

# MSW

## Master of **Social Work**



## **Information Packet**

2024-2025



UNION UNIVERSITY  
**School of Social Work**



### About the School of Social Work

Social Work is about helping people-children, families, older adults, and whole communities. The social work program prepares students for entry level professional positions in a diversity of public and private settings, including child advocacy and welfare, children and youth counseling, school social work, medical social work, church social work, missions, foster care and adoptions, geriatric social work, and mental health.

The program prepares students to empower people, particularly those who are vulnerable, to achieve a better "fit" with their world and to help the world to be more responsive to the needs of people. The program emphasizes the importance of a liberal arts foundation and of Christian and social work values that promote social and economic justice.

The mission of the Union University Master of Social Work program is to prepare competent and effective professionals for leadership in advanced practice. In a context of Christian higher education, the program fosters compassionate service, promotes social and economic justice, and equips students for excellence in social work practice.

### Accreditation:

The Master of Social Work program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Union University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

### About Union University

A private, Christian, four-year, coeducational, liberal arts-based university offering bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees.

Founded in 1823, Union is the oldest institution affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Located in Jackson, Tennessee, Union is approximately 80 miles east of Memphis and 120 miles west of Nashville. Union also has extension campuses in Memphis and Hendersonville, Tennessee.

Our Mission: Union University provides Christ-centered education that promotes excellence and character development in service to Church and society.



## *From the Desk of the Dean*

We are excited that you are looking at the School of Social Work at Union University. Our Christian commitment allows us to offer an integration of faith and social work practice. Students, faculty, and staff work collaboratively in a positive and supportive learning environment. An ecological and justice perspective exposes learners to a holistic approach in working with vulnerable persons.

Faculty members bring a variety of professional experiences and expertise to the classroom setting and a challenging curriculum encourages students to engage with peers and professors through in-person and synchronous online learning options.

The School of Social Work meets the needs of students by offering in-person full-time, part-time, and Advanced Standing options on both the Jackson and Germantown campuses as well as synchronous online options. In-person classes meet in the evenings, one to two nights a week to allow for employment and internships during the day.

A sense of community is built as classes are small thus providing students ample space to freely engage while practicing skills that transfer to real world practice in internship and work settings. Students learn best practices, professional competencies, and ethical decision-making skills that further enhance work with clients whether at a micro, mezzo, or macro level.

The faculty and staff in the School of Social Work would be honored to work with you on your goal of obtaining your MSW.

Please let us know how we can be of further service.

Nita Mehr, Ph.D., LCSW  
Dean, School of Social Work



## Admissions Requirements

### Advanced Standing Program

- Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) or Bachelor of Science in Social Work degree from an accredited School of Social Work
- 3.0 GPA or above
- No GRE Requirements
- Can begin in the fall, spring, or summer

### Traditional Standing Program

- Undergraduate degree from a regionally accredited university
- 2.65 GPA or above
- No GRE Requirements
- Can begin in the fall, spring, or summer

## Application Requirements

- Complete the online application process. This can be found at [www.uu.edu/msw](http://www.uu.edu/msw).  
The application process includes:

- 3 Recommendations (all recommendations complete an online form):
  - One previous professor/instructor (if you graduated within the last 3 years)
  - One current/previous supervisor
  - Final recommendation can be an additional professor or supervisor
- \*\* For BSW students graduating within 12 months, one recommendation must be your field instructor.
- Admissions Essay (follow instructions outlined in application)
- Payment of \$25 application fee
- Submit your transcript from any university that you graduated from.

Send via postal mail to:

Union University School of Social Work  
UU 1868  
1050 Union University Drive  
Jackson, TN 38305

Send via email to [aerichardson@uu.edu](mailto:aerichardson@uu.edu)

- Interviews can be scheduled at the discretion of the admissions committee.

## Advanced Standing Program

- 33 required credit hours (21 hours of core course work + 12 hours of electives)
- Students have two time-frames in which to complete the program: 1 year or 2 years (see course schedules below)
- 600 field placement hours (begins in August and continues through May)

### 1 Year Course Plan

Fall:

SW 605: Psychopathology  
SW 631: Practice & Program Evaluation  
SW 650: Advanced Practice with  
Individuals and Families  
SW 690: Field III

Spring:

SW 623: Theory & Ethics for Advanced  
Practice  
SW 660: Advanced Practice in  
Community Development  
SW 691: Field IV

**\*\*12 hours of electives can be  
taken in Summer or during  
traditional Fall/Spring semesters.**

### 2 Year Course Plan

Fall I:

SW 605: Psychopathology  
SW 650: Advanced Practice with  
Individuals and Families

Spring I:

SW 660: Advanced Practice in  
Community Development  
Elective

Fall II:

SW 631: Practice & Program Evaluation  
SW 690: Field III

Spring II:

SW 623: Theory & Ethics for Advanced  
Practice  
SW 691: Field IV

**\*\*12 hours of electives can be  
taken in Summer or during  
traditional Fall/Spring semesters.**

## Traditional Standing Program

60 required credit hours (51 hours of core course work + 9 hours of electives)

Students have three time-frames in which to complete the program: 2 years, 2.5 years, or 3 years (see course schedules below)

900 field placement hours (two separate placements):

- First placement: 300 hours (Spring of first year in the program)
- Second placement: 600 hours (begins in August of year 2 and continues through May)

2 Year Course Plan	2.5 Year Course Plan (Spring Start Only)	3 Year Course Plan
<p>Fall I:</p> <p>SW 500: HBSE I: Theoretical Foundations SW 510: Social Justice &amp; Social Welfare SW 520: Practice I: Communities SW 521: Foundations for SW Practice SW 590: Field I</p> <p>Spring I:</p> <p>SW 501: HBSE II: Assessment through the Lifespan SW 530: Practice II: Individuals &amp; Families SW 535: Policy Analysis SW 540: Practice III: Social Work with Groups SW 591: Field II</p> <p>Fall II:</p> <p>SW 605: Psychopathology SW 631: Practice &amp; Program Evaluation SW 650: Advanced Practice with Individuals and Families SW 690: Field III</p> <p>Spring II:</p> <p>SW 623: Theory &amp; Ethics for Advanced Practice SW 660: Advanced Practice in Community Development SW 691: Field IV</p> <p><b>**9 hours of electives can be taken in Summer or during traditional Fall/Spring semesters.</b></p>	<p>Spring I:</p> <p>SW 500: HBSE I: Theoretical Foundations SW 530: Practice II: Individuals and Families SW 535: Policy Analysis and Advocacy</p> <p>Summer I:</p> <p>SW 521 Foundations for Research</p> <p>Fall I:</p> <p>SW 501: HBSE II: Assessment Through the Lifespan SW 510: Social Justice and Social Welfare SW 520: Practice I: Communities and Organizations SW 590: Field I</p> <p>Spring II:</p> <p>SW 540: Practice III: Social Work with Groups SW 591: Field II Social Work Elective</p> <p>Fall II:</p> <p>SW 605: Psychopathology SW 631: Practice and Program Evaluation SW 650: Advanced Practice with Individuals and Families SW 690 Field III</p> <p>Spring III:</p> <p>SW 623: Theory &amp; Ethics for Advanced Practice SW 660: Advanced Practice in Community Dev/Admin SW 691: Field IV</p> <p><b>**9 hours of electives can be taken in Summer or during traditional Fall/Spring semesters.</b></p>	<p>Fall I:</p> <p>SW 500: HBSE I: Theoretical Foundations SW 510: Social Justice &amp; Social Welfare SW 521: Foundations for SW Practice</p> <p>Spring I:</p> <p>SW 501: HBSE II: Assessment through the Lifespan SW 535: Policy Analysis SW 530: Practice II: Individuals &amp; Families</p> <p>Fall II:</p> <p>SW 605: Psychopathology SW 520: Practice I: Communities SW 590: Field II</p> <p>Spring II:</p> <p>SW 540: Practice III: Social Work with Groups SW 591: Field III</p> <p>Fall III:</p> <p>SW 631: Practice &amp; Program Evaluation SW 650: Advanced Practice with Individuals and Families SW 690: Field III</p> <p>Spring III:</p> <p>SW 623: Theory &amp; Ethics for Advanced Practice SW 660: Advanced Practice in Community Development SW 691: Field IV</p> <p><b>**9 hours of electives can be taken in Summer or during traditional Fall/Spring semesters.</b></p>

# Trauma Studies Graduate Certificate

Everyone is subject to trauma and no one is immune to the impact of trauma. Trauma has a lasting impact that not only affects individuals and families, but also affects communities. Trauma adversely affects relationships, is a contributing factor in mental health issues and substance abuse, is highly responsible for incidents of domestic violence and child abuse, and is a catalyst for adjustment issues and poor coping skills. Ultimately, everyone pays the price when a community produces multi-generations of people with untreated trauma.

Most individuals, families, and communities do not have the necessary skills or resources to adequately cope with recurring or chronic exposure to trauma, which results in a perpetual cycle of crises that stunts optimal growth and development in all areas of an individual's life.

Despite the devastating impacts of trauma, there are effective evidence based trauma-specific interventions for treating trauma. These interventions in combination with a trauma-informed care model offer children, families, and communities impacted by trauma the greatest potential for learning to manage the side effects related to trauma and to reach their optimal potential.

**Union University School of Social Work's Trauma Studies Graduate Certificate** (TSGC) is designed for currently admitted MSW students and will provide students with specialized trauma focused skills and knowledge that will enable them to effectively practice across various settings with individuals, families, and communities heavily impacted by trauma.

## Prerequisites:

- Currently admitted MSW student
- Submission of Trauma Studies Graduate Certificate Application

## Course and Field Placement Requirements:

The TSGC requires **18 credit hours of graduate course work**. Students earning the TSGC must completed 12 elective credit hours specifically designated as trauma specific and 6 credit hours in a field placement with trauma-focused learning outcomes (i.e., learning tasks are connected to a trauma perspective regardless of the practice setting).

1. Trauma Electives (12 credit hours). All students seeking the Trauma Studies Graduate Certificate (TSGC) must take \*SW 602 Foundations of Trauma, as an elective. This course provides fundamental knowledge and theory regarding different types of trauma, including its neurobiology, as well as the systemic impact of chronic trauma exposure. All TSGC students must also complete three additional trauma-specific electives, for a total of 12 credit hours.

#### TSGC Electives:

- SW 523 TF-CBT
  - SW 525 Traumatic Grief and Loss
  - SW 552 Addictions
  - SW 553 Social Work Services in Schools
  - SW 554 Clinical Social Work in Healthcare
  - SW 585-1 Trauma-Informed Care and Communities
  - SW 585-2 Human Trafficking
  - SW 585-3 Criminal Justice & Social Work
  - SW 602 Foundations of Trauma\*
  - SW 612 Crisis Intervention
- 
- Field Practice (6 credit hours). TSGC students must have a specialist year field placement where they will gain exposure to working with or on behalf of populations affected by trauma. Students must work with their field instructor at their assigned agency to develop specific learning outcomes/goals that are specifically connected to a trauma perspective. Students not yet in field (SW 690 & SW 691) will not complete this step until they enter their specialist field placement.

## Application Process

- Students will receive information about the TSGC at the time of their admission to the MSW program.
- To pursue this certificate, advance standing students must submit a TSGC departmental application at the time of registration (Summer/Fall semester).
- Students enrolled in the 2, 2.5, or 3 year MSW program must submit a TSGC departmental application no later than the Spring semester of year one.

Upon review and approval Dr. Matthews will send a formal confirmation to the student's Union email, confirming approval of their TSGC application and course plan. (The student's MSW advisor will also be made aware of the student's approval for the TSGC and provided a copy of the student's course plan)

Please forward all questions and concerns regarding this certification to Dr. Katrinna Matthews ([kmatthews@uu.edu](mailto:kmatthews@uu.edu)).



# Alumni Perspective

“Social Work is showing empathy to the individuals that I come into contact with, it is offering hope to those who may have never had any hope, it is empowering individuals to chase after their goals, it is caring for those who have been left behind by others and the knowledge that I might be the first person in their life to genuinely care about their story and their future.”

**Dustin Roberson, MSW ('17)**

## Tuition Costs:

Program cost: \$655 per credit hour plus additional fees

Field Fee: \$100 per semester that a student is enrolled in a Field course

Licensure Prep Course: \$145 per semester in the final year of the program

## Financial Aid:

The School of Social Work does not offer scholarships for the MSW Program. Students primarily fund the program through federal student loans.

Union University Financial Aid Phone Number: (731) 661-6582

To apply for financial aid, follow these steps:

Step 1: Complete your Program of Study application for admission (Students must be officially accepted in their Program of Study before any aid can be processed).

Step 2: Complete the FAFSA. Here's where to find more information on the FAFSA and Union:

<https://www.uu.edu/fafsa/>

Step 3: Submit Required Documents.

Step 4: If you will be receiving aid from outside sources, you must complete the Documentation of Outside Assistance

Step 5: Receive your Award Letter.

Step 6: Explore additional sources of grants and loans. Some employers offer tuition assistance as well.

Step 7: Manage your awards.

## Field Placement Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is a Field Placement?**

A Field Placement is an opportunity for students to take the knowledge gained in the classroom and put it into practice. Field is a required course in the MSW Program.

### **When do Advanced Standing students complete the field placement?**

For students in the Advanced Standing program, the field experience is completed during the academic year that the student will graduate in. For Advanced Standing 1-year program, the student completes the Field Placement while taking the full course load. For Advanced Standing 2-year students, the field placement is completed during the second year of the program. Students are required to spend 600 hours in their internship.

### **When do Traditional MSW students complete the field placement?**

Students in the Traditional MSW program complete two field placements. The first placement is 300 hours and the second is 600 hours. For students in the 2-year program, the first placement is completed in the spring of the first year of the program. The second field placement is completed over the course of the second full academic year of the program. For students in the 3-year program, the first placement takes place spring semester in the second year. The second placement is completed over the course of then third full academic year of the program.

### **Can the field placement be arranged for evening and/or weekend hours?**

The School of Social Work does have partnerships with agencies that have non-traditional hours; however, those placements are very limited and are highly competitive. Most students will complete their placement during the traditional hours of 8:00-5:00.

Students should plan to be in their placement for 16-20 hours per week when supervision is available, which for most students means during traditional work hours.

### **Do students have to set up their own field placement?**

No. Students will meet with the MSW Field Director prior to starting their field placement to determine where the student will complete their field. The Field Director will determine which agencies might be a good fit for the student and contact those agencies directly.

After contacting the agencies, the Field Director will instruct the student to set up a time to interview with the agency. After the interview, the student and the Field Director will work together to decide where the best field placement will be.

### **Are there field placement agencies that provide stipends to students?**

It is uncommon for stipends to be provided to students by agencies as the primary focus is educationally-based. However, there are some agencies that will provide stipends and this can be discussed with the MSW Field Director when reviewing placement options.

### **Can students complete their field placement at their place of employment?**

Social work field placements are typically educationally focused and unpaid experiences. However, under some circumstances paid employment may be considered. Employment-based placements are an exception to the program's standard practice, which is that field placements should be separate from employment. Students may request the Employment-Based Field Placement Application from the MSW Field Director and once complete, consult with the Field Director to determine if this is an option.

The Field Director reserves the right to approve field placements on site of paid-employment based upon a pre- approved set of guidelines.

## Dual Degree Opportunities

The School of Social Work is excited to be able to offer two dual degree opportunities for our MSW students (Students must apply and be accepted into both programs):

### - MSW/Master of Business Administration:

Combining the MBA with the MSW provides students with the opportunity to either simultaneously or post graduate, obtain two versatile and valuable degrees. In today's competitive market, having an MBA in addition to an MSW degree equips individuals with the competitive edge they need to succeed in both the world of social work and business. You can earn both of your degrees from a prestigious university, knowing you are receiving a quality education. The Union MBA is one of nine MBA programs which has the highest level accreditation, AACSB, has an evangelical faith affiliation, and reports that faith affiliation has a significant impact on our program.

### - MSW/Master of Christian Studies:

The Master of Christian Studies (MCS) is designed especially for bi-vocational pastors, missionaries, church planters, foreign nationals planting ethnic churches in the U.S. and church staff members. Laypersons who want to be better equipped biblically will also benefit from the program. Combining the MSW with the MCS is great for students who are considering ministerial vocations or Christian Counseling.

#### **MSW/MBA**

As a dual degree student, you will complete the full MSW Program core coursework, which is 51 hours of core coursework for traditional standing students and 33 hours for advanced standing students. Three of your core courses for the MBA program count as the electives for the MSW program (9 hours).

The MBA program counts 12 hours of your MSW core coursework as the electives you would take for the MBA program.

The traditional MBA requires 36 hours, but since you count 12 hours of your MSW coursework as your electives, you will take 24 hours of MBA coursework (plus the Graduate Business Foundations course for non-Business undergraduate degree students).

For traditional MSW students, the total number of hours required to complete the MSW/MBA dual degrees is 75 hours. For Advanced Standing MSW students, the total number of hours required to complete the MSW/MBA dual degrees is 51 hours.

#### **MSW/MCS**

As a dual degree student, you will complete the full MSW Program core coursework, which is 51 hours of core coursework for traditional standing students and 33 hours for advanced standing students. Students will take TWO electives from each program (MSW and MCS)

The traditional MCS requires 36 hours, but since you only take two elective courses instead of three, the number of MCS hours is 33.

For traditional MSW students, the total number of hours required to complete the MSW/MCS dual degrees is 90 hours.

For Advanced Standing MSW students, the total number of hours required to complete the MSW/MCS dual degrees is 63 hours.



## MSW Program Frequently Asked Questions

### **Does Union offer a fully online MSW Program?**

Yes, both the Advanced Standing and Traditional standing programs can be completed in an online format where classes happen via Zoom.

### **Can I tour the Campus and the School of Social Work?**

Yes! We encourage students to come to meet with us on campus (either Jackson or Germantown). During your visit, we will discuss the program that you are interested in, introduce you to any faculty that are on campus, and give you a tour to show you the different areas that will be important to you as a student in the MSW Program.

### **How selective is the MSW Program admissions process?**

The Union MSW program is continuing to grow each year, which means each year, admission to the program because more and more competitive. Our Admissions Committee strives to admit the strongest applicants into the MSW Program based upon the strength of the application and the interview process.

As the admissions process becomes more competitive, the priority registration deadline becomes more crucial for those who are seeking admission into the program.

### **Can I transfer courses from another graduate MSW program into the Union MSW program?**

Courses that can be transferred in are considered on a case by case basis. The highest number of hours that can be transferred in would be 9 hours. These decisions will be handled by the MSW Program Director.

### **Is it possible to waive some of the academic requirements for students with many years of experience in the field?**

No, our accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education, does not permit life experience to be counted for course credit.

### **How large are the classes in the program?**

Depending on the course, class sizes range from 10-30 students.

### **Can I get financial aid?**

The only form of financial aid that we offer is through student loans. Students can apply for these loans through the FAFSA.

### **Is there graduate housing?**

Yes. On the Jackson campus, Union offers apartment style dormitories for graduate students.



## Alumni Perspective

“The Union slogan – Excellence Driven, Christ-Centered, People Focused, Future Directed, could not have proven to be more true. From the atmosphere on campus to the professors in the classroom, I found my experience at Union to be rich in each of those ideals. My professors cared about me as a person, they pointed me to Christ and encouraged me walk in faith toward the future God had for me in the profession of social work.”

**Debbie Bellinghausen ( '20)**

# Contact Us

MSW Program office hours are from 8:00-4:30 (CST) on Monday-Friday.



Program Coordinator for  
Jackson and Germantown  
Andrea Richardson  
aerichardson@uu.edu  
731.661.5388



Director of Marketing &  
Continued Education  
Stephanie Townsend, BSW  
stownsensend@uu.edu  
901.312.1945



Check out our website at [www.uu.edu/msw](http://www.uu.edu/msw).



Facebook: Union University School of Social



Work Instagram: @uusocialwork



UNION UNIVERSITY  
**School of Social Work**