

SOCIAL WORK, MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK (157)

Program Coordinator

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The Master of Social Work (MSW) program at Western Kentucky University (WKU) prepares students for professional social work practice at the graduate level to meet the needs of increasingly diverse rural populations. It is particularly dedicated to addressing the work-force needs of agencies that serve families and communities. Moreover, the MSW curriculum emphasizes social work practice at the advanced level in rural communities.

There are two program options for students meeting the admission requirements outlined below. The Traditional Option requires 60 semester hours for students with a baccalaureate degree in any field and may be taken full or part-time. The Advanced Standing Option requires 33 semester hours for students who have earned a bachelor of social work (BSW) degree from an accredited social work program and who have fulfilled the additional admission requirements outlined below. The Advanced Standing Option may be taken full or part-time as well. All program options require students to complete SWRK 661 as a capstone course prior to graduation. This course integrates the entire curriculum in a comprehensive practice experience. Students are required to pass a comprehensive examination, the Practice Readiness Exam, prior to graduation.

Program Admission

Admission Requirements for the 60 hour Traditional Program

1. 2.75 or greater GPA based on the last 60 hours of undergraduate and/or graduate semester credit hours prior to admission. Students with a lower GPA must take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) and achieve minimum scores of 139 on each of the sections (verbal and quantitative) and apply for Alternate Admissions (See Alternate Admissions and Admissions Appeal Process). All GRE scores must have been taken within 5 years of the application date.
2. A Western Kentucky University Master of Social Work program application, personal statement, and writing sample.
3. Three completed WKU Master of Social Work program reference forms.
4. Demonstrated competence in the use of basic statistical methods through completion, with a minimum grade of "C", of an undergraduate or graduate course covering the portion of the research process involving the quantitative manipulation and analysis of data. This course should cover descriptive and inferential statistics. The student must submit documentation that this prerequisite has been met prior to program admission. Any course presented to fulfill the statistical competence requirement must have been completed within seven years prior to admission into the MSW program.
5. Liberal arts background - at least 30 hours in liberal arts coursework (social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, communications, mathematics, etc.), including at least one course in sociology, psychology, OR anthropology AND at least one course in American government, political science, OR economics. All courses counted towards the liberal arts requirement must have been completed with a final grade of "C" or higher. Applicants may be enrolled in liberal

arts prerequisite courses while their MSW applications are being evaluated, but all of these courses must have been successfully completed before admission to the program. Offers of admission will be contingent upon the successful completion of all required courses.

6. Students at or above a 2.75 GPA on the last 60 hours of undergraduate and/or graduate semester credit hours (prior to admission) applying for the 60 hour Traditional Program who otherwise meet admission criteria in the application for the MSW program are not required to take the GRE for admission.
7. An interview may be required.

Alternate Admissions for the 60 hour Traditional Program

An applicant who believes that her/his individual circumstances warrant consideration for a waiver of the minimum admissions requirement of an undergraduate GPA of 2.75 and 800 on the GRE must petition the MSW Program Director. Students must meet all other traditional program admission requirements. The request should be attached to the MSW application in the form of a statement entitled "Petition for Exceptional Consideration." The petition should include a statement indicating how failing to meet the minimum admission requirement of a 2.75 GPA and 800 GRE score does not adequately represent the applicant's capabilities. The applicant should briefly discuss her/his demonstrated capacity for successful achievement of an arduous MSW program. For example, an applicant might provide evidence of:

1. Superior grades during the final semester(s) of work prior to graduation indicating a trend toward improved performance;
2. Competence through achievement in another graduate program; and/or
3. Outstanding work experience in human services (volunteer or paid).

The applicant should also discuss how she/he plans to address potential obstacles to successful completion of the program. Finally, the applicant should attest to the accuracy of all information provided in the petition, date and sign the document. The petition must be submitted with the application.

Admission Requirements for the Advanced Standing Option

1. Completion of a bachelor of social work (BSW) degree at a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited institution within the previous seven years with at least a 3.0 GPA based on the last 60 hours of undergraduate and/or graduate credit hours. Alternate Admissions is not an option for the Advanced Standing Program.
2. Satisfactory completion of a minimum of 400 hours of educationally based field instruction in direct practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities under appropriate social work supervision. A copy of the student's final field evaluation must be submitted.
3. Completion of courses from the following subject areas within an accredited social work program at the upper-division (junior and senior) level with a grade of "C" or better in each course: Human Behavior and the Social Environment - one course; Social Welfare Policy and Services - one course; Social Work Practice - two courses to include study of intervention methods with individuals, families, small groups and communities; Social Work Research - one course in research methodology.
4. The GRE is not considered for admission to the Advanced Standing Program.
5. A Western Kentucky University Master of Social Work program application, personal statement, and writing sample.

6. Three completed WKU Master of Social Work program reference forms.
7. Demonstrated competence in the use of basic statistical methods through completion, with a minimum grade of "C", of an undergraduate or graduate course covering the portion of the research process involving the quantitative manipulation and analysis of data. This course should cover descriptive and inferential statistics. The student must submit documentation that this prerequisite has been met prior to program admission. Any course presented to fulfill the statistical competence requirement must have been completed within seven years prior to admission into the MSW program.
8. Liberal arts background - at least 30 hours in liberal arts coursework (social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, communications, mathematics, etc.), including at least one course in sociology, psychology, OR anthropology AND at least one course in American government, political science, OR economics. All courses counted towards the liberal arts requirement must have been completed with a final grade of "C" or higher. Applicants may be enrolled in liberal arts prerequisite courses while their MSW applications are being evaluated, but all of these courses must have been successfully completed before admission to the program. Offers of admission will be contingent upon the successful completion of all required courses.
9. An interview may be required.

Please refer to the admission section (<http://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/admission>) of this catalog for Graduate School admission requirements.

Program Requirements (33-60 hours)

Traditional Program Degree Requirements (60 hours)

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses		
SWRK 501	Cultural Competency in Social Work Practice	3
SWRK 510	Human Behavior in the Social Environment	3
SWRK 520	Generalist Social Work Practice	3
SWRK 522	Group Dynamics in Social Work Practice	3
SWRK 523	Rural Community Organization and Development	3
SWRK 530	Foundation of Social Welfare Policy	3
SWRK 540	Foundations of Social Work Research Methods	3
SWRK 560	Generalist Field Practicum I	3
SWRK 561	Generalist Field Practicum II	3
SWRK 610	Social Work Administration and Supervision	3
SWRK 620	Advanced Psycho-Social Approaches for Rural Practice	3
SWRK 622	Integrated Social Work Practice with Families	3
SWRK 623	Social Work Clinical Assessment and Intervention	3
SWRK 630	Rural Social Welfare Policy	3
SWRK 640	Applied Social Work Research	3
SWRK 660	Advanced Generalist Field Practicum I	3
SWRK 661	Advanced Generalist Field Practicum II	3
Electives		
Select 9 hours with advisor approval		9
Total Hours		60

Advanced Standing Degree Requirements (33 hours)

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses		
SWRK 610	Social Work Administration and Supervision	3
SWRK 612	Social Work in Diverse Rural Areas	3
SWRK 620	Advanced Psycho-Social Approaches for Rural Practice	3
SWRK 622	Integrated Social Work Practice with Families	3
SWRK 623	Social Work Clinical Assessment and Intervention	3
SWRK 630	Rural Social Welfare Policy	3
SWRK 640	Applied Social Work Research	3
SWRK 660	Advanced Generalist Field Practicum I	3
SWRK 661	Advanced Generalist Field Practicum II	3
Electives		
Select 6 hours with advisor approval ¹		6
Total Hours		33

¹ 3 hour elective may be taken in winter or summer term