MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Welcome

This master of arts degree is an interdisciplinary program of study that provides students with the tools to lead communities toward social justice and sustainability. It is designed especially for students inclined toward the humanities, social sciences, and related fields.

- Students take a core set of courses that provide interdisciplinary grounding in social justice and sustainability, economic and policy issues, leadership issues, community-building, and community-based research.
- Students may focus their elective courses on environmental sustainability, women's & gender studies, inter-generational studies, or other issues—depending on their interests, on availability of courses, and in consultation with their adviser.
- Students in the MA in Social Responsibility & Sustainable Communities will cultivate the skills and knowledge necessary to be economic, political, and social change agents for more just and sustainable communities.

The Master of Arts in Social Responsibility & Sustainable Communities is learning in action. As a student in this program you'll have the opportunity to conduct an action research project to understand issues relevant to social justice and sustainability and identify possible solutions. You'll also participate in a unique experiential learning program where you'll meet community members engaged in work relevant to these core principals. Your master's program will culminate in a conference style symposium where you'll share your research and learn from that of your peers and faculty.

Curriculum

The MA in Social Responsibility and Sustainable Communities is comprised of a thesis and a non-thesis option. Both options require 18 hours of Core Courses plus electives, and if pursuing the thesis option, 6 thesis hours, for a total of 33 hours; students are required to be in attendance during the campus-based ICSR 590 Sustainability Symposium.

Program Objectives

Through this MA program, you will be able to:

- examine a range of disciplinary perspectives on social justice
- analyze the interrelationships of issues and interlocking systems associated with social organization and community development
- examine the practical and theoretical principles of sustainability and how to apply them to diverse situations and communities throughout the world
- analyze the power relationships (gender, race, age, class) that historically surround social justice and how these may be changed or augmented to increase social equality and equity
• apply the principles of community organizing and be able to effectively utilize them in a variety of communities

**Required Core Courses (18 hours):**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Fall/Spring</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICSR 510</td>
<td>Perspectives on Social Justice</td>
<td></td>
<td>A consideration of major perspectives concerning social justice issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICSR 520</td>
<td>Community-Based Research</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>The study of and training in community-based participatory action research</td>
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<td>across different disciplines, focusing on shared perspectives that apply</td>
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<td>sustainable, community-based problem solving.</td>
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<td>ICSR 540</td>
<td>Community-Building for Sustainability</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Direct participation and research in a topic related to sustainable community-</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>building.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICSR 530</td>
<td>Social Policy &amp; Social Justice</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>A study of the convergences and discontinuities between social justice and</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>social policy using critical interdisciplinary theories.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEAD 500</td>
<td>Effective Leadership Studies</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>An in-depth investigation of the basics of effective leadership including</td>
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<td>current and historical leadership theories. Assessment of leadership styles</td>
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<td>will be a key component. Note: Please do not take other sections, only this</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>with Dr. John Baker.</td>
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<td>ICSR 590</td>
<td>Sustainability Symposium</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Culminating residency requirement for students seeking the Master’s in Social</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Responsibility &amp; Sustainable Communities. Includes group site evaluations</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>and concluding symposium.</td>
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Students may choose to write a thesis for six hours of credit (ICSR 599), or to complete six hours additional electives for a non-thesis option.

For a sample course schedule, [click here](#).

**Elective Courses**

Student will select 15 hours for non-thesis option or 9 hours for thesis option. For a list of online elective courses, [click here](#).

**Applying for Admission**

A GRE score is not required for this program. Admission will be based on prior academic performance, a written Statement of Purpose, a resume, and two letters of recommendation.
In order to be admitted to this program, students must submit an online application and mail the following required documents to The Graduate School:

- official copies of your undergraduate transcripts
- resume
- statement of purpose
- two letters of recommendation

**Mailing Address:**
The Graduate School
Western Kentucky University
1906 College Heights Blvd. #11010
Bowling Green, Ky. 42101-1010

Review of applications for the Fall 2014 Cohort will begin April 14, 2014. Applications accepted on a rolling basis.

**Writing Your Statement of Purpose**

Your Statement of Purpose should discuss your personal, professional, and/or academic preparation for graduate study and how the master’s program in Social Responsibility and Sustainable Communities will fit into your professional development.

**Submitting Letters of Recommendation**

Please have those who write the letters of recommendation on your behalf address your potential for graduate study and, in particular, this program of study.

**For questions regarding the admissions process, contact:**

Brandi Button
Program Support Specialist
brandi.button@wku.edu
(270) 745-3221 or (270) 745-6995

**For academic questions, contact:**

Jane Olmsted
jane.olmsted@wku.edu
(270) 745-5787

**Financial Aid**

**Eligibility**

Financial Aid includes grants and loans for educational purposes. The government requires the student to file a form online to the government agency for this purpose which is called FAFSA at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) to apply. Once that form is completed and filed, the student will receive an email from WKU about the status. All financial aid comes through the WKU Student Financial Aid office and they communicate mostly through email. The email will explain all the grants and/or loans that are available to the student and how to receive the money.
Nearly all students are eligible for some form of financial assistance. In fact, over 90% of the students who applied for financial aid in recent years received an award offer. Every effort is made to assist you and your family in obtaining the resources necessary to meet the difference between the total cost of attending Western Kentucky University and your ability to contribute toward your education.

If you would like to apply for financial assistance (loans, grants, scholarships, veteran’s benefits) the first step is to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Please refer to the Financial Aid Guide for additional information and complete instructions.

Please keep in mind, student must maintain satisfactory academic progress to continue to qualify for financial aid. For additional information on receiving, and keeping your financial aid, please refer to the WKU Financial Aid website to review the complete policy on Satisfactory Academic Progress at http://www.wku.edu/financialaid/sap.php.

Job Opportunities

Students who are members of the first cohort come from a wide range of undergraduate and professional training, but they all have in common a desire for helping to make positive change in their communities, whether that change emphasizes the environment or social conditions. The SRSC master’s program is designed with maximum flexibility so that students can tailor their program of study to meet their personal and career goals. The SRSC emphasizes community-based research, social justice as it applies to the environment and to communities, and social responsibility in terms of engagement with real-world problems and their solutions. The SRSC would not be suitable for careers that require a specific degree, such as community-based counseling, which would require a degree such as an M.S. in Social Work.

The following are just a few of the positions that can benefit from this program:

- **Sustainability Specialists**
- **Urban and Regional Planners**
- **Social and Community Service Managers**
- **Social Justice Coordinators**
- **Outreach Relations Coordinators**
- **Media Relations**

According to the 2010-2011 United States Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, employment in community and social services occupations is projected to increase by 16 percent, growing by roughly 448,400 jobs. Total employment nationwide is expected to increase by 10%, so the opportunities in the community and social services occupations are well above the average.

In Kentucky, total employment is projected to increase by 148,700 jobs, or 7.5 percent, while the jobs in the Community and Social Services occupations is expected to grow by 13.99%. The educational level needed for most of these jobs is a Master’s degree (Kentucky Occupational Outlook to 2020, by the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet).

In an EduVentures study of directors of community development agencies, respondents spoke of the importance of developing a "consciousness" about social responsibility and the ability to "think critically about issues, how they relate to their organization and others, . . . and to apply a broad world view to their assessment." The interdisciplinary nature of this program, and its emphasis on theoretical and practical knowledge, will ensure that
students will be able to apply such skills to their work in sustainability and community development. The MA addresses the AACU claim that "students face a rapidly changing and ever more interconnected world, in which integrative learning becomes not just a benefit...but a necessity."

Contact Information

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Visit: [www.wku.edu/study/srsc](http://www.wku.edu/study/srsc)