

Social Work Program Podcast

Hello, my name is Amanda and I am a staff member in The Graduate School at Grand Valley State University. Thank you for taking the time to learn more about GVSU's Master of Social Work program. Today we're going to cover the admissions process, program requirements, and the qualities that distinguish this program.

Let's start by explaining to you what this program entails. The Master of Social Work at GVSU will prepare students to become social workers from an accredited program. Your courses will include lectures, discussions, and seminar formats. You will also complete an extensive internship experience. This is a 60 credit hour program for students without a Bachelors of Social Work degree and can be completed in 2 years as a full-time student or 3 to 4 years on a part-time basis. All students are expected to complete the degree in four years.

Employment of social workers is projected to grow 12% through 2024, which is much faster than most occupations. Employment of healthcare social workers and mental health and substance abuse social workers is projected to grow 19% through 2024.

Standard Grand Valley admission requirements include completion of the online application as well as a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education. Your application must include official transcripts, and if English is not your native language you must provide scores from one of our approved standardized tests such as the TOEFL, IELTS, MELAB, or the PTE Academic. There is a \$30 nonrefundable application fee, however this fee is waived if you attended GVSU previously or are currently attending GVSU.

In addition to the graduate admission standards, the Master of Social Work program requires a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 for undergraduate coursework, a graduate admission statement detailing academic preparation, background experiences, and professional, educational and career goals. Applicants are also required to submit a current resume and three recommendations from professional individuals. At least one reference from a college professional is preferred. In addition, students must complete a Coursework Requirement Form that identifies a minimum of 18 credit hours in social or behavioral science courses, such as sociology, psychology, or social work and a broad liberal arts background. Students lacking this requirement may be assigned relevant prerequisite courses.

More program details as well as the online application can be found on the Master of Social Work website, www.gvsu.edu/grad/msw/.

The great news about GVSU's graduate programs is that tuition rates for Michigan resident and non-resident students are the same. In other words, there are no extra costs for being an out of state student. Current tuition costs and information about scholarships and financial aid can be found at www.gvsu.edu/financialaid or by calling 616-331-3234. For information on graduate assistantships, please contact The Graduate School at gradschool@gvsu.edu.

The Master of Social Work program is a 60 credit hour program with 18 of those credit hours being required core courses. Each core course includes relevant content about the role of social policy, social research, social work practice, human diversity, and populations-at-risk. Each student in this

program must also complete a fieldwork component with placements made in a wide variety of human service settings in the public and private sectors. 12 of the required 60 credit hours are granted for field education. Students will participate in three academic semesters of supervised, agency-based field instruction for a minimum of 21 hours per week.

Students in the Master of Social Work program that have already obtained a Bachelors of Social Work are eligible to be advanced standing students. Advanced standing students have the first five courses in the program waived and can complete the program requirements in a shorter time period. Advanced standing students must complete a two semester 660 hour internship, while regular standing students must complete a 990 hour internship over the course of one calendar year.

For a complete listing of all courses please visit www.gvsu.edu/msw/.

Rather than a narrow clinical specialization, we are one of three programs in Michigan with an “Advanced Generalist” focus. This means we prepare students for autonomous social work practice that promotes social and economic justice and endeavors to address poverty and other social problems within organizational, individual, and community contexts. All of our students have available study abroad opportunities. Additionally, students may write a thesis, add school certification which requires at least 4 additional credit hours, or pursue a combined Masters of Social Work and Master of Public Administration degree which requires at least 28 additional credit hours. We are known for our emphasis on diversity and cultural sensitivity, including domestic and international service learning trips. The one year internship has a distinct strength because it immerses students in their assigned setting for an entire calendar year. Our School of Social Work offers the opportunity to apply for graduate assistant positions. There are also six scholarships provided to Master of Social Work students that annually award about \$20,000 to our students.

That is just a snapshot of the Master of Social Work graduate program at Grand Valley State University. We hope that you will consider applying to a graduate program at GVSU. Any questions can be directed to the Graduate Program Director, Dr. Paola Leon, at leonm@gvsu.edu or to The Graduate School at gradschool@gvsu.edu. Thank you for your time and we hope you have enjoyed this podcast.