



MSW Exemption Information

MSW students may pursue exemptions from essential course requirements via an SSW online exemption request system. **The exemption process is web-based and student-initiated.** We encourage students to request exemptions as soon as possible as it may affect fall 2023 course selections.

Students are encouraged to pursue exemptions for some essential courses if they have already covered the material and demonstrated the relevant competencies in course work completed within six years of a student's MSW start date with grades of "B" or better. (See details below).

The following essential courses are eligible for exemptions:

SW 505*
SW 506
SW 507
SW 508
SW 509
SW 515

* Exemptions from SW 505 are very rare and approved only under extraordinary circumstances

Exemption Criteria

- Receiving an Exemption from an essential course does not lower the number of credit hours needed for graduation. Students receiving exemptions will still need to complete 60 graduate credit hours (45 if eligible for advanced standing, MasterTrack MSW, UM-Dearborn HHS & SW, or Sociology & SW). Receiving exemptions will increase the amount of elective credits that a student can complete in the program.
- Exemptions from essential courses are granted when students have prior undergraduate or graduate course work comparable to the content of an essential course. Students need to have completed at least two relevant undergraduate courses or one graduate course to be eligible for an exemption from an essential course.
- The courses utilized for exemption review must be completed within the six years prior to the first term of enrollment in the MSW program and with a grade of "B" or better.
- Courses that are graded by narrative evaluation will also be considered for exemption review. When completing the exemption request form, if the course was not graded, but included a narrative evaluation, please indicate the grade as "narrative" in the appropriate box.
- Prior work experience is not a basis for exemptions.

Exemption Process

1. Go to the exemption request form at ssw.umich.edu/assets/exemption-request/
2. Select the relevant essential course from the drop down menu.
3. Review the course statement and description to understand the content covered in the relevant essential course.
4. Upload the syllabus for the first course previously completed to be utilized for exemption review. Include any supporting documents that illustrate the relevance of this course. Provide a reason why the completed course contributes to the content and competencies of the MSW essential course.

5. Repeat the process for the second previously completed course to be considered for the exemption review. Upload the syllabus and provide a reason why the completed course contributes to the content and competencies of the MSW essential course.
6. It is optional to add a third course, but sometimes it is necessary to cover all the areas in the essential course. Follow the same format for this third course.
7. Complete the web-based form and submit the request.

Repeat the process for additional essential course(s) to request an additional exemption(s).

A faculty Exemption Consultant will review each submitted exemption request.

Students will receive an email regarding the outcome of the exemption review. If the exemption is approved, students should register for courses for fall term accordingly. Students will be informed if an exemption request has been denied and if there is additional information needed.

The School will review official transcripts to verify that a grade of “B” or higher was received for any course listed for an exemption request. Once the grade is verified, the exemption will be made official.

Advanced Standing Students

Advanced standing students do not need to pursue exemption approval for the following courses SW 506, SW 507, SW 508, SW 509, and SW 515.

Students Renouncing Advanced Standing Status

Advanced standing-eligible students who renounce advanced standing status are exempted automatically from the essential courses that are not required for advanced standing students (SW 515, SW 506, SW 507, SW 508 and SW 509).

BSW Students Not Eligible for Advanced Standing Status

Students that received a BSW, but are not eligible for advanced standing, are encouraged to submit exemption requests for essential courses that meet exemption eligibility criteria. Common courses include SW 515, SW 506, SW 507, SW 508 and SW 509.

Substitutions

Students who do not receive an exemption for a required essential course may pursue approval for a substitution for the requirement. Substitutions may be granted for students wishing to take a graduate-level SW course or a graduate-level course given in another unit of the University of Michigan as a substitution for a required course. Students interested in pursuing a substitution for a required essential or advanced course should discuss this option with their faculty advisor at fall orientation. Substitutions require approval of a student’s faculty advisor and the MSW Program Director.

Course Planning Assistance

Prior to the start of fall term, Course Planning Specialists are available in the Office of Students Services and Enrollment Management (OSS) to answer questions regarding exemptions and other course planning issues. OSS will be providing course planning and registration information to all incoming students in mid-June 2023. **After reviewing the course planning and registration information**, contact OSS at ssw.msw.info@umich.edu or (734) 936-0961 with any questions or to schedule an in-person or Zoom course planning appointment.

Welcome to the University of Michigan School of Social Work!
We look forward to seeing you in Ann Arbor soon.