

Doctor of Social Work

Doctor of Social Work (D.S.W.)

The Doctor of Social Work Program aims to create a collaborative learning community that fosters scholars who are 1) leaders in anti-oppressive social work in both agency and community contexts, 2) experts in translational and implementation science, and 3) world-class teachers and mentors. An emphasis on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion provides context for the classes and serves as a central component of course content. The program is centered on developing leadership and administrative skills, while simultaneously preparing graduates capable of engaging with communities and translating the research base of the profession in order to help agencies to understand and implement the best practices found in the social work and social science literature. Finally, recognizing that many students pursuing a DSW wish to teach, a significant percentage of our courses are devoted to the theory and practice of teaching, enabling graduates to enter clinical faculty roles prepared to conduct their own classes, contribute to curricular development, and serve as skilled mentors and advisors to students.

Program Highlights

- A focus on leadership, teaching, and implementation science.
- An advanced social work degree that builds skills designed to create more diverse, equitable and inclusive programs and communities.
- The development of a sophisticated understanding of best practices in social work and how to apply them in real world contexts.
- Courses that build an understanding of advanced social work practice in agency and community settings.
- Collaborative learning environments in a fully online setting.
- The development of relationships with student colleagues from diverse geographic areas of the US and beyond.
- Advising and mentorship from admission to program completion.
- Creative and applied Capstone Projects which serve as final projects for the doctorate.

Consider Our Program

The online D.S.W. program (<https://socwel.ku.edu/dsw/>) gives current social workers the opportunity to further advance their skills with coursework of practice at the leadership or management level. While earning your D.S.W. at KU, you will build a framework of leadership best practices, develop a deep understanding of research implementation, and takeaway critical learning theories to the social work classroom. The program offers an affordable doctorate in social work that will allow working professionals the opportunity to become leaders in their field and is designed to allow students the capacity to maintain their employment throughout. Job prospects for D.S.W. applicants in higher education and in agency and government leadership are strong and predicted to grow.

Curriculum

D.S.W. courses prepare students as practitioner-scholars leadership and pedagogy skills, and the ability to translate scientific research into practice at various levels.

- The Advanced Practice course grounds students in an understanding of the D.S.W., their own identity as an advanced leader, and the practice contexts D.S.W. level practitioners encounter in their work lives.

- The Leadership courses build skills and knowledge in program development and design, program budgeting and finance, leadership and management, and community engaged macro social work practice.
- The Pedagogy courses teach students about adult centered learning, the development of syllabi, classes, assignments, and courses as well as an understanding of how to teach, mentor and advise students from diverse backgrounds and with diverse learning styles.
- The Research and Inquiry classes teach students about the basics of applied social research design, how to understand and utilize the best practice literature to solve problems and design programs and how to translate and implement scientific practices and knowledge in real world settings.

Admissions Criteria and Requirements

Criteria used in judging applications include the applicant's potential for excellence in academic performance, professional practice experience, and potential for contributions to social work teaching, leadership, and the translation of knowledge into practice.

Required

- A master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program.
- Minimum of three (3) years of clinical or macro practice experience beyond the master's degree in social work.
- International candidates would need to provide evidence of English language proficiency through the TOEFL exam or the Applied English Center. Any non-native English speaker applying to an online degree or certificate program must achieve Full Proficiency to be eligible for graduate admission. Please consult the English Proficiency Requirements for Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/english-proficiency-international-students/>).

Preferred

- Undergraduate GPA of 3.2 or above on a 4.0 scale.
- Master of Social Work GPA of 3.5 or above on a 4.0 scale .
- Social work licensure is a preferred qualification but not required.
- The program would seek candidates who evidence strong oral and written communication skills, a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, leadership potential, and an interest in expanding their knowledge of leadership, pedagogy, and the implementation of evidence-based approaches in practice settings.

Application Timeline and Procedures

D.S.W. Program admissions occur on a yearly basis. Applications open in October of the year prior to the commencement of classes and close on February 1 of that year. Applications are not reviewed until all materials are received and late applications are not accepted.

Learn more about the admission process at <https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply> (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>)

International Students

International students are encouraged to apply. For more information about international student applications and resources and regulations contact International Support Services (<http://www.iss.ku.edu/>) and the Applied English Center (<https://aec.ku.edu/>).

The program (<https://socwel.ku.edu/dsw/>) consists of 42 credit hours including the development of a final Capstone Project.

Courses fall into five domains:

- Ethical & Historical Frameworks (3 hours)
- Leadership & Administrative Practice Knowledge, Theories, and Skills (15 hours)
- Research & Inquiry (9 hours)
- Pedagogy & Instruction (9 hours)
- Capstone Portfolio Seminars (6 hours)

Students must complete all of these courses successfully with a GPA of at least a 3.0. All courses are required and there are no electives.

To meet the requirements of doctoral education in this practice degree, the D.S.W. program requires the successful completion of a Capstone Project under the supervision of a Capstone Chair. Because the D.S.W. is not a research degree, the emphasis is not on conducting original empirical research and demonstrating proficiency in research design and analytical methodologies. Rather, in the practice-centered D.S.W. degree, the emphasis is on understanding of evidence-based academic literature in a particular area of social work practice and policy and the demonstration of knowledge, skills, and values in the implementation of those practices in existing community or agency practice settings. The Capstone project can take any number of forms, including but not limited to the following: A community change initiative, a pilot study, intervention development and evaluation, measurement development for outcomes evaluation, program evaluation, evaluation of a clinical practice model, or quality improvement related to practice, organizations, or community services.

Successful defense of the Capstone Project Proposal serves as the Oral Exam and the successful defense of the final Capstone Projects is required to meet Graduate School requirements. The Capstone is evaluated by a Capstone Committee made up of members of the School of Social Welfare faculty. Courses may be taken on a 2-, 3-, or 4-year basis, but all classes, including the defense, must be completed in 4 years.

Code	Title	Hours
D.S.W. Courses		
SW 920	Introduction to Advanced Social Work Practice	3
SW 921	Evidence Informed Leadership and Management	3
SW 922	Fundamentals of Applied Research	3
SW 923	Funding Human Services and Social Change: Financial Management and Budgeting	3
SW 924	Assessing and Using Evidence to Design and Improve Multi-level Interventions in Social Work	3
SW 925	Integrative and Critical Approaches within Educational Theory and Pedagogy	3
SW 926	Capstone Seminar 1	1.5
SW 927	Human Service Program Development and Design	3
SW 928	Diversity and Accessibility in Curriculum Design and Development	3
SW 929	Understanding Translational and Implementation Science	3
SW 930	Capstone Seminar 2 & Comprehensive Oral Exam	1.5
SW 931	Community Engagement and Advocacy	3
SW 932	Grantwriting	1.5

SW 933	Creating Social Momentum Through Public Communication	1.5
SW 934	Advising, Mentoring, and Supervision	3
SW 935	Capstone Seminar 3	3

D.S.W. Degree Plan

42 hours are required for the degree.

Students should work with the Program Director and their academic advisor for enrollment guidance for part-time plans of study.

Year 1

Fall	Hours Spring	Hours Summer	Hours
SW 920	3 SW 923	3 SW 926	1.5
SW 921	3 SW 924	3	
SW 922	3 SW 925	3	
9		9	1.5

Year 2

Fall	Hours Spring	Hours Summer	Hours
SW 927	3 SW 931	3 SW 935	3
SW 928	3 SW 932	1.5	
SW 929	3 SW 933	1.5	
SW 930 (winter term)	1.5 SW 934	3	
10.5		9	3

Total Hours 42