Master of Social Work, MSW

The Master of Social Work (MSW) program prepares social workers for leadership in the profession and for advanced social work practice in a wide range of settings. Students choose from two specializations, both of which allow students to develop advanced skills to work with families and communities and advocate for social change. The two specializations of the program, clinical practice and leadership practice, teach students knowledge and skills to work with children, adults, older adults, families, small groups, organizations, and communities. The program provides students the opportunity to develop the competencies necessary for leadership in addressing current challenges.

The program has been continually accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1951. See the CSWE Assessment of Learning Outcomes for the MSW program on the School of Social Work website.

Master in Social Work Program Options

Options are available to complete the MSW full-time or part-time in Iowa City, Des Moines, and online, with applications reviewed annually. The Sioux City program is a three-year, part-time program to which students are admitted every three years. Applicants to any of the options, at any of the centers, complete the same application.

Regular Standing (54 s.h. Option)

Designed for individuals who have completed a degree in a discipline other than a CSWE-accredited social work degree program. Applicants apply for fall admission; the deadline is Feb. 1.

Advanced Standing (36 s.h. Option)

Designed for individuals who have completed the BA in social work or the BSW from a CSWE-accredited social work degree program. Applicants apply for summer admission; the deadline is Dec. 1.

MSW Goal

The goal of the MSW program is to prepare competent professionals for autonomous practice and leadership within the professional community, including advanced interventions at multiple system levels, supervision, program development, program administration, training, evaluation of practice, dissemination of new models of practice, and policy development.

Learning Outcomes

The School of Social Work learning outcomes are expressed as enduring understandings—concepts that have lasting value beyond the classroom and apply to every aspect of social work practice.

- Commitment to advance social justice and fight discrimination and inequity.
- Adherence to a high standard of ethics.
- Using a systemic perspective, understanding the interconnectedness of people and their environments, and the systems in which we operate.

Competencies

The curriculum is designed to address the following nine CSWE competencies for both generalist and advanced practitioners:

- demonstrate ethical and professional behavior;
- advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice;
- engage in anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) in practice;
- engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice;
- engage in policy practice;
- engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
- assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
- intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities; and
- evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Professional Association

Students and graduates of the social work program are eligible for membership in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world with 132,000 members. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies. The NASW Code of Ethics is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers.