

MSU School of Social Work
WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM
with concentrations in
ORGANIZATION AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP
&
CLINICAL PRACTICE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – FALL 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background Information.....	2-3
Admission Requirements & Application Procedures.....	3-4
Courses, Concentrations, & Schedules.....	4-6
Field Education.....	7-9
Financial Aid & Program Expenses.....	9-10
Information Technology, Libraries, & Course Materials.....	10-11
Contact Information.....	12

MSU School of Social Work
WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM
with concentrations in
ORGANIZATION AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP
&
CLINICAL PRACTICE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – FALL 2014

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

I've heard about the Weekend MSW Program offered by Michigan State University. What is the purpose of this program?

In keeping with MSU's land grant mission, the basic purpose of the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM is to respond to the professional leadership needs of the human services community throughout the state. There are many people working in human service agencies that seek the professional growth and skill development only a graduate social work program can provide. The combination of full-time employment, family, and other community obligations makes it very difficult for many of these individuals to continue on to a full-time MSW program, especially if this requires the extra burden of commuting to campus numerous times each week. By combining its fully accredited MSW Program with the best features of online learning, qualified applicants can now pursue an advanced degree without the requirement of being on-campus every week.

How is the program set up?

The WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM provides the entire Master of Social Work (MSW) degree program through a combination of online learning and face-to-face instruction at MSU's James B. Henry Center for Executive Development. All courses required to complete MSU's Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)-accredited MSW degree requirements are offered through this program. MSU faculty members are available in-person and online for various segments of each course.

Why might I choose a blended/hybrid program over a fully online program?

The WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM combines the best features of face-to-face and online instruction. Courses in this program are roughly 70% online and 30% face-to-face, making this program a great option for students who wish to continue in their place of employment while pursuing the MSW degree, without sacrificing the relationships that are formed in traditional campus-based programs. The online component of this program allows for less time commuting to campus and less time spent in the classroom, giving students more flexibility in their schedules. Online instruction is thoughtfully balanced with face-to-face instruction between students and faculty. Students in this program

stress the importance of this blend in reducing feelings of isolation and increasing supports necessary for successful completion of the program.

Who teaches the courses and where?

Courses in the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM are taught by faculty of the School of Social Work at MSU. Students in this program take part in eight weekend meetings (between August through April) during each of the three years of the program, as well as online summer courses in the second and third year. Between these weekend meetings, course instruction takes place online. This blend of features is designed to bring the best of classroom instruction and technology-based learning to make a great program more accessible.

When did the program begin?

The WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM was launched in August 2012. The first cohort of students started coursework in August 2012 and will graduate in May 2015. It is our expectation to recruit a cohort of 15-25 students each year.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS & APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applicants for all of MSU's MSW programs must meet the following requirements:

- A bachelor's degree from a recognized institution.
- Normally a grade-point average of at least 3.00 (on a 4.0-point scale) during undergraduate study or in 14 or more credits of graduate study. The grade point average in the last 60 credits or their equivalents of undergraduate courses is primarily considered.
- Evidence of personal qualities considered important for the practice of social work.
- Prior academic work must reflect a liberal arts perspective (at least nineteen semester credits in humanities and social and natural sciences such as courses in sociology, psychology, anthropology, history, philosophy, literature, and languages).

In addition to meeting the regular requirements listed above, WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM applicants must:

- Demonstrate career interests consistent with a course of study that focuses on Organization and Community Leadership or Clinical Practice.
- Have easy access to high speed Internet service on a regular basis.
- Be willing to spend considerable time in the on-line environment for the completion of all social work courses.
- Be willing to attend weekend sessions 8 times per year for all three years of the program.

If all of these requirements are met and the application is complete, it will be reviewed

according to normal School admissions review procedures. Since a considerable component of the academic work in the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM is completed online, newly admitted students are asked to complete a free Online Assessment and Orientation Program (OAOP) on how to learn effectively in the online environment to insure they are aware of, and prepared for, the substantial online components of the Weekend Program. After completion of the OAOP, students may be asked to take part in a personal interview either by phone or in-person in East Lansing.

When should I apply?

The application deadline for the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM is **January 10, 2015**. All application forms and materials are available on the School of Social Work's website: <http://socialwork.msu.edu/msw/admissions.php>

NOTE: The entire application process is completed online.

How many students are admitted, and when can I expect to know whether I have been accepted into the program?

We admit between 15 to 25 students in the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM each year. Letters of acceptance to all successful applicants are typically emailed in late-March to early-April. Accepted applicants then begin orientation and coursework in mid- to late-August.

COURSES, CONCENTRATIONS, & SCHEDULES

What concentrations (majors) are available?

Applicants to the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM must choose between the School of Social Work's two concentrations: Organization and Community Leadership or Clinical Practice.

The concentration on Clinical Practice prepares students to practice advanced clinical skills in a variety of settings that focus on individuals, families, and groups. The concentration on Organization and Community Leadership prepares students to practice a wide range of advanced skills for leadership and change management within diverse organizations and communities.

Applicants admitted for Fall 2015 into the pilot Clinical Practice concentration in the Weekend Program will be able to complete all required courses for this concentration in the Weekend Program.

All MSW students have a first field placement that has a generalist social work practice focus with two accompanying practice courses that also focus on generalist practice. Generalist social work practice includes intervention on the individual, family, group and community levels. The concentration practice courses and concurrent field placement

occur in the final year of the program and will focus on either Organization and Community Leadership or Clinical Practice. Thus, students admitted into the Weekend MSW Program will take identical courses together for the first two years of the program, regardless of concentration.

What kind of time commitment does this program require?

The WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM is a 3-year, part-time, year-round program. Students in the program begin coursework in August and graduate in May three years later. There are required courses year-round for all three years of the program.

All MSW programs at MSU include 57 credit hours of graduate courses in social work practice methods, policy, human behavior in the social environment, and research methods, as well as supervised field education in two social work settings totaling 960 hours spread over four semesters. Students in Weekend MSW Program will be required to complete all courses in the curriculum according to the schedule offered by MSU. Courses will not be repeated during the proposed program.

There will be considerable online content for all courses. In general, for graduate social work courses students should expect to spend 8 to 12 hours per week PER COURSE to complete readings, written assignments, and online activities. Most semesters will involve two courses (16 to 24 hours per week total) or one course plus field education (24 to 28 hours per week total).

Field education activities (16 hours per week for four semesters, generally during normal business hours) will be scheduled for Fall and Spring semesters in the second and third years of the program. Additional details about the field component are noted below.

Even though graduate education is a major time commitment, the part-time nature of the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM allows students to continue to work full-time, manage family and other life demands, etc.

When and where are the courses offered?

The WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM meets at the James B. Henry Center for Executive Development on the Michigan State University East Lansing campus (3535 Forest Road, Lansing, MI 48910). Adjacent to the Henry Center is a Candlewood Suites hotel. This provides students who may need overnight lodging while participating in the program, a convenient, reasonable prices, and comfortable option.

Each year the program will meet for 8 weekend sessions (4 each in the fall and spring semesters.) Weekend sessions will be from 6-9pm on Friday evenings and from 9am-4pm on Saturdays. The mid- to late-August meeting will be two days longer and start on Wednesday; it will include an Orientation to the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM and Graduate School in the first year, and an orientation to field education and certificate program options in the other years.

In the summers of the 2nd and 3rd years, students will also be enrolled in online courses. In addition, there will be a variety of elective credits offered online and in face-to-face sessions. Most electives are offered in the summer, but there are also options throughout the academic year.

What is the overall sequence of courses for the program?

SEMESTER	YEAR 1 COURSES	YEAR 2 COURSES	YEAR 3 COURSES	
			OCL	Clinical
SUMMER	Orientation to Weekend MSW program and graduate school – end of August (no credit)	SW 822 (3 cr) – Topics in Pol Prac & Advocacy (Online)	SW 844 (2 cr) – Org & Cmty Theories SW Prac (Online)	SW 843 (2 cr) – Clinical Assessment Diagnosis (Online)
FALL	SW 810 (3 cr) – Thry Grps Organ & Commun in SW SW 820 (3 cr) – Soc Wel Pol & Services * SW 891 (1 cr) – Spec Top Grad Soc Work (Leadership Seminar) Monthly Weekend Seminar	SW 830 (2 cr) – SW Research Methods II SW 840 (3 cr) – Generalist SW Prac Meth I SW 894A (4 cr) – Fld Educ Grad Gen Prac I Monthly Weekend Seminar	SW 832 (2 cr) – Applied SW Research: Survey & Field Designs SW 865 (3 cr) – SW Leadership in Orgs & Comm I SW 894G (4 cr) – Fld Educ Org & Comm Pract I Monthly Weekend Seminar	SW 832 (2 cr) – Applied SW Research: Survey & Field Designs SW 850 (3 crs) – Clin SW Prac I SW 894D (4 crs) – Fld Educ Clin Prac I Monthly Weekend Seminar
SPRING	SW 811 (3 cr) – Perspectives in Human Devel SW 829 (2 cr) – SW Research Methods I * SW 891 (1 cr) – Spec Top Grad Soc Work (Leadership Seminar) Monthly Weekend Seminar	SW 841 (3 cr) – Generalist SW Prac Meth II SW 845 (3 cr) – Administrative Skills for SW Practice SW 894B (4 cr) – Fld Educ Grad Gen Prac II Monthly Weekend Seminar	SW 866 (3 cr) – SW Leadership in Orgs & Com II SW 894I (4 cr) – Fld Educ Org & Comm Pract II Monthly Weekend Seminar	SW 851 (3 crs) – Clin SW Prac II SW 894E (4 crs) – Fld Educ Prac II Monthly Weekend Seminar

* SW 891 (Leadership Seminar) is a required elective for students in the Weekend OCL MSW Program.

Note: Students in the Weekend OCL MSW Program must complete **four (4) credit hours of electives** in addition to all required courses and **two (2) credits of Leadership Seminar**; students in the Weekend CLINICAL MSW Program must complete **six (6)**

credit hours of electives in addition to all required courses. These courses may be completed during any semester. However, students are strongly encouraged to complete elective credits during the summer semesters due to a decreased required course load and increased number of elective course options. Clinical students can choose to take one or both Leadership Seminars – offered during required weekend sessions – as part of their required 6 credits of electives.

() behind each course number equals the credit numbers for the course.

What if I start the program but for some reason I cannot finish it on schedule? Can I finish at a later date, perhaps in East Lansing or one of the other campus locations?

If for some reason students are unable to finish the program on schedule it is generally possible to request an extension in meeting degree requirements and then to complete the program. However, to continue in the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM the only option is to request a leave of absence for a full year and then join the next cohort if space is available.

The School's policy is that students must matriculate into and graduate from the program to which they were admitted. Changes may be made only after careful consideration by the Graduate Office of the School of Social Work. The Weekend Program Coordinator and Advisor are available to answer questions about particular circumstances students may face.

FIELD EDUCATION

How does field education (sometimes called internship or practicum) work?

Field education is the experiential component of the MSW program where theory integrates with practice. The purpose of field education is to provide supervised opportunities directed toward student development of professional identity, self-understanding and competent practice.

Students must complete four semesters of field education in the MSW program (a total of 960 hours). This means students spend sixteen hours per week or a total of 240 hours each semester for four semesters in human service organizations that are affiliated with the University. These experiences must be supervised by an MSW with two years post master's experience.

In the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM, students complete the field education requirement during the 2nd and 3rd years of the program.

How might I combine field education with my full-time job?

Sixteen (16) hours of field education are generally completed during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). While some weekend and

evening field opportunities may be available, we ask that students arrange with employers for some flexibility in their work week to combine employment and field obligations. It is impossible for students to complete field placements in just evening and weekend hours. Combining field placement with classes (at least one each semester) and full-time employment can be difficult for students. However, efforts will be made to place you in an agency that accommodates your schedule and is geographically suitable to you.

I work in a social service agency; can I do my field placement at my place of employment?

If you have had long-term employment in a qualified social work organization you may be eligible to complete two semesters of the field education requirement within your employing institution (during the first year of field placement; second year of the program), pending employer approval. The School's Employment-Related Placement Policy (http://www.socialwork.msu.edu/field_education/employment_related.php) provides more details. NOTE: Employment-related placements are permitted for only TWO of the four semesters of field education.

Are there any other options besides the traditional or employment-related field placement?

Project-based field placements may be an option for MSW students in the Organization and Community Leadership concentration who have substantial experience and established careers in social work. Projects will be completed under the instruction of a MSW field instructor with at least two years of post-masters experience who has knowledge and expertise within the focus area of the project. The scope of the identified project will likely extend beyond the parameters of a traditional or employment-related field placement. Project-based field placements should span both semesters of the placement and reflect time commitments consistent with 240 hours per semester. In addition, the project must be well defined by the student (within established criteria) and should reflect the competencies and practice behaviors consistent with field curriculum for each of the semesters the student will be in field. To qualify for this option a student would need to submit a proposal in the Spring semester of their second year in the program. The proposal will be reviewed and approved by the field team and must meet all established criteria. Approval will be granted by the School of Social Work's Field Education Team after consultation with the student and field instructor.

Projects might be developed in a number of areas that include, but are not limited to, community engagement projects, program development and evaluation, leadership and change initiatives in communities or across agencies. Projects may also be associated with specific certificate or specializations identified by the University or School. Students will be provided with additional information and criteria for Project-Based Field Placements after admission to the program.

Can I contact agencies and start to make plans for my placements?

With the exception of employment based placements, the field office will make contacts with field agencies to arrange placements. You can identify your interests and specific agencies that you are interested in on your field application. Students are asked to not contact agencies directly unless they have been directed to by the field office.

Regardless of the program or your employment situation, the Field Education Office at MSU will work collaboratively with community agencies throughout the state to arrange and monitor an appropriate field placement for you. Questions concerning field education requirements may be directed to Cheryl Williams-Hecksel at will1534@msu.edu.

NOTE: For more details on Field Education requirements, policies, procedures, etc., please see the Field Education website:

http://socialwork.msu.edu/field_education/index.php?submenuheader=4

FINANCIAL AID & PROGRAM EXPENSES

Will financial aid be available from MSU so I will be able to pay for tuition, fees, textbooks, or other items related to my graduate education?

Part-time and graduate students in general have fewer options for financial aid. Students who wish to participate in various loan programs can apply for financial aid by filing a FAFSA (the Free Application for Federal Student Aid) with the MSU Office of Financial Aid: <http://www.finaid.msu.edu>

Where else can I turn for financial assistance to help make the MSW program more feasible?

If you are employed in a human service agency, your employer may be an excellent source of financial support throughout the degree program. For example, a number of public and private agencies provide tuition reimbursement programs to support professional development of their staff. Another approach in some cases may be to arrange for paid field education hours. Finally, some community and civic groups close to your place of employment and/or residence may provide support.

The MSU School of Social Work will gladly provide documentation of student status and other material routinely required in support of student applications for financial assistance. However, it is up to individual students to seek out and make arrangements for such support.

Local libraries, bookstores, and the Internet all are potential sources of information about scholarships, fellowships, grants, and loans. Some may be open to all applicants, while others are targeted at special populations (e.g., women, minorities, veterans, etc.). You may want to start with the MSU Financial Aid home page at: <http://www.finaid.msu.edu>.

What are the actual costs of the MSW program?

Tuition for the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM is the same as tuition for all MSU graduate courses. For the 2014-2015 academic year, the IN-STATE tuition rate is **\$646.00** per credit hour. (The MSW degree program requires 57 credits for completion.)

Additional information on all university tuition/fees is available at:

<http://ctlr.msu.edu/COStudentAccounts/Default.aspx>

How do the costs of the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM compare with the costs for the campus based three year part-time programs?

Tuition rates are the same for the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM. A special fee of \$475 to assist with expenses associated with the weekend sessions will be collected in August of the first and second years of the program. Students in the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM can expect some savings in commute time and related expenses. We estimate that participation in a traditional campus-based, 3-year, part-time MSW program will include about 150 trips to and from the campus. As a student in the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM, you can expect there to be 24 trips to the East Lansing campus for weekend sessions. There may, however, be other activities or events that draw you to campus during your program.

Additional costs that students might expect could include overnight accommodation for weekend sessions when and if needed. Arrangements have been made with the Candlewood Suites, a hotel adjacent to the Henry Center, for a special rate. Students are not required to stay and may make other accommodations or choose to stay at home and commute both days if that is more convenient.

Students will be responsible for all meals during their attendance at the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM. Beverage and snack service will be provided throughout the day on Saturday, including continental breakfast items.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, LIBRARIES, & COURSE MATERIALS

To help prepare students for the use of technology in the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM, all newly admitted students are required to complete an Online Assessment and Orientation Program (OAOP). In addition, the School of Social Work will provide a required technology orientation during the first August meeting.

Do I have to have a computer and an internet connection to be admitted?

Yes! Students are expected to have personal, readily available access to computing capability, as well as a high-speed internet connection. During the admissions process we will be using email to communicate with you, and you must have access to a computer and a high-speed (not dial-up) Internet connection to complete some components of the admissions process.

Access to sufficient computing resources is essential to successfully completing the program. School announcements, course requirements, library resources, and communication with faculty and other students will all be provided through email and web sites. Especially because this is an off-campus program, with students away from campus for most components, access to sufficient computing resources is critical to maintain contact with the School. The use of various information technologies (video conferencing, computers, the Internet, and so forth) in the MSW program also reflects their increasing use in social work practice, and developing skills in the use of these technologies is one of the goals of the MSW program.

You MUST have high-speed (not dial-up) Internet access readily available where you envision doing most of your course work in place by Summer, 2015.

What are the School's expectations concerning computer size, features, and software?

If you plan to purchase a new computer, **we recommend that you consider a laptop** for its portability to the weekend sessions. In general, you will need a computer that meets the standards identified on this MSU website: <http://vplits.msu.edu/guidelines-policies/computer-requirement.html>

NOTE: You may want to take advantage of the student prices available through MSU to get both hardware and software. Specific details concerning recommended computer resources can be found in the online catalog available at the MSU Computer Store (<http://www.cstore.msu.edu>).

In terms of software, the only required application is the Microsoft Office Suite (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.) or open source equivalents. The MSU Computer Store has an excellent student price on the Microsoft Office Suite.

What are my options for obtaining a computer to use?

MSU students are permitted to purchase computers and software through the MSU Computer Store. A good way to find out about prices and options is to visit their web site at: <http://www.cstore.msu.edu>.

As noted above, all courses will be incorporating computer-based components. This makes easy access to a computer essential. It is our understanding that because the computer is a required element in the MSW program, the cost of a new computing system can generally be included as an educational expense when you apply for financial aid.

What kind of computer support will be available?

The School of Social Work is moving toward greater inclusion of information technology in all of its courses, and we will be committing resources to supporting your efforts to utilize the technology. There will be technical support to aid in issues related to connecting with the School and its faculty through e-mail and other mechanisms. MSU

provides online technical advisors to assist with course-related technology issues. These will be described during the Summer Institute.

What we will not be able to provide is a basic repair service for your hardware or software. After you purchase your own computer, service should come from whoever sold you the system. This also applies to your software purchases.

How do students have access to library resources?

Students will have complete online access to MSU's library catalog, bibliographic databases, and on-line professional journals. In addition, MSU's Distance Learning Services staff will obtain copies of requested articles and books and mail them to students at no additional cost other than return postage for the books (see <http://www2.lib.msu.edu/about/dls/division-dls.jsp> for details). There will be an orientation to these services during the Summer Institute.

How do we handle textbooks and course packs?

Books for all courses can be ordered by phone or online from several East Lansing and national booksellers. When required for specific courses, course packs (collections of readings) can be ordered by phone or online. Other material will generally be provided through course web sites, where you will be able to download and print documents.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For general information about the WEEKEND MSW PROGRAM, you may contact Tina Blaschke-Thompson at wkndmsw@msu.edu.

For information concerning field education requirements, please contact Cheryl Williams-Hecksel at will1534@msu.edu.

For information about application and admission issues and general requirements for the MSW program, please contact Joan Reid at reidj@msu.edu.

We hope this FAQ document has addressed all of your questions about the program. Please contact any of the people listed above to discuss any of these topics and/or obtain additional information.