

AREA OF EMPHASIS IN AGING (AEA)

Master of Social Work

What is Gero-Social Work?

Gerontological social work is social work practice with older adults – focused primarily on maintaining and enhancing their quality of life. Gero-social work includes attention to physical, social, familial, cultural, community, and societal factors that support and enhance the well-being of older adults and their families.

Why is this area of social work practice important?

By 2030, all baby boomers will be older than age 65. This will expand the size of the older population so that 1 in every 5 residents will be retirement age (US Census 2017 projections). The number of Minnesotans turning 65 in the current decade will be greater than the past four decades combined. Around 2020, Minnesota's 65+ population is expected to eclipse the 5-17 (K-12) population, for the first time in history (MN State Demographic Center, 2018). These demographic changes have created a need for social workers with interest, education, and experience working with older adults and their families.

The School of Social Work has developed opportunities for MSW students to explore their interest in working with older adults and their families. These include the Area of Emphasis in Aging (AEA) Scholars program and elective courses specific to practice with these populations.

Components of the AEA experience:

Networking and Collaboration: AEA involves community members, alumni/ae, students, and faculty members in a dialogue about practice with older adults and their families.

Building Knowledge: Scholars develop their skills and deepen their understanding of the context and unique needs of older adults and their families with courses, course assignments, and campus and community events.

Required Electives:

- GRSW 523: Practice with Older Adults and Their Families
- GRSW 623: Clinical Practice with Older Adults

Practice: Scholars gain hands-on experiential learning and apply social work values, knowledge and skills in a social work context during field practica.

Research: AEA scholars will contribute to the body of knowledge in this area of social work practice by focusing a variety of course assignments on topics related to older adults and their families.

Leadership: AEA scholars assume leadership roles on the AEA advisory council, guide the development of group service and academic projects, and represent this unique area of social work practice in the School of Social Work, on campus and in the professional community.

Stipend: AEA scholars receive a tuition stipend of \$1,000 in their last semester of the program.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Why consider an Area of Emphasis (AE) Scholars program?

The AE Scholars programs focus on emerging practice areas and provide additional networking, collaboration and leadership opportunities for those interested in these critical areas.

Who can apply to AE Scholars programs?

AE Scholars programs are designed as two-year experiences. All newly admitted Advanced Standing 2 year and Regular Standing MSW students are eligible to apply. Other students who have at least two years remaining in their MSW program and who meet the requirements of the program also may apply during the spring application period. Students apply to the AEA program after acceptance to the MSW program.

How competitive is it to be accepted to the AE Scholars programs?

Applicants need to articulate and demonstrate relevant qualifications and professional goals, and a limited number of students are accepted each year.

Can I apply to more than one AE Scholars program?

You may apply to more than one AE Scholars program; however, you may only be selected for one.

Learn more about Gero-Social Work Practice



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