Nebraska Wesleyan University

Social Work (Graduate)

Catalog

2026-2027

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 30 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 30 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.

Advanced Standing Admissions Criteria:

- Undergraduate degree in social work from a CSWE Accredited Program (3.0 GPA) from a college/university, accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association 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.
- 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 Social Work Purpose, Values and Ethics

3 hours

In this course, students will be oriented to the NWU MSW program, as well as the social work profession. Students will develop an understanding of the social work profession by learning diverse perspectives around the values, ethics, and purpose of the profession. Students will explore and apply frameworks and models used for ethical decision making. Students will build and enhance professional writing skills.

SOCWK 5010 Human Behavior in Social Environment

3 hours

In this generalist course, students will synthesize and examine social work theories, concepts and values. Students will learn the Generalist Intervention Model for social work practice and apply that to the individual, group, family, organizational and community systems. Content will be drawn from the biological, psychological, sociological, eco-political, and cultural environmental systems to assess client needs and strengths.

SOCWK 5100 Anti-oppressive Socwk Pract

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 and the profession of social work. By understanding our country's social, economic, and political history through the lens of oppression, racism, 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.

SOCWK 5110 Social Welfare Policy, Services, and 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. Students will learn how to analyze and advocate for policy change at the local, state, and federal levels using a rights-based approach. 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. 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 Social Work Purpose, Values and Ethics.

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 individuals. 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 when working with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Students will learn how to practice in alignment with the social work professional values and ethics. 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 lived experiences is often an intersection of multiple factors. Self-reflection and evaluation of the student's own life experiences and their impact on their work with individuals will facilitate this understanding.

Prerequisite(s): *SOCWK 5000 Social Work Purpose, Values and Ethics*, *SOCWK 5010 Human Behavior in Social Environment*.

SOCWK 5210 Family and Group Practice

3 hours

Students will identify the theoretical underpinnings as well as practical applications of social work practice with groups and families. Students will also explore how groups and families function and develop skills and techniques to apply when working with these systems. Students will role-play family and group facilitation to practice engagement, assessment, planning, intervention, and termination with and on behalf of diverse individuals. Students will explore how to collaborate with multidisciplinary teams to improve service provision.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5000 Social Work Purpose, Values and Ethics, SOCWK 5010 Human Behavior in Social Environment.

SOCWK 5220 Macro Practice: Comm Org, Plan, Admin

3 hours

In this generalist practice course students will explore the three primary areas of macro social work practice: Policy, organization, and community practice and the application of the Generalist Intervention Model in these arenas. Major emphasis upon community and organization assessment; program planning; and evaluation, through a human rights lens. 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, while applying social work theories, concepts and professional values.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5000 Social Work Purpose, Values and Ethics and SOCWK 5010 Human Behavior in Social Environment

SOCWK 5230 Research Informed Practice

3 hours

Students will be introduced research methods used in generalist social work practice. Course content emphasizes critiquing research methodology, 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 and anti-racist research practices and the application of evidence-based practice to improve policy and social service delivery.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5000 Social Work Purpose, Values and Ethics.

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 200 hours of practicum. The Field Director will place students in area agencies.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5000 Social Work Purpose, Values and Ethics and permission of Field Director.

SOCWK 5271 Generalist Field Practicum II

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 200 hours of practicum. The Field Director will place students in area agencies.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5270 and permission of the 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 and adverse 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, students will explore 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 understanding of how trauma and adversity impact people physiologically, psychologically, and socially.

SOCWK 5310 Clinical Assessment with Individuals and Families

3 hours

In this advanced practice course, students will learn to assess the type of traumatic event and intensity of exposure. Students will explore tools and measures used when completing a clinical assessment, with specific attention to the clinical assessment of individuals and families who have experienced trauma. Students will explore
the theoretical foundations for these assessment strategies. Students will explore how assessment can be used to draw conclusions and inform recommendations for future action, including the use of interdisciplinary perspectives.

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

SOCWK 5320 Advanced Practice With Groups

3 hours

This advanced practice course builds upon foundational attending skills, group dynamics, and counseling theory to develop advanced competencies in facilitating therapeutic group interventions. Students refine skills in engaging, assessing, intervening, and evaluating with client groups using trauma-informed, theory-driven, and ethically grounded approaches. Emphasis is placed on reflective use of self, emotional regulation, power-sharing, and evidence-informed practice in group settings.

The course also explores the ethical integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and other digital tools in social work practice. Students examine the risks, benefits, and professional responsibilities associated with AI use in group work, including considerations related to confidentiality, informed consent, bias, documentation, and equitable access. Guided by the NASW Code of Ethics and current professional standards, students critically evaluate how technology can support or hinder ethical, client-centered group practice.

Prerequisite): SOCWK 5310 Clinical Assessment with Individuals and Families.

SOCWK 5330 Clinical Interventions with Individuals and Families

3 hours

In this advanced practice course, students will explore clinical interventions used to effectively treat the symptoms of trauma, as well as other mental health needs. Students will explore 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 theories and 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 Clinical Assessment with Individuals and Families.

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 explore how trauma impacts communities and how political advocacy can be a tool to fight for social, racial, economic, and
environmental justice. Students will recognize the impact of trauma because of oppressive and anti-racist policy practices that limit access to basic human rights. Students will explore how policy practice impacts clients at the local, state, federal and/or global level. Students will work to engage in their own strategies to empower
change with diversity, equity and inclusion as a guide. 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.

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. 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. Students will explore the impact of vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue on the social worker and identify ways to manage this impact for themselves and others.

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

SOCWK 5570 Advanced Field Practicum

3 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 250 hours of advanced practicum.

Pre or Corequisite(s): SOCWK 5330 Clinical Interventions with Individuals and Families.

SOCWK 5571 Advanced Field Practicum II

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 250 hours of practicum. The Field Director will place students in area agencies.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5570 and permission of the Field Director

SOCWK 5580 Advanced Integrative Capstone

3 hours

In this advanced practice course, students will explore methods of program evaluation and will work together to design an evaluation that can be implemented by a partnering agency. Students will integrate and apply previous learning in their evaluation design. 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 organizational level.

Prerequisite(s): SOCWK 5330 Clinical Interventions with Individuals and Families.
Corequisite(s): SOCWK 5320 Advanced Practice With Groups, SOCWK 5340 Social Advocacy in Social Work, SOCWK 5460 Trauma Conscious Social Work Admin