

## Organization and Community Leadership at MSU

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### Introduction

The School of Social Work has a long and proud history of training social workers since 1920. The School's coursework and field experiences provide the grounding for all professional social work practice, regardless of setting, specialization, or professional role. With time, curriculum has become both broader and more specialized, resulting in the opportunity for students to concentrate their advanced training for either micro-level (clinical) or macro-level (leadership, management, advocacy, social justice, program development, and evaluation) interventions.

The social work profession promotes positive social growth using an integrated view of people within their individual and collective contexts. The distinction between micro and macro social work practice lies not in the intent or purpose, but the level of focus of the intervention and the nature of the contact.

### What is macro-level social work practice?

Social Work macro practice involves defining, clarifying, and working to resolve social problems at multiple levels. Macro focused social workers may engage at the community or organizational level, or in the larger society at national and international levels.

Important in macro practice is the significance of leadership, management, advocacy, and social justice directed at large social systems. Social justice is an essential component of the social work profession and is a critical part of working toward change in all social work practice.

#### Areas of macro practice

- Communities: their composition and type, and the power structures and influence within communities
- Policy making procedures and the dynamics and nuances of social problems
- Human services organizations: their purposes, functions, and constituencies
- Macro specific tasks such as collaboration and capacity building, advocacy, negotiation, task group dynamics, marketing, research, evaluation, analysis, and teaching

### Why study Organization and Community Leadership (OCL)?

The purpose of the profession of social work in both micro and macro practice is to promote positive social growth. Some common features of social work practice include adherence to social work ethics and values, application of problem solving processes, use of a strengths perspective, placing work in a systems context, emphasis on the role of relationships in

promoting change, and commitment to advocacy and social justice. Macro social work practitioners work with people within their individual and collective circumstances.

Leadership theory and practice is stressed in each macro course, allowing students to self-determine the most effective and successful leadership style to employ in different and dynamic situations. Coursework includes emphasis on ethics, technology, theory, culture, and diversity, as well as international and global perspectives.

The OCL macro practice concentration focuses on social issues at a larger scope—programs, policies, communities, laws, or social and governmental institutions—through activities such as program and policy analysis and development, advocacy, fundraising, grant-writing, research, and program evaluation.

The chart included with this information demonstrates the interrelationships of macro practice theory and skills, and defines the process of influencing and becoming a catalyst for social change.

### **Why come to MSU School of Social Work?**

Michigan State University consistently ranks among the leading social work programs nationally, primarily because of its high quality faculty and a well-developed network of social service agency partners. Our OCL faculty members not only are informed by and involved in research and knowledgeable about the most important trends in the field, but bring to the classroom their own extensive practice experience in agency-based, community, and private settings.

MSU brings together the best of a research-intensive university with the service mission of a land grant institution to extend educational access and learning more broadly to diverse populations. We also are a national leader in technology-supported education and emphasize state-of-the-art classroom instruction.

The MSU School of Social Work has a strong commitment to macro practice. The OCL Program draws upon multiple theories and approaches utilizing practice wisdom and evidence-informed interventions. We pride ourselves on research-informed teaching. Small class size is a feature of our program which allows intensive interaction between students and faculty. Students train with experienced practitioners in a practice-guided, application-focused curriculum. A directory including links to faculty résumés can be found at [www.socialwork.msu.edu](http://www.socialwork.msu.edu)

### **Our field instructors and liaisons**

Our nationally recognized Field Education Program works with individual students to provide placement options throughout the state of Michigan that are responsive to student needs and career goals. The School's dedicated advisors and field coordinators, liaison faculty, and instructors work together to graduate well-prepared MSW macro practice social workers who are ready to provide outstanding macro practice service to organizations and communities. In addition, with its location near the center of state government, there are numerous opportunities for students to observe and participate in macro practice directly.

The Field Education Program utilizes a unique liaison/seminar model that provides topical learning, reflection, and interpersonal support for students in seminar groups located geographically close to their homes. During the macro practice concentration year field placements are provided to students in order that they may demonstrate competence related to

roles in a specific practice setting such as state government, administrative or legislative offices, and nonprofit policy or service delivery organizations. Students may also have the opportunity to participate in project based placements. Students meet throughout the academic year in groups of seven to ten student colleagues, where field liaison staff monitor their placements, allow for enriched discussion, and encourage accountability. They will have the opportunity to learn from faculty experts with diverse experiences in influencing social change and operating social service agencies, as well as to interact closely with fellow students having similar interests.

Students also will receive structured field learning opportunities in a variety of macro social work settings to work toward mastery of functions such as:

- community organization
- program planning and development
- administration of community services or programs
- assessment of client needs for macro community programs & services
- coordination and/or evaluation of service delivery
- advocacy on behalf of persons or groups with unmet needs
- analyzing social welfare policy
- organizational analysis
- provision of training linked to community needs and challenges

Field education experiences and strong relationships with the practice community bring macro social work to life by integrating theory and practice. Our state-of-the-art Continuing Education Program is among the best in the nation, and not only provides lifelong learning for our graduates but great networking opportunities.

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### **What do OCL graduates say about the program's value?**

The macro practice concentration prepared me to be able to do a wide range of tasks. It is really skill oriented, rather than being focused on population or level. ~ *Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer*

My macro practice training and education empowered me to see the world around me as a continuum of hierarchies, which allowed me to recognize which level of intervention would be more likely to lead to success. For example, am I looking at a problem, or is it a symptom of a larger problem? ~ *Nonprofit Deputy Director*

As a macro social worker I make positive changes within systems that are creating barriers for those seeking assistance. By securing funding for new programs, creating coalitions with community agencies, and working to provide exceptional care to our clients, I can begin to break through some of these existing barriers. I love macro practice for the variety of tasks I perform and my ability to make system changes. ~ *Fundraising and Development Coordinator*