

MSW@USC: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the MSW@USC?

The University of Southern California is the first among elite research universities to offer a highly regarded Master of Social Work degree online. Available nationally through the School of Social Work's Virtual Academic Center, the MSW@USC blends web-based learning and hands-on, supervised field instruction in students' own communities. MSW@USC students earn the same quality education that on-campus students receive. Taught by USC's renowned faculty, our classes are delivered in a robust virtual environment that promotes interactive and collaborative learning experiences.

How do I attend classes?

You will attend classes on your computer. The MSW@USC provides the unique opportunity to attend the University of Southern California without relocating to California. The program contains both synchronous and asynchronous elements. This means you will be expected to be online at specific times for some activities but able to engage in other activities, like field placement, in your community. Using an interactive, web-based learning platform, the Virtual Academic Center enables you to communicate with professors and peers—from all over the country—via live webcam discussions and custom-designed social-networking tools that function like Facebook.

What will I study?

The foundation year of the MSW@USC curriculum introduces theories, issues and practice methods that deal with individuals and their environment. The second half of the curriculum offers you advanced training so that you can develop in-depth knowledge and skills in one of four concentration areas:

- Families and Children
- Community Organization, Planning and Administration (COPA)
- Mental Health
- Health

Additionally, you may choose a sub-concentration in military social work to complement your coursework. You can complete the 60-credit program in just under two years in four consecutive semesters through a three-year (part-time to full-time) program or as a four-year part-time option. We also offer a 35-credit advanced standing program with both full-time (three semesters) and part-time (five semesters) options for students who meet competitive admissions criteria.

How do I complete my field internships?

While the MSW@USC is an online program, we value traditional field education internships as an integral part of a graduate social work

education. We employ community agencies, schools, hospitals, businesses and government entities in students' hometowns to become learning laboratories. This allows you to experience firsthand the broad field of social work and the diversity of populations and treatment issues. As an MSW@USC student, like your fellow classmates on campus, you will complete your internship in a high-quality, community-based organization approved by the USC School of Social Work and supervised by seasoned MSW professionals.

What are the admissions requirements?

Acceptance into the USC School of Social Work is competitive. The MSW@USC mirrors the admissions criteria and standards of the on-site program. The GRE is not required. However, we do consider the following:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, with an interdisciplinary liberal arts background, spanning both social and biological sciences
- Strong academic performance at the undergraduate level with at least a 3.0 GPA
- Professional and volunteer experience in social work field
- Personal and professional commitment to social work values
- Emotional maturity, capacity for self-awareness, concern for others and advanced written and verbal communications skills

For the advanced standing program, a 3.25 overall GPA and 3.5 GPA in all college-level social work courses are required. Also, you must have earned a BSW degree in the last five years. You can find application deadlines and enrollment dates on our website.

How much does the program cost?

Tuition is currently \$1,473 per unit for students enrolled in 1-14 units. The flat rate for students enrolled in 15-18 units is \$21,861. There are no additional out-of-state fees, so the cost of earning your MSW degree through the Virtual Academic Center is the same as attending any of our other locations. Financial aid is available for MSW@USC students through the USC Financial Aid Office. You may be eligible for Federal Direct Stafford Loans, Federal Direct Graduate PLUS Loan and private financing programs. You may also qualify for loan forgiveness programs or Yellow Ribbon and post-9/11 GI Bill scholarships if you are a service-member. We strongly encourage you to apply for financial aid at the same time you apply for admission.

How do I learn more?

Visit our website at msw.usc.edu. To speak with an Admissions Counselor, call 877.700.4MSW or email VACDEV@usc.edu.