

MSW Handbook

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Graduate-level electives

Graduate-level electives are at the 3000 level or above. Courses that are 3000 or 4000-level will be open to both graduate and undergraduate students. Electives in the School of Social Work are listed in the General Catalog and are posted in MyUI before the start of each semester.

- MSW students are required to complete a minimum of 9 s.h. of graduate-level electives.
- Students select their graduate-level electives.
- Graduate-level elective courses outside of SSW can be taken with prior approval from the students' advisor when the student justifies how the course will benefit their educational and professional goals.

In this appendix, we have organized our electives into areas. Students are **NOT** required to select a specific area but may find the information in this guide helpful when selecting electives.

Planning for electives

It is important to understand:

- Many electives are offered once a year or, sometimes, every 2-3 years
- An elective may not be offered at all School of Social Work centers
- An elective may be cancelled due to low enrollment
- Many electives are offered during summer session only
- Academic advisers do not know whether an elective course will be offered prior to its posting on MyUI

Electives are chosen in consultation with their advisors; options include:

- School of Social Work courses (prefix SSW)
- Aging and Longevity Studies Program courses (prefix ASP) numbered 3000 and above (excluding courses already listed)
- PSQF:7354 Seminar: Experimental Approaches in Counseling Research arr. (1-3 s.h.)
- Electives listed below in the "Fields of Practice" section

With advisor permission, additional elective options are possible. Students completing a thesis are permitted to apply a maximum of 6 s.h. of [SSW:7272](#) Thesis toward their elective requirements.

Areas of Practice

Students have many opportunities to develop expertise with specific populations through electives. Electives are organized into several fields of practice that are divided into five broad areas: Aging and End-of-Life, Children and Families, Clinical Practice, Leadership and Social Justice Practice, and Higher Education.

Identified below are approved graduate-level elective courses in other disciplines.

School of Social Work Endorsement

- EDTL:4137 Introduction to Educating Gifted Students 3 s.h.
- EDTL:4900 Foundations of Special Education 3 s.h.
- EDTL:4940 Characteristics of Disabilities 3 s.h.

- EDTL:4950 Behavioral and Social Interventions 3 s.h.
- EPLS:3000 Foundations of Education 3 s.h.
- EPLS:5130 Sociology of Education 3 s.h.
- EPLS:6201 Foundations of School Administration 3 s.h.
- EPLS:6236 Special Education Administration 3 s.h.
- PSQF:4133 The Adolescent and Young Adult 3 s.h.
- PSQF:4136 Home/School/Community Partnerships 3 s.h.
- PSQF:6200 Educational Psychology 3 s.h.
- PSQF:6206 Advanced Child Development 3 s.h.

Higher Education and Research

- PSQF:4143 Introduction to Statistical Methods 3 s.h.
- PSQF:6215 Online Instruction: Design and Facilitation 3 s.h.
- PSQF:7385 Teaching and Learning in Higher Education 3 s.h.

For students completing their practicum with the Iowa LEND program at the Center for Disabilities and Development.

- EDTL: 4990 Interdisciplinary Issues in Disabilities 1-3 s.h.
- EDTL:7040 Advanced Topics in Teaching and Learning arr. 0-2 s.h.

Aging and Gerontological Social Work

See also the [Aging and Longevity Studies Certificate](#). Professors available to advise students interested in aging and gerontological social work:

- Mercedes Bern-Klug, Nadia Sabbagh Steinberg, May Guo, Yi Wang, and Dean Sara Sanders

Graduate-level elective courses:

ASP:3150	Psychology of Aging
ASP:3170	Health and Aging
SSW:3135/ASP:3135	Global Aging
SSW:3786/ASP:3786	Death & Dying: Issues Across the Life Span
SSW:5194	Social Work Practice in Health Care Settings
SSW:5200	Grief Work with Individuals and Families

End-of-Life Care

End-of-Life Care is provided in hospice programs and in hospital social work in pediatric and adult oncology, palliative care units, and other social work settings focused on the needs of individuals at the end of life, their families and bereaved individuals. End-of-life services are based on the values of the hospice movement, which include patient-directed treatment, services focused on the family as well as the patient, a focus on pain control and palliative care, a continuum of services available in the home and in inpatient settings, and integrated services provided by an interdisciplinary team and focused on medical, social, and spiritual needs.

Approved graduate-level elective courses:

SSW:3135	Global Aging
SSW:3786	Death & Dying: Issues Across the Life Span
SSW:5194	SW Practice in Health Care Settings
SSW:5200	Grief Work with Individuals and Families
SSW:6224	Spirituality and Ethics in Social Work Practice

Students are advised to focus their specialized clinical or leadership practicum placement to serve patients and families at any stage of the life cycle. Appropriate settings include hospice, palliative care, bereavement, or other setting related to end-of-life care.

Child Welfare Practice

Students interested in a continuum of services designed to ensure that children are safe and that families have the necessary support to care for their children successfully.

Approved graduate-level elective courses:

SSW:3729	Substance Use and Abuse
SSW:3796	Family Violence
SSW:3797	Child Welfare Policy and Practice
SSW:4155	Treatment of Substance Abuse and Co-occurring Disorders
SSW:4700	Motivational Interviewing in Diverse Application
SSW:5240	Trauma-Informed Family Practice
SSW:6237	Social Work Practice with Children, Youth & Families (not offered frequently)

Juvenile and Criminal Justice Practice

This area of practice helps prepare students interested in working with victim/survivors of abuse/violence and individuals and families involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

Approved graduate-level elective courses:

SSW:3729	Substance Use and Abuse
SSW:3796	Family Violence
SSW:4100	Social Work Practice in Criminal Justice
SSW:4155	Treatment of Substance Abuse and Co-occurring Disorders
SSW:4700	Motivational Interviewing in Diverse Application
SSW:5240	Trauma-Informed Family Practice

Mental Health Social Work

Approved graduate-level elective courses for students interested in developing their therapy or counseling skills:

SSW:3786	Death & Dying: Issues Across the Life Span
SSW:4700	Motivational Interviewing in Diverse Applications
SSW:5200	Grief Work with Individuals and Families
SSW:5240	Trauma-Informed Family Practice
SSW:5250	Resilience and Trauma-informed Interventions with Individuals
SSW:6234	Social Work Practice and Use of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
SSW:6238	Introduction to Play Therapy

Health Social Work

Approved graduate-level elective courses for students interested in healthcare social work:

SSW:3786	Death & Dying: Issues Across the Life Span
SSW:4700	Motivational Interviewing in Diverse Applications
SSW:5194	Social Work Practice in Health Care Settings (Not a therapy course)
SSW:5200	Grief Work with Individuals and Families
SSW:5240	Trauma-Informed Family Practice
SSW:6234	Social Work Practice and Use of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

Higher Education and Research

Students interested in applying to a PhD program, teaching at the college level, or research should consider the following courses.

Approved graduate-level elective courses:

SSW:7271	Individual Study (Research Project 1-3 s.h.) with consent of instructor
SSW:7803	Social Work Research Practicum (3 s.h.) with consent of instructor
SSW:7804	Thesis Writing Seminar (3 s. h.)
SSW:7806	Teaching Practicum (2 s. h.)
SSW:7820	Writing for Publication in the Social Sciences (3 s.h.)
PSQF:4143	Introduction to Statistical Methods (or equivalent) (3 s. h.)
PSQF:6215	Online Instruction: Design and Facilitation 3 s. h.
PSQF:7385	Teaching and Learning in Higher Education 3 s. h.
CLAS:5100	Practicum in College Teaching (1 s.h.)

Organizational and Program Administration

Students interested in developing mezzo and macro practice skills may consider courses in organizational practice.

Approved graduate-level elective courses:

SSW:6247	Non-profit Organizational Effectiveness I
SSW:6248	Non-profit Organizational Effectiveness II
SSW:6282	Grant Writing

Resilience and Trauma-Informed Practice

A focus on Resilience and Trauma-Informed Practice prepares students for competent trauma-informed practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in all service settings. Many studies document the widespread prevalence of trauma exposure and its lasting impact across the life course on all populations served by social workers. The intersection of socioeconomic status, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and national origin adds to the inherently complex impact of trauma exposure.

Approved graduate-level elective courses:

SSW:3796	Family Violence
SSW:3797	Child Welfare Policy and Practice
SSW:3900	Campus Sexual Assault: Policy, Prevention and Intervention
SSW:4155	Treatment of Substance Use and Co-Occurring Disorders
SSW:5200	Grief Work with Individuals and Families
SSW:5240	Trauma-Informed Family Practice
SSW:5250	Resilience and Trauma-informed Interventions with Individuals

Students are advised to focus their specialized clinical or leadership practicum placement to work with individuals or organizations where trauma informed perspective is operable.

School Social Work

Iowa School Social Work Endorsement

Social workers must be licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners to practice in schools. Information for the initial application for the Iowa School Social Work Endorsement is available at:

<http://www.boee.iowa.gov/licensure/apply.html> If you are interested in School Social Work Endorsement in other States, contact that State. Iowa's requirements may or may not fulfill other State's requirements.

The Educational Examiners Board has two licensing options for social workers:

Option 1: **School Social Work Endorsement.** The individual applying for this endorsement must be nominated by the University to the Iowa Department of Education for the School Social Work Endorsement. The curriculum required for this endorsement is detailed below.

Option 2: **Statement of Professional Recognition (SPR).** The special education director (or designee) of an area education agency or an administrator in a local school district can submit a letter to the Board of Education Examiners requesting that an SPR (statement of professional recognition) be issued.

The candidate for the **Statement of Professional Recognition** must have:

- An official transcript reflecting the master's degree (or PhD) in social work
- A license at the LMSW or LISW level from the Iowa Board of Social Work Examiners
- Documentation of completion of the human relations component.
- A temporary SPR (statement of professional recognition) can be issued for one school year for individuals that have not yet completed the human relations component or fulfilled the supervision requirement for a social work license. The individual must complete the human relations component by the end of the first year.
- Temporary SPR: A temporary SPR will be issued for one school year. An approved human relations course must be completed before the start of the next school year. The applicant must provide evidence that the human relations component has been fulfilled within the required time frame.

At first glance, it may appear that Option 2 is the least complicated route to school social work practice. However, this option has some disadvantages. The holder of an SPR can practice as a school social worker indefinitely. However, they cannot move on to leadership positions within education. To be eligible to take the courses needed for administrative endorsements, a person must hold an entry level license in education. In the past, school social workers had to return to school to complete a teaching license. The School Social Work Endorsement made school social workers equal members of the education community. The Endorsement serves as the entry-level education license for school social workers, allowing them to move on to leadership positions in education.

School Social Work Endorsement – 20 s. h. are required

Courses for the Endorsement are offered by the School of Social Work in cooperation with the College of Education and meet the Chapter 1 State Requirements for an Original School Social Worker Endorsement – Endorsement 15.3 (15). A Program Guide identifying the curriculum required for this endorsement is available [here](#). State requirements for licensure and endorsements are subject to change without notice, check with the educ-licensure@uiowa.edu for updated requirements. Course transfer and substitution may require syllabi or other documentation in addition to transcript.

Practicum Site – Practicum sites required to be at any of the Area Education Agencies in the State of Iowa, and other school districts by arrangement. Practicum must occur in school setting. Supervision of student must be under an experienced School Social Work practitioner/Licensed Social Worker to include experiences in assessment; direct services to children and families; consultation; staffing, community liaison and documentation; which leads to development of professional identity and disciplined use of self. If a person has served two years as a school social worker, the practicum experience can be waived. This experience must be documented when application for licensure is submitted.

Contact: ssw-dept@uiowa.edu to express interest and/or inquire with questions.

For additional information, admissions procedures, or advising referral, please contact:
educ-licensure@uiowa.edu

The Endorsement's home department is the College of Education, N201 Lindquist Center, Iowa City, IA 52242, 319-335-5359, <https://education.uiowa.edu/>

Professional Service License Information

Upon completion of course requirements, the process includes applying for the endorsement. Details and contact for process and signatures: <https://education.uiowa.edu/current-student-resources/professional-service-license->

[information](#)

Alcohol and Drug Counseling

Iowa Alcohol and Drug Counselor Certification

Students interested in developing expertise in substance use and abuse counseling are encouraged to take courses that will allow them to apply for the state of Iowa Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CADC). Students may apply for Temporary Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (tCADC) or, after graduation, the CADC. For more information, call the Iowa Board at 515-965-5509 or e-mail them at info@iowabc.org. For specific requirements, go to: <https://iowabc.org/credentials/cadc/>

Students preparing for the CADC must take a minimum of 150 clock hours in several areas. The Iowa Board of Certification determines whether a course or courses meet criteria for each area. These 150 clock hours may be a combination of college courses, trainings, and workshops. One semester hour equals 15 clock hours and one quarter hour equals 10 clock hours. A minimum grade of "C" must be earned or the course will be ineligible.

Contact:

Katie Hentges - Executive Director
2600 Grand Ave. Suite 114
Des Moines, IA 50312
515-965-5509
info@iowabc.org

This is accurate as of Spring 2025. Please refer to the resources available at:

<https://iowabc.org/credentials/cadc/>

Selective(s) for the CADC:

Counseling Theories & Techniques – Take 45 *clock* (not semester) hours

SSW:4700	Motivational Interviewing in Diverse Applications (3 s. h.)
SSW:6200	Development of Professional Use of Self
SSW:6300	Theory and Skills for working with Individuals and Families
SSW:7310	Clinical Practice I
SSW:7320	Clinical Practice II
SSW:7330	Clinical Practice III

Alcohol and Drug Specific – Take 45 clock hours

SSW:3729	Substance Use and Abuse (2-3 s. h.)
SSW:4155	Treatment of Substance Use and Co-Occurring Disorders (3 s. h.)

Special Populations – Take 6 clock hours

Requirement can be met through several SSW courses.

SSW:1200	Mental health Across the Lifespan
SSW:1800	Aging Matters: Introduction to Gerontology
SSW:2042	Intercultural Communication
SSW:2700	Introduction to Understanding Trauma and Resilience
SSW:3135	Global Aging
SSW:3712	Human Sexuality, Diversity, and Society

SSW:3786	Death/Dying: Issues Across the Life Span
SSW:3796	Family Violence
SSW:3847	Discrimination, Oppression, and Diversity
SSW:4100	Social Work in the Criminal Justice System
SSW:5200	Grief Work with Individuals and Families
SSW:5250	Resilience and Trauma-Informed Interventions with Individuals
SSW:6224	Spirituality and Ethics in Social Work

Counseling Ethics – Take 6 clock hours

Requirement can be met through several SSW courses.

SSW:6100	Thinking Like a Social Worker
SSW:6224	Spirituality and Ethics in Social Work
SSW:6600	Engaging with Evidence
SSW:7550	Program and Practice Evaluation

Racial/Ethnic – Take 3 clock hours

SSW:2042	Intercultural Communication
SSW:3847	Discrimination, Oppression, and Diversity
SSW:6500	Social, Economic and Environmental Justice I

Other Knowledge and Skill Competences-Take 45 clock hours. See Addendum II of the *Application Handbook*
<https://iowabc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/tCADC-CADC-IADC-IAADC-Handbook-Jan.-2022.pdf>

SSW:6234	SW Practice and the Use of the DSM (3 s. h.)
SSW:7271	Independent Study Course possibly on specific substance issues such as: Gambling, Gaming, Eating Disorders, Sex Addiction/Problem Sexual Behavior

For expectations re: practice and supervision, please refer to this: <https://iowabc.org/credentials/cadc/>

Combined Degrees and Certificates

Combined MSW/PhD Degree Program

The joint [MSW/PhD](#) is offered through the [School of Social Work](#). Apply to the Graduate College and indicate your preference for this program on your application.

Combined Degrees

Students interested in macro practice in an interdisciplinary field may pursue a credential in collaboration with another college. The course plan for these options are highly individualized. In addition to official combined degree programs listed here, students may concurrently seek another degree. **Contact:** ssw-admissions@uiowa.edu for more information. See also: <https://grad.admissions.uiowa.edu/academics/combined-degree-programs-social-work>

MSW and Business Combined Degree Program

<http://catalog.registrar.uiowa.edu/tippie-business/master-of-business-administration/>

The M.B.A. Program offers combined graduate degrees in collaboration with the School of Social Work (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences) with the M.B.A./M.S.W. programs. Separate application to each degree program is required. Applicants must be admitted to both programs before they may be admitted to the combined degree program.

MSW and Urban and Regional Planning Combined Degree Program

<https://sppa.uiowa.edu/future-students/mpa/combined-degrees>

This combined degree program is offered by the schools of [Social Work](#) and [School of Planning and Public Affairs](#); degrees are administered by the Graduate College. Apply to the Graduate College and indicate your preference for this program on your application.

Aging and Longevity Studies (ALS) Certificate

The certificate requires 12 s.h. of credit taken at the University of Iowa. For more information:

<https://socialwork.uiowa.edu/graduate/graduate-certificate-aging-longevity-studies>

Contact: Mercedes Bern-Klug, Coordinator of the Aging and Longevity Studies Program

Mercedes-bern-klug@uiowa.edu

View admission details and certificate course requirements in the General Catalog [here](#)