

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
ADVANCED DIRECT PRACTICE CONCENTRATION AND SPECIALIZATIONS**

**Advanced Direct Practice Concentration**

Advanced direct practice consists of three specializations that prepare students for professorial practice with diverse populations in a wide variety of settings. Building on the foundation knowledge and skills obtained in the first year of the MSW program, advanced practice in the second year is designed to prepare students for enhanced competencies in working with individuals, families, small groups and communities. Across all specializations the curriculum is guided by the social work values that emphasize evidence-based practice, client strengths, social justice, and client empowerment. The primary MSW curriculum goals are to educate and train advanced social work practitioners who demonstrate the knowledge, skills, values and ethics of the profession and who are competent for specialized practice. The specialization objectives include:

- Plan, implement, and evaluate evidence-based interventions through the application of critical thinking skills, review of evidence, synthesis of information, and development of a clear rationale for guiding practice.
- Demonstrate appropriate professional use of self and ethical problem solving in advanced practice.
- Evaluate and apply culturally relevant theories and empirical evidence to assessment and intervention in area of specialization.
- Demonstrate culturally responsive skills in individual, family, and group assessment and interventions in area of specialization.
- Advance social justice using principles of cultural competence and empowerment to promote organizational and social change.
- Analyze the impact of social policies on social and economic justice, and demonstrate skills for influencing policy in area of specialization.

**Specialization Descriptions**

**Health/Behavioral Health for Adults**

The Health/Behavioral Health specialization prepares students for advanced social work practice involving the delivery of health and mental health services to individuals, families, small groups and the community. Social workers make up the country's largest group of professionally trained mental health providers and the health field is a growing specialty. Course topics include: alcohol and other drugs, mental health and mental illness, intimate partner violence, community violence, cognitive and physical disabilities, physical illness, and other behavioral

health concerns across the lifespan. Individual, couple and family psychosocial interventions are emphasized. This specialization will prepare students to work in mental health outpatient clinics, psychiatric hospitals, day treatment centers, supportive work agencies, emergency rooms, oncology, hospice, and other health settings.

### **Children, Youth and Families**

The Children, Youth and Families specialization prepares students for advanced social work practice in the delivery of services to children, youth and families. One of the largest specialties in social work, this specialization prepares social workers to provide a broad range of services to individuals and families in all phases of the family life cycle. Advanced clinical skills for working with children with mental illness, behavior problems, and positive youth development are emphasized in this specialization. Parent education and training, family therapy and in-home counseling, outpatient mental health treatment, and the full spectrum of child and family services are included in the coursework. This specialization will prepare students to work in outpatient mental health clinics, child guidance centers, positive youth development agencies, psychiatric hospitals, day treatment centers, and other child and family service agencies.

### **Public Child Welfare**

The Public Child Welfare Specialization provides opportunities for Master of Social Work degree candidates in the Advanced Direct Practice Concentration to acquire specific skills and knowledge in preparation for working in Child Welfare, a dynamic and challenging field. Course topics include areas of current significance for social work practice with families and children in the child welfare system such as substance abuse, family violence (child abuse, domestic violence and animal abuse) and serious mental illness within their ecological context. Students are expected to build sensitivity to various family forms and cultural patterns; and to appreciate client strengths and resiliency despite multiple challenges. This Specialization will prepare students to work in public child welfare positions with the Department of Economic Security (DES) as well as with agencies that contract with DES to provide services to their clients as well with nonprofit agencies that serve children and families who face the difficult challenges of abuse and neglect.