

The Online Assessment and Orientation Program (OAOP)

Ensuring Student Success in Blended MSW Programs

Introductions

- **Kelly Fornwalt**, LLMSW: Academic Advisor, Statewide Blended Program and Weekend Program; Clinical Instructor
- **Tina Blaschke-Thompson**, LMSW: Coordinator, Statewide Blended Program and Weekend Program; Clinical Instructor
- **Paul Freddolino**, PhD: Associate Director for Research and Distance Education; Professor

Background

- MSU offers MSW degree through traditional campus-based as well as blended programs
- Admissions criteria are the same for all MSW programs – applicants are deemed admissible regardless of program they choose
- If deemed admissible for one of the blended programs, they then complete the OAOP

History

- 10 years ago, blended education was relatively new
- Not all students were up-to-speed on skills needed to succeed in a largely online program
- OAOP helped fill this gap by allowing them to learn these skills before their first class, and assess their comfortability in this type of learning environment
- Today, most students have the technical skills, so the focus has shifted to making sure they understand the “nitty gritty” of the program

Purpose of the OAOP

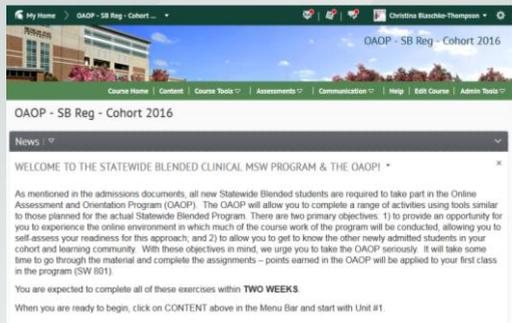
- Allows students to experience the course management system (Desire2Learn) where the majority of their coursework will take place (80%)
- Allows students to assess whether blended learning is a good fit for their learning style/needs
- Early intervention for students who struggle with the online environment BEFORE it really matters

What is the OAOP?

- Gives students hands-on practice with online learning and reinforces basic components of the program
 - Complete quizzes
 - Take part in discussion forums
 - Submit an essay in a drop box
 - Access material (articles, documents, links, etc.)
- Confirmation of expectations – program and format
 - Self-assessment of readiness for approach
 - Information distribution
 - Opportunities to connect

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Introduction/Getting Started



OAOB - SB Reg - Cohort 2016

News

WELCOME TO THE STATEWIDE BLENDED CLINICAL MSW PROGRAM & THE OAOB!

As mentioned in the admissions documents, all new Statewide Blended students are required to take part in the Online Assessment and Orientation Program (OAOB). The OAOB will allow you to complete a range of activities using tools similar to those planned for the actual Statewide Blended Program. There are two primary objectives: 1) to provide an opportunity for you to experience the online environment in which much of the course work of the program will be conducted, allowing you to self-assess your readiness for this approach; and 2) to allow you to get to know the other newly admitted students in your cohort and learning community. With these objectives in mind, we urge you to take the OAOB seriously. It will take some time to go through the material and complete the assignments – points earned in the OAOB will be applied to your first class in the program (SW 801).

You are expected to complete all of these exercises within **TWO WEEKS**.

When you are ready to begin, click on **CONTENT** above in the Menu Bar and start with Unit #1.

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Modules

- UNIT #1: Information about the Blended Program
- UNIT #2: Understanding the Blended-Hybrid Model
- UNIT #3: Characteristics of Successful Blended Students
- UNIT #4: Statewide Blended Program "Nitty Gritty"
- UNIT #5: Getting to Know One Another

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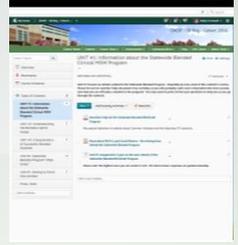
VIDEO

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UNIT #1: Information about the Statewide Blended Clinical MSW Program

Goal: Confirming Expectations
Activity: Access documents; Quiz

- Read the FAQs for the Statewide Blended REGULAR Program
- Read about MSU's Land Grant Mission - the driving force behind the Statewide Blended Program
- Unit #1 Assignment: A quiz on the basic details of the Statewide Blended REGULAR Program



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UNIT #2: Understanding the Blended-Hybrid Model

Goal: Getting a sense of blended learning environment
Activity: Access documents; Class Discussion



- Read an article titled "The Hybrid (Blended) Model: Good Practice"
- Read an article about Developing a Sense of Community in Blended-Hybrid Courses
- Unit #2 Assignment: Take Part in Asynchronous Class Discussion

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UNIT #3: Characteristics of Successful Blended Students

Goal: Becoming a blended student/learner
Activity: Access documents; Uploading document

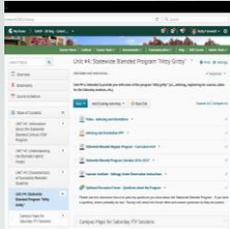
- Read an article Describing Characteristics of Successful Online Students
- Complete Online Readiness Assessment
- Unit #3 Assignment: Compose a brief reflective essay (Upload)



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UNIT #4: "Nitty Gritty"

Goal: Understanding specifics (where, what, when)
Activity: Watching video; Optional Discussion Forum

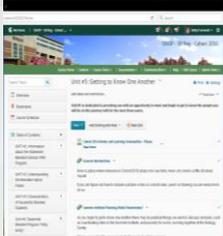


- **Video:** Advising and Orientation
- Curriculum Grid
- Schedule of Courses
- **Optional Discussion Forum:** Questions about the program
- Maps of learning community locations

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UNIT #5: Getting to Know One Another

Goal: Connecting & starting to build relationships
Activity: Discussion



- Cohort Roster
- **Discussion:** Introducing self
- **Discussion:** Planning for Summer Institute (rooms, rides)

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Evolution

- Until recently, OAOP was part of admissions process – submissions were used as additional evaluation criteria to get into the program
- Now, students are admitted into the program PRIOR to completing OAOP
 - Standardization across all MSW programs
 - Speed-up admissions process
- Worry? How do we make sure they complete it if admission decision doesn't hinge on it?
 - 10 points in their first class awarded for OAOP completion

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Evolution Cont.

- Added bonus – students get a jump start on getting to know one another (no longer have to make them “invisible”)
 - Plan for room sharing and car pooling
- Earlier advising
- Opportunity to address questions (DF)

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Why it matters...

- One task is to complete reflective essay
 - “Considering what you have learned from this online orientation so far, we would like you to write a brief essay describing how this type of blended/hybrid program is a good match for you. Using specific examples from the readings and how they apply to you, explain what strengths you possess as a learner that would lead you to be successful in this program. Again referring to the readings, what are your limitations as a learner and how would you address these?”

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Assess Fit

- “The orientation to the Statewide Blended MSW Program has, from the start, assured me that entering the program is the best decision I have made in years.... The OAOP has served to familiarize me with the tools, resources, and methods by which I will learn. I have gained a better understanding of the advantages this style presents, as well as the personal responsibility I will take toward my own success.”

Experience Platform

- “The OAOP offered a great way to instruct how to navigate through the information that will be of continued importance throughout the program, and also give an opportunity to experience how to conduct on-line courses.”

Increase Self-Awareness

- “Viewing information about the Statewide Blended program at Michigan State University and reading articles about hybrid classes has given me a good idea about what is in store for me in the next three years. Some of the information I learned has shown me that I will have to work on some of my weaknesses, but I think this program is a great fit for me and the strengths I have.”

Build Community

- “I once took an online course with no sense of community and I put very minimal effort in, doing only what I needed to at the very last minute. I did not care what others’ thought of the material because I had no clue who else was taking the course. However, I have already found myself checking for updates on posts on the forum in the OAOP to read what others thought, now that I have names and short descriptions of everybody. I think that the community that is already being developed will be an excellent fit for my education, as I am very social and am finding out that I enjoy knowing what others are taking from the material.”

The Perfect Trifecta

- OAOP is the first of many steps in building this sense of community that is so very important for student success in blended programs
- After OAOP completion, students take part in “interviews” to confirm program requirements and have questions answered
 - Originally, in-person or by phone with program administrators (1 applicant/student at a time)
 - Now, group sessions using ZOOM
- Summer Institute

Questions?

Contact Information & Websites

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- Blended Programs:
 - <http://socialwork.msu.edu/Programs/MSW/Blended-Programs>