

University of Utah MSW Program

Application Instructions

MSW Program applications are submitted through University of Utah Graduate Admissions at <https://futureu.admissions.utah.edu/apply/>. The University of Utah application, MSW application, and MSW application instructions undergo yearly changes and updates.

Please do not start or submit your application before August 1st

Your application is not submitted until you have paid the Office of Admissions application fee (\$55 domestic/\$65 international). Payment is the final step in the application and must be made by 11:59pm MST on the application [deadline](#). Your application cannot be processed or evaluated until all required materials are received. Transcripts and recommendations need to be submitted by 11:59pm MST seven (7) calendar days after the application deadline.

If you need accommodations in the application process, you must contact the Center for Disability and Access (CDA) at least three weeks prior to the date you plan to submit your application. The Center's phone number is 801-581-5020, and they can be found online at <https://disability.utah.edu>. The center will work with you and the MSW Program to arrange accommodations. **Please note that accommodations can only be granted for applications started *before* the deadline.**

Important Note: In order to create an account with Graduate Admissions, you **MUST use an email address that you check regularly.** **All communication concerning your application will be sent to the email address you use on the application.**

Admissions Criteria

The Admissions Committee engages in a holistic review process, drawing information from the following sources:

1. Transcripts
2. Three professional and/or academic recommendations
3. Statement of Purpose
4. Resume

1. Transcripts

- You are required to upload digital copies of transcripts to your application from all institutions where you have enrolled in courses, even if the credits were transferred and are shown on another transcript *and* even if the credits were never completed.
- Unofficial transcripts are sufficient for your application to be considered. Official transcripts will be required if you are offered admission.
- Please provide quality uploaded documents that are easy for the reviewers to read.
- Graduate Admissions will receive a report from the National Clearinghouse identifying all institutions of higher education you attended. If you took concurrent enrollment credits in high school or have taken continuing education courses, it will be reported that you were enrolled in the institution. It is possible for enrollment to be reported even if you did not end up completing any credits. In this case, you need to contact the institution's registrar and request a Letter of Non-Attendance and then upload it to your application.
- After you submit your application, please be sure to refer back to the checklist items on your application to confirm all necessary transcripts have been received.

2. Three Professional Recommendations

- If you are currently employed or volunteering within the field, you are strongly encouraged to have a recommendation from your current supervisor.
- Request recommendations from professionals who have supervised you or who have been directly responsible for assessing your human service-related work or volunteer experience. Choose recommenders that understand you well in a professional capacity.
- A recommendation from a professor/instructor who is familiar with your academic abilities and able to assess your potential for professional social work is acceptable.
 - If your cumulative GPA is below 3.0, we recommend having at least one academic recommendation.
- We suggest asking your references about one (1) month in advance if they will provide a recommendation. Be prepared to provide the following information for each person who will submit a recommendation:
 - Name
 - Organization
 - Title
 - Phone number
 - Email address

- You will enter the above information into your application. Your recommenders will then receive an email with a link to a recommendation form. The recommendation form consists of their contact information, short essay responses to six (6) questions, and a rating sheet to rate you on six (6) characteristics.
 - If your reference does not receive the email, you are able to send it again by logging into your application. If that still does not work, please contact MSW Admissions at msw@utah.edu.
- Letters of Reference will only be considered when provided *in addition* to the completed form. They are *NOT* required.
- We encourage you to waive your right to examine the letters of recommendation because your recommenders may speak more candidly.
- **Personal and/or character recommendations from co-workers, friends, family members, ecclesiastical leaders (including mission presidents), personal therapists, and acquaintances will receive zero points.**
- **Your application will not be considered complete until three (3) recommendations have been received. For this reason, you may wish to invite more than three (3) recommenders to ensure that three (3) responses are received no later than 11:59pm MST seven (7) calendar days after the application deadline. The first three (3) responses received will be considered. It is your responsibility to make sure that the recommendations are received. You will be able to confirm receipt by logging into your application and reviewing the checklist.**

3. Statement of Purpose

The MSW Admissions Committee looks for the following in your Statement of Purpose:

- A clear and grounded understanding of the social work profession and how it differs from other mental health disciplines based on your educational, professional, and volunteer experiences.
- How your professional and educational experiences have prepared you for graduate studies in social work.
- Your Statement of Purpose will be entered directly into the application. We recommend preparing it ahead of time and then pasting it into the application.
- **Please be aware that any disclosures related to discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct may require mandatory reporting to the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) and Title IX, in accordance with institutional and legal obligations.**
- Your Statement of Purpose must address ALL of the following elements. Answers are limited to 500 words for each numbered question.

1. What is your purpose in pursuing an MSW degree?
 - a. Please be specific. In order to demonstrate an understanding of the profession, elaborate beyond “I want to help people”.
 - b. Please focus on what you hope to accomplish by earning an MSW, e.g., helping newly arriving refugees, working with children with disabilities, completing research in social work, providing therapeutic counseling in a clinical setting, etc. You are not committing to any certain path, but you are showing how an MSW degree will help accomplish your purposes.
2. Consider the NASW Code of Ethics.
 - a. Which ethical principles would challenge your personal values and world views?
 - b. How would you manage these challenges?
3. What are your career goals?
 - a. Discuss how obtaining an MSW degree will support your career goals.
 - b. Address any goals you have in working to achieve change with individuals, families, communities, and policy.
4. Why is an MSW degree the best fit for you rather than an alternative helping profession (e.g., CMHC, LMFT)?
5. What type of professional and educational experiences have you had?
 - a. How do your work and volunteer experiences relate to your decision to become a social worker? (Please focus on social work or human-services-related experiences.)
6. Discuss a situation where you had to overcome your own biases or prejudices and how you addressed and overcame them.
7. How will you utilize your current and/or past experiences with marginalized communities to solve complex client problems at the micro, mezzo, and/or macro level? Provide specific experiences and examples.
8. What does social justice mean to you and how will you advance it as a social worker?
9. Describe a social problem you are passionate about addressing and elaborate on how you perceive your role and/or the role of social work in taking action.
10. References/Bibliography
 - a. Be sure to provide specific references for any sources that you cite in your statement using APA format in this section.

3A. GPA Statement (if your cumulative GPA from all institutions is below 3.0)

- If your cumulative (weighted) GPA from all institutions attended is below 3.0, prepare a GPA statement. You will copy and paste the statement into your application when you enter your GPA.
- In 500 words or less, discuss the following:
 - What were the contributing factors to your undergraduate GPA?
 - How have you otherwise demonstrated a capacity for success in a rigorous graduate program (superior grades during the final semester(s) of work prior to graduation, success in another degree or certificate program, etc.)?
 - If granted admission to the program, how do you plan to address potential obstacles that you might face in successfully completing the program?

4. Resume

Please follow our resume format exactly ([download the editable copy here](#)).

- List all work and volunteer experience with current or more recent experience first.
- List the **exact number of hours per month for all work and volunteer positions** to receive credit for these experiences. **You must calculate the number of hours and add it to the top of your resume.** If your monthly hours varied, please list an average.
- The MSW Admissions Committee is particularly interested in your paid work and volunteer activities that are related to human service. Please visit this link for more information: <https://socialwork.utah.edu/msw/apply/human-service.php>.
- To ensure that full credit is given for related experience, make sure the job responsibilities you list give enough information for MSW Admissions Committee members to accurately determine which positions are relevant.
- Format: Two page maximum in Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins.
- Hours per month and supervisor information for all work and volunteer experience are **required as shown** to ensure Admissions Committee members are able to evaluate your volunteer and work experiences.
- If you do not have Microsoft Word, [LibreOffice](#) is a free alternative that you may be able to use instead.
- Failure to follow the exact resume format provided **may result in receiving 0 points for any service hours, paid or volunteer, on that resume.**