

TSU-MSW Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is the TSU-MSW Program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)?

Yes, in February 2022 TSU-MSW Program became accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.
2. The information from your program states that this master's in social work is being delivered in a hybrid model. What does this mean?

Some of the courses will be 100% online. Some of the courses will be split between in class hours once per week and online hours. For example, you might take one three-hour course from 5:30-6:55 p.m. and another three-hour course from 7:05-8:30 p.m. Although each class meets only 1.5 hours, the remainder of the coursework will be online. This allows the student to attend one evening per week and complete two courses.
3. What does it mean to take a course online?

The entire course will be online. You will need to log onto the course several times each week. There will be content information posted which takes the place of lecture notes. You will be required to read the lecture notes and the assigned chapter(s) each week and participate in discussions boards. In the discussion boards, you will answer the questions for discussion and you will also respond to the answers of your classmates. Exams will be online. Papers written for the course will be submitted by you through the dropbox. The instructor will grade the paper and return it to you. You will communicate with your instructor through email or by phone. Instructors are available to meet with students by appointment. The advantage of online courses is that the student determines the time period which they will devote to learning the required material. The disadvantage is that communication is in a different environment than the traditional classroom.
4. I know about clinical and administration concentrations in social work. What is the advanced generalist concentration?

The Advanced Generalist Concentration prepares the student to work at all levels of practice: micro (individuals), mezzo (families and groups), and macro (organizations and communities). Concentration courses focus on all levels of practice, not just clinical or administration.
5. Does the concentration affect the kind of work I can do?

No. The social work masters degree qualifies you for advanced social work. There are students with an administration concentration whose first job is clinical. There are students with a clinical concentration whose first job is administrative. The concentration is only your area of interest and does not limit your practice. The advanced generalist concentration provides you with flexibility in your professional training.
6. How does the concentration influence licensure?

It doesn't. With the licensure process in Tennessee, you can be licensed as a masters level social worker by completing the masters degree and taking the advanced exam.

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You can be licensed at the clinical level by working in a supervised clinical environment for a specified period and passing the clinical exam. You can be licensed at the administration level by working in a supervised administration environment for a specified period and passing the administration exam. You choose your employment arena and decide which license is best for you and your career. The concentration of your master's in social work does not impact your decision on which license you wish to pursue.

7. When I go back to school, should I apply as a full-time or part-time student?
Part-time enrollment is generally recommended for individuals who are working full time while they attend school. Six credit hours per semester is the usual part-time course load. For each 3 credit hours, you will need to schedule your calendar for 1.5 hours of class time and 7-8 hours of study per week. So, if you are part-time and taking 6 credit hours, you will need 17-18 hours per week in order to meet the requirements of the courses. The 17-18 hours per week include class time, time for required reading, and time for required assignments such as papers. This is just an average, as some weeks there will be more or less reading, and some weeks will have assignments and some will not.
8. When should I apply for the MSW Program?
Applications are available online in October. Applications are due no later than July 31, however, the Admissions Committee will begin making decision in April about admissions to the TSU-MSW Program so you would be wise to complete your MSW application by the end of March. Applicants will be notified of admission decisions through the SocialWorkCAS system and from the TSU Graduate School.
9. Do you accept late applications?
Yes, applications are accepted until the beginning of the Fall semester. This does, however, create a great deal of stress for the prospective student. For this reason, all MSW applicants are encouraged to complete the MSW application ahead of the deadline. and preferably by the end of March.

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10. Do I really have to take an entrance exam?

No. You do not have to take the GRE or any entrance examination.

11. I heard that there is conditional admission. Is this true?
Yes. We accept students who do not meet the minimum requirements for entry into the TSU-MSW Program when the strengths of other aspects of their MSW application outweigh those requirements. This is especially true for those MSW applicants with an undergraduate GPA that does not meet minimum requirements. We understand that, in our youth, we make less desirable or responsible decisions, or encounter hardships that make it difficult to succeed in an academic setting. Your undergraduate GPA does not necessarily represent who you are now or your capacity for graduate level studies. Other

parts of your application may serve to enhance your chances of being accepted under those conditions.

Another type of conditional admission comes when there is a missing transcript from an undergraduate college/university that is not the degree-granting institution. Under that condition, you may receive conditional acceptance to the MSW Program and be required to receive verification in the SocialWorkCAS system for full admission.

12. How important are my letters of recommendation?
They are crucial. Your letters of recommendation should be submitted from professionals. Although your pastor or other community leader may be able to address your character and your willingness to work, they do not have a basis of assessing your writing skills or potential employment in social work.
13. Why is there an essay required?
Even though you already have a college degree, the program wants an example of your writing. We are looking for essays that are clear and concise. Utilization of professional literature will also enhance your essay. Always proof your essay to ensure that you have used proper grammar and spelling. If you are careless with your essay, the admissions committee will wonder if you are really committed to pursuing higher education. Since the admissions committee does not meet you, it is the essay that reflects you to the committee members.
14. Are there specific undergraduate courses that I should have taken?
No. There are no specific prerequisites for admission. However, you should have completed basic liberal arts coursework as an undergraduate. Typically, the courses you took to fulfill the general education requirements for your undergraduate degree provide you with a liberal arts base.
15. I graduated several years ago and my undergrad GPA isn't great. Should I bother applying?
Yes. Even though our admissions requirements state a minimum GPA of 2.65 for the Foundation Program, the Admissions Committee does grant conditional admission to students with strong MSW applications otherwise. This committee may require additional information or an interview to arrive at a decision.

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17. My undergraduate degree was in engineering. I've worked in that field for a couple of years and realize it's just not what I want to do. I really want to become a social worker. Would you even consider me for the program?
Yes, you would be considered for admission. There is not a requirement that your undergraduate degree be in any particular discipline or field, however, you are expected to have completed basic liberal arts coursework. When we review your application we look not just at your GPA, but also at your essay, letters of recommendation, and work and volunteer experiences. Career change is not unusual among MSW students.
18. I heard you offer advanced standing. What would I need to do to be eligible for that?
To be eligible for advanced standing you must: have an undergraduate degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and have an

overall undergraduate GPA of 2.75 or higher. An undergraduate degree in a related field, such as Counseling or Human Services, does not qualify you for advanced standing.

19. I've taken graduate courses in another field. Can those be counted toward my MSW degree?

You may be able to transfer graduate credits if the conditions of the university policy on graduate transfer credits are met and the courses are deemed appropriate for transfer after review by MSW faculty. Coursework used to satisfy the requirements of a prior master's degree in which the degree was conferred will not be eligible for transfer. Transfer credits for coursework taken in another field can be used to fulfill the MSW Program's elective requirements, not the required courses. Internships completed as part of some other, non-social work graduate program will not be considered for transfer credit.

20. OK, but I've taken graduate social work courses at another MSW program. Won't all of those credits be counted?

If you have taken graduate-level social work courses at an MSW program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, the TSU-MSW Program faculty will evaluate your MSW transcript to determine the equivalency of the courses you've taken with those offered by this MSW program. Transfer credit decisions will be based on the evaluation of your transcript and supplied syllabi for those courses

21. I've 10 years of experience working in the field of social work. Can I get credit for that experience?

No. Consistent with the requirements of our accrediting body, the TSU-MSW Program does not award academic credit for life, volunteer, or employment experience. However, although you will not get academic credit, you have a rich base of experience to draw upon in your classes and this will be of benefit to you as well as the other in your classes.

