



Blended Courses MSW Program

The School of Social Welfare began offering its fully accredited MSW program in a new format starting Fall 2009. Graduate level courses are available in a blended format, allowing distant driving students, and others with work or child care concerns, to complete their professional degree with less actual time on campus.

How will this work?

Students taking Saturday classes on the Edwards campus or Wednesday classes in Lawrence may take their foundation level coursework via an integrated delivery method that will include traditional classroom instruction and on-line materials. The more traditional format will take up about half of the semester, so you, your instructor and your classmates will have plenty of time to get to know one another face to face. In place of the other class meetings, you will be participating in on-line discussions, viewing video and accessing materials developed specifically for each course.

Advanced level classes (the second year for full-time students) will be available in the blended format beginning Fall 2010 for those choosing the clinical or SWAAP (Social Work Administration and Advocacy Practice) concentrations on Saturdays on the Edwards campus and a weekday on the Lawrence campus.

What sort of computer access will I need?

Blended courses require an internet connection and a web browser. Some courses include streaming audio or video, for which you will need the RealPlayer plug-in and speakers. A few offer additional readings in PDF format for which you will need Adobe Acrobat. Links to these free resources for download are provided within the course. The following link will also provide basic information about technology requirements for blended courses:

<http://www.socwel.ku.edu/mixedmedia/Default.shtml>

What has research found about blended courses?

In "Hybrid Education: The Future of Instructional Models," Amy Fanter identifies the following benefits:

"This kind of active learning results in better test performance and what is known as subject mastery (or subject knowledge). In addition, students in hybrid programs are more likely to participate in group discussions and collaborate online with other students because there is not only ample opportunity to prepare a response, but also because they are not physically speaking in front of a group. . . . However, even though students seem more confident about being involved with discussions online, it is important to keep in mind that it is because of the actual on-campus classroom component that students are more likely to find success in a hybrid course than in a strictly online class."

Vengroff, Richard. and Bourbeau, James. "In-class vs. On-line and Hybrid Class Participation and Outcomes: Teaching the Introduction to Comparative Politics Class" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the APSA Teaching and Learning Conference, Renaissance Hotel, Washington, DC, Feb 18, 2006 Online <PDF>. 2008-06-27
http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p101324_index.html

What are our faculty members and students saying about blended classes?

Associate Professor Terry Koenig had this to say about teaching a blended course, "The blended course provided me with opportunities to more fully explore the many ways students learn - verbal, visual, hands-on, and through writing. I was able to use on-line discussions, video and audio content as well as electronically submitted writing assignments."

Students also expressed positive experiences with a blended course. One student said that the blended course "gave me the flexibility I needed in order to get my class work done." Another student said, "Through blackboard on-line discussions, I was able to read about every student's ideas - not just from students who are more vocal in class."

Want more information?

Please contact Becky Hofer, Director of Admissions, at 785-864-8956 or bhofer@ku.edu with additional questions you may have.