

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Q. Why should I pursue a Master of Social Work degree?

A: There are many career opportunities for social workers, particularly for those with an MSW. MSWs practice in a wide variety of public and private agency settings such as child welfare, youth services, mental health/counseling, schools, criminal justice, veteran's services, service agencies for the elderly, medical settings such as hospitals and long term care facilities. Social workers interact with diverse client populations and seek to improve the quality of life particularly for those who exist on the margins of society. Career opportunities are abundant as the job market for professional social workers is expanding, both locally and nationally.

The MSW degree can also open the door to upward career mobility within the profession. More and more frequently the MSW degree is a requirement of supervisory or management level positions. The MSW degree often brings higher salaries.

2. Q. How much does the program cost?

Tuition:

Residents: \$139.00 per credit hour

Out of State: \$294.00 per credit hour

Minnesota reciprocity: \$257.45

3. Q. How many credits do I need to take?

A: 60 credits are required for the regular program (2-years); 36 credits for those granted advanced standing (4 semesters, summer, fall, spring, summer).

4. Q. I have a BSW. Can I be given advanced standing?

A: To qualify for advanced standing you must meet the following qualifications:

- A BSW from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education
- Your BSW was earned within 7 years of beginning the MSW program
- Your GPA is 3.0 or better in your undergraduate social work classes

5. Q: I have a master's degree from a related field. Can I qualify for advanced standing.

A: No

6. Q. How is the program offered?

A. This is a full-time only program. The course work has been distributed over 6 semesters during a two year period: fall, spring, and summer. The regular program begins in the fall semester. Students admitted with advanced standing join the program in the summer semester.

7. Q. When and where will the classes be held?

A. All the classes will be held on Mondays from 8:30AM – 8:00PM. Classes will be held **1400 West 22nd St. Sioux Falls.** The building is called: Sanford USD Sanford School of Medicine The University of South Dakota Wegner Health Sciences.

8. Q. Is the program accredited?

A: Like all new MSW programs we must complete the process of accreditation before the program is accredited. We intend to achieve full accreditation through the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Full accreditation cannot be gained until the first class of students has graduated and we have completed a period of candidacy. Our initial candidacy visit is scheduled for the fall of 2010. We will have site visits in the fall of 2011, 2012, and sit for full accreditation in the fall of 2013. After the final site visit, and with the recommendation of the CSWE commissioner, the program will stand before the Commission on Accreditation (COA) in February 2014 and request full accreditation. Accreditation is retroactive to the first graduated class. Yes, once we are accredited, the degree you earned while we were in candidacy will be from an accredited program.

9. Q. Do I need to have a certain undergraduate major to be admitted to the program? Are there any prerequisites?

A: No particular undergraduate major is required. It is expected that applicants will have a strong background in the liberal arts. You will need to have the following courses with a grade of C or better:

- Statistics
- Biology with human biology content
- Human development across the life span
- Three additional courses in the social sciences (sociology, psychology, political science, history, communications, criminal justice)

10. Q. How many students will be admitted?

A: Will admit 12 foundation students for our first year. Every year after this, we will 12 advanced standing students. The foundation year will be offered every other year. Advanced standing will be offered every year.

11. Will I be able to do my practicum work at the agency I currently work for?

A. It may be possible for you to complete some of your practicum hours with your current employer. Many social service agencies have a variety of programs. You would need to be assigned to a completely different job/program with a different supervisor. Many agencies are

willing to work with students to help them meet these requirements. You are encouraged to explore this issue with your employer. You may not use your job as your internship.

12. Q. Will you require the GRE or another entrance exam?

A. No.

13. Q. I have taken other graduate courses. Can I transfer them?

A. Courses may not be transferred for any required course. A maximum of 4 credits may be considered for transfer credit for the elective courses.

14. Q. I have been working in the field for many years. Surely this should count for something.

A. Academic credit for life experiences and previous work experience is not given, in whole or in part, in lieu of field practicum courses or academic courses. The Council on Social Work Education prohibits accredited programs from granting credit for life/work experience.

15. Q. What are the requirements for the MSW degree?

A. Students are responsible for completing all requirements for the MSW degree—completing required and elective courses, meeting the standards for competency in coursework and in field, completing successfully all field placements, and maintaining a 3.0 GPA.

16. Q. What if I earn a C in a graduate course?

Graduate students are expected to maintain a 3.0 GPA. The grade of C for a graduate course is not condoned, however, two C's throughout the course of the program will be accepted. A third C will result in dismissal from the MSW program. If your grade falls below a 3.0 you will be on academic probation and have one semester to bring your GPA back to a 3.0. Please see the MSW handbook regarding academic probation and grades below the B that is expected for a graduate student.