

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
(FAQS)

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Marilyn Younger Conley School of Social Work

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Meet our Faculty



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Does Brescia University have a brick-and-mortar building?

Yes. Brescia University was founded by the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph in 1950. Its origins are in Mount Saint Joseph Junior College for Women, established at Maple Mount, Kentucky, in 1925. Between 1925 and 1950, coeducational extension courses in Owensboro led to the creation of a second campus and, after 1949, consolidation of the two campuses at the present site of Brescia University.



You are a Catholic University. Does the MSW program have a religious focus?

While Brescia University is a [Catholic](#), [liberal arts](#) institution founded in the [Ursuline tradition](#) of personal and social transformation through education, the focus of the MSW program is generalist and advanced generalist practice with no specific religious affiliation. We welcome people from all religious and spiritual traditions.

I sometimes feel isolated in distance education. How can I feel more connected to the program, the faculty, and the students?



Brescia University's School of Social Work makes every effort to ensure our online students feel just as much a part of campus life as on-ground students. Students are engaged in a variety of ways including:

- All online classes are conducted via a live virtual classroom, including webcams and microphones, so students see and hear the instructor and other students.
- On campus activities such as Social Work Club meetings are broadcast as live podcasts, allowing online students to interact in real time. In addition, the Social Work Program has a popular Facebook page.
- Online students are invited to participate in the Social Work Honor Society, Phi Alpha.
- Classes include Discussion Board assignments. These discussions aren't simply one-time postings as they require students to respond to the postings of other students, resulting in dialogue that allows students to interact outside of the classroom setting.
- Being in a cohort helps students to develop strong, collegial relationships. Students often communicate with each other outside of class.
- As a testament to the bonds forged between students, faculty and the university, many online Social Work graduates travel to Brescia's campus for graduation activities and

commencement, which is live-streamed so all students can be connected, even if they can't physically attend.

I took Research as a BSW student about 8 or 9 years ago. Do I really have to take it again?

Generally, Baccalaureate social work graduates who enter the MSW program will not be required to repeat what has been achieved in a BSW program. Students who have earned a grade of B or higher in the following courses from a CSWE-accredited program within the past 10 years may request a waiver of these course requirements for the MSW degree:

- Human Behavior in the Social Environment
- Social Welfare Policy Practice
- Research Methods.

The student should submit a written request to the MSW Program Director to waive one or more of these generalist courses. The student should attach a copy of the syllabus which clearly identifies the institution and should submit proof of the grade earned. A graduate elective course must be taken for each course that is waived. Thus, waiving a course does not change the overall number of credits required for graduation.

Does Brescia hold an actual graduation ceremony for online students?



Brescia University holds both a Baccalaureate Ceremony and Graduation Ceremony. Traditionally, Baccalaureate is held at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Owensboro, Kentucky, just a few block from campus, and graduation commencement is held at the Owensboro River Park Center, also very close to campus. In addition, social work faculty and local BSW and MSW students are on campus the Friday before commencement to welcome graduates who have travelled to Owensboro for graduation, conducting tours of the campus and hosting a reception for graduates and their families. All students are given the schedule of events, and encouraged to attend.

Do all courses require scheduled chats?

Yes. All course work required for MSW degree completion requires students to attend weekly live chats which are held in the evenings.

***I've just been admitted to the program. [Yay!!!].
What do I need to do next?***

After paying your deposit, the first thing you should do is contact your advisor and set up a time for a virtual, face-to-face meeting to get to know each other. Your advisor will help you get registered for the Fall Semester. If you still need to take Introduction to Social Work or Statistics, make sure you do that during the summer months. Brescia University will be offering those courses in the summer for your convenience. Submit a copy of a non-expired photo ID to your advisor. You will be notified when it is time to register for classes. Information about how you will receive textbooks will be forthcoming. You will also need to attend an information session about finding a Field Placement.



I have a criminal record. If someone finds out, will I be dismissed from the program?



A student will not be dismissed from the program due to a criminal record that has been finally adjudicated in a court of law, unless the court has sanctioned orders which would preclude the student from participating in any aspect of the degree program, including but not limited to Field Practicum Requirements.

It should be noted that prospective Field Agencies may have policies in place which prohibit students with criminal records from serving as interns. As such, it is very important that students be upfront and honest regarding

criminal records.

How long will it take me to finish the MSW program?

For students entering the MSW program with undergraduate degrees other than the BSW, 60 credit hours will be required to complete the degree, which can be done in 2 years.

Students who qualify for Advanced Standing will require 30 credit hours. This can be accomplished in one year.

What are the requirements for Advanced Standing?

Students who have earned a BSW from a CSWE-accredited program within five years of application to the MSW program will qualify for advanced standing if they have a GPA of 3.2 from the last 60 credit hours and a positive Final Field Evaluation.

I've never taken a distance education course. What do I need to know?



The educational content for all CSWE-accredited programs is the same, regardless of how it is delivered. That means that students in online programs who complete all of the requirements will graduate as competent social workers. They will learn the same skills as students in on-ground programs. Students are required to have a computer equipped with a webcam, microphone headset, internet access (preferably daily), and are expected to be present for each class session.

Where can I find more detailed information about program policies?

The MSW Program Policy Manual is available on the School of Social Work web page.

If I email a question to an instructor, how soon should I expect a response?

Brescia University's MSW faculty and staff are committed to providing a positive and high-quality educational experience for students. Each individual instructor will include this specific information in the class syllabus, but generally, students should expect to receive an acknowledgement or response from their instructors within 24-48 hours.





What is Soup Day?

Soup Day is an annual fundraiser hosted by the University Social Work Club to raise

money for St. Paul's Mission in Crownpoint, New Mexico. Funds raised during the Soup Day event are used to provide Christmas presents for the Navajo children on the reservation.

by the Brescia

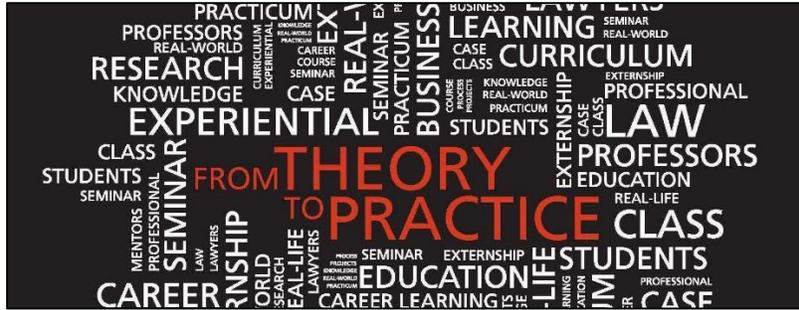
How do I know if I qualify for the social work honor society?

Students in the MSW program who have completed a 15 credit-hour semester with a GPA of 3.5 or higher are qualified for inclusion in Phi Alpha, the Social Work Honor Society.



I have a full-time job. Can I complete my required practicum hours during nights and weekends?

While this may be a possibility, it is unlikely. Considering that you are required to intern under the supervision of a professional social worker who holds a Master's degree in Social Work from a CSWE-accredited program, has two years post-master's experience, and the fact that most professional social workers work Monday through Friday, it will be very difficult to complete the practicum during nights and weekends. That being said, there are options to consider. You might request that your employer allow you a temporary cut in hours worked, possibly switch shifts with a co-worker for the duration of Field Practicum, or if possible, take a temporary leave of absence.



How many hours are required for Field education?

Students will complete 150 hours in the first semester, and 250 hours in each of the following three semesters, totaling 900 hours. Expect to spend approximately 2 to 2 ½ days per week in Field.

I currently work for an agency which provides professional social work services, and employs an MSW who meets the CSWE requirement for Field Instructors. Can I complete my practicum hours on-the-job?

On-the-job placements are not encouraged; however, there is no rule prohibiting on-the-job placements. A student who wishes to complete a practicum with a current employer must complete the “Request for On Job Placement” form, and the practicum must be approved by the Director of Field Education. There are specific reasons why on-the-jobs placements are not ideal, and consideration should be given to the need for definitive boundaries regarding paid activities versus practicum activities. A practicum at your place of employment requires a) a different set of learning activities than what you do at your job, b) a different supervisor than who you have at your job, and c) learning activities that occur at different hours than you work for your job.

Can I count any of my employment experience toward the required practicum hours?

Accreditation standards require that social work programs may not grant course credit for life experience or previous work experience. In the practicum setting, students are supervised by someone with a master’s degree in social work from an accredited program and with a minimum of two years of post-master’s experience. This allows the student to frame agency services, policies and procedures in the context of professional social work. Employment in an agency which provides social services in no way guarantees that the work experience was grounded in the values, ethics and competencies of professional social work practice.

Can I get paid for my practicum?

Paid internships are rare, but not specifically prohibited.

Am I responsible to find my own placement?

For practical reasons, students enrolled in the MSW program are responsible to locate and secure their own field placements. All placements must be approved by the Director of Field Education.

In choosing prospective placements, students should consider career goals, skill sets, and personal strengths. A “good match” is imperative for successful placements.



Can I start the practicum early, during the summer, to spread out my hours and ease my schedule during the semester when I am taking all the other classes?



Field Practicum is a required course for the completion of the MSW program. Just like any other course, Field Practicum is offered at specific times during the semester, and can only be completed during the times the course is offered. Students begin the practicum at the same time they begin any other course for which they are registered. In addition, just as is the case with any other course, students may not finish early, and must remain in the practicum for the duration of the semester(s) as scheduled.

What is Field Seminar?

Field Seminar is mandatory classroom instruction which accompanies practicum placements for Field I, II, III and IV. Seminar meets one hour weekly, and affords students the opportunity to process placement experiences as well as participate in peer-learning.

There are no social workers at the agency I am interested in, but some very good supervisors with degrees in other disciplines. Can one of them supervise me in my practicum?



CSWE Accreditation standards require that students be supervised by someone with a master's degree in social work from an accredited program, with a minimum of two years post-master's experience. This ensures that students are taught using the values, ethics, and practices of the social work profession. In rare and preapproved instances, a task supervisor may be utilized within the agency, and an "outside" social worker serves as the Field Instructor/supervisor. This requires the agreement and cooperation of the agency, the task supervisor, the field instructor, the student, and university faculty.

What are the minimum hardware/software requirements for success in an online course?

These are the hardware and software requirements for successfully accessing a web-based course. If you have questions, feel free to fill out a Helpdesk Ticket in the Information Technology Department.

Personal computer (PC):

2GHz Pentium 4 or faster, 1GB of RAM

Operating System – Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8

Memory – 256 MB

CPU – 500 MHz or higher

Free Disk Space – 10 MB or more

Browser – Firefox 14, Google Chrome 20

Browser Settings – JavaScript enabled, Popup blockers disabled, Cookies enabled

Productivity Software – MS Office or viewers

Internet Connection – 56K modem (DSL recommended)

Other – Sound card and speakers

Virus Protection (strongly recommended)

Microphone and Webcam

Adobe Flash Player 10.3+, Java Runtime Environment, headset with microphone



Macintosh computer (MAC):

Apple Power Macintosh computer, 1GB of RAM Operating System – Mac OS X 10.6 or higher
Memory – 256 MB

CPU – Power Mac G3 or higher

Free Disk Space – 10 MB or more

Browser – Firefox 14, Google Chrome 20

Browser Settings – JavaScript enabled, Popup blockers disabled, Cookies enabled

Productivity Software – MS Office or viewers

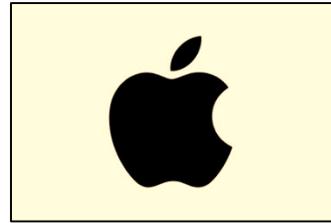
Internet Connection – 56K modem (DSL recommended)

Other – Sound card and speakers

Virus Protection (strongly recommended)

Microphone and Webcam

Adobe Flash Player 10.3+, Java Runtime Environment, headset with microphone



Can I use an iPad to participate in online classes at Brescia University?

Yes, it is possible to use an iPad to participate in online courses. Several students and instructors use their iPads to work on assignments and access the course. Students can access the site through the iPad web browser Safari, but we recommend Firefox. In addition, an iPad app is available for free in the App Store. It is called Moodle Mobile. - See more at:

<http://online.brescia.edu/admissions/faq/#q22>

I have other questions which are not answered here. How can I find the answers?

There are a number of ways. First, feel free to ask our faculty any questions. Your advisor is a good place to start. If the question is specific to Field, you should contact the [Director of Field Education](#). Policies specific to the MSW program are located in a Policy book on the School of Social Work web page. University policies can be found in the [University Catalog](#).

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Image Sources

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