Certificate of Social Work Practice in Disability Studies

The School of Social Work offers MSSW students the opportunity to graduate with a certificate in Disability Studies. This certificate program prepares both Clinical and APP students to work with disabled communities in various settings, including healthcare programs, case management, nonprofits, schools, and policy work. Coursework emphasizes historical perspectives of the disability rights movement, current perspectives of disability justice, critical analysis of current models of disability, intersectional approaches to advocacy and policy, and is grounded in interprofessional education and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Certificate Requirements

The Disability Studies certificate program is composed of one anchor course, Making Systems Work for People with Disabilities, elective and selective coursework, 20 hours of professional development, and an approved practicum placement. All coursework counted toward earning a certificate must be taken at the graduate level at the School of Social Work or through approved out-of-department classes. The student is responsible for documenting that all requirements for the certificate have been successfully completed. Throughout enrollment in the certificate program, the certificate coordinator will provide ongoing support, including guidance on course selection, practicum alignment, and progress tracking to ensure students stay on track toward completion.

Approved Practicum Placement

Certificate students may complete their practicum in settings that serve or engage with their population of interest, including specialized agencies or broader organizations offering relevant services. Social Work Practice in Disability Studies certificate students will complete one official practicum focused on disability or disability advocacy social work practice. The placement is a key educational component, providing students with hands-on learning and an opportunity to apply and integrate classroom-based knowledge. This placement may occur in the student's first or final practicum experience. Securing a final practicum placement is a competitive process. Students must confirm with the certificate coordinator that their placement meets the requirements of the certificate program. Because of external factors, such as funding, placement is competitive and not guaranteed at any specific agency. Regardless of placement, all students gain valuable experience through specialized coursework, practicum opportunities, and faculty mentorship, preparing them for effective practice across various social work environments.

Additional Proposed Coursework

Certificate students in the Clinical concentration will select three of their five choices from the suggested course options on page two. Students in the APP concentration will select three of their four choices from the suggested course options on page two. Other courses may be approved as offered, through consultation with the certificate coordinator.

Professional Development

Certificate students are required to engage in a minimum of 20 hours of professional development during the course of their graduate program, either through conference attendance, training participation and/or research project participation that relates to Disability Studies. Professional

development hours must be approved by the certificate coordinator prior to the certificate being awarded and may not count toward fulfillment of requirements of another course or program at the School.

Process

Students will fill out an application for the certificate program, which can be found at https://socialwork.utexas.edu/academics/mssw/certificate-programs/.

Certificate Coordinator

For more information, please contact Shanna Killeen, Ph.D., at shanna.killeen@austin.utexas.edu.

Social Work Coursework		
Anchor course: Making Systems Work for People with Disabilities		
APP Selectives*	**Clinical Selectives***	**Electives***
• Program Evaluation • Grant Development • Advanced Policy Practice • Collaborative Leadership through Public, Private Partnerships • Nonprofit Management	• Assessment and Treatment of Traumatized Populations • Grief Counseling • Crisis Intervention	• Social Construction of Disability • Women and Disabilities • Spirituality and Disability • Incarceration and Disability • Aging and Disability • Leadership Training in Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities
* These are not exhaustive lists. Additional courses, including out-of-department courses, may be presented to the certificate coordinator for approval. Additionally, not all courses may be offered in all semesters and seats are not guaranteed.		