MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

General Information

The profession of Social Work is devoted to the enhancement of human well-being and to the alleviation of poverty and oppression. These goals are accomplished through the promotion, restoration, maintenance and enhancement of the social functioning of individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. The expansion of human service programs and areas of practice that utilize social work knowledge and skills creates a demand for professionally educated social workers. Social Work offers a challenging and exciting career for the individual who is motivated to help others and has a personal commitment to the advancement of social justice.

Mission and Goals

The School of Social Work, through its programs of professional education, research and public service is dedicated to the enhancement of human well-being and to the alleviation of poverty and oppression through developing and improving systems of social services, especially public social services. The school’s primary means of achieving its mission is by preparing skilled social work practitioners who are committed to practice that includes services to the poor and oppressed, by improving and developing social service programs, and by promoting professionalism in social work in Oklahoma. To this end the school offers two degree programs: an undergraduate major in social work leading to a Bachelor of Arts and a graduate program leading to a Master of Social Work. The mission and goals of the school are consistent with those of professional social work education and of the University of Oklahoma. The school’s goals are:

1. To educate skilled social workers who can effectively serve individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities;
2. To increase the availability of skilled social work professionals, particularly from minority groups; and
3. To develop and strengthen social services through:
   a. scholarly activities which elaborate and explicate issues relevant to the enhancement of human well-being and the alleviation of poverty and oppression;
   b. research and evaluation activities aimed at facilitating effective practice and the generation of knowledge;
   c. consultation and leadership to emerging and existing social service programs; and
   d. continuing education and training.

The school prepares practitioners who will use an integrated combination of knowledge, values and skills in service to diverse client and community systems. The undergraduate program and the foundation requirements of the graduate program are based on a generalist model that emphasizes skills, knowledge and values basic to all social work practice. In their candidacy year (final year) of graduate study, students take one of two concentrations: 1) Direct Practice (DP) or 2) Administration and Community Practice (ACP).
General Information and Admission Categories

For all graduate programs offered at the school, admission is for the fall semester. (Admission can sometimes be moved forward to the preceding summer, where students want to take a course offered at that time.) Students are admitted to one of three general categories:

- Advanced Programs format, part-time to the three-year, 60 credit hour program (Two years are required to complete foundation courses as a part-time student. Candidacy year (final year) requirements are completed in full-time status);
- Full-time to the two-year, 60 credit hour program; and
- Full-time to the Advanced Standing, 30 credit hour program (Available only to applicants who have completed a Bachelor in Social Work degree within the past five years from a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program accredited by the CSWE, Council on Social Work Education).

Admission Criteria

Students admitted to the graduate program in social work must meet the following requirements:

- Possess a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university. The applicant’s course of study must include liberal arts content, which is broadly defined as coursework in the natural and social sciences and in the arts and humanities. Though not a formal admission requirement, an introductory (undergraduate or graduate) course in statistics is a prerequisite course requirement for Social Work Research I (SWK 5083). Students in the full-time (60-hour) program take research and, thus, must complete statistics prior to beginning their graduate program. The precise scheduling of research varies for students in the part-time (60-hour) programs in Norman and Tulsa, but it is typically offered in the first year. Students in these programs are strongly advised to complete statistics prior to beginning their program. (Students in the Advanced Standing (30-hour) program do not take SWK 5083, so the statistics requirement does not apply to them.)
- Meet all admission requirements of the Graduate College. The Graduate College requires that all students admitted on a non-conditional basis have a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or above. For applicants with no post-baccalaureate coursework, the Graduate College calculates the GPA based on the last 60 semester credit hours of letter-graded coursework. Where the 60 credit hours fall within a semester’s work, that whole semester is included in the GPA calculation. Applicants who complete with a satisfactory GPA 12 or more hours of graduate work or 12 or more hours of upper division post-baccalaureate work (graduate and post-baccalaureate undergraduate work may be combined) with a satisfactory GPA will have their GPA based on this work. Students with GPA’s between 2.75 and 2.99 may be considered for conditional admission by the Graduate College and the school. Students admitted conditionally must meet specific requirements specified by the Graduate College and the school.
- One exception is made to the 2.75 minimum GPA requirement for consideration for conditional admission. The exception applies to applicants who have, subsequent to their bachelor’s degree, completed three years of paid, full-time work (or the equivalent thereof) in social work or a closely related human
services field. Such applicants may be considered for conditional admission if their GPA, as calculated by the Graduate College, is 2.5 or higher.

- No students with GPA's under 3.0 will be admitted to Advanced Standing. Further, for Advanced Standing admission only, post-baccalaureate work may not be used to raise the GPA. For more information on Graduate College policy, see the Graduate College Bulletin or visit the Web site at gradweb.ou.edu/.

- The successful applicant is expected to meet the requirements for Ethics and Physical and Emotional Well-being as presented in the Personal Conduct and Comportment guidelines for the School of Social Work.

Diversity and Admissions Decisions

As it makes admission decisions, the Graduate Committee seeks to build a student body composed of students from varied backgrounds with the potential and desire to work effectively with the varied client groups that social work serves. It encourages applications from persons from all walks of life; in particular from persons who are members of oppressed populations within society. Consistent with its affirmative action stance on diversity, the Admission Committee will give particular consideration for admission to those students who are members of special population or oppressed groups.

Transfer Credit

The school will accept up to six hours of credit from another college or university or a full first year from a school of social work accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (for coursework consistent with the school’s first-year curriculum). These actions are contingent on the approval of the director of the School and the dean of the Graduate College. The following criteria apply to potential transfer credit:

- The coursework transferred must represent valid graduate credit from an institution accredited to offer work at the master’s degree level and willing to accept such credit toward its own master’s degree.
- Credit hours presented and counted toward a completed master’s degree in another field may be not applied toward the M.S.W. degree.
- The credit must carry a grade of A, B or S (Satisfactory).
- The credit must not be more than five years old at the time that the student’s graduate program begins.
- Credit for coursework transferred must be applicable to and congruent with the educational mission and objectives of the school.
- Credit hours earned by correspondence courses, workshops, seminars and other similar continuing education offerings do not count as transfer credit toward the M.S.W. degree.
- Practicum course credits earned from other programs or departments outside the OU School of Social Work will not apply to the M.S.W. degree (except from transfer students from other CSWE accredited M.S.W. programs).
- Academic credit is not given for life experience or previous work experience. The credit must meet all university and Graduate College requirements. Key College policies as presented in the Graduate College Bulletin are on the Web at gradweb.ou.edu/docs/masters/.
Foundation Course and General Enrollment Requirements (Effective Fall 2004)

The first 27 credit hours of coursework comprise the foundation curriculum. The same courses are offered in the full-time and part-time programs. The following format applies to the full-time program. Applicants should recognize that the graduate curriculum undergoes constant scrutiny and that the precise nature of that curriculum could change some by the time that they enter the program.

I. Fall Semester: Foundation (1st Year)
   a. SWK5233 Human Behavior: Individuals and Families
   b. SWK5333 Human Diversity and Societal Oppression

II. Spring Semester: (1st Year)
   a. SWK5103 Generalist Practice/Individuals, Families and Groups
   b. SWK5243 Human Behavior: Groups, Organizations, and Communities

III. Summer Semester: (1st Year)
   a. Elective (Optional)

IV. Fall Semester: (2nd Year)
   a. SWK5083 Social Work Research Methods I
   b. SWK5113 Generalist Practice/Groups, Organizations and Communities
   c. SWK5093 Social Work Research Methods II
   d. SWK5313 Social Welfare in A Changing World Summer Semester: Foundation (2nd Year)
   e. SWK5410 Social Work Practicum I
   f. SWK5420 Social Work Practicum II

All elective courses, whether taken as part of the foundation or in the candidacy year (final year), require approval of the student’s advisor. All directed readings, directed research and independent study courses require the approval of the advisor and graduate coordinator.

Comprehensive Examination

Passing of the comprehensive examination is one of the Graduate College requirements for a non-thesis program, such as the Master of Social Work. This written examination tests for integration of learning often through an applied, analytical/research paper covering both the foundation and candidacy years of the program. The exact form of the exam may vary in different years. Students take this exam in their final semester of enrollment. Where a student fails the exam (a score of less than 80), the exam may be retaken at the discretion of the examining committee. Students may take this exam a maximum of two times and only once during any given semester. If a student fails twice, they are required to terminate their MSW program.
More Information

Greater detail on the Master of Social Work program at the University of Oklahoma School of Social Work may be found in the School’s Graduate Program Bulletin. Complete application materials may be obtained from:

Office of Admissions
School of Social Work
University of Oklahoma
Norman, OK 73019
www.ou.edu/socialwork

Or contact:

Dr. Anthony Natale,
Graduate Program Coordinator
anatale@ou.edu

Or:

Mary L. Sandefer,
Admissions Secretary
(405) 325-8570
marylsand@ou.edu

For additional course descriptions please see the University of Oklahoma General Catalog. Please note that degree program requirements are subject to change.