Master of Social Work, M.S.W.

The Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) program prepares social workers for leadership in the profession and for advanced social work practice in a wide range of settings. The program’s general focus is on family systems and social change, both domestic and international. Primary program goals are met through a set of professional foundation requirements and advanced courses which enable students to understand the dynamics of human development and change; to understand the links between society’s structures and families; to acquire skills for working with individuals, families, small groups, and communities; and to learn how to enhance the responsiveness of human service organizations.

M.S.W. Goals

The goals of the M.S.W. program are to:

- prepare students to shape the profession’s future by providing education in family-based, community-based, and culturally competent practice approaches using the person-in-environment framework; and
- 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.

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 M.S.W. program.

Explore how social workers help individuals, groups, and families across their lifespans at the National Association of Social Workers website.

Master in Social Work Program Options

Options are available to complete the M.S.W. in Iowa City and Des Moines, Iowa, depending upon an applicant’s prior preparation. Applicants to the three-year programs in the Quad Cities (located in the Davenport/Bettendorf area on Iowa’s eastern border), in Sioux City, Iowa, or the hybrid (online) option. Applicants to any of the options, at any of the centers, complete the same application.

60 s.h. Option (Regular Standing)

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 February 1.

48 s.h. Option (Advanced Standing)

Designed for individuals who have completed the B.A. in social work or the B.S.W. from a CSWE-accredited social work degree program. Applicants apply for fall admission; the deadline is February 1.

41 s.h. Option (Accelerated Advanced Standing)

Designed for individuals who have completed the B.A. in social work or the B.S.W. from a CSWE-accredited social work degree program and who meet additional entrance criteria. Additional forms and written requirements are part of the application. Applicants apply for summer admission; the deadline is December 1.

M.S.W. 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.

Graduates of accredited M.S.W. programs may be eligible for membership in many specialized areas of practice, for example, associate membership in the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) upon fulfilling certain curriculum requirements at the graduate level. Courses are not automatically accepted; graduates need to demonstrate that specific courses meet the AAMFT’s requirements, usually by sending course outlines.