

*Master of Science in Social Work*

**2024 - 2025**  
**Student Handbook**

UNIVERSITY OF  
**LOUISVILLE**<sup>®</sup>

---

RAYMOND A. KENT  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL  
WORK & FAMILY SCIENCE

# *Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) Program*

## *Student Handbook Overview*

The Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) Student Handbook is a vital resource for prospective students and students in the program. This handbook provides a comprehensive overview of the program's policies, procedures, and academic requirements. Its purpose is to guide students through the program and help them understand their roles and responsibilities. The handbook outlines the curriculum, briefly introduces practicum education requirements and academic policies, and offers guidance on the code of conduct and ethical standards expected of social work students. Furthermore, the handbook is essential for students to refer to throughout their academic journey, ensuring they have the necessary information to make informed decisions about their academic and professional goals. While the handbook is not an exhaustive list of all university policies and procedures that may affect students, it is a valuable point of reference tailored to support students in their academic and professional endeavors.

Additional information is available at:

MSSW Admissions Office: [msswkent@louisville.edu](mailto:msswkent@louisville.edu)

MSSW Advising Office: [msswhelp@louisville.edu](mailto:msswhelp@louisville.edu)

Practicum Education Office: [fielddedu@louisville.edu](mailto:fielddedu@louisville.edu)

[University of Louisville Graduate Catalog](#)

*The Handbook is applicable to students who enroll in the MSSW Program beginning Summer 2024 through Spring 2025. This Handbook documents policies and procedures set by the Graduate Council, the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science, and the MSSW program and is updated each academic year to reflect changes and updates to policy. While every effort has been made to make the Handbook accurate as of the date of publication, the MSSW program reserves the right to change programs of study, academic policies, academic requirements, fees, course information, procedures for the confirmation of degrees, or the announced academic calendar and related deadlines without prior notice.*

# Contents

- 4 [Directors Message](#)
- 5 [Institutional Overview](#)
  - University Mission Statement
- 6 [Master of Science in Social Work \(MSSW\) Program Overview](#)
  - Kent School of Social Work and Family Science Mission
  - MSSW Program Mission
  - MSSW Program Goals
  - Accreditation
- 7 [Admission Overview](#)
  - Admission Requirements
  - MSSW Application Instructions
  - International Applicants & US Citizens Living Abroad
  - Military Applicants
  - Dual Degree Applicants
  - Kent BSW to MSSW Admission Criteria
  - Cardinal Express to Success Admission Criteria
  - Important MSSW and Practicum Application Deadlines
- 15 [Master of Science in Social Work Program Curriculum](#)
  - Core and Elective Course Descriptions
  - Optional Concentrations
  - Optional Dual Programs
- 18 [Financial Aid & Scholarships](#)
- 18 [MSSW Student Communication](#)
- 19 [MSSW Academic Advising](#)
- 19 [Practicum Education Overview](#)
- 20 [Academic Policies and Procedures](#)
  - Transfer Credit
  - Activating University Accounts
  - Registration Information
  - Auditing Courses
  - Continuous Enrollment and Leave of Absences
  - Reenrollment Process
  - Withdrawal Process
  - Writing Guidelines
  - Grading
  - Graduate School Academic Standing
  - MSSW Academic Policies
  - Student Resources
  - Student Involvement
- 26 [Degree Application & Commencement](#)
- 27 [Academic Integrity](#)
- 28 [Professional Development](#)

# Interim Director's Welcome

Susan Heffner Rhema, MSW, LCSW, PhD



Greetings and welcome to the Master of Science in Social Work Program at the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science. It is my pleasure to serve as the Interim Program Director for the MSSW program for academic year 2024-2025.

As a school we acknowledge the historical harms that are part of our past and are working to create an educational environment that is built on anti-oppressive policies and practices. Our faculty are dedicated to a model of social work education that enables students to build the necessary skills for advanced social work practice. It is my personal goal to provide a student-centered environment with the educational resources and professional development necessary for each student. In this role, I will strive to support systems that aid students in meeting their educational objectives.

The MSSW Student Handbook is a resource to help guide you in your educational journey. Please review it and let us know if you have questions.

Together with the MSSW staff team and the many faculty instructors, I am here to help in any way possible and ensure your success. I am very glad that you choose to pursue your dream with Kent School of Social Work and Family Science.

*Susan Heffner Rhema, MSW, LCSW, PhD*



# Institutional Overview



The University of Louisville is a state-supported research university located in Kentucky's largest metropolitan area. It was a municipally supported public institution for many decades prior to joining the university system in 1970. The University has three campuses. The 287-acre Belknap Campus is three miles from downtown Louisville and houses eight of the university's 12 colleges and schools. The Health Sciences Center is situated in downtown Louisville's medical complex and houses the university's health-related programs and the University of Louisville Hospital. The 243-acre Shelby Campus is located in eastern Jefferson County.

## Mission Statement

The University of Louisville pursues excellence and inclusiveness in its work to educate and serve its community through:

1. teaching diverse undergraduate, graduate, and professional students in order to develop engaged citizens, leaders, and scholars,
2. practicing and applying research, scholarship and creative activity, and
3. providing engaged service and outreach that improve the quality of life for local and global communities.

The University is committed to achieving preeminence as a nationally recognized metropolitan research university.



# Kent School of Social Work and Family Science

## Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) Program Overview

The Kent School of Social Work and Family Science at the University of Louisville has prepared professional social workers since 1936. Centered in Kentucky's largest metropolitan city, Louisville, KY, we prepare generations of social workers nationally and globally for careers in advanced social work practice through lenses of anti-oppression and anti-racism while promoting social justice.

To promote student success, the MSSW Program provides diverse program options, including Advanced Standing (30 credit hour) and Regular (60 credit hour), on-campus and 100% online courses, full-time and part-time paths, dual degree options, and you can customize your MSSW degree to concentrate in social work career options in Alcohol and Drug Counseling, Gerontology Social Work, Forensic Social Work, Mental Health Social Work, Military Social Work, Psychosocial Oncology/Medical Social Work,

and School Social Work.

### Kent School of Social Work and Family Science, Mission

The Kent School of Social Work and Family Science addresses complex social problems through education, research, and service to create a just and better world.

### MSSW Program Mission

The mission of the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science MSSW program is to prepare students for ethical, evidence-informed, advanced generalist social work practice with diverse, vulnerable and marginalized individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. We take an anti-oppressive stance in educating students for careers as advanced social work practitioners who apply critical thinking skills and available evidence to inform practice that responds to complex social problems. Graduates will use these skills to actively pursue social change, advocating with

and on behalf of vulnerable and marginalized client systems. The program will contribute to the mission of the University as a great place to learn, by providing engaged service and outreach opportunities that improve the quality of life for local and global communities. The educational part of our mission is accomplished through theoretically and empirically driven approaches to pedagogy in our on campus and on-line instruction and transformative learning experiences.

### MSSW Program Goals

- Prepare graduates for advanced social work practice with vulnerable and marginalized individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities through the acquisition and demonstration of social work practice behaviors consistent with CSWE







educational standards and policies, and the NASW Code of Ethics.

- Prepare graduates who critically evaluate and synthesize knowledge from theory, empirical evidence, and professional experience on which to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.
- Prepare graduates to be leaders who are committed to social justice and are effective in bringing about social change on behalf of diverse client systems.
- Prepare graduates who continue to develop professionally throughout their careers to meet new challenges and opportunities.

## Accreditation

The MSSW program offered by the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science adheres to the established framework and regulations of the Council

on Social Work Education (CSWE). The MSSW Program at the University of Louisville is accredited by the Council of Social Work Education Board of Accreditation through February 2032.

Accreditation of a baccalaureate or master's social work program by the Council on Social Work Education's Commission on Accreditation indicates that the program meets or exceeds standards that define competent preparation for professional social work at the generalist and specialized levels. Through the accreditation process, the Commission on Accreditation verifies that the program demonstrates compliance with all sections of the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.

Accreditation applies to all program sites and program delivery methods (e.g., on-campus; online) of an accredited program. Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.

# Admissions Overview

The Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) program is currently accepting and evaluating applications for admission of new students. The MSSW program employs a semester-based schedule, which permits students to begin their graduate studies during the Fall (August), Spring (January), or Summer (May) semesters. This structure allows for year-round admissions and greater flexibility in the enrollment process. Prospective students are encouraged to submit their applications in a

timely manner to facilitate timely review and consideration for admission.

**No GRE required!** You must have earned a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution to apply to our MSSW program and a minimum of 27 credit hours in the social sciences, i.e., communications (6), natural sciences (3), humanities (9), and social sciences (9).

Our admissions process and application requirements are customized to accommodate unique prospective student demographics. Each applicant must complete an online application including essays, submit official transcripts, and letter(s) of recommendation. The selection process includes an evaluation of each applicant's demonstrated and potential abilities as a student, practitioner, and leader in the social work field. Applicants should utilize the [MSSW Application Checklist](#) to ensure that all application requirements and relevant deadlines are met.

Attending an [MSSW Program Information Session](#) is beneficial and will likely assist applicants in strengthening their application

## Admission Requirements

### Regular Standing (60 credit hour) Program Eligibility Criteria

- ▶ Earned a Bachelors degree in any field of study from a regionally accredited institution.
- ▶ Preferred cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.
- ▶ International applicants must adhere to the requirements detailed in the International Section.

### Advanced Standing (30 credit hour) Program Eligibility Criteria

- ▶ Earned a Bachelors in Social Work degree within the last seven (7) years from a CSWE accredited social work program.
- ▶ Preferred cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.
- ▶ Preferred Social Work cumulative GPA of at least 3.25.
- ▶ International applicants must adhere to the requirements detailed in the International Section.

## MSSW Application Instructions

All applicants must complete an online application through the University of Louisville Graduate School. The online application requires a \$65 non-refundable application fee. For information

on application fee waiver eligibility criteria, please contact the Graduate Admissions Office at (502) 852-6495.

[Click Here to Apply!](#)

## Admission Essay

Under the "Education and or Life Experiences Responses" section in the online graduate application applicants must respond to their choice of two (2) prompts. Each response is limited to 300 words.

## Personal Statement

The Kent School of Social Work and Family Science MSSW Program takes an anti-oppressive stance in educating students for careers as specialized social work practitioners who apply critical thinking skills and available evidence to inform practice that responds to complex social problems. Upload to the application, a 2-part, three (3) page double-spaced, 12-font essay with sources cited addressing the following:

1. Analyze a systemic/ institutionally oppressive policy or practice and discuss the scope, the population affected, causes and consequences, as well as what social workers can do to combat the oppressive policy or practice.
2. Review the NASW Code of Ethics Preamble and Ethical Principles and discuss how your personal values and



beliefs are or are not compatible with NASW values. How will you reconcile any conflicts between your personal values and the requirements of the profession? View the Code of Ethics [here](#).

## Official Transcripts

- ▶ Transcripts must be OFFICIAL. Faxed transcripts are not acceptable.
- ▶ Official transcripts must be sent directly to the UofL Graduate School.

## Letters of Recommendation

List the email addresses of two (2) recommenders in the recommendation section of the graduate application. Recommendation forms are emailed automatically to the recommenders with information on how to complete and return the recommendation.

- ▶ If applying to the **Advanced Standing program** List an email address of *one (1) recommender* in the recommendation section of the graduate application of a current or former social work instructor. The recommendation form will be emailed automatically to the recommender. Your Field Practicum Evaluations serve as your second form of recommendation.

Recommendations must come from individuals who have

been directly responsible for supervising your professional experience or academic experience. **Personal recommendations will not be accepted.** These include co-workers, mentors, advisors, friends, clergy, personal therapist, etc.

## Resume

- ▶ Include all current/past employment, volunteer, and internship experience.

## Field/Practicum Evaluations

- ▶ If applying for the Advanced Standing program applicant must provide a copy of the final practicum evaluation or the most recent evaluation if currently completing BSW degree.

## Addendum to Personal Statement *(Required for applicants with incoming GPA under 3.0 only)*

Provide an Addendum to your personal statement discussing gaps or deficiencies in your academic record, or explanation of any previous academic review. Include planned strategies for maintaining the required 3.0 in Graduate School.

## International Applicants & US Citizens Living Abroad

All MSSW candidates who

completed their undergraduate degrees outside of the US are required to have their transcripts evaluated by the credential services World Education Services at [wes.org](http://wes.org) or Educational Credential Evaluators at [ece.org](http://ece.org). Any candidate may be required to participate in a brief telephone interview as part of the admissions process. Candidates who are required to complete an I-20 form should note that they will be placed in a practicum program as part of their education. Admitted students to the on-campus program should contact UofL's International Center to determine if any other immigration documentation is necessary to begin practicum at [louisville.edu/internationalcenter](http://louisville.edu/internationalcenter).





## Non-Native English Applicants

ALL candidates for whom English is not their primary language must:

- ▶ Show English proficiency by demonstration of a specified level of proficiency on the TOEFL exam, IELTS, or Duolingo examination or by providing an official transcript from an acceptable English language institution.
- ▶ Minimum TOEFL scores: 213 on the computer-based TOEFL or a score of 79-80 on Internet-based TOEFL is required. More information on TOEFL at [www.ets.org/toefl](http://www.ets.org/toefl).
- ▶ Minimum IELTS score: 6.5 for more information review [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org).

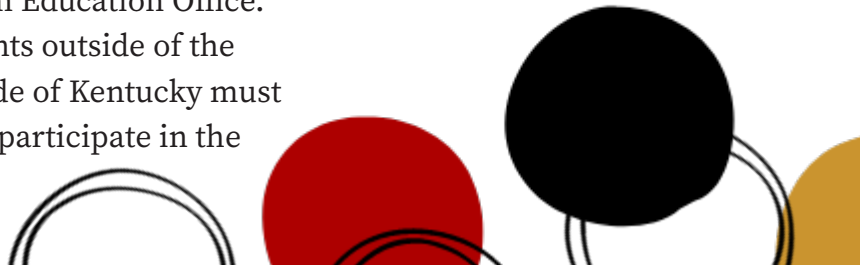
- ▶ Duolingo score of 105 for more information review [englishtest.duolingo.com/applicants](http://englishtest.duolingo.com/applicants).

Applicants who live outside of the US will need to consult with the Practicum Education Office in advance of applying to the MSSW program to ensure the feasibility of meeting the practicum placement requirements in accordance with CSWE policies at [fielddedu@louisville.edu](mailto:fielddedu@louisville.edu). A qualified practicum supervisor must be readily available (e.g., the supervisor has an MSSW/MSW degree from a CSWE accredited institution or similar CSWE type accreditation) and/or the applicant must participate in identifying a qualified practicum supervisor with the support of the Practicum Education Office. Both applicants outside of the US and outside of Kentucky must be willing to participate in the

process of identifying a qualified practicum supervisor with the support of the Practicum Education Office.

## Military Applicants

The UofL Graduate School waives the application fee for currently serving members of the U.S. Armed Forces and veterans. Additionally, UofL and the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science are committed to supporting students currently serving in the military, veterans, and family members in their academic success. You can learn more about the application fee waiver, military tuition rates, and student support services [here](#).





## Dual Program Applicants

If you wish to pursue any of the dual offerings, you must also complete the other unit's application process. All dual degree options may not offer fully online opportunities, so students in the Online MSSW program may be ineligible for some dual offerings.

## Kent BSW TO MSSW Applicants

Alumni of Kent BSW must adhere to the Admission Requirements detailed on pages 8-9 of this handbook. BSW Alumni engaged in specific activities can have their graduate application expense covered by the MSSW program. For more information about those activities please contact [MSSW Admissions](#). The MSSW Admissions Office has access to pull your official transcript and field evaluations and will notify you if you need to take any action to obtain these documents.

## Cardinal Express to Success Applicants

Alumni of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) must adhere to the Admission Requirements detailed on pages 8-9 of this handbook. The online application fee is waived for alumni of these institutions please contact [MSSW Admissions](#) for access to the fee waiver. This approach acknowledges and promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion in the MSSW program by providing a pathway for underrepresented students to access advanced education and training in the field of social work. The Cardinal Express to Success Program is open to all eligible applicants regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. Applicants can contact the Admissions Team at [hbcucard@louisville.edu](mailto:hbcucard@louisville.edu) or visit the [Kent School's Admission](#) page for additional details about the application process. The Admissions Committee may request additional admissions materials prior to admission if necessary.





# Important MSSW and Practicum Education Application Deadlines

<b>I want to start the MSSW Program during the:</b>	<b>My application is due:</b>
Summer Semester (May)	April 1st
Fall Semester (August)	July 1st
Spring Semester (January)	October 15th

## Exceptions to Deadlines

Applications submitted past the deadline may be considered on case-by-case bases if space allows and only if the applicant is willing to pursue courses with availability and potentially delay field/practicum start until the following semester. Please contact the [MSSW Admissions Office](#) for questions about the MSSW Program and the [Practicum Education Office](#) for practicum questions.

## Important

ALL application materials should be uploaded to Graduate Admissions via your Application Portal under the Upload Materials link one at a time as they are completed. Questions regarding the upload of documents should be directed to the following email address: [gradschool@louisville.edu](mailto:gradschool@louisville.edu).

Additional materials may be requested by an MSSW Admissions Coordinator on behalf of the MSSW Admissions Committee. These documents can be sent to [msswkent@louisville.edu](mailto:msswkent@louisville.edu). Applications will only be reviewed by the Admissions Committee once all required documentation is received. An admission decision is typically made within 10 business days after receipt of a complete application packet.

## Criteria Used by the Admissions Committee

The Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) program is an academically rigorous program that requires dedication and commitment. The Admissions Committee values a record of high academic achievements, but the holistic application review process allows for a more comprehensive approach to consider all factors that make a candidate suitable for admission into the program. We acknowledge that past academic experiences can vary, and while we recognize academic performance, it is not the sole criteria utilized to determine admission. We highly encourage utilizing the Addendum option to share any details with the Admissions Committee about previous academic challenges, which is required for applicants with a previous cumulative GPA below 3.0. The Addendum provides the Admissions Committee with additional information to consider and could lead to waiving the required GPA requirements for admission.

# Master of Science in Social Work Program Curriculum

## Generalized Curriculum (30 credit hours)

MSSW 601 Human Behavior & Social Environment I

MSSW 602 Social Welfare Policy I

MSSW 603 Diversity, Oppression, and Social Justice Practice

MSSW 604 Micro Social Work Practice

MSSW 605 Macro Social Work Practice

MSSW 619 Human Behavior & Social Environment II

MSSW 622 Social Welfare Policy II

MSSW 626 Research Methodology & Design

MSSW 670 Generalist SW Practicum I

MSSW 671 Generalist SW Practicum II

## Specialized Curriculum (21 credit hours)

MSSW 640 Evidence-Based Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups

MSSW 641 Social Justice Policy

MSSW 642 Psychopathology

MSSW 668 Program Evaluation in Social Work

MSSW 672 Specialized Social Work Practicum I

MSSW 673 Specialized Social Work Practicum II

MSSW 677 Mezzo Practice and Integrated Social Work with Complex Cases

## Electives – 9 Credit Hours (3 courses)

To fulfill the MSSW program requirements, all students must finish nine (9) credit hours of electives, equal to three (3) courses. Students have the option to select any MSSW 600-level elective or request permission for a 600-level elective in a different discipline. Those opting for a concentration must complete the specified electives to meet concentration course requirements.

## Core Courses and Elective Course Descriptions

The [University of Louisville Graduate Catalog](#) offers a wealth of information. The MSSW Program encourages all students to consult the Graduate Catalog as a supplementary resource to gain a comprehensive understanding of the courses and their prerequisites.

## Optional Concentrations

The MSSW program offers several concentration areas. In general, these concentrations require the student to take prescribed electives and may offer the opportunity to engage in a practicum placement tailored to their population of interest. Accepted students can declare their interest in pursuing a concentration within our program through a designated form provided after admission. Concentration options include:

- ▶ Alcohol and Drug Counseling
- ▶ Forensic Social Work
- ▶ Gerontology
- ▶ Mental Health
- ▶ Military Social Work
- ▶ Psychosocial Oncology
- ▶ School Social Work (*available to KY residents only*)

## Optional Dual Programs

The Kent School offers a joint program that combines the MSSW with a graduate certificate in Latin American and Latino Studies. Additionally, the Kent School also offers joint degrees with the Couple and Family Therapy Program (MSSW/MS CFT), the Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville (MSSW/JD), the Louisville Presbyterian Seminary (MSSW/MDiv), the Department of Pan-African Studies at the University of Louisville (MSSW/MA), the Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of Louisville (MSSW/MA), and the Department of Philosophy/Healthcare Ethics (MSSW/MA). Applications must be submitted independently to each academic unit/institution. Dual programs generally require that the student to take additional coursework, complete the three MSSW electives in the dual degree area and potentially take a targeted specialized practicum that is approved by the dual program.

**Dual programs may not be available to online students as we cannot guarantee the availability of online courses in other academic units.**

## ***MSSW/Latin American and Latino Studies (LALS) Graduate Certificate***

The dual MSSW/LALS graduate certificate allows students to gain a comprehensive understanding of the diverse cultures of Latin America and Latino communities in the United States. By combining the MSSW and LALS Graduate Certificate, students can develop a deeper appreciation for the social, cultural, and economic issues facing Latin American and Latino communities in the US. The MSSW/LALS dual program prepares graduates to become effective and compassionate social work practitioners with a deep understanding and appreciation for the complexities of the Latin American and Latino communities.

## ***MSSW/MS in Couple and Family Therapy:***

The dual MSSW/MS CFT degree program allows students to complete coursework accredited to educate and prepare future licensed professionals in both Social Work and Couple and Family Therapy (formerly Marriage and Family Therapy). This dual degree program within the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science is dedicated to developing professionals in CFT (MFT) and master's-level Social Work to work with at-risk individuals & families within their community contexts.

***MSSW/Master in Divinity:*** The dual MSSW/MDiv program recognizes the value of



professional education in two interrelated fields and encourages students who have an interest in both ministry and social work to pursue these degrees simultaneously. A student may enter the dual degree program from social work or theology.

**MSSW/Juris Doctor:** The dual MSSW/JD program recognizes the value of interdisciplinary study and encourages students having an interest in both social work and law to pursue these degrees simultaneously. Social workers and lawyers often seek to address identical or related societal concerns, albeit from different perspectives; understanding both disciplines enhances one's effectiveness in both professional capacities. Law courses strengthen the social worker's understanding of legal doctrine and structures that have an impact on social institutions and human conditions; social work courses help lawyers to better understand human behavior, conflict resolution, and social welfare institutions.

**MSSW/MA in Pan-African Studies:** The dual MSSW/MA in Pan-African studies program recognizes the value of professional education in two interrelated fields and encourages students who have an interest in both Pan-African Studies and Social Work to pursue these degrees simultaneously. Social Workers and Pan-African studies scholars often seek to address

identical or related societal concerns, albeit from different perspectives; understanding both disciplines enhances one's effectiveness in both the analysis of and engagement with contemporary social and cultural issues. Pan-African Studies courses strengthen the social worker's understanding of the historical foundations for policies and structures that have an impact on social institutions and human conditions; social work courses help Pan-African scholars or activists to better understand human behavior, conflict resolution and social welfare institutions. A Pan-African Studies and Social Work combination provides the tools of social change for a historic problem of racial injustice.

**MSSW/MA in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies:** The dual MSSW/MA in Women's, Gender and Sexuality program recognizes the value of professional education in two interrelated fields and encourages students who have an interest in both Women's, Gender and Sexuality and Social Work to pursue these degrees simultaneously. Social workers and Women, Gender, and Sexuality scholars often seek to address identical or related societal concerns, albeit from different perspectives; understanding both disciplines enhances one's effectiveness in both the analysis of and engagement with contemporary social and cultural issues. Women's, Gender and Sexuality courses strengthen the social

worker's understanding of the historical foundations for policies and structures that have an impact on social institutions and human conditions; social work courses help Women's, Gender, and Sexuality scholars or activists to better understand human behavior, conflict resolution, and social welfare institutions. A Women's, Gender and Sexuality and Social Work combination provides the tools of social change for a historic problem of gender inequality and injustice.

**MSSW/MA in Applied Philosophy - Health Care Ethics:** The dual MSSW/MA in Applied Philosophy - Health Care Ethics degree program focuses on providing our social work graduates a contextual experience within the interdisciplinary fields that comprise health care ethics in addition to the development of social work skills. MA in Applied Philosophy - Health Care Ethics is an inherently interdisciplinary field, located principally at the intersection of philosophy, the law, and the health care professions, such as clinical medicine and nursing, but drawing as well from social science disciplines as diverse as sociology, clinical psychology, and social work. In addition to any career options presented by the MSSW, degree holders may then participate in hospital ethics committees, teach medical ethics and humanities, or be prepared for future doctoral-level work in medical ethics and humanities.

## Financial Aid & Scholarships

The Kent School of Social Work and Family Science MSSW Program makes every effort to assist students with identifying financial assistance to pursue their graduate studies. While the MSSW program offers some scholarships, the program encourages students to pursue a variety of potential funding sources.

Students can initiate this process by connecting with

the University of Louisville financial aid office for additional assistance in meeting their educational expenses. More detailed information about programs, eligibility requirements, and procedures for making an application for financial assistance is found on the [UofL Financial Aid](#) website.

Additional information pertaining to the [Kent School of Social Work and Family Science scholarships](#) is also regularly distributed via university email upon admission to the program.

Additionally, students can peruse the Financial Support tab on the homepage of the [Graduate School](#) webpage to explore additional potential opportunities offered through the university.



## MSSW Student Communication

After admission to the program all official university

communication is sent via official UofL email and Blackboard. Students must check their UofL email regularly to

ensure they receive important reminders and details pertaining to pertinent deadlines.





## MSSW Academic Advising

The MSSW Academic Affairs Office utilizes a holistic, individualized, and collaborative case management advising approach. The MSSW Program Coordinators, who serve as Academic Advisors, work closely with each student to assess their unique needs and develop a personalized plan to help them achieve their goals. The Academic Advisors maintain a strong working relationship with the students to ensure they remain on track to meet

academic requirements. Every semester, MSSW Academic Advisors provide students with a detailed degree audit, which they can use to verify that they are progressing toward graduation.

MSSW Academic Advisors are available to advise students both virtually and on campus. It is essential to note that students only need to meet with an advisor before registering for classes if they have questions or concerns about their schedule. The University of Louisville only places academic holds on students' accounts if there

are any academic concerns. Therefore, academic advising is optional to progress through the program. However, students are encouraged to take advantage of this valuable resource. It is important to note that institutional holds on accounts are possible if deemed necessary, which must be resolved with the appropriate department in a timely fashion to avoid any unnecessary delays in registering for courses each semester. For advising assistance please contact [msswhelp@louisville.edu](mailto:msswhelp@louisville.edu).

## Practicum Education Overview

Practicum Education is the signature pedagogy in social work education. Students must complete a practicum placement as part of their MSSW curriculum and degree requirement. The purpose of practicum education is to provide students with ongoing opportunities to learn and apply theoretical knowledge and practice through the use of social work methods and skills.

The Practicum Education Office has a separate application

process for starting your practicum placement and closely works with students, providing guidance and support through the process of identifying, securing, and completing a practicum.

Please be mindful that due to the collaborative approach deadlines exist to ensure the Practicum Education Office has adequate time to assist students through the process.

All students admitted to the Regular Standing 60 credit-hour program must complete

two separate and different practicums, one at the generalist level and another at the specialized level. All students admitted to the Advanced Standing 30-credit-hour program will complete one practicum at the specialized level. Each practicum consists of a continuous two-semester placement in the same agency. If you have any questions regarding practicum placement, please contact MSSW Practicum Education Office via email at [fieldedu@louisville.edu](mailto:fieldedu@louisville.edu).

### Practicum Application Deadlines

#### Fall - Spring Placement

Non-local: May 15th

Local: June 30th

#### Spring - Summer Placement

Non-local: September 15th

Local: October 31st



## Academic Policies and Procedures

As a leading institution of higher education, the University of Louisville holds all graduate students to the highest academic standards, evident by the University's Code of Student Conduct. This code outlines the expectations for behavior and academic integrity for all students, including those pursuing graduate studies. The Kent School of Social Work and Family Science expects graduate students to maintain high professionalism and ethical behavior within and outside the university setting. Graduate students within the MSSW program must adhere to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, which extends beyond the institutional community. By adhering to the University's Code of Student Conduct and the NASW Code of Ethics, graduate students uphold the highest standards of academic and professional excellence.

### Transfer Credit

UofL generally accepts transfer credits earned at institutions of higher education accredited by the following institutional accreditors, which are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education:

- Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
- Middle States Association of College and Schools, Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc., Commission on Institutions of Higher Learning (NEASC-CHE)
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
- Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
- Western Association of Schools and College, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (WASC-SCUC)
- Western Association of Schools and College, Accrediting Commission for Community Colleges and Junior Colleges (WASC-ACCJC)

Course work taken more than three years prior to the student's application to a graduate program will not normally be considered for transfer.

The number of credit hours transferable, upon request, is six (6). Up to six (6) additional credit hours may be petitioned, provided that these additional

hours are not credits earned by extension, thesis or practicum and provided also that the residency requirement of 24 semester hours is maintained by the addition of University of Louisville credits to the total program.

To access eligibility for transfer credit into the MSSW program utilize the following [form](#).

### Activating University Accounts

Access to UofL's online services, requires admission and activation of UofL accounts.

The 7-digit student ID is necessary to activate UofL accounts. The 7-digit student ID number can be located through the Graduate Application or [here](#). If assistance is necessary to locate the student ID number, please contact [msswkent@louisville.edu](mailto:msswkent@louisville.edu).

**Please note:** If you recently attended the university or are an employee, you have access to your accounts and can omit this step.

To activate UofL accounts after admission please visit [here](#).

## Registration Information

UofL students utilize the [ULink Student Portal](#) to register for courses. Each semester, the university places a pre-registration hold on all students' accounts, and the system automatically removes this hold upon the student completing the pre-registration questions. Students can register without meeting with an Advisor beforehand. However, those not in good academic or financial standing may face holds that affect their process (i.e. provisional, provisional probation, etc.). In such cases, you must reconcile those holds before proceeding with registration. To assist you with navigating the registration process, the MSSW Advising Office provides several resources. You can [contact an Advisor](#) about an upcoming Registration Workshop, [view the Manage Classes how-to videos](#), or meet one-on-one with an MSSW Advisor by emailing [msswhelp@louisville.edu](mailto:msswhelp@louisville.edu).

Additional details pertaining to registration processes and procedures are available through the [Registrar's Office](#) webpage.

## Auditing Courses

Auditing at the graduate-level is available only to students who are enrolled in a graduate

program. A student who wishes to audit a course must obtain permission from the course instructor and the director of the program in which the student is enrolled using the proper form provided by the Office of the Registrar. Auditing a course will not satisfy a prerequisite for a graduate course or a degree requirement.

## Continuous Enrollment and Leave of Absences

It is expected that students maintain continuous enrollment either on a full-time or part-time basis. Continuous enrollment is defined as being registered in both Fall and Spring semesters. However, if unforeseen circumstances necessitate a temporary interruption in your graduate studies, students may request a leave of absence by completing this [form](#).

Such a request is limited to a maximum of one year but may be extended to a second year in exceptional circumstances. For additional guidance and support please contact an MSSW Academic Advisor at [msswhelp@louisville.edu](mailto:msswhelp@louisville.edu).

## Reenrollment Process

Students planning to return from a leave of absence must complete the re-enrollment process before they can resume

their studies. This process requires students to contact an [MSSW Academic Advisor](#) to discuss their academic plan and any necessary adjustments to their course schedule. Additionally, students must submit a [Request to Re-Enroll form](#) to initiate the re-enrollment process. This form will provide us with updated information about your expected return date and any changes to your academic profile. These steps will initiate the process for students to re-enroll in courses and continue their progress toward their academic goals.

## Withdrawal Process

Students may withdraw from courses after the drop/add period up until the withdrawal deadline. A grade of W (withdrawal) will be posted to students' transcripts. The hours count as attempted hours but do not count as earned hours, and the grade will have no effect on the students' grade point averages. Students withdraw by using the registration link of the [ULink Student Portal](#). No signature or other authorization is required if the change is made by the withdrawal deadline, but students should consult with academic and/or financial aid advisors to understand how

withdrawing from a course will affect their academic plan status, their progress toward their degree, and their financial aid eligibility.

The withdrawal deadline for each semester is specified in the [official registration calendar](#).

The deadline typically occurs shortly after mid-term. Students who stop attending class without withdrawing will be given the grade of F for the course.

In exceptional circumstances, students may petition for a late withdrawal after the withdrawal deadline. Students should contact the [MSSW Advising Office](#) for guidance in the petition process.

An academic withdrawal does not remove a student's financial responsibility for his/her educational expenses.

### Writing Guidelines

Kent School requires student papers to conform to the most recent APA writing style unless directed by their instructor. Students are recommended to use or have access to the APA manual for those questions that go beyond the scope of writing pointers. [The University's Writing Center](#) located in Ekstrom Library is available to assist students with writing papers. The Writing Center can also provide virtual (online) assistance to students writing papers.

### Grading

The Graduate School uses a plus/minus grading system. Grade-point averages are calculated by dividing the quality points earned by the number of graded classes attempted (excludes pass/fail and audit classes). Quality points are calculated as follows:

Grade	Quality Points
A+	4.0
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
F	0.0

Graduate students cumulative graduate grade point average must be a 3.0 or higher on a 4-point scale to meet graduate degree requirements.

**Pass/Fail Grades:** Practicum courses assign a pass/fail grade. Courses completed on a pass/fail basis will not be assigned any quality points, but credit will be given if the grade assigned is a P. If the grade assigned is F, it will be calculated as such in the student's grade point average.

**C Grades:** The completion of degree requirements for graduate students will only consider a maximum of two courses, equivalent to six credit

hours, wherein grades of C+, C, or C- have been obtained. While any other grades below C- will be factored into the student's overall grade point average, grades below C- will not be credited towards fulfilling degree requirements.

**Incomplete Grades:** Temporary or conditional grades of incomplete (I) may be posted on behalf of a student facing extenuating circumstances that prevent them from completing a small portion of coursework with Instructor approval. In order to avoid unforeseen repercussions on academic progression, the MSSW Advising Office requires final grades for all incomplete (I) grades within two (2) weeks of the end of each semester.

Extensions beyond two (2) weeks are available for extenuating circumstances. However, failure to update the grade before the end of the following semester will result in the grade automatically converting to an F-grade.

If a student is granted an incomplete in their final semester, they must have the grade updated before the final date to confer their degree. The University of Louisville requires students to be actively enrolled in the semester they intend to graduate.



Failure to update an incomplete (I) grade by the final deadline can result in the requirement to enroll in Master Candidacy and accrue additional tuition costs.

## **Graduate School Academic Standing**

**Good Standing:** A graduate student is in good standing as long as the graduate grade point average is 3.0 or higher on a 4-point scale. A student must be in good standing in order to receive a degree.

**Academic Probation:** Any student with a semester GPA below 3.0 will receive an academic warning from the Graduate School. A notification will be sent to the student as well the student's graduate program. Should a student's cumulative GPA fall below 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation until the student regains a 3.0 average (which is required to graduate). Ordinarily students are not permitted to continue on academic probation for more than one semester, but upon request of the student's graduate program, the unit dean may submit a variance request to the Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs to approve continuation of academic probation beyond a single semester. Students on academic probation for more than one semester risk dismissal

from the graduate program.

Graduate programs have the prerogative to establish more stringent criteria for which students may be placed on academic probation.

## **MSSW Academic Policies**

The academic progress of each student in the Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) graduate program is regularly monitored. This monitoring serves to inform students and necessary parties, according to FERPA guidelines, of their progress in the program.

Reviews of student academic progress consist of a review of the student's suitability for the profession in relation to academic transcript, student's program-related professional and ethical history, and faculty assessments of the student based upon experience with the student in program-related situations (e.g., classroom, academic advising).

### ***Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) Student Review and Retention Policy***

Successful completion of the MSSW program is based upon demonstration of student's academic, ethical, and professional areas as they relate to a student's ability to successfully complete

the program. Kent staff and faculty have a professional responsibility to evaluate the academic, professional, and ethical development of graduate students in the MSSW program. This review process serves two main purposes:

1. To identify students' strengths and remediate any identified areas of growth in academic, ethical, and professional areas that directly impact student's academic retention and persistence.
2. To assist the student and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs Office in the determination of suitability for the profession as evidence by satisfactory performance academically, ethically, and professionally.

Student reviews are an ongoing continuous process that regularly monitors students' performance and progression towards graduation. Based on these reviews, students will have one of three possible outcomes:

1. The student is making satisfactory progress in the program and in good standing. A graduate student is in good standing when their cumulative graduate grade point average is 3.0 on a 4-point scale or higher. A student

must be in good standing to receive a graduate degree from the University of Louisville.

2. The student is not demonstrating satisfactory progress, but the issues are not judged serious enough to be placed on a warning or probation. This student is notified to make an appointment with an advisor to receive feedback and collaborate to identify appropriate remediation procedures expected of the student.
3. If, in the professional judgment of the department faculty or staff, a student's academic performance or behavior is deemed substandard, unethical, illegal, and/or professionally unbecoming at any time during the MSSW program (including, but not limited to, coursework, practicum, and violations of the NASW Code of Ethics or student code of conduct), an Academic and Professional Standards Review may be requested, and procedures may begin to facilitate a remediation plan or potential dismissal from the graduate program.

All graduate students are expected to make steady and satisfactory progress toward the completion of their MSSW degree. This includes maintaining the standards of academic, professional, and ethical integrity. If a graduate student's GPA does not reflect steady and satisfactory progress, they may be notified by University of Louisville Graduate School and MSSW Advising Office. The MSSW Program will inform the student of the following:

***MSSW Academic Warning Policy.*** Any student with a semester grade point average (GPA) below 3.0 will receive an academic warning from the Graduate School and/or the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science. A written notification informing the student of the academic warning is sent via university email.

The student may still be considered in "Good Standing" in the MSSW program if their cumulative GPA is above 3.0. However, should their cumulative GPA drop below 3.0, they will be placed on Academic Probation.

***MSSW Academic Probation Policy.*** Any student with a cumulative GPA below 3.0, will be placed on probation until the student regains a 3.0 average (which is required to graduate). Written notification about their probationary status may be sent to the student from the Graduate School and/or the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science. Students are required to consult with an MSSW academic advisor to develop an academic success plan.

Ordinarily, students are not permitted to continue on academic probation for more than one semester. Students on academic probation for more than one (1) semester risk dismissal from the graduate program.

***MSSW Extended Academic Probation Policy.*** Any student with a cumulative GPA below 3.0, will be placed on probation until the student regains a 3.0 average (which is required to graduate).

Ordinarily students are not permitted to continue on academic probation for more than one semester.



However, a student deemed to be exhibiting steady and satisfactory progress may be granted Extended Academic Probation. If not granted extended academic probation the student has the right to submit a written appeal to be placed on Extended Academic Probation beyond the one semester. This appeal must be sent to the MSSW Advising Office via email at [msswhelp@louisville.edu](mailto:msswhelp@louisville.edu) and include the following:

- Any supporting documentation (if applicable) that the student is making academic progress (i.e., a semester earning a 3.0 GPA or above).
- Steps initiated and completed towards all requirements from any previous Student Success Planning Session, Academic and Professional Standards Review reviews, and/or practicum education action plans.
- A detailed rationale of how the student plans to exemplify steady and satisfactory progress.

This documentation will be reviewed by the MSSW Program Manager to determine if the student is eligible for an

extension. Students on academic probation for more than one semester risk dismissal from the graduate program.

To gain further guidance on Student Success Planning Sessions or Academic and Professional Standards Reviews please see below:

1. **Student Success Planning Sessions.** Student Success Planning Sessions are conducted to assist students in identifying appropriate remediation procedures to successfully complete the semester if feasible or explore alternative options.

These collaborative sessions with an advisor can be deemed necessary by faculty, staff, or the student. Advisors will collaborate with the student to develop steps that support the student in achieving academic success. The Advisor will send follow-up emails to the student regarding their discussion to the students UofL email

account.

**Academic and Professional Standards Review.** An Academic and Professional Standards Review can be initiated if a student's academic performance, professional standards, or behavior is deemed substandard, unethical, illegal, and/or professionally unbecoming at any time (including, but not limited to, coursework, practicum, and violations of the NASW Code of Ethics and/or student code of conduct).

2. The Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee will assess the circumstances and recommend one of the following options to the MSSW Program Director, Associate Dean, and/or Dean:

**Remediation Plan** outlining recommended actions to be taken by the student. If deemed



necessary, a reevaluation date can be set at the Academic Review Committee's discretion to assess student's ability to perform the functions necessary to successfully complete the program.

**Dismissal** from the graduate program if academic performance or behavior is deemed to impede the student's ability to successfully complete the program.

## **Student Resources**

[Campus Bookstore](#)  
[Campus Housing](#)  
[Campus Parking](#)  
[Cardinal Card](#)  
[Career Center](#)  
[Counseling Center](#)  
[Cultural Center](#)  
[Disability Resource Center](#)  
[Financial Aid Office](#)  
[Kent School Store](#)  
[LGBTQ+ Center](#)  
[Library Services](#)  
[Military-Connected Student Resource Center](#)  
[Registrar's Office](#)  
[Writing Center](#)

## **Student Involvement**

[Kent School Student Association \(KSSA\)](#)  
[Multicultural Association of Graduate Students \(MAGS\)](#)  
[UofL Graduate Student Council](#)



## **Degree Application & Commencement**

Students must be enrolled during the semester in which they wish to graduate. All candidates for degrees, whether or not participating in Commencement, must apply for degrees according to the deadlines through the [ULink Student Portal](#). All information pertaining to Degree Application, Diploma, and Commencement is located on the [Commencement webpage](#).

# Academic Integrity

## UofL Graduate School Academic Dishonesty Statement

Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious violations of academic conduct and may result in permanent dismissal. Students are expected to be familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. A plea of ignorance is not a defense against the charge of academic dishonesty.

## Kent School of Social Work and Family Science Academic Integrity Statement

A primary goal of the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science is to educate students who will serve society with competence and integrity—both are key to meeting the needs of vulnerable populations and to promoting social justice. Both the [National Association for Social Workers \(NASW\) Code of Ethics](#) and the [American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy \(AAMFT\) Code of Ethics](#) list integrity as a core value of our work. Thus, we practitioners behave

in a trustworthy manner. In accordance with the NASW and AAMFT Code of Ethics and the University of Louisville, we at the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science expressly forbid cheating, fabrication, falsification, multiple submission of the same work, plagiarism and complicity in academic dishonesty. Several explicit examples are provided below. However, these examples are not exhaustive. All students are to be familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the [University of Louisville Code of student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

*Plagiarism* describes the use of someone else's work without giving specific credit for those words to the original author. It is acceptable to use someone else's words in our compositions. When we do so, however, rules of credit/citation must be observed (unless otherwise directed by the instructor, written assignments must conform to APA format, per the most recent edition of the APA manual). Plagiarism may include, but is not limited to:

- Copying someone else's work and claiming it as your own without proper credit/citation regardless of the

source (e.g., someone else's computer files, or from the internet);

- Paraphrasing someone else's work and claiming it as your own;
- Collaborating with someone else and claiming the work as your own; or,
- The use of a substantial portion of a graded paper from one course, as a submitted assignment to obtain credit in another course, without instructor permission.

*Cheating and complicity in academic dishonesty* may include but are not limited to:

- Capturing of course materials by any means and using any device (e.g., camera, screenshot) with the intent to distribute. This relates to all course materials including assignment requirements, quizzes, tests, and the like, with or without incorrect/correct answers, and no matter the point allocation (e.g., 2-point open-book quiz vs. 20-point exam).
- Intent to distribute may relate to students who are enrolled or planning to enroll at the University of Louisville, or who are enrolled or planning to enroll at any another institution of higher education.

- Completing work collaboratively that is meant to be individual work (e.g., taking an online exam in the presence of other students and “helping” each other in any way).
- Acquiring direct knowledge of academic dishonesty of other students (e.g., being copied on an email with other students engaged in dishonest academic activities) and failing to report it. While we recognize the discomfort and challenges associated with notifying appropriate authorities, reporting academic dishonesty aligns with the NASW Code of Ethics Ethical Responsibilities as Professionals regarding dishonesty, fraud, and deception. It also aligns with the AAMFT Code of Ethics regarding the avoidance of deceptive, fraudulent, misleading, or exploitative practices.
- Paying for any material (e.g., a paper, exam) and submitting it as your own. All of these offenses are serious breaches of academic conduct. A plea of ignorance is not an acceptable defense against violation of our academic integrity statement. Evidence of violation of academic integrity may lead to a failing grade for the assignment or course, referral for academic review, expulsion from the Kent

School of Social Work and Family Science, and/or other consequences as determined by appropriate authorities. The decision regarding penalties for violating academic integrity is at the discretion of the instructor(s) and/or an academic review committee.

- Collaboration with ChatGPT or other AI composition software is not permitted unless specifically indicated by the instructor. In the rare case that collaboration with ChatGPT or other AI composition software is permitted by an instructor, they will provide you with specific instructions prior

to your collaboration with AI chatbots (like ChatGPT) on assignments. In these cases, you will be required to acknowledge its use, the name of the tool and how it was used. There may be additional requirements not identified here.

## **Professional Development**

[Association of Social Work Boards](#)  
(Information about Social Work Licensure)

[PLAN Professional Development](#)

[The Center for Family & Community Well-Being](#)

## ***Kent School of Social Work and Family Science Doctoral Programs***

### **PhD - Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work**

The PhD Program is designed to develop scholars prepared to create knowledge through research that informs interventions and policies and educate future social workers to address critical social problems and pursue social justice. The program is designed to prepare its graduates for positions in academic and related research settings.

### **DSW - Doctor Social Work**

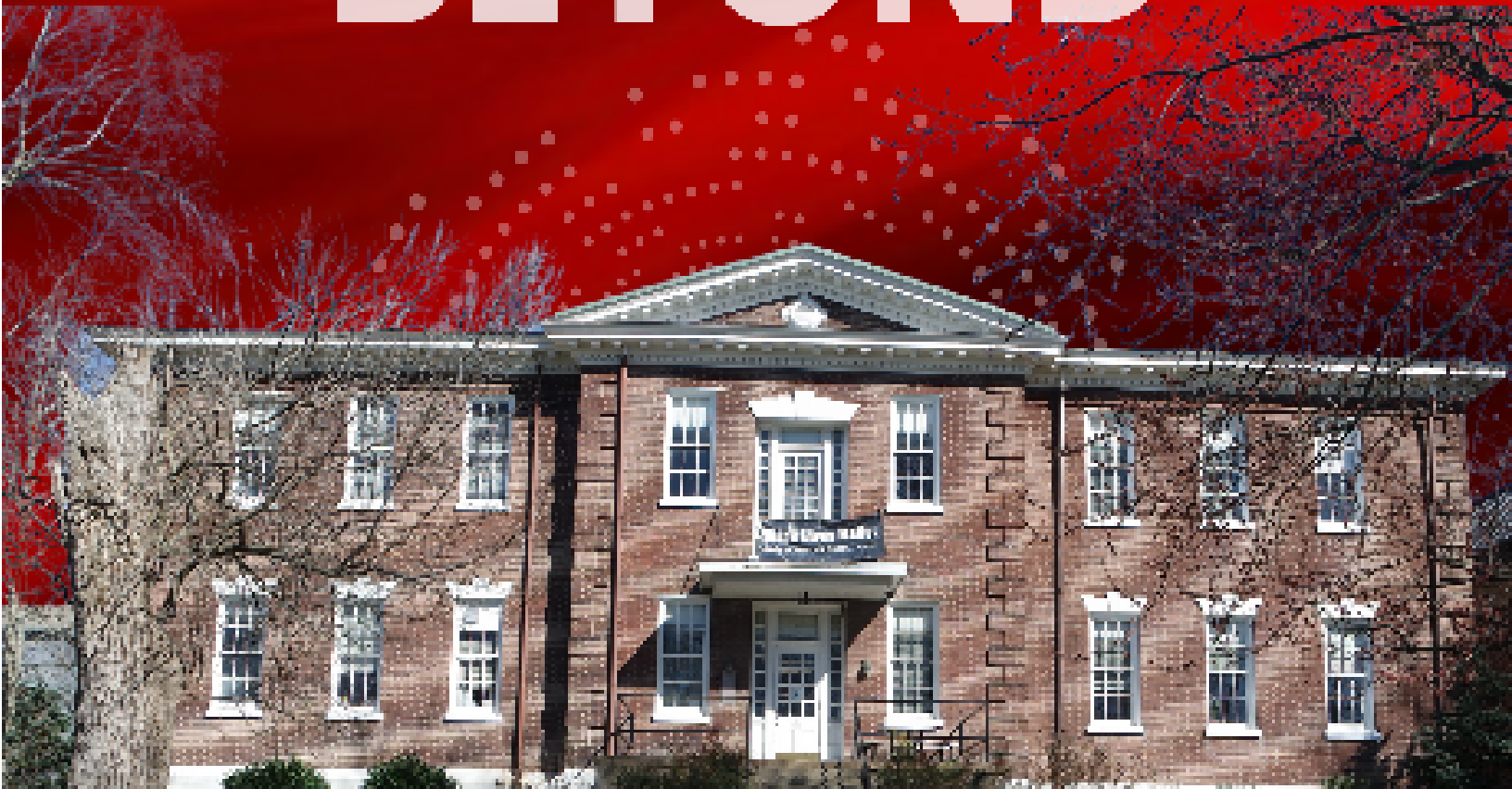
The Doctor of Social Work (DSW) program within the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science will educate master-degreed social workers to become future practitioner-scholars in teaching and social service leadership. The overall goal of the DSW program is to provide advanced education, training, and mentoring to social workers with master’s degrees who want to become teaching faculty in social work departments/schools and/or leaders managing public or private social service organizations. This program addresses the academic and social service workforce’s need for competent and well-trained social work professionals.



UNIVERSITY OF  
**LOUISVILLE**

RAYMOND A. KENT  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL  
WORK & FAMILY SCIENCE

# HERE AND **BEYOND**



**EDUCATING MINDS. EMPOWERING LIVES.**  
**SINCE 1936**

Visit us online:  
[www.louisville.edu/kent](http://www.louisville.edu/kent) →

