

Social Work
Master of Social Work
2025-2026

General Areas of Service

Nature of Work: Social work is a profession for those with a strong desire to help improve people's lives. Social workers assist people by helping them cope with and solve issues in their everyday lives, such as family and personal problems and dealing with relationships. Some social workers help clients who face disabilities, life-threatening diseases, or social problems, such as inadequate housing, unemployment, substance abuse, and mental health. Social workers also assist families that have serious domestic conflicts, sometimes involving child or spousal abuse. Additionally, they may conduct research, advocate for improved services, or become involved in planning and policy development. Many social workers specialize in serving a particular population or working in a specific setting such as mental health, substance abuse, medical, public health, schools, geriatrics, developmental disabilities, corrections, child welfare, counseling, administration, research, policy development, and community organization.

Professional Training

A master's degree in social work (MSW) prepares graduates for direct service positions, counselors in individual and group therapy settings. The MSW program includes courses in social work values and ethics, cultural competence, and at-risk populations, with the program's clinical focus developing students' skills to serve mental health populations, promote social and economic justice, understand human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy and services, and research. A minimum of 900 hours of supervised practicum experience in an agency setting is required for Regular Standing students and 600 for Advanced Standing.

Job Outlook

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Overall employment of social workers is projected to grow 12 percent from 2020 to 2030, faster than the average for all occupations. About 78,300 openings for social workers are projected each year, on average, over the decade. (See www.bls.gov).

Earnings

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the median annual wage for social workers in May 2024 as \$61,330 and for child, family, and school social workers as \$58,570. For health social workers, the median annual wages were reported as \$61,330, and mental health and substance abuse social workers' average as \$60,060 (See www.bls.gov).

Websites

[Walla Walla University](#)
[University Graduate Bulletin](#)
[School of Social Work & Sociology](#)

Faculty

Program Director
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Professional Organizations

[Council on Social Work Education](#)
[National Association of Social Workers](#)

Additional Sources

[U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)
[Social Work Occupations](#)

Required Degree Path

Total Credits Required

Regular Standing 73 credits; Advanced Standing 45 credits. [See the Graduate Bulletin for Details.](#) The chart below details the **required** path a student needs to take to complete a master's degree in social work. In addition to core classes, regular Standing requires 6 elective credits; Advanced Standing requires 9 elective credits.

First-Year Regular Standing

Fall Courses	Hours	Winter Courses	Hours	Spring Courses	Hours
Writing & Scholarship (SOWK 505)	3	Research for Practice (SOWK 506)	3	Privilege & Oppression (SOWK 510)	3
Changemakers in Social Welfare (SOWK 514)	3	Practice with Groups, Organizations, & Communities (SOWK 518)	4	Social Development Across the Lifespan (SOWK 524)	3
Practice with Individuals (SOWK 517)	4	Generalist Elective Option	3	Practice with Families (SOWK 519)	4
Colloquium: Practicum Orientation	0	Practicum: Generalist (SOWK 529)	2	Practicum: Generalist (SOWK 529)	2
Total	10	Total	12	Total	12

Second-Year Regular Standing

Fall Courses	Hours	Winter Courses	Hours	Spring Courses	Hours
Assessment and Diagnosis for Social Workers (SOWK 542)	3	Policy, Justice, and Social Change (SOWK 544)	3	Social Work, Religion & Spirituality (SOWK 588)	3
Clinical Practice with Individuals (SOWK 541)	4	Clinical Practice with Groups (SOWK 573)	4	Clinical Practice with Families (SOWK 545)	4
Clinical Social Work (SOWK 582)	3	Clinical Elective Option	3	Intersectional Practice (SOWK 586)	3
Practicum: Clinical (SOWK 530)	3	Practicum: Clinical (SOWK 530)	3	Practicum: Clinical (SOWK 530)	3
Total	13	Total	13	Total	13

Advanced Standing

Fall Courses	Hours	Winter Courses	Hours	Spring Courses	Hours
Assessment and Diagnosis for Social Workers (SOWK 542)	3	Policy, Justice, and Social Change (SOWK 544)	3	Social Work, Religion & Spirituality (SOWK 588)	3
Clinical Practice with Individuals (SOWK 541)	4	Clinical Practice with Groups (SOWK 573)	4	Clinical Practice with Families (SOWK 545)	4
Clinical Social Work (SOWK 582)	3	Elective Option	3	Intersectional Practice (SOWK 586)	3
Practicum: Clinical (SOWK 530)	3	Practicum: Clinical (SOWK 530)	3	Practicum: Clinical (SOWK 530)	3
Total	13	Total	13	Total	13
Summer Courses	Hours				
Electives	6				
Total	6				