

# SOCIAL WORK

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Master of Social Work Program

5030 Cherry Street

(816) 235-1025

Fax: (816) 235-1062

soc-wk@umkc.edu

<https://seswps.umkc.edu/academics/social-work/index.html> (<https://seswps.umkc.edu/academics/social-work/>)

## Mailing Address:

University of Missouri-Kansas City

School of Social Work

5100 Rockhill Road

Kansas City, MO 64110-2499

**Director of Field Education:** Associate Teaching Professor Ile Haggins

**MSW Program Director:** Associate Teaching Professor Amy Simmons

Rosalyn Bertram, Ph.D., Professor (children, child welfare, youth and families, wraparound and multi-systemic collaborative strengths-based practice, evidence-based practice, program implementation and evaluation, systems of care, research)

Ile Haggins, MSW, LCSW, Associate Teaching Professor, Director of Field Education (practice, children and family, cultural diversity, and mental health)

Steven Onken, Ph.D., Social Work Chair, Associate Professor (culturally resonant, recovery-based, trauma-informed programs and systems of care, cross-system collaboration and development, complex needs, wellbeing, integrated supported living, marginalization)

Robert Prue, Ph.D., Associate Professor (social work research methods, open source and freely available software for social workers, interface of indigenous health and healing supports with mainstream, spirituality and social work, veterans' issues, post-traumatic stress)

Amy Simmons, MSW, LCSW, Associate Teaching Professor, MSW Program Director (community development, prevention, behavioral health, group practice, school social work, psychopathology)

## Department Description

The School of Social Work offers a program of study leading to the master's in social work degree and a professional career in social work. Started in 1999, the MSW program is the result of collaborative efforts by the University of Missouri System, UMKC and many social service agencies in the Kansas City metropolitan area. The MSW program received initial accreditation in May 2003 with reaffirmation of accreditation granted in 2015.

## Mission of the Master of Social Work

The mission of the Master of Social Work Program is to "Prepare competent, advanced generalist social work practitioners to meet the needs of multicultural diverse populations in a dynamic mid-western metropolitan context; to be culturally proficient, ethical leaders and service providers engaged in knowledge-driven, inter-professional, multi-systemic, community-based practice; who advocate for social and economic justice, enhance human wellbeing, and support individuals' capacity to address their own needs."

## Mission-derived goals of the School of Social Work are to:

- Demonstrate professional behavior and uphold the values and ethics of the profession that guide professional practice.
- Advance human rights and social, economic, and environment justice while actively engaging diversity and difference in all levels of practice.
- Engage in interdisciplinary scientific inquiry, through practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
- Implement practices to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate families, groups, organizations, and communities, while utilizing critical thinking, knowledge of theoretical frameworks, and evidence-based practices.

## Vision of the School of Social Work

UMKC School of Social Work will become a model urban, professional school recognized for its partnership within diverse communities to effectively collaborate and sustain a safe, more economically secure, and socially just quality of life.

## Career Implications

Why consider an advanced degree in social work? Above all, the degree is flexible and versatile. For example, social workers are employed in public social service agencies, nonprofit organizations, medical settings, schools, community-based clinics and residential settings. The social work perspective looks not only at individual thoughts, feelings and actions, but also at the social environment as a primary arena for opportunities for change. On behalf of the people they serve, social workers have strong interests in social policy and advocacy, as well as social science research and policy and program evaluation.

- Social workers have the right education, experience, and dedication to help people help themselves whenever and wherever they need it.
- Social workers help people in all stages of life, from children to the elderly, and from all situations from adoption to hospice care.
- Professional social workers are the nation's largest providers of mental health services.
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the need for social workers is expected to grow twice as fast as any other occupation, especially in gerontology, home healthcare, substance abuse, private social service agencies, and school social work (BLS, 2010).

## Program Description

The program educates Advanced Generalist Social Work practitioners for professional responsibilities at various levels with complex and dynamic human service organizations. To accommodate working students' schedules, many classes are scheduled for late afternoons, evenings and weekends.

Faculty members and students co-create empowering learning environments through group discussions, role play, experiential occurrences and readings that enable transformational learning.

The practice-oriented curriculum is focused on advanced generalist social work practice in an urban environment. The curriculum provides: theoretically based understanding to assess diverse human behaviors in varied social environments; skills for operating in a multidisciplinary agency and community environment; research methods with practical application to agency practice; and approaches to working with culturally diverse populations.

The full-time, regular MSW program offers a two-year, 60-credit curriculum combining classroom and field experience. For students who already have a B.S.W. degree, the full-time Advanced Standing program includes 36 credits during a spring or summer semester and one full-time year of coursework with a supervised field practicum. Students may attend the part-time program schedule, but must complete the MSW in four years.

The foundation year curriculum includes coursework in generalist social work practice, theory and skills, social policy, human behavior in the social environment, social work research and a generalist field practicum experience in a human service agency approximately 16 hours a week.

The concentration year curriculum focuses on advanced generalist methods within an urban context. The required curriculum includes courses in program evaluation, advance practice methods, and a capstone course (Integration Seminar). Under the guidance of their academic advisor and in light of their career plans, students select four electives with a requirement of at least one elective in Integrative content area and at least one elective in Advanced Methodological approaches to Social Work practice. Finally, a second field practicum for approximately 16 hours a week provides advanced generalist experience and supervision.

## Field Practicum

The practicum program uses agencies throughout the metropolitan area to offer experiences at both foundation and advanced levels. Students typically spend approximately two days in the field and are mentored by an MSW practitioner employed by the agency. Students spend a required number of hours in face-to-face contact with clients, in agency meetings, in individual or group supervision, and in the community. In some cases, students who already are social service employees can arrange to complete one year of their field placements at their own agencies. Practicum can also be completed in a student's human service oriented work site, provided the Director of Field Education approves the same.

## Admissions

The majority of applicants to MSW programs have a variety of undergraduate degrees. Some people have life or work experience in other fields and are ready for a career change. Others have worked in the human service field and are ready to pursue an MSW degree to advance in their careers.

- Applicants who hold a baccalaureate degree that, preferably, reflects a broad liberal arts base in the social, behavioral, or psychological sciences, or related disciplines, are encouraged to apply. The baccalaureate degree should be from an institution accredited in a manner accepted by UMKC.
- B.S.W. degrees from accredited programs may be considered for the advanced standing program if students have received a B.S.W. degree within the last five years.
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 is preferred. However, lower GPAs will be considered for provisional admission when combined with volunteer and work experience, or when there are extenuating circumstances.
- GRE is not required.

• **The UMKC application and School of Social Work application are both required. Applicants must provide narratives addressing the following:**

**a. Statement of Values and Ethics**

Attach a brief essay (2-5 typewritten, double-spaced pages) in which you address the following: The *NASW Code of Ethics* may be found at <https://www.socialworkers.org/about/ethics/code-of-ethics> (<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>)

- i. Discuss your purpose for pursuing a Master's in Social Work.
- ii. Compare and contrast your personal value framework with the *NASW Code of Ethics'* values and principles.
- iii. In light of the Code of Ethics, what human needs do you hope to address as a professional social worker?
- iv. In light of the Code of Ethics, how will you infuse all of the six ethical principles into your future social work practice?
- v. Describe a personal life experience that challenged your values and ethics. How did you respond to this challenge?

**b. Preparation for Professional Training**

Read the prompts below and provide complete answers including specific examples (2-5 typewritten, double-spaced pages).

- i. Please explain any particular difficulties or successes in your undergraduate academic career.
- ii. How would you evaluate your academic experience up to this point in time?
- iii. Identify how you manage personal and professional challenges in your life.
- iv. What social supports do you have in place (or can you put in place) to assist with managing work, family and academic commitments?
- v. Identify the areas in which you need further learning and growth.

• **Advanced Standing Only**

Please provide a 3-5 page typewritten, double-spaced response to the following:

- a. Provide an overview of your field practicum experiences.
- b. Describe lessons learned from your field experiences. Provide specific examples.
- c. How do you think these lessons-learned will affect your future social work field experiences?
- d. In relation to the social work profession, in what areas do you need to further your personal and professional growth?

• **Additional Information**

- a. Use the forms provided to supply three references. Include a person able to judge your potential for social work (a social worker who has supervised you, an employer, or field instructor) and a person able to judge your writing, critical thinking, and academic potential.
- b. While personal interviews are not required, the MSW Admissions Committee may request a meeting with an applicant. Applicants with questions about the program may attend public information sessions, which are scheduled once a month in the Social Work office. See website for details ([cas.umkc.edu/socialwork](http://cas.umkc.edu/socialwork) (<http://cas.umkc.edu/socialwork/>)).
- c. The program is inclusive and draws from a diverse applicant pool. Toward this end, program faculty members make regular community presentations to diverse groups. The program works with student organizations representing women, people of color, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people, international students, and students with disabilities. Individuals from diverse groups are encouraged to apply.
- d. For additional details, please refer to the Student Handbook pdf file at the School of Social Work website.
- e. UMKC University Application for Admission and its application fee are required. In addition you are required to submit all of the School of Social Work application material.

• **Application Checklist**

Please refer to the following checklist before sending materials:

- Application for Admission: Go to <https://www.umkc.edu/apply> (<https://www.umkc.edu/apply/>) to begin the online application process.
- All undergraduate and graduate transcripts.<sup>1</sup>
- Application fee
- Statement of Values and Ethics Narrative
- Preparation for Professional Training Narrative
- Advanced Standing Narrative (if applicable)
- Letters of Reference (3)

<sup>1</sup> **You must personally request transcripts from previous schools you have attended.** Requests for official transcripts should be made as soon as possible to ensure timely receipt of these documents. In addition, applicants who either currently attend or have attended UMKC must make a new request for transcripts to be reported to the School of Social Work. For transcript assistance, please call (816) 235-1125. Individuals with speech or hearing impairments may call Relay Missouri at (800) 735-2966 (TT) or (866) 735-2460 (voice).

## Application Deadlines

### Advanced Standing

- February 1 to begin courses in Summer Semester

## Regular Program

- March 1 to begin courses in Fall Semester

Note: All completed applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis

## Midwest Student Exchange Program (MSEP)

MSEP is an interstate initiative established by the Midwestern Higher Education Commission to increase educational opportunities for students in its member states. MSEP enables residents of Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska and North Dakota to enroll in designated institutions and selected programs outside their home state at reduced tuition levels.

## Student Advising

Upon admission into the program, students must:

1. Read student handbook available on our website: [cas.umkc.edu/socialwork](http://cas.umkc.edu/socialwork) (<http://cas.umkc.edu/socialwork/>)
2. Schedule a meeting with their academic advisor during the academic year to develop a plan of study.
3. Report any changes they make to the plan of study to their advisor.
4. Full-time students must meet the Director of Field Education and complete a field application form to select and finalize field placement.
5. Part-time students must meet the Director of Field Education at the end of their first year in the program, fill out the field application form and finalize field placement before the beginning of their second year in the program.

## Professional Status

After graduation, students are well prepared to accept professional social work positions with populations at-risk in a variety of human service, mental health, medical, or community settings.

Both Missouri and Kansas offer an exam to license specialist clinical social workers after two years of supervised practice in direct services. For social workers who plan to practice at this level, Kansas statutes require completion of graduate or continuing education courses in psychopathology and diagnostic skills. Students who are considering clinical licensure in Kansas are encouraged to take SOC-WK 5560 as an elective prior to graduation from the MSW program.

Both Missouri and Kansas offer the following licenses for professional social workers:

- LMSW - Licensed Master Social Worker
- LSCSW - Licensed Specialist Clinical Social Worker (Kansas)
- LCSW - Licensed Clinical Social Worker (Missouri)

Missouri also offers:

- LAMSW - Licensed Advanced Macro Social Worker

## Graduate

### Graduate Program:

- Master of Social Work