



Online Master of Social Work Course Curriculum

ONLINE DEGREE PROGRAMS IN:

- Master of Social Work
- Master of Social Work - Advanced Standing

online.wlu.ca





Table of Contents

Master of Social Work and Master of Social Work – Advanced Standing

Click on the Page Number to go directly to that page.

[03](#) | Program Overview

[04](#) | Program Goals

[06](#) | Master of Social Work
Curriculum

[14](#) | Master of Social Work-
Advanced Standing Curriculum



Master of Social Work Program Overview

Wilfrid Laurier University's Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work has been a force of innovation in social work education for more than 50 years. Our practice-based approach is on the leading edge of contemporary social work education, equipping students with academic knowledge and theoretical understanding that guides and directs their real world practice experience. We uniquely combine a structural analysis with building on-the-ground practice skills and this orientation drives our online Master of Social Work (MSW) and Master of Social Work – Advanced Standing programs.

"I am very happy with my decision to attend Laurier's MSW program because it takes an integrated, critical approach to a field that is infused with both historical problems and future possibilities. I know that the critical, reflexive skills I am learning in class will greatly benefit me in my future practice. I feel prepared to work in the field and perhaps later pursue a PhD. Overall, the combination of Laurier's stellar reputation in the social work field and the skills and knowledge I have learned will definitely prove to be helpful in my social work career."

– Kevin Devotta, Laurier MSW student

Master of Social Work Program Goals

Two Degree Options

In Wilfrid Laurier University's Master of Social Work (MSW) or Master of Social Work – Advanced Standing programs, you'll grow personally and professionally. The flexible and customizable curriculums are designed to work with all skill levels.

For those just entering the field, the 2.5-year online MSW program provides a wholly integrated foundation covering the essential and interconnected areas of social work knowledge and practice. You'll gradually build your knowledge and skills, critically analyzing local and global social issues, in preparation for the learning found in the advanced standing program.

For students with a BSW, the 1.25-year online Master of Social Work – Advanced Standing program introduces complex concepts, emphasizes practical skill development through application, and critically examines the complexities of social work practice in our contemporary, globalized world.

Program Outcomes

Laurier's online Master of Social Work and Master of Social Work – Advanced Standing programs have an overarching framework focused on the advancement of equity, inclusivity, reflexivity and social justice.

Both programs' outcomes have been categorized by essential and interconnected core themes. Any, if not all, of these outcomes are. The result is that the outcomes crossover between categories.

- **Reflexivity: Taking account of your personal experience and bias and understanding how it affects interactions with diverse populations.** Upon completion of either of the MSW degrees, you should be able to:
 - Appreciate social work learning as a lifelong process.
 - Develop and apply creative and critical thinking skills, as well as a self-reflexive approach to your social work practice.
 - Articulate ideas, both orally and in writing, clearly, confidently and with sensitivity, using modes of communication appropriate to the audience.
 - Demonstrate your knowledge of inter-connections among social work research, theory and practice.

Master of Social Work Program Goals

- **Equity: The quality and ability to be fair and impartial; egalitarian.** Upon completion of either of the MSW degrees, you should be able to:
 - Advance multidisciplinary and marginalized forms of knowledge, including familiarity with Indigenous worldviews.
 - Understand and appreciate the ways our social structure makes invisible the lack of equitable opportunity.
 - Develop and implement creative ways to promote well-being in individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities, both locally and globally.
- **Social Justice: Justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.** Upon completion of either of the MSW degrees, you should be able to:
 - Evaluate institutional systems and challenge oppressive conditions and structures that infringe upon human and civil rights.
 - Determine the interaction of historical, political, economic, social and intrapersonal forces in shaping people's lives.
- **Inclusivity: An intention or policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those with disabilities or ethnic or sexual minorities.** Upon completion of either of the MSW degrees, you should be able to:
 - Demonstrate and accept accountability around your practice with respect to diversity- and oppression-related issues such as class, race, gender, age, ability, sexuality, and spiritual affiliation.

Master of Social Work Curriculum

The online Master of Social Work program is designed for those who have obtained a four-year bachelor degree. The MSW is made up of eight credits of required 14 courses plus two elective courses. Most courses in the program are six weeks long, with 10 hours per week of course work. The MSW degree can be completed in 2.5 years.

Core I Courses

Students complete five core I courses in any order that they are offered. Core I courses include:

SK501: Approaches to Community Organizing and Group Practices (0.5 Credit)

This course provides an introduction to concepts, theories and methods associated with social work practice in communities locally, nationally and internationally. The scholarship on feminist community organizing, group processes, health promotion, advocacy, civic engagement, grassroots organizing, capacity building, community economic development, international development and social movements inform the theoretical foundations of this course. Working with marginalised populations is an essential component of the course, which hopes to promote systematic and reflexive thinking about specific determining factors influencing the lives of marginalized individuals globally. The course also teaches students about our responsibility as social work practitioners to be aware of power and privilege, and our capacity to transform these factors.

SK504: Research 1 (0.5 Credit)

This course will offer a broad sampling of research methods (both qualitative and quantitative) and an introduction to concepts of data analysis. The aim is for students to acquire knowledge and skills for conducting social work research, evaluating professional practices and becoming critical consumers of research. The course also explores how decolonizing, anti-oppressive and social justice perspectives can operate in current approaches to strengthen the research enterprise. An important component of this course is the critical examination of the ethical aspects and issues of the research process. An applied research project offers students the opportunity to integrate the course content with their practicum.

Master of Social Work Curriculum

SK507: Social Justice and Transformative Social Work Practices (0.5 Credit)

Transformative social work practice is understood to encompass critical reflexivity and action that aims to disrupt current social inequalities and manifestations of power inherent in the delivery of social services and community work. The fluid concept of social justice will be deconstructed and explored through a variety of theoretical lenses including, but not limited to, Indigenous, anti-racist, feminist, queer, disabled and transnational perspectives.

Theories of progressive social change practices will be explored in order to lead the student to think about concepts such as colonialism, intersectionality, power and resistance within social work practices. Students will also be encouraged to engage in reflexivity with regards to their own experiences of intersecting identities and how they are situated within relations of power.

SK522: Social Work Practice with Individuals (0.5 Credit)

In this course students learn the basic tenets and skills of a range of theories applicable to practice with individuals. The course emphasizes an experiential approach to teaching and practicing skills. The main elements of the course are: the processes and stages involved in social work practice with individuals; an introduction to the importance of reflexivity and self-awareness in the co-construction of the social work relationship; ethics; skills of interviewing, holistic assessment, and developing a complex understanding of the service user within an ecological systems context; and issues important to working with diverse and marginalized populations, including a trauma-informed perspective and Indigenous worldviews.

Master of Social Work Curriculum

SK545: Introduction to Ethical Thought and Reflexive Practice (0.5 Credit)

This course is designed to expose participants to ethics and reflexivity as they intersect and are performed in social work practice. Professional and relational ethics, ethical decision-making models and the intersections between the law and professional ethics are reviewed and scrutinized from a critical perspective. Self-awareness as an aspect of reflexivity and as it relates to ethics and values in our working relationships, is considered throughout.

Contemporary workplace examples are used to ground theory and reflexivity to practice. Such reflexive practices are rooted and framed by our epistemological foundations, or the ways in which we understand the nature of knowledge and its creation. Thus, a consideration of how we know, and how such knowing is socially and culturally constructed, will support our considerations of ethics and reflexivity.

Master of Social Work Curriculum

Core II Courses

Once students complete core I courses, they will complete the core II courses along with foundation field education courses. Descriptions can be found below:

SK536: Integrating Theory and Practice

(0.5 Credit)

This experientially oriented course aims to support students in connecting and applying foundational social work theory to practice and practicum settings. It is offered over the same time period as the practicum. The course provides an opportunity for students to understand the interconnections between research, theory and practice within the context of their own practice, including the role of the mind, body, emotions and spirit. It will provide a space for students to grapple with dilemmas arising in placement through the medium of hands-on exercises and simulations.

SK541: Foundational Field Education (0.5 Credit)

The work placement is an integral part of the curriculum and is structured to enable students to use their knowledge as professional social workers in practice situations. The student chooses placements based on interest and knowledge base and is placed by practicum coordinator.

SK552: Social Work Practice With Families

(0.5 Credit)

This course provides a critical study of widely used approaches to practice with diverse family forms within social work settings. Emphasis will be placed on influential theories that impact and guide the methods used in the practice of family social work.

Master of Social Work Curriculum

SK641: Critical Social Policy and Activism

(0.5 Credit)

This course provides a critical overview of the historic processes of marginalization and resistance in social policy development in Canada, starting with First Nations from colonization through the present. It outlines the roots of social welfare and the role of neoliberalism, globalization, state restructuring, social inclusion/exclusion, citizenship and the impact of policy on social identity. Policy development will be examined in relation to colonization, capitalism, racism, sexism, ableism, ageism and homophobia. Practical skills will be taught in relation to activism, advocacy and collaboration in order to critique social policies and bring about social policy change.

SK665: Critical Indigenous Knowledge in Social Work (0.5 Credit)

This course provides students with conceptual tools and knowledge for understanding the nature of First Nations historical/structural problems; the role and operation of social services in Indigenous contexts; alternative (culture-based and healing-focused) methods of intervention; and present day Indigenous concerns and issues including concepts of Indigenous title.

Master of Social Work Curriculum

Advanced Core Courses, Electives, and Advanced Field Education Courses

To complete the program, students will complete the courses below, which is a combination of advanced core courses, electives and advanced field education.

SK610: Social Change Social Action

This course focuses on theories and practices of social change, as well as on the purposes, organization and strategies of social movements by marginalized populations such as people living in poverty, First Nations people, people of colour, gays/lesbians/transgendered/bisexual people, two-spirited people, elderly people, people with disabilities and people in less wealthy countries. Topics may include visions of a just society, methods of civil disobedience, modes of social action organizing and organizations and the context provided by globalization. Specific techniques may be considered, such as financing social movements, use of the media, use of new technologies, action research, building coalitions, lobbying and advocacy.

SK615: Research 2 (0.5 Credit)

Choose two out of four modules. Two modules is equivalent to one course credit.

Consistent with the social work research goal of contributing to social justice and social change, this course aims to expand students' knowledge and skills in research methods by offering four different modules; students will choose two of these according to their needs and preferences.

2.1 Advanced Qualitative Research A

Students will acquire and develop skills in data collection and analysis in qualitative research consistent with student interest and inquiry. This can include grounded theory, case study, narrative, phenomenological and ethnographic research methodologies. Emphasis will be placed on data analysis (including introductory training on N'Vivo and Atlati) and report writing.

Master of Social Work Curriculum

2.2 Advanced Quantitative Research

Students will acquire and develop skills in data collection and analysis consistent with student interests on advanced quantitative methodologies. This can include cross-sectional, complex survey, single subject, quasi-experimental, experimental, case control, cohort and other research designs. The course also offers an introduction to innovative sampling techniques for hard-to-reach populations, such as 39 Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS). Emphasis will be placed on data analysis (including introductory training on SPSS) and report writing.

2.3 Advanced Qualitative Research B

This course offers students extended practice and knowledge on a sample of qualitative methodologies informed by a critical theory paradigm such as feminist research, participatory action research (PAR) and visual methodologies such as photovoice, body mapping, performance ethnography, etc. The primary aim of these methodologies is to expose and transform social arrangements that perpetuate inequalities and marginalization in close collaboration with populations impacted by those arrangements. Emphasis will be placed on participatory and collaborative data analysis and report writing.

2.4 Advanced Mixed Methods Research:

Needs Assessments, Community Capacity Building Research and Program Evaluation

Agencies are increasingly undertaking needs assessments, community capacity building research and program evaluations. This course will cover these topics, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This course provides practical skills through research projects in field placements, theses, or other student involvements. One of the main focuses of the course will be on how to analyse the results of research studies, and write the findings up to bring about social change. This course will include research issues related to marginalized populations, participatory action research, writing reports for various audiences, and utilizing research skill in future work. Emphasis will be placed on quantitative and qualitative data analysis (including introductory training on N'Vivo and SPSS) and report writing.

Master of Social Work Curriculum

SK621: Reflexive Practices (0.5 Credit)

The emphasis of this course is on the use of self as it relates to the direct practice experience of the student. The overall objective is to enhance self-awareness and interpersonal skills that are related to the conscious use of self in social work practice. A focus on self-reflective awareness will include an examination of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that arise in practice interactions, including how these are influenced by personal history, social location and attitudes toward issues of diversity and difference (e.g., race/ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, class, sexual orientation and disability).

SK649: Advanced Field Education (0.5 Credit)

A supervised field experience designed to develop competence pertinent to social work practice in the student's chosen area of concentration (29 weeks).

SK651: Advanced Social Work Practice With Individuals (0.5 Credit)

This course builds on SK522 by taking a more in-depth look at the integration of theory and practice in clinical work with a variety of client-presenting problems. It includes an overview of major classes of psychiatric diagnoses and a critical look at the value of such diagnostic categories considering race, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation and so forth. The strengths and weaknesses of various theoretical approaches to intervening with specific client problems and populations are reviewed.

SK652: Advanced Social Work Practice with Families (0.5 Credit)

This course builds on SK552 by taking a more in-depth look at the integration of theory with family practice. Emphasis is placed on the inclusion of substantive issues in family work (e.g., drug misuse, eating disorders, gerontological issues, divorce, developmental issues, sexual orientation, poverty, and work with families from diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds).

Master of Social Work - Advanced Standing Curriculum

The online Master of Social Work – Advanced Standing program was created for graduates of a Bachelor of Social Work program. The MSW - Advanced Standing is made up of 4.5 credits of a required seven courses plus two elective courses. Most courses in the program are six weeks long, with 10 hours per week of course work. The MSW - Advanced Standing degree can be completed in 1.25 years.

Core I Courses

MSW - Advanced Standing students complete one core I course:

SK504: Research 1 (0.5 Credit)

The aim is for students to acquire knowledge and skills for conducting social work research, evaluating professional practices and becoming critical consumers of research. The course also explores how decolonizing, anti-oppressive and social justice perspectives can operate in current approaches to strengthen the research enterprise. An important component of this course is the critical examination of the ethical aspects and issues of the research process. An applied research project offers students the opportunity to integrate the course content with their practicum.

Master of Social Work - Advanced Standing Curriculum

Core II, Advanced Core I, Core II and Electives

Once MSW - Advanced Standing students complete the core I course, they will complete a combination of advanced core I, core II and electives courses. Courses include:

SK615: Research 2 (0.5 Credit)

Choose two out of four modules. Two modules is equivalent to one course credit. Consistent with the social work research goal of contributing to social justice and social change, this course aims to expand students' knowledge and skills in research methods by offering four different modules; students will choose two of these according to their needs and preferences.

SK651: Advanced Social Work Practice With Individuals (0.5 Credit)

This course builds on SK522 by taking a more in-depth look at the integration of theory and practice in clinical work with a variety of client-presenting problems. It includes an overview of major classes of psychiatric diagnoses and a critical look at the value of such diagnostic categories considering race, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation and so forth. The strengths and weaknesses of various theoretical approaches to intervening with specific client problems and populations are reviewed.

Master of Social Work - Advanced Standing Curriculum

4 Electives

Elective offerings will be determined on a year to year basis. Examples of elective courses include: Mindfulness Based Therapies, Social Work Practice with Survivors of Trauma, Family Violence, Crisis Intervention, Addictions and Program Development.

SK621: Reflexive Practices (0.5 Credit)

The emphasis of this course is on the use of self as it relates to the direct practice experience of the student. The overall objective is to enhance self-awareness and interpersonal skills that are related to the conscious use of self in social work practice. A focus on self-reflective awareness will include an examination of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that arise in practice interactions, including how these are influenced by personal history, social location and attitudes toward issues of diversity and difference (e.g., race/ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, class, sexual orientation and disability).

SK649: Advanced Field Education (0.5 Credit)

A supervised field experience designed to develop competence pertinent to social work practice in the student's chosen area of concentration (29 weeks).

