

SOCIAL WORK, MSW

Banner Code: PH-MSW-SOCW

Academic Advising

Website: <https://publichealth.gmu.edu/students/academic-advising>
(<https://publichealth.gmu.edu/students/academic-advising/>)

George Mason's accredited Master of Social Work (MSW) program, which began in fall 2002, prepares students for advanced social work practice. The MSW program builds upon a foundation of generalist social work knowledge and skills that integrates micro and macro theory and practice and emphasizes empowerment and systems transformation. This foundation equips students to enhance human well-being and to promote social and economic justice and human rights through ethical professional practice with culturally diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Once the generalist curriculum (30 credit hours) is complete, students choose a specialization in Children, Youth, and Families (CYF) or Adults and Healthy Aging (AHA). Graduates will be prepared to strengthen their communities, stimulate positive change through advocacy, social, and political action, and help meet local, national, and global challenges. All social work students are expected to abide by the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. No academic credit towards field experience or coursework is given based on previous work or life experience.

The MSW degree is offered via a regular on-campus or fully online delivery format. The curriculum in both programs is the same, but students must matriculate through only one pathway. Separate application processes are used for on-campus and online programs. On-campus students can complete their degree in a two-, three-, or four-year plan of study. All courses are sequenced and must be taken in the order designated. Students should meet with their academic advisor to ensure timely completion of all degree requirements. The fully online program is offered in a flexible 8-week schedule format, and courses are taken in a prescribed sequence, one at a time, except during semesters when students are in their field practicum.

In both program options, students are required to successfully complete 1,050 hours of supervised field practicum in agencies approved by the Department of Social Work: 450 hours during the generalist year and 600 hours during the specialized practice year. Field placements generally require availability during regular daytime hours. The Department of Social Work will make reasonable efforts to work with a student to secure an appropriate field placement, but it does not guarantee a placement.

Admissions & Policies

Admissions Requirements

Applicants must meet the admission standards and application requirements specified in Graduate Admissions (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/>) and apply using the online Application for Graduate Admission (<http://admissions.gmu.edu/>). The application process is competitive, and applications for the on-campus program are considered for the fall semester only. In addition to holding an undergraduate degree from an institution of higher education

accredited by a Mason-recognized U.S. institutional accrediting agency or international equivalent, applicants must have a minimum of 30 undergraduate credits in the liberal arts to include at least 3 credits in each of the following: English composition, history or government, social sciences, and statistics. For application deadlines and detailed application requirements, please refer to the College of Public Health Admissions website (<https://publichealth.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/standards-requirements-and-deadlines/>).

Requirements for MSW students with Advanced Standing

Students with a BSW degree who demonstrate superior academic achievement and excellence in social work practice may apply for advanced standing. Advanced standing students begin the MSW Program in the summer and upon successfully completing SOCW 674, move directly into the specialized practice curriculum. Advanced standing students must successfully complete 600 hours of supervised field practicum in agencies approved by the Department of Social Work.

All other academic policies for the advanced standing program are identical to those for the traditional MSW Program.

Advanced standing applicants must meet the admission standards and application requirements specified in Graduate Admissions (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/>) and must apply using the online Application for Graduate Admission (<https://www2.gmu.edu/admissions-aid/>). The application process is competitive, and applications are considered for the fall admissions cycle only, with advanced standing students beginning courses in the summer. In addition to holding a BSW in Social Work earned within the past five years from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, applicants must have a minimum of 30 undergraduate credits in the liberal arts to include at least 3 credits in each of the following: English composition, history or government, social sciences, and statistics. For application deadlines and detailed application requirements, refer to the College of Public Health Admissions website (<https://publichealth.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/standards-requirements-and-deadlines/>).

Policies

Transfer of Credit

Students may transfer a maximum of 29 graduate credits successfully completed with a B or better at another CSWE-accredited MSW program into the Mason MSW program.

Transfer credit is subject to university and college policies and must be approved by the program director and the dean (See: AP.6.5.3 Transfer of Credit (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-5-3>)). Students must note on the MSW Departmental Form and MSW Application Checklist that they are applying as transfer students.

Non-Degree Students

Admission to the on-campus MSW program is offered once a year for the fall semester only. Non-degree students may apply through the Office of Admissions (<http://admissions.gmu.edu/nonDegree/>) and be admitted in the fall and spring and, as space allows, enroll in classes as appropriate. Please contact the program director for more information.

Program Requirements

Students must earn a grade of B- or above in each course and must achieve a GPA of 3.0 over all courses applied to the degree. A prerequisite must be satisfied with a B- or better before registering for the next course in a sequence. A course in which the student earns a C may be repeated once. No more than 6 total credits of C may be repeated overall.

Social work faculty members evaluate each student's performance periodically and may terminate the student from the program when, in their judgment, performance is not satisfactory. The decision is based on the quality of academic and field performance, as well as on personal fitness for the profession of social work. The student has the right to appeal.

A student with a criminal history may find it difficult to obtain a field placement or employment in a human service agency depending on the specific charge. It is possible that a student with a criminal background may not be able to be placed in a field practicum or complete their degree program. The Criminal Background Policy is available on the Social Work Department website (<https://socialwork.gmu.edu/>).

Insurance Coverage

Students engaged in internships are covered for liability under the Commonwealth of Virginia's Self-Insured Liability Insurance Plan and covered for medical malpractice under the Medical Malpractice Insurance Plan, as established by the Department of General Services, Division of Risk Management. Only practicum activities that have been determined by the field instructor to be part of the course are covered. Students are encouraged to obtain professional liability coverage through the National Association of Social Workers, although this additional coverage is optional.

Immunizations

All students who are enrolled in a course that requires a field placement (SOCW 672, SOCW 673, SOCW 696, SOCW 698) must have an annual tuberculosis screening (PPD). In addition, students must complete the entire Hepatitis B immunization series in accordance with current U.S. Public Health Service recommendations. Any cost related to these requirements is the responsibility of the student. Students can register for field classes prior to the completion of the immunizations, but documentation of completion must be submitted to the Social Work Department office no later than one month after the beginning of the semester. Immunizations are program requirements and must be completed by the student even if they are not required by the agency.

SOCW 644	Community Practice Across the Life Course	3
SOCW 656	Poverty, Oppression, and Inequity	3
SOCW 659	Organizing and Advocating for Change	3
SOCW 660	Foundations of Direct Practice	3
SOCW 671	Research Methods for Social Workers	3
SOCW 672	Generalist Field Practicum and Seminar I	3
SOCW 673	Generalist Field Practicum and Seminar II	3
SOCW 674	Psychopathology	3
Total Credits		30

Specialization in Children, Youth, and Families (CYF)

Core Courses

Code	Title	Credits
GCH 500	Foundations of Public Health	3
SOCW 630	Clinical Social Work in Forensic Settings	3
SOCW 650	Advanced Social Work Policy Practice Skills	3
SOCW 683	Clinical Practice with Children, Youth, and Families	3
SOCW 688	Program Evaluation for Social Workers	3
SOCW 696	Specialized Practice Field Practicum and Seminar I	3
SOCW 698	Specialized Practice Field Practicum and Seminar II	3
Total Credits		21

Specialization in Adults and Healthy Aging (AHA)

Core Courses

Code	Title	Credits
GCH 500	Foundations of Public Health	3
SOCW 640	Clinical Practice with Adults	3
SOCW 650	Advanced Social Work Policy Practice Skills	3
SOCW 688	Program Evaluation for Social Workers	3
SOCW 689	Clinical Practice with Older Adults	3
SOCW 696	Specialized Practice Field Practicum and Seminar I	3
SOCW 698	Specialized Practice Field Practicum and Seminar II	3
Total Credits		21

Macro Elective Courses

Code	Title	Credits
Select 1-3 courses from the following:		
SOCW 653	Immigration Policy	3-9
SOCW 654	Social Policy for Children and Youth	
SOCW 655	Aging Programs and Policies	
SOCW 663	Global Human Rights Policy	
SOCW 676	Selected Topics in Social Work and Social Change	
SOCW 684	Social Work and the Law	
SOCW 685	Organizational Leadership for Social Workers	

Requirements

Degree Requirements

Total credits: 60

In order to graduate with the MSW degree, students must successfully complete the generalist courses and the courses for one specialization. Before beginning Specialization Courses, students must complete all Generalist Courses.

Generalist Courses

Code	Title	Credits
SOCW 600	Foundations of Social Work and Social Welfare	3
SOCW 623	Human Behavior and Social Systems	3

Other course with permission of chair

Total Credits 3-9

Clinical Elective Courses

Code Title Credits

Select 0-2 courses from the following: 0-6

SOCW 664	Creative Arts in Social Work Practice	
SOCW 667	Advanced Group Theory and Practice	
SOCW 675	Selected Topics in Clinical Practice	
SOCW 677	Family Therapy	
SOCW 678	Trauma and Recovery	
SOCW 679	Military Social Work	
SOCW 682	Substance Use Interventions	
Other course with permission of chair		

Total Credits 0-6

MSW for Students with Advanced Standing

In order to graduate with the MSW degree, advanced standing students must successfully complete the generalist course (SOCW 674) in the summer prior to beginning the specialization curriculum and the courses for one specialization.

Generalist Course

Code	Title	Credits
SOCW 674	Psychopathology	3
Total Credits 3		

Specialization in Children, Youth, and Families (CYF)

Core Courses

Code	Title	Credits
GCH 500	Foundations of Public Health	3
SOCW 630	Clinical Social Work in Forensic Settings	3
SOCW 650	Advanced Social Work Policy Practice Skills	3
SOCW 683	Clinical Practice with Children, Youth, and Families	3
SOCW 688	Program Evaluation for Social Workers	3
SOCW 696	Specialized Practice Field Practicum and Seminar I	3
SOCW 698	Specialized Practice Field Practicum and Seminar II	3
Total Credits 21		

Specialization in Adults and Healthy Aging (AHA)

Core Courses

Code	Title	Credits
GCH 500	Foundations of Public Health	3
SOCW 640	Clinical Practice with Adults	3
SOCW 650	Advanced Social Work Policy Practice Skills	3
SOCW 688	Program Evaluation for Social Workers	3
SOCW 689	Clinical Practice with Older Adults	3

SOCW 696	Specialized Practice Field Practicum and Seminar I	3
SOCW 698	Specialized Practice Field Practicum and Seminar II	3
Total Credits 21		

Macro Elective Courses

Code Title Credits
Select 1-3 courses from the following: 3-9

SOCW 653	Immigration Policy	
SOCW 654	Social Policy for Children and Youth	
SOCW 655	Aging Programs and Policies	
SOCW 663	Global Human Rights Policy	
SOCW 676	Selected Topics in Social Work and Social Change	
SOCW 684	Social Work and the Law	
SOCW 685	Organizational Leadership for Social Workers	
Other course with permission of chair		

Total Credits 3-9

Clinical Elective Courses

Code Title Credits
Select 0-2 courses from the following: 0-6

SOCW 664	Creative Arts in Social Work Practice	
SOCW 667	Advanced Group Theory and Practice	
SOCW 675	Selected Topics in Clinical Practice	
SOCW 677	Family Therapy	
SOCW 678	Trauma and Recovery	
SOCW 679	Military Social Work	
SOCW 682	Substance Use Interventions	
Other course with permission of chair		

Total Credits 0-6

Dual Degree Options

Conflict Analysis and Resolution, MS and Social Work, MSW Dual Degree

The Department of Social Work (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/public-health/social-work/>) and the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/peace-conflict-resolution/>) have joined forces to offer a three year dual-degree program. Students can earn both an MSW and an MS in Conflict Analysis and Resolution (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/peace-conflict-resolution/conflict-analysis-resolution-ms/>) while taking advantage of the diversity of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and the university's proximity to the nation's capital. This is the only dual-degree program of its kind.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must meet the admission standards and application requirements specified in Graduate Admissions (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/>) and apply using the online Application for Graduate Admission (<http://admissions.gmu.edu/>). The application

process is competitive, and applications are considered for the fall semester only.

Students interested in the 3-year dual degree program submit one online Application for Graduate Admission (<http://admissions.gmu.edu/>), select the MSW in Social Work as a primary program, and submit all application support materials to the Office of Graduate Admission in the College of Public Health. Applicants should communicate their interest in completing the dual degree program in their essays, and recommendations should address the dual program interest. Students must be admitted to both programs in the same semester (fall only) to be admitted to the dual degree program.

For application deadlines and detailed application requirements please refer to the College of Public Health Admissions website (<https://publichealth.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/standards-requirements-and-deadlines/>). Interested students should consult the MSW program website (<https://socialwork.gmu.edu/program/social-work-msw/>), the MSW program, and the MSW program director for additional information prior to applying.

Transfer of Credit

Transfer credit is governed AP.6.5.3 Transfer of Credit (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-5-3>) and AP.6 Graduate Policies (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/>). Transfer credits must be approved by the program director and the dean. Students who enroll initially through non-degree studies should seek course advising through the department prior to taking a course and plan to submit their application to the dual degree program as soon as possible.

Please refer to the Transfer of Credit policy for the MSW in Social Work for departmental policy governing courses taken at another institution and the maximum number of credits allowed.

MSW-MS Degree Requirements

Total credits: 78

Social Work Courses

Code	Title	Credits
SOCW 600	Foundations of Social Work and Social Welfare	3
SOCW 623	Human Behavior and Social Systems	3
SOCW 644	Community Practice Across the Life Course	3
SOCW 650	Advanced Social Work Policy Practice Skills	3
SOCW 656	Poverty, Oppression, and Inequity	3
SOCW 659	Organizing and Advocating for Change	3
SOCW 660	Foundations of Direct Practice	3
SOCW 672	Generalist Field Practicum and Seminar I	3
SOCW 673	Generalist Field Practicum and Seminar II	3
SOCW 674	Psychopathology	3
SOCW 688 or CONF 660	Program Evaluation for Social Workers ¹ Conflict Assessment and Program Evaluation	3
Total Credits		33

1

Students complete only one of SOCW 688 or CONF 660.

Specialization in Children, Youth, and Families (CYF)

Code	Title	Credits
SOCW 630	Clinical Social Work in Forensic Settings	3
SOCW 683	Clinical Practice with Children, Youth, and Families	3
SOCW 696	Specialized Practice Field Practicum and Seminar I	3
SOCW 698	Specialized Practice Field Practicum and Seminar II	3
GCH 500	Foundations of Public Health	3
Select one course from the following:		3
SOCW 640	Clinical Practice with Adults	
SOCW 653	Immigration Policy	
SOCW 654	Social Policy for Children and Youth	
SOCW 655	Aging Programs and Policies	
SOCW 663	Global Human Rights Policy	
SOCW 664	Creative Arts in Social Work Practice	
SOCW 667	Advanced Group Theory and Practice	
SOCW 675	Selected Topics in Clinical Practice	
SOCW 676	Selected Topics in Social Work and Social Change	
SOCW 677	Family Therapy	
SOCW 678	Trauma and Recovery	
SOCW 679	Military Social Work	
SOCW 682	Substance Use Interventions	
SOCW 684	Social Work and the Law	
SOCW 685	Organizational Leadership for Social Workers	
SOCW 689	Clinical Practice with Older Adults	
Total Credits		18

Specialization in Adults and Healthy Aging (AHA)

Code	Title	Credits
SOCW 640	Clinical Practice with Adults	3
SOCW 689	Clinical Practice with Older Adults	3
SOCW 696	Specialized Practice Field Practicum and Seminar I	3
SOCW 698	Specialized Practice Field Practicum and Seminar II	3
GCH 500	Foundations of Public Health	3
Select one course from the following:		3
SOCW 630	Clinical Social Work in Forensic Settings	
SOCW 653	Immigration Policy	
SOCW 654	Social Policy for Children and Youth	
SOCW 655	Aging Programs and Policies	
SOCW 663	Global Human Rights Policy	
SOCW 664	Creative Arts in Social Work Practice	
SOCW 667	Advanced Group Theory and Practice	
SOCW 675	Selected Topics in Clinical Practice	
SOCW 676	Selected Topics in Social Work and Social Change	
SOCW 677	Family Therapy	
SOCW 678	Trauma and Recovery	
SOCW 679	Military Social Work	

SOCW 682	Substance Use Interventions	
SOCW 684	Social Work and the Law	
SOCW 685	Organizational Leadership for Social Workers	
<hr/>		
Total Credits		18

Conflict Analysis and Resolution Courses

Code	Title	Credits
CONF 600	Foundations of Conflict Analysis and Resolution	6
CONF 610	Conflict Inquiry	3
CONF 657	Facilitation Skills	3
CONF 625	Engaging Conflict ¹	3
<hr/>		
Total Credits		15

1

CONF 657 Facilitation Skills should be completed before a student takes CONF 625 Engaging Conflict.

Electives

Code	Title	Credits
Select 12 credits of CONF Electives with approval from Carter School (http://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/conf/)		12
<hr/>		
Total Credits		12