

SOCIAL WORK (MSW)

Master of Social Work

This program is available on the Aurora campus, and the Woodstock Center location.

This program is offered in the traditional and AU Online format.

Program Description

The primary objective of the MSW program in the School of Social Work is to prepare students for clinical social work practice. The MSW program prepares students to assist individuals, families, and communities and to advance social change to improve the well-being of vulnerable populations.

The generalist curriculum provides social work knowledge, values, and skills in a generalist practice model. The generalist curriculum prepares students to assess, engage, treat and evaluate individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Field instruction during the generalist year consists of approximately 15 clock hours per week (225 clock hours per semester) during each semester for a total of 450 clock hours for the academic year.

In the clinical specialization curriculum, students enter the specialization-level courses in social work theory, policy and practice; psychopathology, advanced social work electives; and advanced social work research. Field instruction during the concentration year consists of approximately 20 clock hours per week (300 clock hours per semester) during each semester for a total of 600 clock hours for the academic year. Students may pursue a track during the specialization curriculum.

MSW Program Options

The School of Social Work offers several graduate program options leading to the Master of Social Work degree, including two-year full-time and three-year part-time. The full-time program requires 15 semester hours of coursework for four semesters. The part-time program requires nine semester hours for the first four semesters (first two years) and then 12 semester hours per semester in the third year. Advanced standing students may complete the program either as full- or part-time students. Full-time advanced standing for those who receive full credit for the BSW degree complete 15 semester hours of coursework for two semesters in addition to summer, which requires three semester hours. Part-time advanced standing requires six semester hours of coursework in each semester in year one, and nine semester hours of coursework in each of the semesters in year two. Students will make a choice of which plan they will pursue at the time of admission.

Admission Requirements

- The student must have a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution with an average GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Students with a GPA of less than 3.0 will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Commitment to high standards of personal and professional conduct, as reflected in the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Students must submit the following:
 - A completed Graduate Application for Admission ([aurora.edu/auapply](http://www.aurora.edu/auapply) (<http://www.aurora.edu/auapply/>))
 - Two letters of recommendation from individuals familiar with the professional or academic abilities of the student.

- A professional Statement of Purpose.
- A curriculum vitae or detailed resume that includes work experience, educational background, professional experience, professional activities, honors, professional publications and/or presentations, and other relevant information relating to the applicant's experiences.
- All transcripts from previous institutions and previous degrees.
- Upon admission to the program, a background check must be completed by the student prior to beginning course work.
- Personal characteristics indicative of the capacity for professional practice as evidenced by:
 - personal maturity
 - a high level of personal integrity, readiness to identify with the values and ethical principles of the social work profession
 - commitment to social justice and to improvement of the condition of vulnerable and oppressed groups

Admission Review Process

The School of Social Work strives to recruit a diverse group of students who have had relevant and significant work and life experiences and who can relate to diverse and vulnerable populations. The MSW Admission Committee will consider factors relating to the applicant's academic ability, work, service and extracurricular experience, especially as they relate to promotion and development of resilient communities, organizations, social groups, families, and individuals. In reviewing applications, MSW Admission Committee members evaluate all transcripts, the "Statement of Purpose," and letters of recommendation.

Application Considerations

Potential applicants for the MSW program should note that a background indicating convictions may render them ineligible for a field internship, which is a requirement to complete the MSW program. The applicant may also be ineligible for licensure after graduation. Aurora University and the School of Social Work reserve the right to deny admission to the MSW program based on application materials, previous academic record and records of past conduct, including but not limited to, the results of a criminal background check or registration of a sex offense.

Provisional Admission

A student seeking regular admission whose official transcripts or other required documents have not arrived by the established deadline due to circumstances beyond the applicant's control and who otherwise meets all requirements for admission to the program may be admitted provisionally for one semester. A provisional student whose admission status is not complete by the first day of the next semester will be administratively dropped from classes.

Conditional Acceptance

On occasion, an applicant may be accepted into the program conditionally. Conditional acceptance requires that an applicant meet certain conditions either prior to beginning the MSW program or concurrent with enrollment in the MSW program. Applicants being accepted conditionally are notified in writing of the necessary conditions that must be addressed prior to full acceptance being granted. Full acceptance is required if students are to be permitted to continue in the MSW program.

Advanced Standing Students

Students who have earned a BSW degree within the last five years from a CSWE accredited institution and who have demonstrated outstanding scholarship in social work courses and excellence in the field may apply for advanced standing for up to one-half of the semester hours (30 semester hours) required for the MSW program at Aurora University.

Special admission procedures and standards apply to advanced standing applicants. (For additional information on advanced standing, please refer to the MSW Policy Handbook).

Program Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
Generalist Curriculum		
Social Welfare		
SWK-6140	Social Welfare Policy and Institutions	3
Human Behavior and Social Environment		
SWK-6180	HBSE I: Building Professional Social Work Competence	3
SWK-6185	HBSE II: Theories of Human Development II: Life Course Development	3
Social Work Practice Theory and Methods		
SWK-6370	Social Work Practice With Individuals and Families	3
SWK-6381	Social Work Practice With Groups	3
SWK-6382	Social Work Practice With Communities and Organizations	3
Research		
SWK-6250	Social Work Research Methods	3
Generalist Field Instruction		
SWK-6730	Field Instruction I: Generalist Internship	3
SWK-6740	Field Instruction II: Generalist Internship	3
Specialization Curriculum		
Social Work Practice and Policy		
SWK-6500	Social Work Perspectives on Psychopathology	3
SWK-6511	Evidence-Based Clinical Social Work Practice	3
SWK-6521	Psychotherapy in Clinical Social Work Practice	3
SWK-6533	Advanced Social Policy	3
SWK-6575	Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity in Social Work Practice	3
Advanced Field Instruction		
SWK-6750	Field Instruction III	3
SWK-6760	Field Instruction IV	3
Social Work Electives		
Social work electives may be used to complete tracks or coursework of interest.		12
Total Credits		60

Optional Track Coursework

(not all tracks are offered at all locations):

Track in Addictions

The Addictions Track prepares students to work with populations impacted by substance use within a primary substance abuse treatment setting. The coursework focuses on educating students about various aspects of substance use, challenging some of their own biases regarding this population, and learning specific clinical skills to help the various sub-populations of substance use. Within the clinical concentration, students complete a field internship at an approved addictions site. Upon successful completion of this track, students are eligible to take the Illinois Certified Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Counselor (CADC) examination for state licensure. Students interested in declaring the Addictions Track must meet with the Coordinator to complete an interview and required declaration paperwork. Additional coursework (SWK-5600 Co-Occurring Substance Use and Mental Health Disorders) will assist the student in pursuing credentialing as a Board registered Co-occurring Substance Use and Mental Health Disorder Professional (CODPI). Students interested in pursuing the CODPI credential must consult with the Addictions Track Coordinator.

Track Courses (must obtain a "B" or higher in all track courses)

Code	Title	Credits
SWK-6340	Psychopharmacology of Substance Use Disorders	3
SWK-5420	Addictions Counseling I	3
SWK-6400	Addictions Counseling II	3
Total Credits		9

Track in Leadership Administration through the Dunham School of Business MBA and MPA Programs

The graduate Leadership Administration track is designed for students who wish to add depth of knowledge about effective management of organizations to their professional studies. Instruction contemplates the leadership of individuals, teams, and entire organizations. The program introduces academic theory about organizational behavior and supplements that theory with practical applications designed to provide the student with tools supporting excellence in management practice.

Courses leading to the graduate Leadership Administration track prepares students to take positions of authority in both for-profit and not-for-profit human service agencies. Courses endeavor to create synergy between students' social work and business skills. Leadership graduates might help design the structure of organizations and teams, create operating protocols, measure performance, or even establish new agencies. Program graduates will be skilled in creating goals, diagnosing program successes and failures, and evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of programs. Many social work programs require talented management; recipients of the leadership certificate offer distinctive skills that employers find very attractive.

Aurora University has a rich history in social work education. It is also home to the well-respected Dunham School of Business. It is natural that these two imposing educational forces combine to provide the social work profession with managers especially equipped to maximize the effectiveness of social work organizations.

To complete the Leadership Administration track in the MSW, students are required to complete the following courses. Please refer to the MBA section of the graduate catalog for course details.

Track Courses (must obtain a "B" or higher in all track courses)

Code	Title	Credits
Required		
MBA-6030	Leadership and Organizational Behavior	3
MBA-6200	Human Resource Management	3
MPA-6350	Nonprofit Management and Leadership	3
Total Credits		9

Track in Child Welfare

The courses in the Child Welfare Track will not only serve to educate our students; they will also continue to promote the field of child welfare and social work. Graduates with the track will gain competitive positions aimed directly at serving the needs of children and families involved in the child welfare system.

The School of Social Work has been, and continues to be, committed to making a positive difference in the lives of children. Developing a track in child welfare, coursework and field placement internships will address the educational needs of the students while enhancing their work toward improving the lives of children and their families.

The Child Welfare Track is a three-course sequence. The students will participate in at least one internship specific to the field of child welfare in the first or second year of the social work program with an agency that focuses on child welfare. The thrust of this track is to develop an interdisciplinary curriculum designed to provide comprehensive child welfare education.

Upon completion of the course work, child welfare field work and successfully passing the four DCFS required exams students will be considered eligible for the Child Welfare Employee License (CWEL). Prior to declaring the track or immediately after declaring the track the student must meet with the child welfare coordinator to review the track requirements.

Track Courses (must obtain a "B" or higher in all track courses)

Code	Title	Credits
SWK-6700	Effects of Trauma on Children	3
SWK-6720	Social Work with Vulnerable Children and Families	3
SWK-6725	Child Welfare Services	3
Total Credits		9

Track in Forensic Social Work

The Graduate Forensic Social Work Track prepares students to use legal expertise to work in the social work field. The National Organization of Forensic Social Work (NOFSW) defines forensic social work as the "application of social work principles to questions and issues relating to law and legal systems." The coursework focuses on educating students in forensic social work practice and theory, challenging some of their own biases regarding this population, and learning specific clinical skills to help the various subpopulations of forensics. In addition to the coursework, students complete a field internship at an approved site involving forensic involved populations.

Track Courses (must obtain a "B" or higher in all track courses)

Code	Title	Credits
SWK-5300	Forensic Social Work	3
SWK-6720	Social Work with Vulnerable Children and Families	3
SWK-6721	Mediation	3
Total Credits		9

Track in Gerontology

Students may specialize in Gerontology within the Health Care Track. The focus of this track is to provide comprehensive gerontology education to MSW students in order to enable them to be effective practitioners in the field of geriatric services. The track courses fulfill the elective requirements for the MSW program. In addition, students complete their advanced field placement in an approved social work gerontology agency.

Track Courses (must obtain a "B" or higher in all track courses)

Code	Title	Credits
SWK-6010	Medical Social Work	3
SWK-5100	Social Work Gerontology: Assessment and Intervention	3
SWK-5110	Social Work Gerontology: Biology and Health of Aging	3
Total Credits		9

Internship with aging populations to be completed in the advanced year. For students wishing to obtain the Health Care Track in addition to the Gerontology Track, one additional Health Care elective is needed.

Track in Health Care

Students interested in medical environments may elect to specialize in Health Care to prepare for the myriad of Social Work roles in healthcare systems across the United States. The understanding of basic medical terminology, brief and chronic illness and respective treatments, ethics, insurance, Medicare and Medicaid, policy and patient advocacy are considered important components of best practice in health care Social Work.

Track Courses (must obtain a "B" or higher in all track courses)

Code	Title	Credits
Required		
SWK-6010	Medical Social Work	3
Selected		
Select two of the following:		6
SWK-5100	Social Work Gerontology: Assessment and Intervention	
SWK-5110	Social Work Gerontology: Biology and Health of Aging	
SWK-5250	Infertility and Assisted Reproduction	
SWK-5600	Co-Occurring Substance Use and Mental Health Disorders	
SWK-5620	Social Work Practice With the Exceptional Child	
SWK-6030	Bereavement Counseling	
SWK-6035	Hospice	
SWK-6045	Psychiatric Hospital Social Work	

SWK-6050	Self-Injury and Eating Disorders
SWK-6055	Oncology
SWK-6340	Psychopharmacology of Substance Use Disorders
SWK-6581	Mindfulness in Clinical Social Work
SWK-6710	Expressive Therapy for Children

Total Credits 9

Internship within a medical environment to be completed in the specialization year.

Track in Military and Veteran Social Work

The Military and Veteran Social Work track immerses students in the culture, values, and traditions of the U.S. Military. Throughout the two course series, students learn how to build therapeutic relationships with active duty military personnel and veterans, how to assess for mental health and substance use conditions, and best practices for interventions and clinical treatments.

Track Courses (must obtain a "B" or higher in all track courses)

Code	Title	Credits
SWK-5350	Military Social Work Culture, Customs, and Traditions	3
SWK-6170	Clinical Social Work Practice With Military and Veteran Populations	3
Total Credits		6

Track in School Social Work - Policy and Procedures for Illinois Professional Educator License with School Social Work Endorsement (excluding Post Graduate MSW students)

1. All graduate social work students interested in taking coursework toward the Illinois Professional Educator License with School Social Work Endorsement must be in good standing with the School of Social Work and will be required to complete the following procedures:
2. While school social work students are recommended to complete the School Social Work Content exam in the fall of their Specialization MSW placement, a passing exam score must be posted to the student's ELIS account before the student is eligible for licensure.
3. Secure a field placement in the public school setting by actively seeking an internship. Since internships in the school setting are very competitive, it is recommended that students begin to look between January - March of the academic year preceding the specialization-year (school) field placement. Only MSW Specialization placements can be completed in public school districts, under the supervision of a school social worker who has their Professional Educator License, in order to qualify for the school social work track and the Illinois Professional Educator License in Social Work.

Students who complete these procedures follow the MSW program, clinical concentration structure outlined in this book. Note: Illinois State Board of Education Requirements for endorsement/licensure are

frequently modified. Please contact the School Social Work Program Coordinator for current requirements.

Upon successful completion, students are eligible to apply for the Illinois Professional Educators' License with School Social Work Endorsement (PEL:SSW).

Track Courses (must obtain a "B" or higher in all track courses)

Code	Title	Credits
SWK-5620	Social Work Practice With the Exceptional Child	3
SWK-6410	School Social Work Policy and Practice I ²	3
SWK-6420	School Social Work Policy and Practice II ³	3
SWK-6755	Field Instruction for School Social Work Track I	3
SWK-6756	Field Instruction for School Social Work Track II	3
Total Credits		15

¹ Recommended to be taken prior to SWK-6650 Advanced PEL School Field Instruction I

² Fall Course

³ Spring Course

Graduate Degree Requirements

1. Completion of all coursework specified by the graduate program.
2. Cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or higher if specified by the graduate program.
3. Submission of all pre-graduation materials required by the graduate program.
4. Acceptance of thesis or other required final project by the graduate program.
5. Submission of two copies of approved thesis or project in a specified form together with payment of binding fee where applicable.
6. Submission of Application for Graduation and payment of any graduation fees assessed by the university.
7. In the case of certification programs, submission of all governmental forms.
8. Residency Requirement: A minimum of 25% percent of the total credits required for the completion of the graduate degree or post-baccalaureate certificate or credential must be earned at Aurora University. Individual programs may establish more extensive residency requirements, including requirements that specific coursework be completed at Aurora University.

Specific Program Components

Internships (Field Instruction)

Field instruction provides students with opportunities to practice and integrate social work theory in the field under the guidance and instruction of an experienced social work field instructor. Students may select a field placement from affiliated agencies in consultation with the Director of Field Instruction at the School of Social Work.

First-year students typically complete a minimum of 15 clock hours of field instruction per week over two semesters for a required total of a minimum of 450 cumulative hours for the academic year. Second-year students typically complete a minimum of 20 clock hours of

field instruction per week over two semesters for a required total of a minimum of 600 cumulative hours for the academic year.

Program Academic Policies

Student Evaluation

Professional social work education requires high standards of academic, personal, and professional conduct. The educational program at the graduate level (MSW) requires the development of ethics and values as well as knowledge and skills.

In accordance with Aurora University regulations, the School of Social Work reserves the right to maintain academic standards for admission and retention in the social work program at the MSW level, above and beyond compliance with the general academic standards of the university.

Also recognizing that there are professional competencies and conduct not measurable by academic achievement alone, the School of Social Work reserves the right to make decisions regarding admission and retention based on high standards of personal and professional conduct. Because social work education involves a significant amount of internship experience and preparation for helping vulnerable populations, student evaluation will honor not only the rights of students, but also the rights and well-being of clients and others to whom students relate in a professional role.

Four-Year Limit

Students must complete the program on or before a date four years from the date of matriculation. A statute of limitations of five years applies for re-application to the MSW program or transfer of credit.

Credit for Life Experience

In accordance with the standards of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), credit may not be given for life experiences.

Note: Please refer to the MSW Policy Handbook for complete policies and procedures of the School of Social Work and Aurora University.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
- Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
- Engage in Policy Practice
- Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

SWK-6140	Social Welfare Policy and Institutions	3
Human Behavior and Social Environment		
SWK-6150	HBSE I: Theories of Human Development I	3
SWK-6160	HBSE II: Theories of Human Development II	3
Social Work Practice Theory and Methods		
SWK-6370	Social Work Practice With Individuals and Families	3
SWK-6381	Social Work Practice With Groups	3
SWK-6382	Social Work Practice With Communities and Organizations	3
Research		
SWK-6250	Social Work Research Methods	3
Generalist Field Instruction		
SWK-6730	Field Instruction I: Generalist Internship	3
SWK-6740	Field Instruction II: Generalist Internship	3
Specialization Curriculum		
Social Work Practice and Policy		
SWK-6500	Social Work Perspectives on Psychopathology	3
SWK-6511	Evidence-Based Clinical Social Work Practice	3
SWK-6521	Psychotherapy in Clinical Social Work Practice	3
SWK-6533	Advanced Social Policy	3
Advanced Field Instruction		
SWK-6750	Field Instruction III	3
SWK-6760	Field Instruction IV	3
Social Work Electives		
Social work electives may be used to complete tracks or coursework of interest.		15
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Social Welfare		