

Mortuary Science and Funeral Service

The mission of the Mortuary Science and Funeral Service program is to challenge students to achieve academic and professional excellence; prepare students to acquire entry level positions in the funeral service profession; provide quality instruction and stay current with trends of the profession; cultivate and maintain excellent relations with local, state, and national organizations; enhance University and community relations; and work toward the continued improvement of the Mortuary Science and Funeral Service program as an ongoing process.

The Mortuary Science and Funeral Service program has, as its central aim, recognized the importance of funeral service personnel as:

- Members of a human services profession;
- Members of the community in which they serve;
- Participants in the relationship between bereaved families and those engaged in the funeral service profession;
- Professionals knowledgeable of, and compliant with, federal, state, provincial/territorial, and local regulatory guidelines in the geographic area where they practice; as well as
- Professionals sensitive to the responsibility for public health, safety, and welfare in caring for human remains.

In addition, the Mortuary Science and Funeral Service program is devoted to:

- Providing a quality learning environment by maintaining high program standards and offering opportunities to network with individuals and entities within the profession.
- Offering students a challenging and rewarding academic curriculum to enable them to fulfill their potential in theory, practice, and management of funeral service.
- Securing and retaining faculty with experience in education and the funeral service field and providing them with opportunities to attend local, state, and national meetings; encouraging their membership and participation in funeral service organizations; and assuring they add to the body of knowledge of funeral service literature.
- Contributing to the University's growth by developing, maintaining and participating in community activities.
- Assessing its degree requirements and the allocation of credit hours to ensure they are consistent and conform with the accreditation requirements of the American Board of Funeral Service Education.

Mortuary Science and Funeral Service Program Objectives:

- Explain the importance of funeral service professionals in developing relationships with families and communities they serve.
- Identify standards of ethical conduct in funeral service practice.
- Interpret how federal, state, and local laws apply to funeral service in order to ensure compliance.
- Apply principles of public health and safety in the handling and preparation of human remains.
- Demonstrate technical skills in embalming and restorative art that are necessary for the preparation and handling of human remains.
- Demonstrate skills required for conducting arrangement conferences, visitations, services, and ceremonies.
- Describe the requirements and procedures for burial, cremation, and other accepted forms of final disposition of human remains.
- Describe methods to address the grief-related needs of the bereaved.
- Explain management skills associated with operating a funeral establishment.
- Demonstrate verbal and written communication skills and research skills needed for funeral service practice.

This program is the only mortuary science and funeral service program offered in a public university in the state of Illinois. The initial program was developed in response to a request from the Illinois Funeral Directors Association. The Mortuary Science and Funeral Service program at SIU Carbondale is accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), 992 Mantua Pike, Suite

108, Woodbury Heights, Nj 08097, 816-233-3747. Website: www.abfse.org. Graduates meet licensing requirements established by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation. This program in mortuary science and funeral service is recognized by other state licensing boards.

The program is designed to accept students directly from high school or to accommodate students transferring from other accredited post-secondary institutions. Transfer students are admitted with 12 or more transfer credit hours with a GPA of at least 2.3 (on a 4.0 scale). Enrollment in the program is limited due to variety of circumstances, including rules of accreditation, limitations of facilities/internship sites, and faculty-student ratio.

Prospective students attending another college or university prior to transferring to SIU Carbondale should concentrate on completing courses articulated or approved as substitutes for SIU Carbondale's University Core Curriculum requirements. Prior to taking courses that appear to equate to the professional sequence, the applicant should consult with an advisor within the Mortuary Science and Funeral Service program.

The Mortuary Science and Funeral Service program has a Linkage Agreement with Southeastern Illinois College, Rend Lake College and Shawnee College. If you have questions about this agreement, contact the community college advisor or SIU Carbondale School of Health Sciences at 618-453-7287.

In addition to the professional coursework, the student will be responsible for the University Core Curriculum as well as a number of courses, which will lead to an understanding of the psychological, sociological and theological implications of life and death. Each student will serve a semester-long internship at an approved off-campus facility. The expenses related to the internship courses are the responsibility of the student. The Internship Coordinator and/or Program Director will assign the internship location. Prior to participation in the internship, students may be required to undergo an "Internship Site Required" criminal background check and drug screening. Students are required to have a driver's license before going out on their practicum internship. Faculty members in the professional courses are licensed funeral directors and embalmers with experience in the profession. The program's Advisory Committee is composed of mortuary science and funeral service professionals.

The student is required to complete the Hepatitis B vaccine series before participating in the laboratory classes. The vaccine may be acquired at the SIU Carbondale Student Health Center, a local health department, or through a private physician. The cost of this vaccine is the responsibility of the student and documentation showing completion of the vaccine series must be presented to the advisor prior to registration. In addition to the Hepatitis B vaccine requirement, a laboratory uniform, personal protective equipment and instruments must be purchased.

National Board Examination pass rates, graduation rates, and employment rates for this and other ABFSE-accredited programs are available at www.abfse.org. To request a printed copy of this program's rates, go to ASA 116, 1365 Douglas Drive, Carbondale, IL 62901 or by e-mail at health.sciences@siu.edu, or by telephone at 618-453-5698. Since laws governing the profession are enacted at the state level, licensing and qualification requirements vary among states. Prospective students should contact the licensing body of the state in which they wish to attempt licensure.

The Mortuary Science and Funeral Service program can be completed at Southern Illinois University Carbondale or in combination with other institutions of higher education.

All MSFS courses that are requirements for the major must be passed with a grade of "C" or better. These courses can be retaken once if not passed with a "C". If a student does not pass the course with a grade of "C" or better the second time, they are released from Mortuary Science and Funeral Service program and required to submit a change of major form. If a student fails 2 courses in the major they are removed from the program.

Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Mortuary Science and Funeral Service Degree Requirements

Degree Requirements	Credit Hours
University Core Curriculum Requirements	39

Degree Requirements	Credit Hours
CHEM 106, CMST 101, ENGL 101 and ENGL 102, MATH 101 or MATH 108, PHIL 104, PSYC 102, SOC 108, ZOOL 115/ZOOL 118, Fine Art Elective, Humanities Elective, Human Health and Multicultural Elective.	
Requirements for Major	78
ACCT 220; AH 105, AH 241; FIN 270; MSFS 101, MSFS 108, MSFS 240, MSFS 256, MSFS 257, MSFS 275, MSFS 325A, MSFS 325B, MSFS 340, MSFS 345A, MSFS 345B, MSFS 351, MSFS 352, MSFS 355, MSFS 360, MSFS 364, MSFS 401, MSFS 410, MSFS 411, MSFS 412.	
Approved Career Electives	3
Total	120

Capstone Option for Transfer Students

The SIU Carbondale Capstone Option may be available to eligible students who have earned an associates degree or the equivalent. The Capstone Option reduces the University Core Curriculum requirements from 39 to 30 hours, therefore reducing the time to degree completion. See the Capstone Option section for more information on this option.

Last updated: 04/16/2025