work (M.S.W.)

Courses

SOCWK 5000 History and Philosophy of Social Work in the United States

3 hours

In this course, students will develop an understanding of the social work profession by learning diverse perspectives around the values, ethics, and goals that the profession entails along with the National Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics. Students will also learn about the history of social work as a profession, including the important people who have shaped the practices that social workers have used over time. Students will also identify the ways that the social and political environments bear on the problems faced by individuals and families, and communities in the United States and influence the environment has on social work practice. Finally, students will actively consider how the historical context of the social work profession and the values that the profession has adopted relate to their own personal and professional values and goals.

SOCWK 5010 Human Behavior In Social Environment

3 hours

In this generalist course, students with synthesize and examine the body of knowledge concerning how the individual, group, family, and community systems interrelate with each other and the larger social context from the lifespan stages from birth through adolescence, adulthood, aging, and death. Content will be drawn from the biological, psychological, sociological, eco-political, and cultural environmental systems. The importance of professional ethics in the assessment process is also examined.

SOCWK 5100 Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice

3 hours

In this generalist course, students will identify mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and forms of power and privilege embedded within the history of the United States. By understanding our country's social, economic, and political history through the lens of oppression, discrimination, power and privilege, students will increase their awareness of how these mechanisms have personally, culturally and historically impacted individuals, groups, families, organizations and communities in the United States. By means of self and collective reflection, students will evaluate and regulate their own biases and values as learners and will learn to uphold their professional obligation to engage with diverse clients and constituencies as the experts in their own lives.

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SOCWK 5110 Social Welfare Policy, Serv, Delivery

3 hours

In this generalist course students will study the historical development of social welfare policies, services, and institutions and address contemporary policy and service delivery issues from a national and global perspective. The social, political, and value systems that create policies are studied and assessed for the preservation of civil, political, environmental, social and cultural rights of all humans. A systems perspective is taught which focuses on the relationship between policy, services, and institutions at the local, state, and federal levels. Students will explore oppressive structural barriers and their impact on service delivery and effectiveness to address human well-being. Students will use their knowledge of social work micro, mezzo, and macro theories in analyzing the creation and implementation of policies.

Pre or Corequisite(s): SOCWK 5000 History and Philosophy of Social Work in the United States.

SOCWK 5200 Micro Practice

3 hours

In this generalist practice course students will explore and apply theories of human behavior and the social environment, the strengths perspective, and person-in-environment perspective when working with diverse clients and constituencies. Role plays, as a form of experiential learning, will be used to help students practice basic attending skills, empathic responses, and apply the generalist intervention model, with a focus on analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions with diverse clients and constituencies. In addition to role plays, students will observe, discuss, and provide feedback to each other about the application of micro-practice skills as an integral aspect of learning throughout the course. Students will develop skills in inter-professional collaboration to achieve beneficial practice outcomes for their clients and constituencies. Finally, students will examine how a person's life experiences is often an intersection of multiple factors. Self-reflection and evaluation of the student's own life experiences will facilitate this understanding

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5000 History and Philosophy of Social Work in the United States, SOCWK 5100 Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice , SOCWK 5230 Research Informed Practice.

SOCWK 5200 Micro Practice

3 hours

In this generalist practice course students will explore and apply theories of human behavior and the social environment, the strengths perspective, and person-in-environment perspective when working with diverse clients and constituencies. Role plays, as a form of experiential learning, will be used to help students practice basic attending skills, empathic responses, and apply the generalist intervention model, with a focus on analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions with diverse clients and constituencies. In addition to role plays, students will observe, discuss, and provide feedback to each other about the application of micro-practice skills as an integral aspect of learning throughout the course. Students will develop skills in inter-professional collaboration to achieve beneficial practice outcomes for their clients and constituencies. Finally, students will examine how a person's life experiences is often an intersection of multiple factors. Self-reflection and evaluation of the student's own life experiences will facilitate this understanding

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5000 History and Philosophy of Social Work in the United States, SOCWK 5100 Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice , SOCWK 5230 Research Informed Practice.

SOCWK 5210 Group Practice

3 hours

In this generalist practice course, students will identify the theoretical underpinnings as well as practical applications of group work as a vehicle for social work. Students will also explore how and why groups function and develop skills and techniques of membership and leadership. Students will role-play group facilitation in order to practice engagement, assessment, planning, intervention, and termination with and on behalf of diverse individuals. Students will develop skills in empathy and self-regulation in order to understand how their personal experiences impact the experience of engagement with group members.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5000 History and Philosophy of Social Work in the United States, SOCWK 5100 Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice , SOCWK 5230 Research Informed Practice.

SOCWK 5220 Macro Practice: Comm Org, Plan, Admin

3 hours

In this generalist practice course students will be introduced to the administration and planning of social service organizations. Major emphasis upon community and organization assessment; program planning; and evaluation. This practice-oriented course will provide students an opportunity to collaborate in the assessment of a community and to create a project or program to address an identified need.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5000 History and Philosophy of Social Work in the United States

SOCWK 5230 Research Informed Practice

3 hours

In this generalist course students will be provided an introduction and overview of research methods used in generalist social work practice. Course content includes both quantitative and qualitative methods and emphasizes critiquing research methodologies, including data collection, sampling and analysis. Students will engage in a single-subject design study where they will identify and implement an intervention and evaluate its outcomes for practice effectiveness. Students will explore ethical considerations in research as practice and the application of evidence-based practice to improve policy and social service delivery.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5000 History and Philosophy of Social Work in the United States, SOCWK 5100 Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice .

Pre or corequisite(s): SOCWK 5010 Human Behavior In Social Environment.

SOCWK 5270 Generalist Field Practicum

3 hours

This course provides students with supervised learning experiences in selected social work agencies. The experience introduces a variety of social work practice roles and enables the student to apply social work knowledge, skills, and values in a real practice situation. Students will be required to complete 400 hours of practicum. The Field Director will place students in area agencies.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5000 History and Philosophy of Social Work in the United States and permission of Field Director.

SOCWK 5300 Nature of Trauma and Traumatic Experience

3 hours

In this advanced course, students will be introduced to different types of traumatic experiences, ranging from private terrors to public traumas, creating an understanding that the impact of trauma is experienced both collectively and individually, historically and racially. Additionally, the role of affect regulation as a key component to understanding our thinking and our body-based responses to our biases and perceptions in the treatment of trauma. Students will gain an in-depth understanding of neuroscience and how experiences shape the developing, embodied brain.

SOCWK 5310 Theories for Advanced Social Work Practice

3 hours

In this advanced practice course, you will learn theories that social workers use with individuals and families to guide ethical and professional behavior. This learning will give you foundational knowledge of theoretical orientations as well as practice in applying theories to the process of engagement, assessment, and intervention across diverse populations.

Pre or Corequisite(s): SOCWK 5300 Nature of Trauma and Traumatic Experience.

SOCWK 5320 Advanced Practice With Groups

3 hours

This advanced practice course will build upon basic attending skills and group dynamics and theory. Students will be provided with advanced practice skills in facilitating therapeutic group interventions.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5300 Nature of Trauma and Traumatic Experience.
Prerequisite or corequisite(s): SOCWK 5310 Theories for Advanced Social Work Practice.

SOCWK 5330 Assessment and Treatment of Trauma

3 hours

In this advanced practice course, students will learn to assess the type of traumatic event and intensity of exposure in order to effectively treat the symptoms of trauma. Students will be introduced to instruments utilized to evaluate the impact of traumatic events and the elements of trauma treatment, which include establishing a sense of safety, manage emotions, and develop coping strategies. Students will further be introduced to well-established practice models to treat trauma as well as how to apply the most recent research on resilience as applied to a variety of clients and practice settings. Students will work in a simulation setting to engage, assess, and intervene with individuals and families and evaluate their own practice behavior. Students will apply ethical decision-making practices that demonstrate an understanding of trauma and well-being. Students will practice self-reflection to identify vicarious trauma and possible self-care strategies used to address it.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5270 Generalist Field Practicum, SOCWK 5300 Nature of Trauma and Traumatic Experience, SOCWK 5310 Theories for Advanced Social Work Practice.

SOCWK 5340 Social Advocacy in Social Work

3 hours

In this advanced practice course students will increase their abilities in their analytical and critical thinking skills related to policy analysis. Students will recognize the impact of trauma as a result of oppressive policy practices that limit access to basic human rights. Students will learn policy practice theories and skills to assist them in obtaining experience in policy advocacy at the local, state, and/or federal level. Students will explore policy change processes that will help to better meet the needs of those who have experienced trauma at the micro, mezzo, and/or macro level. Students will build and practice skills in advocating for client needs and overall well-being in order to create change at the policy level within communities, agencies and/or society. Students will also demonstrate skill in empowering oppressed client populations in advocating for their own needs. This course will focus on social, economic and environmental justice and their impact on the provision of services to all client populations.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5300 Nature of Trauma and Traumatic Experience.

SOCWK 5450 Professional Ethics and Leadership in Social Work

3 hours

In this advanced course students will explore a variety of theoretical models for leadership and management. Students will assess their own leadership style and engage in self-reflection to explore their role as future leaders in the social work profession. Students will also review the challenges that face leaders in today's profession social work environment while upholding the ethical standards of the profession. Students will apply professional ethics and state and national laws to their

practice as advanced social work practitioners.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5300 Nature of Trauma and Traumatic Experience.

SOCWK 5460 Trauma Conscious Social Work Admin

3 hours

In this advanced practice course students will develop skill-based knowledge in the practice of supervision and program administration with individuals, groups, organizations and communities who have experienced trauma. This will include content focused on conflict and personnel management within the context of ethical, trauma conscious social work practice with diverse populations. Students will acquire the skills that will enable them to effectively build trust and rapport, demonstrating emotional intelligence, self-regulation, respect for autonomy, and empowerment through their roles as supervisors and administrators in settings where individual, organization, and systemic trauma have been experienced. Specifically, students will practice trauma conscious engagement, assessment, intervention, and termination through the role of the supervisor and within the organizational setting.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5450 Professional Ethics and Leadership in Social Work.

SOCWK 5570 Advanced Field Practicum

1-10 hours

This course provides students with supervised learning experiences in selected social work agencies. The experience provides students with opportunities to continue to develop and strengthen advanced social work skills and behaviors. Students will be required to complete 500 hours of advanced practicum.

Pre or Corequisite(s): SOCWK 5330 Assessment and Treatment of Trauma.

SOCWK 5580 Advanced Integrative Capstone I

2 hours

In this advanced practice course, students have the opportunity to integrate and apply previous learning (academic and field) through the creation and implementation of a project to demonstrate mastery of knowledge, skills, ethics and values necessary for evidence-based trauma conscious advanced social work practice. This course will provide students with the opportunity to contribute to the knowledge base of the social work profession as well as develop and enhance professional presentation skills through creating and implementing trauma conscious evaluative practices at the individual and organizational level, including a self-evaluation.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5330 Assessment and Treatment of Trauma.

SOCWK 5590 Advanced Integrative Capstone II

1 hour

In this advanced practice course, students have the opportunity to integrate and apply previous learning (academic and field) through the creation and implementation of a project to demonstrate mastery of knowledge, skills, ethics and values necessary for evidence-based trauma conscious advanced social work practice. This course will provide students with the opportunity to contribute to the knowledge base of the social work profession as well as develop and enhance professional presentation skills through creating and implementing trauma conscious evaluative practices at the individual and organizational level, including a self-evaluation.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5580 Advanced Integrative Capstone I.