

Top 25 Online MSW Programs Ranking for 2014-2015

by Julian Schroer on October 30, 2014



Online Master of Social Work (MSW) degrees are a relatively new innovation in social work education, but every year more colleges and universities are offering this kind of campus-free learning. Currently, there are less than 30 schools that offer 100% online coursework, are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and award an MSW degree. Because comparisons of these programs can be difficult, we have researched them all, comparing their strengths in terms of program options, reputation in the field, and innovation and investment in this emerging educational format. We are now ready to present the 25 best online MSW programs, with rankings and program descriptions below.

But first, a few important points. Before beginning to practice as a professional social worker, every state in the nation requires graduates to apply for state licensure. One of the first things the state checks is whether your degree comes from a CSWE-accredited social work program. This is important to know, because some of the first results that pop up in internet search engines link to schools that do not have this accreditation. Graduates from these schools run the risk that they are never going to be able to become professionally licensed social workers. Before enrolling in a program, always check its accreditation. The CSWE maintains a list of accredited online and hybrid campus programs [here](#).

Another important thing to be sure to check is that the school is authorized to do business in your state. Many states require schools to go through an approval process to offer distance education within their state borders. Due to this process, not every school can offer their programming in every state. This situation is in flux, with many schools rapidly adding to the geographic reach of their programs. Some colleges, on the other hand, simply choose to have a specific regional focus. Out-of-state applicants should always check with the school and state in question as a first step in making distance education decisions.

Online MSW programs, like their campus counterparts, require students to complete internships with social service agencies. The programs listed below allow students to do these internships in or close to their home communities. When reviewing each of these programs, we have included

information about enrollment options such as full-time, part-time, and Advanced Standing, which is for students who already have a bachelor's degree in social work. We mention the focus or concentration of each program – whether generalist, clinical, administrative, or something else. We discuss each programs teaching method: many programs are “asynchronous”, which means there are deadlines but no specific log-in times, while other use “synchronous” instruction that includes logging in for classes at predetermined times. Many programs use a cohort model, in which students move through the curriculum as a group; other allow students to move at their own speed. We also make mention of any required visits to campus – some programs do have orientations – and finally, we give tuition cost per credit. Keep in mind that financial aid packages can, in some instances, make the sticker price irrelevant.

#25. California State University – San Bernardino



Cal-State San Bernardino is the third California State University to make this list, and this one has been named a “Best in the West” university by The Princeton Review for 11 years in a row. CSUSB sits on a scenic 440 acre campus from which it serves over 17,000 students each year.

The School of Social Work at Cal-State San Bernardino offers a part-time, 3 year generalist-focused MSW degree through their Pathway distance education program. Following a quarters system, this degree plan consists of 90 credits with a tuition rate of \$400 per credit hour. The Pathway program uses a cohort model with sequential classes, all of which are taught by CSUSB social work faculty. The only campus requirement is a 2-day orientation at the start of the first year. Because CSUSB does not have agreements in place with every state, the school recommends that prospective students contact them to check on program availability in their area.

Source: <http://www.bestmswprograms.com/best-online-msw-programs-ranking/>