SOCIAL WORK, MASTER OF (M.S.W.)/MENTAL HEALTH, CERTIFICATE IN (GRADUATE CERTIFICATE) [DUAL DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE]

Advanced study in social work and mental health is available through a dual degree and certificate program sponsored by the School of Social Work.

The program allows students to earn a Master of Social Work and a Certificate in Mental Health with a minimum of 63 credits rather than the 72 credits necessary if the two degrees were pursued separately. This efficiency lowers the overall cost of tuition while also reducing time to earning both degrees.

Program goals

The objectives of this dual degree and certificate program are to:

- Provide graduates with an advanced knowledge base that informs and supports trauma-informed practice in a mental health-based model
- Provide graduates with a foundation in the most current evidence-based treatments for complex clinical disorders including Schizophrenia, Treatment-Resistant Depression and Bipolar Disorder—while synthesizing psychodynamic insights with anti-racist and culturally responsive practice models
- Prepare graduates to work with individuals and families navigating complex mental health challenges across diverse organizational and community settings
- Prepare graduates to understand systemic barriers and advocate for equitable policy reform to promote social justice on micro, mezzo and macro levels

Among the many benefits offered by participation in the dual degree and certificate program is the following:

- Prepares graduates to become culturally competent and anti-racist clinical social workers providing services working with individuals, families and communities
- Provides advanced clinical expertise and prepares graduates for high-demand roles in community mental health

The diplomas for this dual degree and certificate program may be awarded simultaneously. However, students must complete a separate graduation check out for each program.

Student learning outcomes

See the individual program pages for student learning outcomes.

Admission requirements

See the individual program pages for admission deadlines and other requirements. Students must meet the admission requirements for each program. Admission into one program does not guarantee admission into the other.

The Certificate in Mental Health program is open to qualified students who have earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university or the equivalent and who have met all **general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School**.

The admissions requirements for the M.S.W. (https://www.socialwork.vcu.edu/programs/msw/admission.html) are posted on the School of Social Work website.

Application procedure

Applicants may apply at any time after acceptance into the M.S.W. program.

Students may contact VCU Graduate Admissions to have their transcripts and letters of recommendation from the M.S.W. application attached to their certificate application. A new personal statement is required.

Dual degree and certificate requirements

As standalone programs, the M.S.W. comprises 60 credits while the certificate requires 12 credits. The dual degree and certificate program allows students to share three credits, therefore decreasing total credits to completion from 72 to 63.

Based on the equivalent knowledge acquired by successfully completing one of the concentration courses in social work (SLWK 709, SLWK 793, SLWK 794 or SLWK 795), the elective is satisfied in the certificate curriculum.

Curriculum requirements

Course	Title	Hours
M.S.W. requirements		
• Generalist courses		
SLWK 601	Human Behavior in the Social Environment I	3
SLWK 602	Policy, Community and Organizational Practice I	3
SLWK 603	Power, Privilege and Oppression	3
SLWK 604	Social Work Practice with Individuals, Families and Groups I	3
SLWK 605	Social Work Practice with Individuals, Families and Groups II	3
SLWK 606	Policy, Community and Organizational Practice II	3
SLWK 609	Foundations of Research for Social Work Interventions and Services	3
SLWK 610	Human Behavior in the Social Environment II	3
Field instruction (select one option)		6
SLWK 693 & SLWK 694	Generalist Field Instruction I and Generalist Field Instruction II	
SLWK 695	Block Generalist Field Instruction	
• Concentration requirements (select one concentration)		15
Administration, planning and policy practice		
SLWK 709	Specialization Research for Understanding and Assessing Social Work Interventions and Services	
SLWK 710	Concentration Social Policy (satisfied by HCPR 601)	

SLWK 711	Strategies for Social Work Planning and Administrative Practice	
SLWK 712	Social Work Planning and Administrative Practice I	
SLWK 713	Social Work Planning and Administrative Practice II	
Clinical practice concentration		
SLWK 703	Psychopathology	
SLWK 704	Clinical Social Work Practice I	
SLWK 705	Clinical Social Work Practice II	
SLWK 709	Specialization Research for Understanding and Assessing Social Work Interventions and Services	
SLWK 710	Concentration Social Policy	
• Field instruction (required for either concentration; select one option)		6
SLWK 793 & SLWK 794	Specialization Field Instruction I and Specialization Field Instruction II	
SLWK 795	Specialization Block Field Instruction	
SLWK 796 & SLWK 797 & SLWK 798	Specialization Field Instruction Extended Semesters I and Specialization Field Instruction Extended Semesters II and Specialization Field Instruction Extended Semesters III	
• Electives		9
Certificate requirements		
SLWK 727	Trauma and Social Work Practice: Theory, Assessment and Intervention	3
SLWK 762	Treatment of SMI (Serious Mental Illness) Through a Trauma-Informed and Evidence-Based Perspective	3
SLWK 763	Neurobiology and Social Work	3
SLWK 764	Mental Health Practice	3
Total Hours		**63**

The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this dual program is 63.

Contact

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