



Online Master of Social Work Course Curriculum

ONLINE DEGREE PROGRAMS IN:

- Master of Social Work — Regular Track
- Master of Social Work — Advanced Standing

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Master of Social Work — Regular Track and Advanced Standing

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"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 Overview

Inaugurated in 1966, the Master of Social Work (MSW) program at Laurier's Faculty of Social Work (FSW) was first accredited in 1974 by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work and was most recently reaccredited in 2019.

Laurier's Master of Social Work (MSW) curriculum is designed to be at the cutting edge of contemporary social work practice. Our curriculum emphasizes the development of critically reflexive practice skills through the ongoing integration of knowledge, theory and practice within a framework that promotes the advancement of equity, inclusivity, reflexivity and social justice. It is our anticipation that graduates

of our program will walk alongside those with whom they work, in collaborative, inclusive, reflexive and caring ways and that they will stand up for what they believe is just.

To provide greater flexibility to working professionals and applicants, we launched the part-time online MSW programs in 2018. The Faculty of Social Work offers the following online, part-time MSW programs:

Program	Duration	Degree Required for Admission
Online, part-time MSW — Regular Track	8 academic terms or 32 months	Bachelor's degree
Online, part-time MSW — Advanced Standing	5 academic terms or 18 months	Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)

Online MSW — Regular Track

With an overarching framework of social justice, equity, inclusivity and reflexivity, the regular track curriculum is designed to provide a wholly integrated foundational year that grounds students in essential and interconnected social work practice areas.

The regular track MSW program is designed for students who have experience working in human service organizations or are currently working professionals in a relevant field. Applicants to the regular track MSW program do not have a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) but have an undergraduate degree. Applicants also rely on their networks to secure field placements with organizations in their communities that provide social work learning, and employ MSW level social workers.

The online MSW — regular track part-time program:

- Consists of 14 online courses that are usually six weeks long;
- Requires approximately 20 hours of coursework per week;
- Has a field placement course where students complete 1,008 placement hours with an agency they propose;
- Can be completed in 8 academic terms or 32 months;

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Students typically complete one course every six weeks, which is the equivalent of two courses per term. When students are in placement, they also enrol in either one or two courses per term.

The program schedule below is a sample only. Course offerings vary per term and depend on the student’s field placement timeline.

Term	Duration: 12 Weeks	
	6-week Course	6-week Course
1	SK507: Social Justice and Transformative Social Justice Practices (0.5 credit)	Core I Course
2	Core I Course	Core I Course
3	Core I Course	Core II Course
4	SK600: Field Education	
	SK536: Integrating Theory and Practice (0.5 credit)	
5	SK600: Field Education	
	SK621: Reflexive Practices (0.5 credit)	

Term	Duration: 12 Weeks	
	6-week Course	6-week Course
6	SK600: Field Education	
	Core II Course	Core II Course
7	SK600: Field Education	
	Core II Course	Core II Course
8	Elective	Elective

Core I Courses

Students first take SK507: Social Justice and Transformative Social Justice Practices (0.5 credit) and then take the following Core I courses (in any order) but must be completed prior to starting field placement.

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

SK504: Research I (0.5 credit)

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

SK522: Social Work Practice with Individuals (0.5 credit)

Core II Courses

Once Core I course are complete, students take the following Core II courses (in any order):

SK552: Social Work Practice with Families (0.5 credit)

SK615: Research II (0.5 credit)

SK641: Critical Social Policy and Activism (0.5 credit)

SK651: Advanced Social Work Practice with Individuals (0.5 credit)

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

Note: Core II courses can be taken at the same time as field education courses.

Field Education Courses

SK600: Field Education (0 credit)

The field placement is a credited course that is completed at an agency setting and is graded (satisfactory or fail). A qualified, agency-based, MSW level field instructor evaluates the student's learning at the placement setting.

To complement the experiential learning during the field placement, students enrol in the following courses while on placement:

SK536: Integrating Theory and Practice (0.5 credit)

This is a 12 week course and is taken concurrently with SK600 at the start of the placement.

SK621: Reflexive Practices (0.5 credit)

This is a 12 week course and is taken concurrently with SK600, but after SK536 is completed.

Electives

Students take two elective courses of their choice:

SK619: Landscapes of Power, Violence and Resilience: Exploring Gender and Systems of Oppression (0.5 credit)

SK693: Crisis Intervention (0.5 credit)

SK690: Social Inequality, Poverty and Income Support: A Comparative Perspective (0.5 credit)

SK668: Social Work Practice with Survivors of Trauma (0.5 credit)

SK 656: Death, Dying and Bereavement (0.5 credit)

Note: The Faculty of Social Work plans on offering elective courses listed above. Further course options will be made available as they are developed for online delivery. Course availability varies by term.

FIELD EDUCATION: GAIN VALUABLE EXPERIENCE

Field education is a vital aspect of the MSW program and constitutes a large part of the program. Field education provides students with the opportunity to practice and integrate social work values, knowledge, and skills. This includes the development of the professional ‘self’ as a social work practitioner. Students can complete the field placement in various agency settings that employ MSW level social workers, such as:

- Mental health organizations
- Municipalities
- Research centres
- Hospitals
- Child welfare agencies
- Funding organizations
- Academic institutions
- Community centres
- Schools
- Government organizations
- Counselling agencies

As part of your field education, you will complete a field placement with an agency that provides social work learning opportunities. A qualified agency-based field instructor will provide supervision to help you develop social work practice skills. Students in the regular track MSW program complete 1,008 field hours at an agency setting. This is a core component of the MSW program and is worth 1.0 course credit.

Field placements begin during the fourth term of the program, or one year after beginning the MSW program. Students are required to be in placement for a minimum of 16 hours, across two days a week. The table below provides all field placement options available to students to choose from:

	Hours per week	Weeks to complete hours	Total hours	Term placement starts	Term placement ends	Number of months and terms required to complete 1,008 hours
Option 1: 2 days/week	16 hours	68 weeks	1,008 hours	Term #4	Term #7	-16 months -4 terms
Option 2: 3 days/week	21 hours	50 weeks	1,008 hours	Term #4	Term #6	-12 months -3 terms
Option 3: 5 days/week	35 hours	29 weeks	1,008 hours	Term #4	Term #5	-8 months -2 terms

PLANNING FOR YOUR FIELD PLACEMENT

Students in the online program rely on their professional network to secure a social work placement. This process allows students to consider opportunities based on their learning interests and within their own communities. The placement process is student-directed, where students take the lead on proposing a placement within their geographical areas. In the absence of a suitable local placement, students may need to commute to complete the field placement requirement.

All proposals submitted by students are vetted and assessed by the field office. The field office takes into consideration various factors when determining whether the student's placement proposal can be approved. Prior to submitting a placement proposal, students participate in online meetings with the field office to help guide students through this process.

Students attend placement for a minimum of 16 hours across two days/week, during the agency's hours of operation, and during the availability of the field instructor. Working professionals are expected to negotiate time off with their employers prior to starting the MSW program. The majority of agencies expect students to attend placement during a structured timeline during weekdays. Students who are unable to take time off from work (e.g. 2 days/week or a leave of absence) to attend placement in a structured manner will likely be unable to secure a placement.

Placements at your workplace

In order to provide working professionals with flexibility to enrol in Laurier's MSW program, the field office encourages students to consider placements at their workplace. These are referred to as 'workplace placements'. To ensure that the educational objectives of the field placement are met, a workplace placement must consist of activities, learning, and assignments the student has not experienced previously, and are distinct from tasks performed as part of the student's employment. Additionally, workplace placements must be supervised by a MSW field instructor who is not the student's current supervisor and/or has not been the student's supervisor in the past. Further information on workplace placements are outlined in the workplace policy provided to students once admitted to the program.

Field Instructors

Placements are supervised by field instructors who completed a MSW, and are experienced social workers. They are recognized as Laurier's faculty in the field. Instructors are employed with the placement agency, have a minimum of two years post-MSW field experience, and have completed field instructor training.

In very few agency settings, it may be appropriate for students to be supervised by a Masters level field instructor in a field other than social work (e.g. Masters in Clinical Counselling, or Masters in Community Development). The degree equivalencies are assessed by the field office based on the learning opportunities provided at the placement setting and the learning goals of the student.

Costs associated with field education

As a course, the field placement is covered under student fees. While on placement, students are responsible for any agency associated costs: police checks, vaccinations, travel costs, and parking.

Online MSW — Advanced Standing

With an overarching framework of social justice, equity, inclusivity and reflexivity, the advanced standing curriculum grounds students in essential and interconnected social work practice areas.

The advanced standing MSW program is designed for students who have experience working in human service organizations or are currently working professionals in a relevant field. Applicants to the advanced standing MSW program have a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW). Applicants also rely on their networks to secure field placements with organizations in their communities that provide social work learning, and employ MSW level social workers.

The online MSW — advanced standing part-time program:

- Consists of eight online courses that are usually six weeks long;
- Requires approximately 20 hours of coursework per week;
- Has a field placement course where students complete 546 placement hours with an agency they propose;
- Can be completed in 4.5 Academic terms or 18 months;

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Students typically complete one course every six weeks, which is the equivalent of two courses per term. When students are in placement, they also enrol in either one or two courses per term.

The program schedule below is a sample only. Course offerings vary per term and depend on the student’s field placement timeline.

Term	Duration: 12 Weeks	
	6-week Course	6-week Course
1	SK504: Research 1	SK651: Advanced Social Work Practice with Individuals
2	SK615: Research 2	Elective
3	Elective	Elective
4	SK621: Reflexive Practices	
	SK649: Advanced Field Education	
5	Elective	
	SK649: Advanced Field Education	

Core I Courses

SK504: Research I (0.5 credit)

SK615: Research II (0.5 credit)

SK651: Advanced Social Work Practice with Individuals (0.5 credit)

Field Courses

SK649: Field Education (0.5 credit)

The field placement is a credited course that is completed at an agency setting and is graded (satisfactory or fail). A qualified, agency-based, MSW level field instructor evaluates the student's learning at the placement setting.

To complement the experiential learning during the field placement, students enrol in the following course while on placement:

SK621: Reflexive Practices (0.5 credit)

This is a 12 week course and is taken concurrently with SK649.

Electives

Students take four elective courses of their choice:

SK619: Landscapes of Power, Violence and Resilience: Exploring Gender and Systems of Oppression (0.5 credit)

SK693: Crisis Intervention (0.5 credit)

SK690: Social Inequality, Poverty and Income Support: A Comparative Perspective (0.5 credit)

SK668: Social Work Practice with Survivors of Trauma (0.5 credit)

SK 656: Death, Dying and Bereavement (0.5 credit)

Note: The Faculty of Social Work plans on offering elective courses listed above. Further course options will be made available as they are developed for online delivery. Course availability varies by term.

FIELD EDUCATION: GAIN VALUABLE EXPERIENCE

Field education is a vital aspect of the MSW program and constitutes a large part of the program. Field education provides students with the opportunity to practice and integrate social work values, knowledge, and skills. This includes the development of the professional ‘self’ as a social work practitioner. Students can complete the field placement in various agency settings that employ MSW level social workers, such as:

- Mental health organizations
- Municipalities
- Research centres
- Hospitals
- Child welfare agencies
- Funding organizations
- Academic institutions
- Community centres
- Schools
- Government organizations
- Counselling agencies

As part of your field education, you will complete a field placement with an agency that provides social work learning opportunities. A qualified agency-based field instructor will provide supervision to help you develop social work practice skills. Students in the advanced standing MSW program complete 546 field hours at an agency setting. This is a core component of the MSW program and is worth 0.5 credits.

Field placements begin during the third term of the program, or eight months after beginning the MSW program. Students are required to be in placement for a minimum of 16 hours, across two days a week. The table below provides all field placement options available to students to choose from:

	Hours per week	Weeks to complete hours	Total hours	Term placement starts	Term placement ends	Number of months and terms required to complete 546 hours
Option 1: 2 days/week	16 hours	34 weeks	546 hours	Term #3	Term #4	-8 months -2 terms
Option 2 3 days/week	21 hours	28 weeks	546 hours	Term #3	Term #4	-6 months -1.5 terms
Option 3: 5 days/week	35 hours	17 weeks	546 hours	Term #3	Term #3	-3 months -1 term

PLANNING FOR YOUR FIELD PLACEMENT

Students in the online program rely on their professional network to secure a social work placement. This process allows students to consider opportunities based on their learning interests and within their own communities. The placement process is student-directed, where students take the lead on proposing a placement within their geographical areas. In the absence of a suitable local placement, students may need to commute to complete the field placement requirement.

All proposals submitted by students are vetted and assessed by the field office. The field office takes into consideration various factors when determining whether the student's placement proposal can be approved. Prior to submitting a placement proposal, students participate in online meetings with the field office to help guide students through this process.

Students attend placement for a minimum of 16 hours across two days/week, during the agency's hours of operation, and during the availability of the field instructor. Working professionals are expected to negotiate time off with their employers prior to starting the MSW program. The majority of agencies expect students to attend placement during a structured timeline during weekdays. Students who are unable to take time off from work (e.g. 2 days/week or a leave of absence) to attend placement in a structured manner will likely be unable to secure a placement.

Placements at your workplace

In order to provide working professionals with flexibility to enrol in Laurier's MSW program, the field office encourages students to consider placements at their workplace. These are referred to as 'workplace placements'. To ensure that the educational objectives of the field placement are met, a workplace placement must consist of activities, learning, and assignments the student has not experienced previously, and are distinct from tasks performed as part of the student's employment. Additionally, workplace placements must be supervised by a MSW field instructor who is not the student's current supervisor and/or has not been the student's supervisor in the past. Further information on workplace placements are outlined in the workplace policy provided to students once admitted to the program.

Field Instructors

Placements are supervised by field instructors who completed a MSW, and are experienced social workers. They are recognized as Laurier's faculty in the field. Instructors are employed with the placement agency, have a minimum of two years post-MSW field experience, and have completed field instructor training.

Costs associated with field education

As a course, the field placement is covered under student fees. While on placement, students are responsible for any agency associated costs: police checks, vaccinations, travel costs, and parking.

Admission Requirements

Degree Requirements

Online MSW — Regular Track

A four-year bachelor's degree (or equivalent) from a university or college of recognized standing is required.

Applicants with a three-year bachelor's degree and significant relevant work experience (equivalent to three years paid and/or volunteer work in human service organizations) will be considered.

Online MSW — Advanced Standing

A Bachelor of Social Work degree from an accredited program in a university of recognized standing is required.

Course Requirements

An applicant's academic background must include the following:

- At least eight 0.5 credit social science courses or equivalent
- One 0.5 credit course in qualitative research methods

Note: 0.5 credit is equal to a one-term course

Social science courses include, but are not limited to: anthropology; child, youth and family studies; criminology; economics; environmental studies; gender studies; global studies; history; political science; psychology; social justice and peace; and sociology.

GPA Requirement

A minimum B GPA (73% average) in the final academic year of the applicant's bachelor's degree (equivalent of 10 0.5 credit courses) is required.

Admission Requirements

For applicants completing their final year of undergraduate study, eligibility is determined on the last completed academic year at the time of application. If an applicant does not have a B GPA in the final academic year, additional undergraduate coursework may be completed to raise their final year to a B GPA.

Additional courses required for admission to MSW programs, or for upgrading purposes, or graduate level work, that are completed after an applicant's undergraduate degree has been granted, will be calculated into the final year GPA. The recalculated GPA must be at least at a B.

Experience Profile

Evidence of paid and/or voluntary experience in human service organizations is required. Two or more years of experience would be considered an asset.

Application materials are assessed for the following:

- Evidence of paid and/or voluntary experience in human service organizations
- Awareness of contemporary social issues and social work values
- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively
- Motivation for a career as a professional social worker

Admission Requirements

English Language Proficiency

Applicants whose language of instruction during their undergraduate degree was other than English are required to submit official English language test results obtained within the last two years from either TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System). Photocopies will not be accepted.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language):

- Internet-based test: Minimum overall score of 89, with minimum skill scores of 21 in each of the skills tests (speaking, writing, reading and listening)

IELTS (International English Language Testing System):

- Minimum score of 7.0 overall

Other tests of English language proficiency accepted include:

- Michigan Test (minimum score of 90)
- Canadian Academic English Language Assessment (CAEL) (minimum score of 70 is required)
- Pearson Test of English (PTE) (minimum score of 60 overall)

Note: Every year, Laurier's Faculty of Social Work receives many more qualified applications than spaces available in the online MSW — Regular Track and MSW — Advanced Standing programs. Having the minimum admission requirements does not guarantee admission. The Faculty reserves the right to select the most qualified applicants. All decisions are final.

What Else You Need to Apply

Visit Laurier's online [Graduate Admissions Toolkit](#) at wlu.ca to see a complete list of supporting [documentation](#) applicants need to submit when applying (e.g., resume, personal statement form, etc.).

APPLY TODAY

Talk to an enrolment advisor or visit the online [Graduate Admissions Toolkit](#) to get started on an application today.

