Dear Graduate Student,

Welcome to the University of South Dakota Master of Social Work Program! We are delighted that you have chosen USD for your MSW degree. It is both an honor and a privilege to be here with you and to be a part of this challenging academic endeavor that will shape your future and career aspirations. We sincerely hope that over the years, as you look back upon your academic career at USD, you will consider it to be one of the best times in your life.

Our program is the first MSW program in the State of South Dakota, and fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). At present, we have one concentration: Advanced Generalist. The graduate degree enables delivery of clinical and therapeutic services, administration and staff supervision, policy analysis, community development, organizational planning and advocating, which effectively meets the needs of South Dakota and surrounding regions.

The faculty is comprised of a diverse group of social workers. We are very lucky to have such a talented group. Each faculty member brings a wide variety of experiences and interests to the program. We represent an array of specialties that will provide you with a professional education of the very highest caliber. Through your course and field work in public, private, and nonprofit social service agencies, you will discover opportunities to develop your knowledge, values, and skills in the various fields of practice that comprise our profession.

The MSW Student Handbook provides practical information about the program and describes the policies and regulations that govern the operations of the social work department.

I sincerely hope that your time in the MSW program is rewarding and enjoyable. Best wishes with your studies and life-transforming experiences.

Sincerely,

Kelly Bass, MSW, DSW, LCSW-PIP, ACS
MSW Program Director and Associate Professor
Introduction

The information contained in this handbook is the most accurate available at the time of publication, but changes may become effective before the next handbook is published. It is ultimately the student’s responsibility to stay abreast of current regulations, curricula, and the status of specific programs offered. Further, The University reserves the right, as approved by the Board of Regents, to modify requirements, curricula offerings, and charges, and to add, alter, or delete courses and programs through appropriate procedures. While reasonable efforts will be made to publicize such changes, a student is encouraged to seek current information from appropriate offices. This handbook is also available on the webpage. It outlines the curriculum requirements and policies for student’s duration in the MSW program.

Expectations

A student admitted to the Graduate School and the MSW program is expected to demonstrate intellectual maturity and independence in the pursuit of advanced knowledge. Graduate students are expected to meet the exacting demands of professionalism and advanced learning by using a variety of intellectual skills. Thus, a Master of Social Work degree represents more than an accumulation of hours and credits and specific competencies.

History of Social Work at the University of South Dakota

A social work program has existed at the University of South Dakota since the 1940s. At that time, the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program was a member of the National Association of Schools of Social Administration. The program developed first within the Department of Sociology as a special emphasis and in June 1974, the Board of Regents approved a major in Social Work. The program was offered within the Department of Social Behavior, College of Arts and Sciences. In July 2003, the Social Work program moved to the Division of Health Sciences in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, which has now become the School of Health Sciences. The Social Work Department resides under the administrative umbrella of the University of South Dakota Health Affairs, which also includes the Sanford School of Medicine.

In 2007, the USD Social Work Department, the National Association of Social Workers-South Dakota Chapter (NASW-SD), and the South Dakota social work professional community collaborated efforts to gain the approval and funding from the State Legislature to establish a Master of Social Work program at the University of South Dakota. The collaborative effort demonstrated the power of social work advocacy at its best. Community social workers attended town-hall meetings across the state to express their concerns about the inadequacy of master degreed social workers throughout the state, and the difficulties agencies experienced when attempting to hire an MSW.
The administration of the University of South Dakota and the School of Health Sciences, along with the USD social work faculty, advocated for an MSW program, submitted a proposal for the establishment of the MSW program, and appeared before the State Legislature to testify the need for professional social workers across the state.

In March 2009, the legislators of the State of South Dakota authorized the establishment of a Master of Social Work program at the University of South Dakota and provided the funding necessary to establish and implement the program. This is the first and only Master of Social Work program in the state of South Dakota.

**Accreditation**

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Commission on Accreditation (COA) provides accreditation for Master of Social Work programs. The COA is recognized by the Council for Higher Education as the sole accrediting agency for social work education in the United States and its territories.

Initial accreditation of an MSW program is a process that occurs in compliance with standards established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The first step in the accreditation process is submission of a letter of intent (LOI) to CSWE to propose authorization of establishment for a new program. A specialist employed by CSWE is assigned to work with the program as it prepares and submits the self-study, which is a document that describes the program in detail, from the mission statement to the evaluation of the achievement of the core competencies expected of social work graduates.

The initial self-study document, written over a period of approximately four years, is submitted to CSWE. A benchmark model is used for the accreditation process. The benchmark model is a systematic, incremental approach to developing a program and writing a comprehensive self-study. There are four benchmarks: Benchmark I: submitted application for candidacy. The first visit by a commissioner from the COA occurs when the program sits for candidacy. Benchmark II: submitted after candidacy granted and prior to the first site visit. Benchmark III: serves as the self-study draft and submitted prior to the second site visit. Benchmark IV: completed self-study submitted in preparation for the granting of the initial accreditation of the program. The COA sends a team of Commissioners to conduct a site visit and provides recommendation to the COA for initial accreditation.

The purpose of site visits is to provide the COA an opportunity to review the compliance of the program and to administer standards and continued compliance consultation. Programs are typically in candidacy for three years and accredited during the fourth year.

A LOI was submitted to CSWE in August 2009. On September 9, 2009, CSWE responded positively offering the Department of Social Work permission to establish an MSW program at USD. The department submitted the first draft of the self-study in February 2010, to apply to for candidacy. It was approved by the CSWE on March 2010. A visit occurred in November 2010 and candidacy was granted by the COA in February 2011.

The site visit following candidacy occurred in November 2011. A second year of candidacy was granted in February 2012. Upon the recommendations of the CSWE consultant and commissioners who visited, the program was approved to sit for full accreditation a year early. The accreditation visit took place in the fall of 2012, and the MSW program at USD emerged from candidacy in February 2013, when the COA voted to grant initial accreditation. In 2017, the MSW program went through reaccreditation and as a result, reaffirmed until 2025.
Social Work Education

The purpose of social work education is to prepare future social work leaders in areas of policy, practice and research. The graduate degree enables delivery of clinical and therapeutic services, administration and staff supervision, policy analysis, community development, organizational planning, and advocating, which effectively meets the needs of South Dakota and surrounding regions. Social work education is grounded in the profession’s history, purposes, and philosophy and is based on a body of knowledge, values, ethics and skills.

The Advanced Generalist Concentration

The advanced generalist concentration is a practice-oriented concentration that emphasizes the importance of research and evidence based practice in all systemic areas of social work practice. It prepares students for practice in the micro and mezzo systems, with individuals, families, groups, and communities. It also prepares students for practice in the larger macro systems such as in organizations and the political arena of social work. It prepares students for direct practice, and for supervisory and administrative roles. It prepares students for non-discriminatory practice and advocacy at all levels of practice. Our advanced generalist program emphasizes social work ethics in practice, and balances the dissemination of knowledge across the ecological system—micro, mezzo and macro systems.

Our advanced generalist concentration is theoretically grounded for practice at all systemic levels. The advanced generalist concentration year builds upon the foundation of generalist practice by increasing the depth and breadth of knowledge at all levels, particularly in the application of theory to practice and in the evaluation of practice.

The advanced generalist social worker possesses a broad and multi-faceted theoretical understanding of client systems with a focus on the person-situation-environment. Social workers with an advanced generalist degree grasp the social context of practice including the psychological, socio-cultural, and political environments that impact approaches, methods, and means to enhance human well-being and to achieve social justice. They understand the importance of evidence-based practice, evaluating the effectiveness of their own practice, and conducting research that contributes to the knowledge base of the profession. Advanced generalist social workers develop a wide range of skills that enable them to work comprehensively across systems. The advanced generalist knowledge base is particularly useful in rural settings and for social workers who enter the field as direct service practitioners and, over the course of their career, move into positions of leadership.

Mission, Goals and Competencies

The Mission, Goals, and Competencies provide the parameters for all studies and activities for students entering the MSW program. Students who become familiar with the mission, goals, and competencies will have a better understanding of program expectations.

MSW Mission Statement

The mission is to prepare social work professionals to provide advanced services in diverse communities. It is our mission to prepare committed social work practitioners to assume leadership roles in their communities and seek to sustain, strengthen and encourage resilient relationships at all levels of practice. Building on a strong foundation of liberal arts and the social work code of ethics, we seek to graduate social workers who will advocate for issues of social and economic justice.
We seek to educate competent social work practitioners who understand the value of evidence-based research and will contribute to the knowledge base of the profession. We seek to educate social work practitioners who recognize the globalization of society and its manifestation in South Dakota and surrounding communities, and practice accordingly. We seek to educate social work practitioners who will strive to improve the delivery of human services to diverse and vulnerable populations by emphasizing prevention, service integration, interdisciplinary cooperation, and community-based programs.

Goals

1. To prepare highly skilled and culturally competent advanced generalist social workers who actively seek to create change, promote social justice, improve the delivery of services, and enhance resilience and well-being at all systemic levels of practice.

2. To educate advanced generalist social workers who identify as professional social workers, grounded in the liberal arts and in values and ethics, theories, and practices of the profession.

3. To educate advanced generalist social workers to think critically, evaluate the effectiveness of their own practice, and contribute to the knowledge base of the profession through research.

4. To educate advanced generalist social workers to analyze social welfare policies, recognize deficits in current policy, advocate for social change, and support diversity and social justice at all levels of practice.

5. To graduate advanced generalist social workers prepared to assume leadership positions in the public and private sectors.

Social Work Competencies

The social work competencies set forth in the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) set the foundation for social work practice and education. These competencies define the content of the practicum and serve as the guide for student assignments across the MSW curriculum. The competencies provide the basis for evaluation of student performance.

The 2015 CSWE EPAS Competencies are as follows:

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice
Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
MSW Standards of Professional Conduct

Separate and distinct from other standards of conduct, the MSW program has specific, cognitive, emotional, and character requirements for students. The standards provide reasonable assurance of student ability to complete entire course of study and participate in all aspects of education and the professional practice of social work. Students are expected to possess the following abilities and attributes at a level appropriate to their program by meeting standards in the classroom and in practicum setting.

- **Professional Behavior**
  The social work student behaves professionally by knowledge of and practicing within the scope of social work, adhering to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, respective state licensing board policies and rules, and the rules of the Association of Social Work Board (ASWB).

- **Interpersonal Skills**
  The social work student communicates and interacts with other students, faculty, staff, and clients in a professional manner while demonstrating respect and consideration of students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals in all forms of communication. Student expresses own ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates willingness and ability to listen to others.

- **Self-awareness**
  The social work student is willing to examine and, if applicable, change own behavior when it interferes with clients and other professionals. Student is able to work effectively with others in subordinate positions as well as with those in authority.

- **Professional Commitment**
  The social work student has strong commitment to the essential values of social work. Student is knowledgeable and adheres to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the rules of the Association of Social Work Board (ASWB) and councils.

- **Valuing Diversity**
  The social work student appreciates the value of human diversity. Student willing to serve in an appropriate manner to all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person’s age, class, race, religious affiliation (or lack of), gender, disability, sexual orientation and/or value system.

Significance of the Social Work Core Competencies

The core competencies are center of social work education. The CSWE requires all students graduating from accredited social work programs demonstrate proficiency in each of the core competencies through mastery of the related practice behaviors. Students entering the program in the foundation year must demonstrate generalist competencies and related behaviors before progression to the concentration year. All students must demonstrate proficiency in each of the competencies and manifest through the advanced generalist behaviors prior to graduation. The competencies, ingrained in course content and written assignments, thus, there is no final exam regarding competencies.
Theoretical Framework

The MSW Program adopted an applied biopsychosocial framework with strengths-based perspective using evidence-based decision-making processes (see Figure 1).

While social workers increasingly generate their own new knowledge, we understand it is our professional responsibility to be anchored in the application of the biopsychosocial framework for the welfare protection of others. Accordingly, our theoretical framework looks to evidence-based findings from a variety of disciplines as follows:

- Biology: health, medicine, neurobiology, epigenetics
- Psychology: developmental, social, clinical, experimental, spirituality
- Social: economics, sociology, public policy, religion, cross-culture, law, education

We believe that applying a biopsychosocial framework to social work engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation is facilitated by adopting the evidence-based behavioral practice process (EBBP). The EBBP process is best understood as a five-step collaborative, complex, and systematic decision-making process when available research evidence, client subjectivities, and practitioner expertise are combined in a comprehensive ecological environment.

Our theoretical framework intentionally adopts a strengths-based perspective. The strengths-based perspective serves two heuristic functions. First, the strengths-based perspective is the filter through which client decisions and behaviors understood to be functional adaptations to failures in social and/or institutional structures. From this perspective, population needs are formed in existing social and institutional power inequities, which are root causes of social problems. Adoption of the strengths-based perspective, accordingly, undergirds our commitment to human and social justice, diversity and policy practice.

Secondly, the strengths-based perspective is the filter that informs the initial step in the EBBP process: ask important questions. We believe importance of a qualitative measure reflected from the strengths-based perspective is best valued. In our view, this perspective is fully compatible with professional social work values (service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence) and, in effect, provides a paradigm in which to operationalize these values in raising meaningful questions.

We conceive of our theoretical framework as three concentric circles (see Figure 1 below). The empirical findings from the biopsychosocial sciences are at the core of our framework and surrounded by the five cyclical steps of the EBBP process. The outer ring represents the environment containing social and institutional inequities and failures from which population needs (micro, mezzo, macro levels of ecosystems), social problems, and the response of social welfare systems emerge.
As illustrated by the diagram below, the strengths-based perspective opens the EBBP decision-making model to client-focused interpretations of their position within the environment and the influence of social institutions in their lives.

Figure 1: An applied biopsychosocial science theoretical framework with a strengths-based perspective using evidence based decision-making processes.

Recruitment and Retention

1. Admission cycle opens September 1. Applicant must create SocialWorkCAS account and begin application process: [https://socialworkcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login](https://socialworkcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login)

2. Submit payment of $50.00 U.S. dollars and application by 11:59 p.m. (EST) on December 1 for consideration of admission for enrollment the following May/August.

3. Pay additional fee of $35.00 U.S. dollars for Graduate School application: [https://apps.usd.edu/administrative/deposits/index.cfm](https://apps.usd.edu/administrative/deposits/index.cfm)

*Applicants do not need to complete the GradCAS application or apply separately to the Graduate School.*
Admission Requirements

The MSW program has several requirements for admission including prerequisites. We highly recommend initiating application process in a timely manner to ensure submission of materials is complete by deadline.

Admission to program requires all of the following:

1. Baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution
2. Minimum undergraduate and/or graduate cumulative GPA of 3.0 (based on 4.0 scale)
3. Evidence of completion for the following prerequisites with a minimum grade of a C (2.0) or higher:
   - A course with human biology content
   - A course with statistics content
   - Three additional courses in social/behavioral sciences. Acceptable courses from the following disciplines: Anthropology, Economics, History, Human Relations, Sociology, Political Science, Psychology
4. Cover letter and resume with dates to include the following:
   - Education
   - Community involvement
   - Military experience
   - Paid work experience
   - Volunteer experience
5. Submission of Purpose Statement concisely answering all of the following questions:
   - How has your life experiences shaped you for a career in social work?
   - What are your attributes and liabilities and how will they affect your social work career?
   - What do you do particularly well?
   - What areas need strengthening?
   - Why do you want a MSW degree?
   - Do you have time and energy to devote to graduate school?
   - How to you plan to readjust your life to accommodate your studies?
   - What are your career goals?
   - How will an MSW degree from USD help you meet your career goals?
   - What do you want to be doing in five years?
6. Submission of essay (3-5 pages) regarding an issue of your concern with five scholarly references. American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition formatting style. Include citations when drawing from the work of others. Example topics:

- Homelessness
- Human Trafficking
- Immigration
- Foster Care
- Older Adults

7. A minimum of three letters of recommendation:

- An academic advisor or university faculty member
- A supervisor (internship/employer)
- A professional reference (colleague/client)

Application Review

After the application is verified, it is forwarded to the MSW program for review. Recommendations for admission or denial of the applicants is made by MSW Admissions Committee to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Graduate School Dean makes the final decision as to the admission of a student with either full or provisional status and notifies the applicant. The designation of graduate student applies only to those who are granted full or provisional admittance.

The School of Health Sciences requires all accepted applicants to obtain clearance prior to full admission to any Health Sciences program. Health Affairs Immunization and Criminal Background Check policies require full compliance.

Full Admission

Full admission to the MSW program is granted when the applicant satisfactorily meets all the following requirements: (a) Baccalaureate degree or equivalent degree from an institution with full regional accreditation for degree; (b) A minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or a graduate GPA of 3.0 based on a 4.0 scale; and (c) All other academic requirements for the MSW program. This includes prerequisite course work and other admission requirements.

Time Limit and Validation of Degree

Graduate credits earned more than seven years prior to the date of intended graduation must be validated. The method of validation is decided upon by the MSW Admissions Committee and forwarded to the Graduate School Dean for final approval. Validation may include a repeat of course or satisfactorily completing a final examination.
Provisional Admission

Provisional admission is granted to an applicant who does not meet the conditions for full admission, but provides evidence of ability to be capable of graduate level work. Reasons for provisional instead of full admission include, but are not limited to: (a) An undergraduate GPA of less than 3.0 based on a 4.0 scale; and (b) Deficiencies in requirements of the MSW program such as prerequisites for study toward their master’s degree.

To gain full admission status, the applicant must demonstrate to the faculty the ability to be capable of graduate level work by earning a 3.0 GPA or higher during the first two semesters of the program. The student is limited to six credit hours per semester (i.e., part-time status), and must earn at least a letter grade of “B” in each course. In addition, the student must complete any/all prerequisites prior to beginning the MSW program. Once the admission deficiencies addressed, the student should speak to academic advisor in regards to petitioning for full admission status.

Immunization Verification

Immunization form and documentation must be submitted to USD Immunization Coordinator for review and verification prior to student obtaining access to online orientation and registration for classes. Upon verification, the Immunization Coordinator will notify the MSW Program Assistant. The Program Assistant will provide access to Desire 2 Learn (D2L) orientation portal for student to complete remaining requirements and register for courses. Students are responsible to stay current with vaccinations throughout the entirety of the program. Students who are unable to provide or have not provided sufficient proof of vaccine administration will not be allowed to participate in clinical rotations or experiences.

Student Health Immunization Forms: https://www.usd.edu/student-life/student-health/immunizations

Background Check Verification

All Health Affairs students where the program or course includes direct contact have the responsibility to assure the public that their graduates not only have the academic capabilities to apply their professional skills, but also have appropriate professional characteristics. That responsibility begins with selective admissions of students who have the appropriate background and skills and attributes to serve the public. Programs whose graduates serve vulnerable individuals have a special responsibility to assure their students and graduates possess the behavioral and social attributes necessary for the care of the individual. The processes for admission to the programs of USD Health Affairs must include procedures to protect the health and welfare of individuals.

Students entering the MSW program must complete an initial criminal background check and annually thereafter through the entirety of the program. The Program Assistant will provide the student with a link and code to access Verified Credentials, Inc. to create an account. The MSW program has access to view and approve results online. Students who do not complete background check will not be allowed to participate in clinical rotations or experiences.
Medical Insurance

Students enrolled in Health Affairs graduate professional programs are required to carry health insurance coverage that meets or exceeds the minimum standard. Students must provide proof of active coverage beginning of each academic year. Health insurance coverage is a requirement of the Affordable Care Act, each academic program’s accreditation standards, and through affiliation agreements with clinical rotation sites.

**Students who are unable to provide or have not provided sufficient proof of credible coverage meeting minimum standards will not be allowed to participate in clinical rotations or experiences.**

If required by the student’s specific academic program, other insurances (i.e. life, disability and malpractice) purchased as a part of the student tuition and fees.

Student Health Insurance: [https://www.usd.edu/student-life/student-health/health-insurance](https://www.usd.edu/student-life/student-health/health-insurance)

Advanced Standing Track

Students enrolled in the program on advanced standing track hold a baccalaureate degree in social work (BSW/BSSW) from a CSWE accredited program. Accelerated track or advanced standing students are expected to have a GPA of 3.0 and a letter grade of “B” or higher in each of their social work classes. Students accepted for advanced standing begin MSW program courses in summer semester. Students begin courses in the summer term and complete 36 credit hours. Full-time degree completion is one year. Tuesday classes are dedicated to the students who enter our program through the advanced standing track. Students accepted for advanced standing who do not have the three required prerequisites for the MSW program must complete the prerequisites prior to beginning the program.

Regular Standing Track

Students enrolled in the program who do not have a social work background (i.e., holds degree in fields such as Psychology or Sociology) are classified as standard track or regular standing students. Students accepted for regular standing begin MSW program courses in fall semester.

Transfer Credits

Students who enter the MSW program from a non-social work graduate program will be allowed to transfer up to nine credit hours (i.e., three courses – 3 credit hours/course) if courses align with graduate-level social work curriculum. The maximum number accepted on a transfer is 9 credit hours and will be used for elective credits. Transfer credits accepted by the MSW program from another social work graduate program are managed on a case-by-case basis. The maximum number of credit hours accepted is 24 credits.

Program Formats

Applicants can choose to apply for either face-to-face format (classroom setting) or online format utilizing Desire 2 Learn (D2L) software. In addition, students can complete the degree as a full-time or part-time student.

All graduate social work courses in the face-to-face (classroom setting) format offered at the USD Health Science Center (USD HSC), 1400 W. 22nd Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57105. Courses are held on Monday or Tuesday from 8:30 a.m. until 9:00 p.m.
**Field Education**

Full-time, regular standing students begin Field Education and Seminar I and II during the fall semester of the foundation year with completion at the end of the spring semester. During the concentration year (second year for regular standing) of the program, regular standing and advanced standing students will complete Field Education and Seminar III and IV beginning the fall semester and conclude at the end of the spring semester.

Students entering on regular standing track will complete 500 hours of field practicum during Field Education and Seminar I and II in the program and 500 hours field practicum during Field Education and Seminar III and IV. Students entering on advanced standing track complete the concentration year of field practicum for a total of 500 hours during Field Education and Seminar III and IV.

**Synchronous Model for Field Education**

Field practicum is a critical component for integrating knowledge from the classroom with hands-on experience in the practice setting. The MSW program engages with an array of addiction treatment, domestic violence, child welfare, mental health, medical social work, school social work, social justice advocacy, and social services agencies. Collaboration with placement agencies and field instructors provide the student a quality enhanced field experience. Additionally, CSWE requires students to complete a field education experience that allows students to learn and demonstrate core competencies. These guidelines ensure that, regardless of where students are earning their degree, they receive a consistent qualitative experience in their social work training.

**MSW Program Course Descriptions**

**Regular Standing 1st Year Courses**

Regular standing students are individuals who do **NOT** have a baccalaureate social work degree from a CSWE accredited program. Regular standing track courses begin in the fall term and complete 60 credit hours. Full-time degree completion is two years.

**FALL SEMESTER:**

**SOCW 601 - HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL WORK**

Description: Introduction to the historic and contemporary profession of Social Work. Students learn the core values, assumptions, theory, guiding principles, and the “Code of Ethics.” Students analyze the development of the profession through critical exploration of the profession’s history within the larger context of national and international history.

**SOCW 610 - GENERALIST PRACTICE I: INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES**

Description: Provides beginning generalist social work practice, knowledge, and skills. Students learn core social work theories: ecological theory, systems theory, problem-solving theory, and the strengths perspective.

**SOCW 641 - HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

Description: Students learn theories of human development, moral development, motivation, and diversity that affect individuals and families as they develop over the life span.
SOCW 683 - FIELD EDUCATION AND SEMINAR I
Description: This is the first of a two-semester foundation (generalist) level internship. Students complete 250 hours of field practicum. In addition, students participate in a two-hour weekly seminar.

SPRING SEMESTER:

SOCW 600 – SOCIAL POLICY ANALYSIS
Description: Provides a study of the development, and limitations of social welfare/social policy. Students gain an understanding of knowledge and skills in the analysis of social policy.

SOCW 630 - PRACTICE WITH SMALL GROUPS
Description: Provides students with theoretical and practice knowledge on work with individuals in small groups.

SOCW 684 - FIELD EDUCATION AND SEMINAR II
Description: This is the second of a two-semester foundation (generalist) level internship. Students complete 250 hours of field practicum. In addition, students participate in a two-hour weekly seminar.

SOCW 792 – GRADUATE LEVEL ELECTIVE COURSE
Description: Students complete three (regular standing track) or two (advanced standing track) elective courses from various graduate level disciplines throughout the University of South Dakota programs.

Advanced Standing 1st Year Courses
Regular Standing 2nd Year Courses

Advanced standing students are individuals who hold a baccalaureate degree in Social Work (i.e. BSW/BSSW) from a CSWE accredited program. Advanced standing track begin courses in summer term. Students complete 36 credit hours. Full-time degree completion is one year.

SUMMER SEMESTER:

SOCW 640 - DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITIES
Description: Provides students with theoretical and practice knowledge to address issues of diversity and social justice. Students learn to recognize and develop skills to address forms and mechanisms of discrimination.

SOCW 650 – PRACTICE-INFORMED QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH
Description: Introduces students to the basic principles of quantitative social work research, including ethics, problem formulation, and quantitative research designs and methodologies.

SOCW 741 – SOCIAL WORK IN MENTAL HEALTH: ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT
Description: Provides students with an understanding of mental illness. Students learn major diagnostic categories process to conduct a multi-axial diagnosis. Case illustrations and practice experiences used with a focus on competency-based assessment and research.

SOCW 792 – SPECIAL TOPICS (GRADUATE LEVEL ELECTIVE COURSE)
Description: Students complete three (regular standing) or two (advanced standing) elective courses from various graduate level disciplines throughout the University of South Dakota programs.
FALL SEMESTER:

SOCW 730 - PRACTICE WITH COMMUNITIES
Description: Focuses on theories that explain interactions of systems at the mezzo level of practice. The course emphasizes social work methods, strategies, and interventions used in practice with communities. The course provides students with a framework to analyze complex problems in communities and develop strategies for change.

SOCW 740 - ADVANCED PRACTICE WITH INDIVIDUALS, CHILDREN, AND FAMILIES
Description: Provides students with advanced theories for practice with individuals, children, and families across the lifespan. Students will apply knowledge that will allow them to conduct multidimensional assessments and integrate knowledge on the human condition with evidence-based practice activities designed to promote the social and human well-being.

SOCW 750 – PRACTICE-INFORMED QUALITATIVE RESEARCH
Description: Introduces students to the basic principles of qualitative social work research, including ethics, problem formulation, and qualitative research designs and methodologies.

SOCW 783 - ADVANCED FIELD EDUCATION AND SEMINAR III
Description: This is the first of a two-semester concentration (advanced generalist) level internship. Students participate in a two-hour weekly seminar designed to provide students with the opportunity to integrate and process advanced theoretical knowledge with field experiences.

The Department of Social Work

The MSW program is one of two programs in the University of South Dakota’s Department of Social Work. The MSW Program is located 1400 West 22nd Street, 3rd Floor (Southeast Wing), Sioux Falls, SD 57105. The BSSW Program is located on the main USD Campus at 414 Clark Street, 253 Julian Hall, Vermillion, South Dakota 57069.

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MSW Program Committees
Three committees are directly involved with the MSW program. The first is the MSW Program Admissions Committee comprised of faculty and staff with principle assignment to the admittance of applicants into the program. This committee reports the Social Work Department faculty. The following faculty and staff currently appointed to the Admissions Committee:

1. Dr. Kelly Bass
2. Michelle Noble
3. Megan Grode Wolters
4. Dr. Wallace Jackmon
The second is the MSW Program Curriculum Committee. The primary responsibility of this committee is to address program development and curriculum needs. This committee reports to the Social Work Department faculty. The following faculty and staff currently appointed to the MSW Program Curriculum Committee:

1. Dr. Kelly Bass
2. Michelle Noble
3. Dr. Wallace Jackmon
4. Dr. Soonhee Roh
5. Ms. Kathy LaPlante

The third is the MSW Advisory Board, which is comprised of social work practitioners who hold an MSW degree. Committee membership represents social work practice across the state. The committee membership also represents the diversity of South Dakota in practice and culture. Currently, this committee has not been active and the program is preparing to re-activate community involvement through this committee during the 2021-2022 academic year.

**Policies and Procedures**

**Academic Appeals**

Students have the right to initiate the Academic Appeals Policy of the University of South Dakota to readdress any form of unjust, oppressive, discriminatory, or fundamentally unfair practice affecting a student’s academic performance and progress.


**Academic Integrity**

The School of Health Sciences and the Department of Social Work considers academic fraud, plagiarism, dishonesty, and cheating to be serious acts of academic misconduct. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on exams or course assignments, plagiarism (using the ideas or words of another as one’s own without crediting the source), lying to get extensions on projects or exams, and any other form of dishonesty.

The MSW program regards any form of academic dishonesty to be a sign that the student’s values and ethics are incompatible with the values and ethics of the social work profession. A student found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty at the discretion of the instructor, be:

1. Given a zero for that assignment
2. Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit
3. Assigned a reduced grade for the course
4. Dropped from the course
5. Failed in the course

USD Student Rights and Responsibilities: [https://www.usd.edu/student-life/srr/academic-integrity](https://www.usd.edu/student-life/srr/academic-integrity)
**Attendance Policy**

Social work is an interactive field of practice and ask that a student miss class only when necessary for purposes of illness. If a student misses more than two classes, the professor may reduce the final grade. Students are required to be present and prepared for every class. If there are significant personal or health matters, which prevent the student from attending class, or if you are involved in a University sanctioned event, contact the professor. Excused absences for illness for two successive class periods or more will require medical verification. Please inform the professor of any necessary absences. However, merely informing the instructor does not constitute an excused absence.

**Academic Probation and Dismissal**

If a student has more than one course of unsatisfactory work and/or has not maintained a 3.0 GPA, the Graduate School may place the student on probation. The MSW Admissions Committee reviews the academic standing of all graduate students each term, in accordance with policy of the Graduate School. The MSW Program Director will notify the student directly of academic probation, and for recommending dismissal of the student to the Graduate Dean. A graduate student may be recommended for dismissal from the program at any time for failure to meet the program’s and/or the Graduate School’s standards of academic performance and progress.


**Confidentiality of Information**

The Department of Social Work recognizes the importance of confidentiality of student information and complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The current policies of USD regarding the release of information and the rights of students with respect to information maintained on their records.

FERPA forms available: [https://www.usd.edu/registrar/forms](https://www.usd.edu/registrar/forms)

**Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, Affirmative Action**

USD is dedicated to fostering an environment, which respects the rights of all individuals and values the promotion of both work and educational environment free of gender bias. The Title IX Coordination services as the point of contact for those seeking information or wanting to report violations of human rights, acts of discrimination/harassment, sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking, and other forms of sexual misconduct. For additional information, please contact Jean Merkle, Director, Equal Opportunity and Chief Title IX Coordinator at [Jean.Merkle@usd.edu](mailto:Jean.Merkle@usd.edu).

USD Equal Opportunity: [https://www.usd.edu/human-resources/equal-opportunity](https://www.usd.edu/human-resources/equal-opportunity)

**Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy**

In accordance with the South Dakota Board of Regents Policy 1:19, the institutions under the jurisdiction of the Board of Regents shall offer equal opportunities in employment and for access to and participation in educational, extension and other institutional services to all persons qualified by academic preparation, experience, and ability for the various levels of employment or academic program or other institutional service, without discrimination based on sex, race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, ancestry, citizenship, gender, gender identification, transgender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status or any other status that may become protected under law against discrimination. The Board reaffirms its commitment to the objectives of affirmative action, equal opportunity and non-discrimination in accordance with state and federal law. Redress for alleged violations of those laws may be
pursued at law or through the procedures established by the provisions of 1:18 of this policy. For additional information, please contact the Director, Equal Opportunity and Chief Title IX Coordinator, Jean Merkle, 205 Slagle Hall, Vermillion, SD 57069 Phone: 605-658-3665 Jean.Merkle@usd.edu

Admission decisions are made without regard to disabilities. All prospective students are expected to present academic credentials at or above the minimum standards for admission and meet any technical standards that may be required for admission to a specific program. If you are a prospective student with a disability and need assistance or accommodations during the admission/application process, please contact the Director of Disability Services, Karen Gerety, The Commons, Room 116, USD, Vermillion, SD 57069. Phone: 605-658-3745 Fax: 605-677-3172 E-Mail: disabilityservices@usd.edu

Federal Law prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990), and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act of 2009. The University has designated Cheryl Tiahrt, Chief Information Officer, as the Coordinator to monitor compliance with these statutes. This obligates USD and Ms. Tiahrt to provide equal access for all persons with disabilities.

Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act

USD provides an accommodating environment for those with disabilities. As required, we prohibit discrimination against qualified students, faculty, staff, and visitors with disabilities. Admission decisions are made without regard to disabilities. All prospective students are expected to present academic credentials at or above the minimum standards for admission and meet any technical standards that may be required for admission to a specific program.

USD Disability Accommodations: https://www.usd.edu/human-resources/disability-accommodations

Student Code of Conduct

If a student is not in agreement with the written recommendations or decision as a result, they have the right to appeal the recommendations and or/decision. Students charged with violation of the Academic Dishonesty Policy and charged under the University Student Code of Conduct.

MSW students have the right to initiate an appeal to readdress what they may believe is any form of unjust, oppressive, discriminatory or unfair practice on behalf of the program faculty member affecting their academic performance and progress.


Academic Advising

Students are encouraged to meet with their advisor to discuss their progress toward the MSW degree and plan of study. Students may also meet with their advisor to discuss any other issues that have an impact on their plan of study. These issues may include academic matters, career planning, personal concerns that may be affecting progress in the program, and other appropriate issues.

The student can reasonably expect to be informed and advised on actions necessary to complete academic and graduation requirements. However, the advisor is not responsible for insuring that advisees complete their academic requirements in a timely manner. Students are ultimately responsible for knowing the status of their academic progress at any given timeframe.

Academic Standing

It is the responsibility of the Director of the Program, in conjunction with the MSW Program Admissions
Committee, to grant admission and continuance in the program for all students. Therefore, maintaining good academic standing with the university is important. All graduate students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0. A student who earns a final grade of D or F must repeat the course.

**Adding and Dropping a Course**

Students may drop and/or add courses after the initial registration until the end of the period. The form must be completed, signed by the Instructor(s), the Student’s Advisor, and Academic Dean then submitted to the Registrar’s Office for processing.

Academic forms available: [https://www.usd.edu/registrar/forms](https://www.usd.edu/registrar/forms)

**Grading**

In addition to satisfactory performance, graduate students must maintain a 3.0 GPA (B) in the program. Occasionally, a grade of C is earned. Students admitted for the two-year program may earn a final grade of “C” in two courses. If a grade of “C” is earned in more than two courses, the student’s academic record is reviewed by the MSW Program Director. Students admitted with advanced standing may earn a final grade of “C” in one course.

All grades of “incomplete” on the program of study must be removed prior to graduation. Grades of “D”, “F” are designated as unsatisfactory and calculated into the GPA. Courses with a grade of D or F will not be considered for academic credit toward an MSW degree. Students who earn a grade of D or F are reviewed to determine if the student will be allowed to continue in the program.

**Degree Completion**

All students admitted as either full-time or part-time are expected to contact the MSW Program Director if status changes over the course of their plan of study. Students must take all the courses outlined in the curriculum plan.

Students enrolling in the regular standing track enter the program in the fall semester for the foundation curriculum. For a full-time, regular standing student, the program is offered over five semesters (fall, spring, summer, fall, and spring). Students complete the regular standing track at the end of 22 months, graduating in May. Advanced standing track students enter the program in the May. A full-time student completes the program curriculum over three semesters (summer, fall and spring). Advanced standing track students complete the program at the end of 13 months, graduating in May. All students who choose to complete the MSW program as part-time students, have up to four years to complete the curriculum.

**Preparation for Graduation**

The MSW program will assist students in preparing for graduation. An Application for Degree/Program of Study form and Application for Graduate Approval form is submitted to the Graduate School. Student is responsible for completing the Diploma Order Form and if attending ceremony, ordering of regalia.

USD Commencement: [https://www.usd.edu/registrar/commencement](https://www.usd.edu/registrar/commencement)
Additional Resources

Phi Alpha Honor Society
The department facilitates a membership for graduate students in the Phi Alpha Honor Society, Sigma Theta Chapter. The purpose of Phi Alpha Honor Society is to provide a closer bond among students of social work and promote humanitarian goals and ideals. Phi Alpha fosters high standards of education for social workers and invites into membership those who have attained excellence in scholarship and achievement in social work. Additional information at http://phialpha.org

Scholarship Opportunities

Faithe Family Scholarship
The Faithe Family Scholarship is awarded to students who are in advanced standing track or second year regular standing track for the MSW program at USD. A student whom is eligible to receive this scholarship benefits from the following criteria:

1. Holds a GPA of 3.5 or above
2. In good standing with the Master of Social Work program at University of South Dakota
3. Is considered full status within the MSW program
4. Enrolled in at least six credits during the summer, fall and spring semester of the year applying for scholarship.
5. Personal statement explaining how you plan to utilize your MSW degree to serve the health care delivery system after graduation.

The Carl A. Scott Book Scholarships
Two scholarships in the amounts of $500.00 available each academic year, the scholarships are awarded to students who have demonstrated a commitment to work for equity and social justice in social work. Awards are made to ethnic groups of color (African American, American Indian, Asian American, Mexican American, and Puerto Rican) who are in their last year of study for a social work degree in a baccalaureate or master’s degree program accredited by CSWE.

Visit CSWE: https://www.cswe.org/

Verne LaMarr Lyons Memorial MSW Scholarship
One scholarship in the amount of $1000.00 is awarded to a MSW student who has an interest and/or demonstrated ability in health/mental health practice and a commitment to working in African American communities.

Visit NASW Foundation: https://www.naswfoundation.org/

Consuelo W. Gosnell Memorial MSW Scholarship
Up to ten scholarships ranging from $1000.00-$4000.00 is awarded to students who have demonstrated a commitment to working with, or who have a special affinity with American Indian/Alaska Native or Hispanic/Latino populations in the United States. Candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to working with public or voluntary nonprofit agencies or with local
grassroots groups in the United States are also eligible.

Visit NASW Foundation: [https://www.naswfoundation.org/](https://www.naswfoundation.org/)

**Ruth Fizdale Program**

NASW chapters are invited to apply for a Fizdale grant to conduct pilot research projects in social policy. Previous grants have been awarded in the amount of $3000.00. If a student were interested in this grant, a discussion with a member of the faculty and the Executive Director of the South Dakota Chapter of NASW would be appropriate.

Visit NASW Foundation: [https://www.naswfoundation.org/](https://www.naswfoundation.org/)

**National Association of Social Workers South Dakota Chapter**

The NASW-SD chapter offers a scholarship for MSW students at USD. The scholarship will award $500.00. Details and information regarding an application are available through the local chapter. This scholarship developed specifically for members of the NASW-SD chapter who attend the MSW program.

Visit NASW: [https://www.nasw-heartland.org/](https://www.nasw-heartland.org/)

**Other Scholarship Possibilities**

Minnesota Social Service Association scholarships are available for students. They offer a Graduate Educational Scholarships of $1500.00 in the fall and spring of each year. In addition, a Diversity Educational Scholarship is offered to assist students who are members of the following diverse groups: African-American, American Indian, Asian, LGBT, Hispanic, and people with disabilities or refugee/immigrant cultures.

Visit MSSA: [https://www.mnssa.org/](https://www.mnssa.org/)

**NASW Code of Ethics**

The NASW Code of Ethics is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers.


**USD Academic Catalog**

Graduate Catalog: [http://catalog.usd.edu/](http://catalog.usd.edu/)

**University of South Dakota Student Handbook**