



MASTER *of* SOCIAL WORK

**Western Kentucky University
Master of Social Work
Program Information**

Our MSW program provides excellent preparation for rural social work practice, and is dedicated to addressing workforce needs of agencies working with regional families and communities.

You will have the opportunity to become an advanced practitioner skilled in integrated direct social work practice with diverse populations living in rural/non-urban areas. However, if your current plans include social work practice in an urban setting, or even internationally, know that MSW education and skills are highly transferable and a degree from WKU can be used in many fields of practice and in any geographical location.

There are many exciting opportunities in graduate social work education at WKU that we believe set us apart:

- We have **excellent faculty** dedicated to **student-centered teaching and research**. Along with active engagement with students in the classroom and advising, faculty members encourage student participation in research.
- Our program works hard to ensure the quality of the profession while also being **accessible to students who have families and who work full-time**. We believe that our **course scheduling structure** and the **option of doing approved worksite field placements** make the challenging job of completing an MSW degree a little easier.
- **Program options:**

Hybrid

- Advanced Standing program (33 hours) for students with a recent (seven years) BSW degree from a CSWE-accredited program.
- Traditional program (60 hours) for students with degrees in areas other than social work.
- Both programs are available full-time and part-time on the Bowling Green campus.

Online

- Advanced Standing Online program (33 hours). This is a one-year program available full-time.
 - Advanced Standing Online program (33 hours). This is a two-year program available part-time.
 - Traditional program (60 hours) a three-year part-time program. 2021 will be the next time this option is offered online.
- WKU social work students have had the opportunity to **travel to attend state, national, and international conferences** and have **co-authored scholarly articles with faculty**.
 - Program graduates have **extremely high pass rates on the graduate social work licensure examination**.

Please take the time to read carefully all the materials in this booklet. Come visit the beautiful Western Kentucky University campus and meet with us in person. Just call ahead so we will be available. The Master of Social Work degree can empower you with the skills necessary to making a real difference in the world.

Western Kentucky University's Mission

Western Kentucky University (WKU) prepares students of all backgrounds to be productive, engaged, and socially responsible citizen-leaders of a global society. The University provides research, service and lifelong learning opportunities for its students, faculty, and other constituents. WKU enriches the quality of life for those within its reach.

Purposes of the Social Work Profession

The social work profession receives its sanction from public and private auspices and is the primary profession in the development, provision, and evaluation of social services. Professional social workers are leaders in a variety of organizational settings and service delivery systems within a global context.

The profession of social work is based on the values of service, social and economic justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, and integrity and competence in practice. With these values as defining principles, the purposes of social work are:

- To enhance human well-being and alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice.
- To enhance the social functioning and interactions of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities by involving them in accomplishing goals, developing resources, and preventing and alleviating distress.
- To formulate and implement social policies, services, and programs that meet basic human needs and support the development of human capacities.
- To pursue policies, services, and resources through advocacy and social or political actions that promotes social and economic justice.
- To develop and use research, knowledge, and skills that advance social work practice.
- To develop and apply practice in the context of diverse cultures.

MSW Mission Statement

Mission

The mission of the MSW program at WKU is to prepare students for advanced professional social work practice to meet the needs of increasingly diverse rural population in the community, in Kentucky, and in a global society.

MSW Program Concentration

Advanced Direct Practice in Rural Settings allows the practitioner to function at multiple system levels with advanced knowledge about the rural culture and its dynamics.

Advanced direct practice within rural areas assumes that rural areas are markedly different from urban settings in a variety of ways. While the skills needed for advanced direct practice may be common across geographical locations, it is the way that social workers practice that is different. Direct practitioners in rural environments face different tasks, client characteristics, and social issues compared to practitioners in urban environments. Rural practitioners enact social work roles in ways that are more diverse than urban social workers. For example, while social problems are common to all geographic regions, rural localities have special concerns in the areas of legislation and regulation regarding economic development, employment, health care, housing, landownership, transportation, and the diverse needs of families and children. Welfare recipients who are required to work may find employment in rural areas non-existent due to the limited economic opportunities in rural areas.

MSW Program Goals, Objectives and Performance Indicators

The goals of the MSW Program directly flow from the Program's mission. The needs of the regional community along with the purposes of the profession combine to shape the four overall goals of the Program. These overall goals are:

1. To produce competent practitioners within rural areas.
2. To increase the number of practitioners with professional values and standards of cultural competence who are creative and ethically responsible in their practice with diverse rural populations
3. To apply critical knowledge that cultivates and synthesizes an understanding of the complex needs within the culture of rural communities, including research, training, continuing education, and other relevant projects.
4. To impact the social, economic, and political environment of rural areas in order to empower constituents and influence social welfare policies, practices, and services.

Competency	Expected Behaviors
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context
	Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations
	Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication
	Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes
	Use supervision and consultation to guide judgement and behavior
Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice	Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels
	Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences
	Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies
Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice	Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels
	Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice
Competency 4: Engage in Practice- informed Research and Research- informed Practice	Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research
	Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings
	Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice	Identify social policy at the local, state , and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services
	Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services
	Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice
Competency 6: Engage with Individuals,	Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies

Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies
Competency 7: Assess with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies
	Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies
	Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies
	Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies
Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies
	Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies
	Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes
	Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies
	Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals
Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Select and use appropriate methods of evaluation of outcomes
	Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes
	Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes
	Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels

Advanced Generalist Year (Specialized Year):

Competency	Expected Behaviors
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to a rural context
	Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in rural practice situations

	Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written and electronic communication both in rural communities and in practice settings
	Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate advanced practice outcomes in rural settings
	Use supervision and consultation to guide judgement and behavior
	Actively participate in professional social work associations/organizations
	Design and manage effective self-care strategies to reduce the likelihood of compassion fatigue and burnout.
Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice	Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels in rural settings
	Present themselves as learners and engage rural clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences
	Utilize self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse rural clients and constituencies
	Analyze the holistic and systemic nature of problems in rural settings taking care to attend to the special factors of rurality such as dual relationships, inadequate transportation, extreme poverty, difficult access to health care, and disenfranchisement from political processes
Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice	Engage in practices which demonstrate critical analysis of the intersections of social, economic, and environmental justice in rural contexts
	Advocate for appropriate resources and equal access to political, economic, and social power for rural clients
Competency 4: Engage in Practice- informed Research and Research- informed Practice	Use practice experience and theoretical underpinning of evidence-based practice models to inform scientific inquiry and research
	Apply advanced level critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings
	Integrate and adapt research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy and service delivery in rural settings
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice	Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services in rural settings
	Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services in rural areas

	Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice in rural settings
Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with rural clients and constituencies
	Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills at an advanced level to effectively engage diverse rural clients and constituencies ensuring informed consent
	Discern the most appropriate engagement strategy according to each practice context
Competency 7: Assess with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Collect and organize client-driven data, and skillfully apply critical thinking to interpret information from rural clients and constituencies
	Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from rural clients and constituencies
	Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies in rural settings
	Modify appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of rural clients and constituencies and preferences of clients and constituencies
	Consider aspects intrinsic in rural settings impacting assessment such as connections with church communities, neighbors, extended family, fictive kin, and other informal resources
Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of rural clients and constituencies
	Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with rural clients and constituencies
	Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes in rural settings
	Provide leadership in program development, administration and evaluation; clinical and organizational supervision; research development and utilization; and policy creation, reform and implementation
	Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse rural clients and constituencies
	Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually developed goals
Competency 9: Evaluate	Select

Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes for rural clients and constituencies
	Critically analyze, appraise, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes in rural contexts
	Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels in rural settings

NASW Code of Ethics

Students admitted into the social work program are required to sign the Western Kentucky University Department of Social Work Code of Ethics Agreement Statement indicating their agreement to practice by these standards. Any violation of the principles contained with the NASW Code of Ethics can result in dismissal from the program. The WKU program places special emphasis on social work values and ethics. The code of ethics can be downloaded from https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ms_ArtLqzel%3D&portalid=0

The Code of Ethics standards indicate that six areas of ethical obligation for social workers: (1) social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients, (2) social workers' ethical responsibilities to colleagues, (3) social workers' ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) social workers' ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the social work profession, and (6) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

These ethical obligations are based on the values and principles discussed below (NASW, 1999). These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

Value: Service

Ethical Principle: *Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.*

Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

Value: Social Justice

Ethical Principle: *Social workers challenge social injustice.*

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused

primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Value: *Dignity and Worth of the Person*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.*

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

Value: *Importance of Human Relationships*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.*

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Value: *Integrity*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.*

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Value: *Competence*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.*

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledgebase of the profession.

Practice Readiness Exam

Students are required to pass a practice readiness (comprehensive) exam during the final semester in order to complete all requirements for the MSW. **Graduate School policy states that a student has only two attempts to pass the comprehensive examination.**

The Practice Readiness Exam will involve an objective exam. This format is subject to change at the discretion of the MSW Program Committee. Students will be notified of the date of the exam and the exact format in September of the year they will be taking the PRE examination.

Discrimination and Affirmative Action Clause

Western Kentucky University is committed to equal opportunity. It is an Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, or handicap in any employment opportunity. No person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to unlawful discrimination, on such basis under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

If you experience discrimination in any educational program or activity, written procedures are available for consideration of complaints that allege such discrimination. These should be directed to the Office of the President, Western Kentucky University, 1906 College Heights Blvd, Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101-3576. Inquiries about such alleged discrimination also may be made directly to the Director, Office of Civil Rights, United States Department of Human Resources, Washington, DC 20201



MSW Full-Time Advanced Standing Program – 33 Credit Hours – 1-Year Curriculum

* Only students who have graduated within the last seven years from a CSWE-accredited BSW program with a 3.00 or higher GPA based on the last 60 hours of coursework may apply for this program.

Year 1 – Fall Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	610	Social Work Administration and Supervision	3
SWRK	612	Social Work in Diverse Rural Communities	3
SWRK	620	Advanced Psycho-Social Approaches for Rural Practice	3
SWRK	623	Social Work Clinical Assessment and Intervention	3
SWRK	660	Advanced Field Practicum I	3

Year 1 – Winter Term

Course	Number	Name	Credit
		Elective 1	3

Year 1 – Spring Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	622	Integrated Social Work Practice with Families	3
SWRK	630	Rural Social Welfare Policy	3
SWRK	640	Applied Social Work Research	3
		Elective 2	3
SWRK	661	Advanced Field Practicum II	3
		Practice Readiness Examination	

Year 1 – Summer Term (if no elective was taken during Winter Term)

Course	Number	Name	Credit
		Elective 1	3



MSW Full-Time Traditional Program – 60 Credit Hours – 2-Year Curriculum

Year 1 – Fall Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	501	Cultural Competency in Social Work Practice	3
SWRK	510	Human Behavior in the Social Environment	3
SWRK	520	Generalist Social Work Practice	3
SWRK	540	Foundation of Social Work Research Methods	3
SWRK	560	Foundation Field Practicum I	3

Year 1 – Spring Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	522	Group Dynamics in Social Work Practice	3
SWRK	523	Rural Community Organization and Development	3
SWRK	530	Foundation of Social Welfare Policy	3
		Elective 1	3
SWRK	561	Foundation Field Practicum II	3

Year 2 – Fall Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	610	Social Work Administration and Supervision	3
SWRK	620	Advanced Psycho-Social Approaches for Rural Practice	3
SWRK	623	Social Work Clinical Assessment and Intervention	3
		Elective 2	3
SWRK	660	Advanced Field Practicum I	3

Year 2 – Spring Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	622	Integrated Social Work Practice with Families	3
SWRK	630	Rural Social Welfare Policy	3
SWRK	640	Applied Social Work Research	3
		Elective 3	3
SWRK	661	Advanced Field Practicum II	3
		Practice Readiness Examination	

Year 2 – May

Graduation

**Electives may be taken in Winter and Summer terms.*



MSW Part-Time Advanced Standing Program – 33 Credit Hours – 2-Year Curriculum

Year 1 – Fall Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	610	Social Work Administration and Supervision	3
SWRK	612	Social Work in Diverse Rural Communities	3
SWRK	623	Social Work Clinical Assessment and Intervention	3

Year 1 – Spring Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	630	Rural Social Welfare Policy	3
SWRK	640	Applied Social Work Research	3

Year 1 – Summer Term

Course	Number	Name	Credit
		Elective 1	3
		Elective 2	3

Year 2 – Fall Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	620	Advanced Psycho-Social Approaches for Rural Practice	3
SWRK	660	Advanced Field Practicum I	3

Year 2 – Spring Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	622	Integrated Social Work Practice with Families	3
SWRK	661	Advanced Field Practicum II	3
		Practice Readiness Examination	

Year 2 – May Graduation

MSW Part-Time Traditional Program – 60 Credit Hours – 4-Year Curriculum

Year 1 – Fall Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	501	Cultural Competency in Social Work Practice	3
SWRK	510	Human Behavior in the Social Environment	3

Year 1 – Spring Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	530	Foundation of Social Welfare Policy	3
		Elective 1	3

Year 2 – Fall Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	520	Generalist Social Work Practice	3
SWRK	540	Foundation of Social Work Research Methods	3
SWRK	560	Foundation Field Practicum I	3

Year 2 – Spring Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	522	Group Dynamics in Social Work Practice	3
SWRK	523	Rural Community Organization and Development	3
SWRK	561	Foundation Field Practicum II	3

Year 3 – Fall Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	610	Social Work Administration and Supervision	3
SWRK	623	Social Work Clinical Assessment and Intervention	3
		Elective 2	3

Year 3 – Spring Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	630	Rural Social Welfare Policy	3
SWRK	640	Applied Social Work Research	3
		Elective 3	3

Year 4 – Fall Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	620	Advanced Psycho-Social Approaches for Rural Practice	3
SWRK	660	Advanced Field Practicum I	3

Year 4 – Spring Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	622	Integrated Social Work Practice with Families	3
SWRK	661	Advanced Field Practicum II	3
		Practice Readiness Examination	

Year 4 – May - Graduation

**MSW Part-Time Traditional Program – 60 Credit Hours – 3-Year Curriculum
(Online Cohort Only)**

Year 1 – Fall Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	501	Cultural Competency in Social Work Practice	3
SWRK	510	Human Behavior in the Social Environment	3
SWRK	540	Foundation of Social Work Research Methods	3

Year 1 – Spring Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	523	Rural Community Organization and Development	3
SWRK	530	Foundation of Social Welfare Policy	3
		Elective 1	3

Year 2 – Fall Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	520	Generalist Social Work Practice	3
SWRK	560	Generalist Field Practicum I	3
		Elective 2	3

Year 2 – Spring Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	522	Group Dynamics in Social Work Practice	3
SWRK	561	Generalist Field Practicum II	3

Year 3 – Fall Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	610	Social Work Administration and Supervision	3
SWRK	620	Advanced Psycho-Social Approaches for Rural Practice	3
SWRK	623	Social Work Clinical Assessment and Intervention	3
SWRK	660	Advanced Generalist Field Practicum I	3

Year 3 – Spring Semester

Course	Number	Name	Credit
SWRK	622	Integrated Social Work Practice with Families	3
SWRK	630	Rural Social Welfare Policy	3
SWRK	640	Applied Social Work Research	3
SWRK	661	Advanced Generalist Field Practicum II	3
		Elective 3	3
		Practice Readiness Examination	

Year 3 – May

Graduation

Electives may be taken in Winter and Summer terms. If an elective is completed in the summer following graduation, the graduation date will be in August