

M.S.W. PROGRAM

Nicole Lynn Lee, Ph.D.

Director, M.S.W. Program

Program mission and profession purpose and values

The VCU School of Social Work offers a graduate professional curriculum accredited by the Council on Social Work Education leading to the Master of Social Work degree. The mission of the M.S.W. program at VCU is to educate students for advanced practice in either clinical social work or social work administration, planning and policy practice under the guiding principle of promoting a more just society that includes a commitment to the values of diversity, ethics and competent social work practice in a multicultural society. The M.S.W. program's mission is strongly aligned with the purpose of the social work profession in that it fully embodies and promotes the dignity and worth of the person and the empowerment and self-determination of individuals, families and communities. In addition, a strong focus on the values of diversity; social, economic and environmental justice; cultural competence/sensitivity; and the importance of human relationships are the cornerstone of the M.S.W. program mission statement. This mission is consistent with and reflected throughout the NASW Code of Ethics.

Upon completion of the M.S.W. program, students will possess the knowledge, skills, values and ethics that guide the core practice standards of the VCU School of Social Work, NASW and CSWE's Educational Policy and Accreditation standards. The curriculum fosters student learning about human rights through course work that addresses poverty and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons. The program curriculum promotes human and community well-being by providing courses focused on service to and empowerment of people who experience oppression or vulnerability due to inadequate or inequitable distribution of personal, social or institutional resources. This perspective is infused across the curriculum. Within this context, social work practice is defined as the application of professional knowledge, skills and values across a range of settings and populations for the prevention and amelioration of personal and social problems. The curriculum connects with the profession's purpose of using scientific inquiry within the practice setting by providing students with practice knowledge based upon the analysis of critical application of qualitative and quantitative research from within the profession and related social, behavioral and biological sciences. The interactions among persons and their environments are the primary targets of social work practice and students obtain critical skills to provide services including the restoration, rehabilitation, maintenance and enhancement of the functioning of individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations.

Program modalities

The VCU School of Social Work provides two modalities in which students may earn the Master of Social Work degree. The fully online modality offers students course work that is asynchronous with some synchronous virtual meeting sessions. The traditional, or face-to-face modality, requires students to attend weekly face-to-face classes. Both modalities require the completion of social work field placements. Field placements are community-based experiential learning opportunities. Most placements require students to attend face-to-face for a minimum number of hours each week.

All required M.S.W. courses (not electives) are offered in the face-to-face and online modalities. When applying to the M.S.W. program, applicants apply for the modality in which they would like to earn their M.S.W.

Additionally, some courses in the face-to-face format may be offered in a hybrid capacity in which asynchronous course work supplements in-class synchronous class sessions.

Students who complete the requirements for either of these concentrations will receive a Master of Social Work.

- Social Work, Master of (M.S.W.) with a concentration in administration, planning and policy practice (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-social-work/msw-program/social-work-msw-concentration-administration-planning-policy-practice/>)
- Social Work, Master of (M.S.W.) with a concentration in clinical practice (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-social-work/msw-program/social-work-msw-concentration-clinical-practice/>)

Opportunities exist to combine the M.S.W. with certification and degree programs within the university as well as programs offered in conjunction with other institutions. See the Opportunities tab for additional information.

- Social Work, Master of (M.S.W.)/Gender Violence Intervention, Certificate in (Post-baccalaureate graduate certificate) [dual degree and certificate] (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/dual-degree-cert-ops/msw-gvi-cert/>)
- Social Work, Master of (M.S.W.)/Nonprofit Management, Certificate in (Post-baccalaureate graduate certificate) [dual degree and certificate] (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/dual-degree-cert-ops/msw-nmc-cert/>)
- Social Work, Master of (M.S.W.)/Public Health, Master of (M.P.H.) [dual degree] (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/dual-degree-ops/msw-mph/>)
- Social Work, Master of (M.S.W.)/school social work practice certification
- Social Work, Master of (M.S.W.)/Divinity, Master of from the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond or the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University [dual degree]
- Social Work, Master of (M.S.W.)/Juris Doctor with the University of Richmond [dual degree]