

What is social policy?

Social policy addresses social problems, such as economic and educational inequality, racial and health disparities, and other similar problems through policy. As such, social policy initiatives and outcomes actively attend to social issues of equity, equality and adequacy.

Program Overview

The Master of Science in Social Policy (MSSP) is an 11-month program spanning three semesters of study. Courses in the full-time MS in Social Policy program begin in August and continue through July.

The MS in Social Policy program prepares professionals for policy leadership positions in government, philanthropic foundations, research institutes, nonprofit and non-governmental organizations, and other related settings, through:

- Understanding the world views, assumptions, and philosophies underlying all policy solutions;
- Understanding how decisions about social policy issues are made, shaped and influenced at local, state, national and global levels;
- Formulating a social reform agenda that is evidence-based and aims at improving the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of policy creation and implementation; and
- Generating and considering a wide array of policy options to address social problems.

The program is designed for:

- Early and mid-career professionals engaged in policy work in a wide variety of organizational settings;
- Recent recipients of a bachelor's degree in the social sciences who wish to develop policy skills;
- Students pursuing other advanced degrees at Penn who wish a graduate degree in social policy may be able to combine the MSSP with the following degrees: Master of Social Work (MSW), Master

of Public Administration (MPA), Master of Public Health (MPH), and Juris Doctor (JD); and

- Students interested in combining the MSSP with a Global Human Rights Certificate.

In every case, the student's progress in meeting the program's requirements will be guided by a written Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) developed jointly by the student and the student's academic advisor.

Admission Requirements

Applicants to the MSSP Program must have:

- A demonstrated record of academic achievement in undergraduate education;
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE), Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), or Law School Admission Test (LSAT) scores that indicate the requisite analytic ability;
- For international students whose first language is not English, we require official TOEFL or IELTS scores taken in the last two years;
- Three references (two academic and one professional); and
- A writing sample that demonstrates potential for policy analysis work.

Application Deadline

The MSSP program offers a rolling admission process until the class is filled. Financial aid is allocated on a preferred basis to those whose applications are completed by or before March 1.



Partial list of our graduates' post-MSSP employment sites

American Institutes for Research

Brookings

Center for Social Responsibility, Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia

Community First Fund (CDFI) Pennsylvania

Common Ground New York

Delaware Center for Justice

Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC

Department of Economic Development and Commerce of Puerto Rico

Doctoral programs in education, public health, public policy, social policy, etc.

Goodwill Industries International Rockville, MD

Mathematica Policy Research

National Conference of State Legislatures

National League of Cities, Washington, DC

Pew Charitable Trusts Philadelphia, PA

The Hatcher Group

The Mural Arts Program of Philadelphia

Reach for College Washington, DC

United Way Philadelphia and New York

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice



Cate Domino, MSSP '13, E-mail Campaigner, Democratic National Committee

My MSSP policy fellowship with the American Association of University Women allowed me to watch the women's policies that I studied at SP2 get put into action. The highlight was meeting House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi at the launch of the Women's Economic Agenda in July.



Daniel Schiff, MSSP '13, Research Analyst & Data Manager, Philadelphia Education Fund

Through learning about social policy, qualitative and quantitative research methods, communications, applied linear modeling, and program evaluation from MSSP faculty, I was able to develop a pragmatic yet intellectually robust skill set as well as a network of colleagues and mentors.



Aaron Truchil, MSSP '13, Manager of Research, Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers

From exposure to diverse policy areas, to providing insights into nonprofit financing and administration, I emerged from the MSSP program well-equipped to hit the ground running. The wonderful community of gifted and engaged students and faculty was important to my personal development.



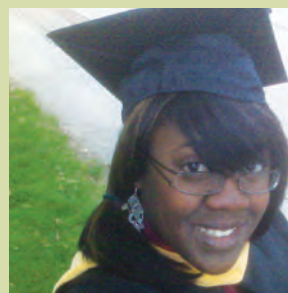
Ayesha Upshur, MSSP '13, Special Assistant to the Director, Washington, DC Department of Employment Services

After considering a number of MPA programs, I felt MSSP offered classes that would allow me to focus upon the specific areas of social policy that interested me most while providing a solid foundation of policy analysis and related research methods. What a wonderful decision that was!



Ajeenah Amir, MSSP '12, Director of Communications, Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr.

The MSSP program prepared me well for my current position in which I'm able to contribute to shaping policy of a legislative agenda with sharpened focus on gathering, understanding and synthesizing data and research for practical and impactful use.



Tanisha Walcott, MSSP '09, Contract Specialist, Office of Procurement Operations, The Department of Homeland Security

As a Contract Specialist in the Office of Procurement Operations for the Department of Homeland Security, I work on a that which handles multi-million dollar special projects to support agency-wide initiatives. My office supports the Secretary of DHS, (Janet Napolitano) and the Office of the Undersecretary for Management.



Find out more about how our alums are changing the world at
www.sp2.upenn.edu/mssp

or contact Caroline Wong, Senior Associate Director, at cwong@sp2.upenn.edu; (215) 573-4977.

Master of Science in Social Policy (MSSP) Dual Degrees

MSSP/Master of Social Work (MSW)

This program prepares graduates for leadership positions in government, philanthropic foundations, research institutes, nonprofit and non-governmental organizations, and other related settings.

MSSP/Juris Doctor (JD)

The MSSP/JD program prepares graduates to assume positions of leadership in law and social policy. Graduates are particularly adept at legislative analysis and legal processes aspects of policy work.

MSSP/Master of Public Administration (MPA)

The MSSP/MPA provides graduates who plan to lead a nonprofit, run for public office, or head a government agency a skill set for analyzing and shaping social policy.

MSSP/Master of Public Health (MPH)

MSSP/MPH graduates are prepared to analyze and influence public health policy at local, national, and international levels.

MSSP/ Master of Urban Spatial Analytics (MUSA)

MSSP/MUSA graduates focus on social policy issues in an urban setting. Graduates combine social policy research skills, with spatial analysis skills—most notably Geographic Information Systems (GIS)—with substantive knowledge in an urban content area of the student's choosing.

Master of Social Work (MSW) Dual Degrees

MSW/Bachelor of Arts (BA)

This sub-matriculation program is an exciting opportunity for committed, exceptional students in the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania who want the challenge of working directly with clients or with community-based social service organizations as they earn a BA and MSW in 5 years of study.

MSW/Juris Doctor (JD)

Graduates are prepared to assume positions of leadership in law and social policy, ready to actively pursue a more just society, and to initiate and implement viable systems change by applying their training in both professions.

MSW/Master of Business Administration (MBA)

The dual MSW/MBA program emphasizes multi-dimensional skills and competencies from the fields of business and social work. The program is designed for a limited number of mature students with some supervisory and/or administrative experience. Field internships are arranged in management and policy research and development in such sites as social welfare organizations, hospitals, philanthropic foundations, and government.

MSW/Master of Bioethics (MBE)

The MSW/Master of Bioethics (MBE) is a dual degree program sponsored by the School of Social Policy & Practice and the Center for Bioethics. The aim of the dual degree program is to prepare students to be leaders in bioethics-related, research-based program and policy venues in the social services, life sciences and medicine. This dual degree program blends the like missions and values of social work and medicine for equitable service provision, knowledgeable development of ethical policies, and just decision making in the 21st century global environment of rapid technological and social change.

MSW/Master of City Planning (MCP)

Graduates of the dual degree in social work and city and regional planning will gain broad knowledge about the interrelation of the physical, social, and economic systems for urban community services; competence in analysis and development of intervention strategies to humanize these services; and the development of a philosophical base for professional practice that instills a commitment to improve the quality of life for people in urban communities.

MSW/Master of Public Administration (MPA)

This program, administered jointly by the School of Social Policy & Practice and the Fels Institute of Government, prepares students for leadership in government service and private and social service organizations closely associated with the public sector.

MSW/Master of Public Health (MPH)

This dual degree program prepares graduates to use their careers to address differential access and treatment in health domains and to promote human and social well-being, whether at micro (clinical practice) or macro (societal and policy) levels.

MSW/Master of Science in Criminology (MS)

This program prepares graduates for policy and/or administrative positions in criminal justice practice or policy, law, and governmental or non-governmental crime prevention agencies.

MSW/Master of Science in Education (MEd)

The MSW/Master of Science in Education is a dual degree offered by the School of Social Policy & Practice and the Graduate School of Education. This program prepares graduates to be leaders in educational administration, student support services, or supervision.

MSW/Master of Science in Social Policy (MSSP)

This program prepares graduates for leadership positions in government, philanthropic foundations, research institutes, nonprofit and non-governmental organizations, and other related settings.

MSW/PhD in Social Welfare (PhD)

This program is designed for applicants whose long-range goals and past experiences are consistent with the aims of both programs and who wish to advance their education.

Our graduates have gone on to work at the following organizations:

Accenture, Inc.	Department of Veteran's Affairs	Philadelphia Education Fund
African Studies Center	Defender Association of Philadelphia	U.S. Agency for International Development
The Attic Youth Center	Esperanza	U.S. Department of Justice
Children's Crisis Treatment Center	Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania	U.S. Department of State
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia	Jewish Family Services	WXPB-FM
Council of State Governments Justice Center	Philadelphia Academies, Inc.	



The dual program was the perfect balance of theory and application. While the coursework allowed me to explore the development and implementation of social policies, it also gave me the flexibility to specifically pursue my interest in health policy and reducing health inequalities.

Papia Paul, MSSP/MPA'13, Research Associate, PolicyLab at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia



The dual program was an excellent training ground for my current position. I was able to refine my policy analysis and development skills and gain a deep knowledge about the history of social policy and programs and intersections with and implications for race, class, and gender dynamics in the U.S.

Simran Noor, MSSP/MPA'11, Coordinator of Advocacy, Center for Social Inclusion



The education I received as a dual MSW/MSSP student allowed me to merge the real world experience of my field placements and internships with the theory and skills learned in the classroom. As a Research Associate, I am constantly using the evaluation, statistical, and research skills the MSSP program taught me.

Kalen Flynn, MSSP/MSW'10, Research Associate, American Institutes for Research (Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Division)



My education at SP2 broadened my understanding of social change and simultaneously focused my understanding of ways to create that change. I honed many skills including policy analysis, program evaluation, research methods, community organizing, and writing techniques that I use on an everyday basis in my professional life.

Sara Ansell, MSSP/MSW'09, Program Manager for the Porch Light Initiative, City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program



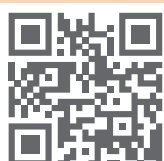
I utilize skills I learned at SP2 every day: policy analysis, advocacy, evaluation, strategic planning, and even those more tactical skills of understanding management styles, the most effective way to conduct a meeting, energize a group around a cause, find leverage points in a problem, and present materials.

Sarah Bainton, MSSP/MSW'07, Program Manager for Family Financial Stability, Goodwill Industries International (headquarters)



Being actively interested in world affairs, I founded my own humanitarian organization, Sweet Nation and utilize the knowledge and skill set gained via my education and field work with disenfranchised and multicultural populations. The design of the dual degree program was the beginning.

Olivette Burton, MSW'03, MBE'04, Administrative Staff Analyst, NYC Maternal Infant and Reproductive Health; Former Chair of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Institutional Review Board



Find out more about how our alums are changing the world at
www.sp2.upenn.edu/dual

or contact the Admissions Department at apply@sp2.upenn.edu; (215) 898-5539

Students at SP2 gain a global perspective through international curricular content, learning from international faculty, interacting with peers from across the globe, engaging in study abroad programs and global immersion experiences. Through hands-on experiences, students have the opportunity to examine social problems through a multicultural lens. The School is committed to preparing students to be leaders of social change across the globe.

The School of Social Policy & Practice takes seriously its responsibility to educate students for leadership positions both nationally and internationally. Thus, the School has created a wide range of international opportunities for students, recent graduates, field instructors, post-doctoral scholars, and visiting scholars. In general, the School's international education and research activities are organized in three primary streams: 1) international research and study opportunities for SP2 students; 2) research and study opportunities for international exchange students; and 3) visiting scholars.

International Research and Study Opportunities for SP2 Students

Many opportunities exist for students to spend 3-6 weeks during the summer months in another country carrying out a comparative research project on a topic of mutual interest to the student, the student's host institution, and SP2.

SP2 maintains formal student-faculty linkage programs with many institutions in Europe and Asia. SP2 also participates in the international programs organized by other American universities.

SP2 also offers instructor-led coursework abroad. In *Education, Culture, and Social Policy*, led by Dr. Ezekiel Dixon-Román, students study in depth the history and culture of Cuba and then experience it first-hand in four weeks of travel through the country.

In *Post-Colonial Social Work Practice: International Social Welfare in India*, led by Dr. Toorjo Ghose, students examine the global welfare system and its engagement with marginalized communities during a six-week course held in Kolkata, India.

In limited cases, SP2 is able to assist students in setting up independent studies in other countries. In these situations, students must take the initiative with both SP2 and the proposed host institution in

conceptualizing and planning the details of an individualized research program. Students will receive substantial assistance in this effort through their SP2 sponsoring faculty member.

MSSP students may also seek approval for the international experience to fulfill an MSSP elective or internship requirement. Again, students must take the initiative to conceptualize and plan the details with the MSSP Faculty Director and the host institution/faculty.

Additionally, MSW and MSSP students are eligible to participate in the University of Pennsylvania Graduate Certificate in Interdisciplinary Studies in Global Human Rights, which is designed to provide enriched perspectives on human rights. Through this Certificate, students will gain a working knowledge of the core international human rights documents, treaties, and mechanisms. This interdisciplinary certificate is administered by the School of Arts and Sciences. [Click here to visit the Global Human Rights certificate website.](#)

Research and Study Opportunities at SP2 for International Students

In addition to SP2 students pursuing research and educational opportunities outside the United States, SP2 also welcomes nationals of other countries into its degree programs. During the current academic year, 50 international students are enrolled in the School's master's and doctoral programs. Like their American counterparts, many of these students also participate in programs of international study outside of the United States and outside their country of origin.

SP2 hosts summer exchange students from its global partners in other countries as well. Every summer from 2010 to 2015 (expected), SP2 hosts a group of summer exchange students from Beijing Normal University in Beijing, China. The students will sit in a six-week class in a summer session, attend a weekly special seminar given by SP2 faculty and staff, and visit several social services agencies in Philadelphia.

Visiting Scholars

Since its founding in 1908 the School has served as a temporary home for hundreds of Visiting Scholars from throughout the world. The tradition of welcoming scholars from abroad continues today and is reflected in the many international scholars who regard SP2 as their "research home" while in the United States.



Examples of recent international independent student research projects

Intimate partner violence among Korean and Korea-American women (conducted in Korea by an MSW student in cooperation with a PhD alum)

Policy implications of the status differential between men and women in Macedonia (conducted in Macedonia by an MSSP student as part of her internship in Macedonia)

Comparative perspectives on K-12 education in Greenland and Hawaii (conducted in Greenland by an MSW student)

'Resiliency' among Burmese refugee women in Thailand (conducted in Thailand by an MSW student in cooperation with a local NGO in Thailand and a Penn PhD alum)



Studying social policy in an international community allowed us to share our knowledge on social issues and policy practices from different countries and learn from each other, while the opportunity for group work exposed us to a multicultural working environment.

Zichao Zhao, MSSP'13, Research Assistant, Research Department, China International Capital Corporation



My draw to the social work profession came from my desire for social justice and peace throughout the world. I strive to help clients live reasonably satisfying lives, comfortable with themselves and in society. SP2 has provided me with incredible skills and tools to continue the efforts of what I have believed has become my life calling.

Lindsey Brown, MSW'11, School Based Mental Health Counselor, Guide Youth Services



A Penn MSW prepares one to serve humanity at all levels. My career objectives include working in a context where I can contribute to the identification, selection, and implementation of strategic issues about public service, education, healthcare, welfare, development, and sustained systemic support.

George Werner, MSW'09, Director-General of Liberia's Civil Service Agency; Chair of the Government of Liberia's Inter-ministerial Scholarships Committee



I crafted my MSW educational experience around international social work. I took courses with a global focus, interned at organizations working with immigrants and refugees or working on international policy and advocacy, and participated in the vast variety of global activities at Penn and in Philadelphia.

Anastasia Shown, MSW'07, Assistant Director, Africa Center, University of Pennsylvania



It's a privilege to travel and work with children, families and colleagues from various backgrounds, countries and cultures to both understand the challenges near and far, and to build important collaborations that lead us to greater understanding and advances in health and well-being across the world.

Rachel Biblow, MSW'03, Director of Social Work, Family Relations and Family Services-The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia



I was able to make the most of my volunteer experience in Tanzania because of the cultural competency training and international coursework at SP2. Now, as a consultant to nonprofits providing public health services, I draw on my experience accessing primary and infectious disease healthcare in Tanzania.

Lean Camara, MSW'02, Program Manager, EdTec



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