Are you really ready for graduate school?

This is the BIG question you must answer for yourself. There are creative ways to overcome the challenges you may face in graduate study, but the time to find these solutions is before you begin your MSW program. Talk to your family, friends, colleagues, and others who have completed a graduate program and assess for yourself if the time is right to enter the program. The MSW academic advisor in Columbus and the coordinators at the regional campuses (Newark, Mansfield, and Lima) are happy to discuss your options and possible challenges. Above all, your goal is to help you successfully complete your MSW studies. For contact information, visit the college website at csw.osu.edu/degreeprograms/msw.

Balancing family, school, and work

1. Look for ways to involve your family in your education. Allow your children to participate with you in volunteer events that will also count for your human rights assignments. Share what you’ve learned in your courses and field experiences. Keep them connected to what you’re doing.

2. If you have school-age children, do your homework together—you’ll be serving as an excellent role model.

3. Improve your time management. Prepare "To Do" lists for the day, week, and semester. This will give everyone a better sense of when you’re available.

4. Get rid of extra obligations. Think about what your priorities are and how you want to use the free time that you have available. There will be plenty of time to resume extra activities when you have graduated with an MSW!

Make your graduate studies a shared project so that your success in the program can be shared with the important people in your life.

Can you afford to go to graduate school now?

Unfortunately, being a graduate student is expensive. Are you prepared? The college offers some scholarships that you can apply for but these will not cover the majority of your expenses, which will include:

• Books and supplies (laptop and software, paper, copying, etc.). Consider buying books online from discount suppliers or use e-textbooks (if they’re available). Use the computers in the student lounge, the computer lab on the second floor of Stillman Hall, or the library.

• Transportation and parking expenses for classes and your field practicum. You can take the bus to campus to avoid the cost of parking or carpool with other students if you live some distance from campus.

• Professional clothing for your field placement. Try shopping at consignment stores for nice, inexpensive professional clothing.

• Eating on campus. Bring your lunch to campus and use the refrigerator in the student lounge.

Is this the right time for you to be in graduate school?

If not, there are creative ways to overcome the challenges you may face in graduate study, but the time to find these solutions is before you begin your MSW program. Talk to your family, friends, colleagues, and others who have completed a graduate program and assess for yourself if the time is right to enter the program. The MSW academic advisor in Columbus and the coordinators at the regional campuses (Newark, Mansfield, and Lima) are happy to discuss your options and possible challenges. Above all, your goal is to help you successfully complete your MSW studies. For contact information, visit the college website at csw.osu.edu/degreeprograms/msw.
Balancing family, school, and work

Returning to graduate school is an exciting opportunity! To get the most from your studies, it’s important that you think carefully about what being a graduate student will mean for your lifestyle and whether you’re prepared to undertake the rigors it will bring. Your success in the MSW program will depend on your ability to balance multiple responsibilities, advocate for yourself, and make some sacrifices. Now is the time for some reflection and planning to ensure that your days as a graduate student will be meaningful and rewarding.

Making It Work: One Student’s Perspective

Denise Davis, MSW Student

It takes a lot of discipline to juggle the demands of grad school. My husband and I have to plan dates and consult schedules before we accept outside commitments. Sometimes it means explaining to friends and family that I may be unavailable for a few weeks, but also that my absence is only a short period of time in the big scheme of our overall lives.

I’ve found creative ways to balance school, my family, and personal life. I send quick texts instead of having long phone calls; I pull all-nighters on papers so I can take the next few days off without feeling guilty; and I’ve taken a leave of absence from some outside commitments.

And I try to take time for me—even if this only means scheduling 30 minute walks a few times a week. My neighborhood is a peaceful haven, and I try to take the time to enjoy it. It’s a perfect escape from the stresses of grad school.

The key is to find positive ways to de-stress and breathe through it all! It’ll all be worth it on graduation day!