

## University of Utah MSW Program Application Instructions

MSW Program applications are submitted through 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 1.**

Your application is not submitted until you have paid the Office of Admissions application fee. This is the final step in the application and must be done by 11:59 pm 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 11:59 PM seven (7) calendar days after the application deadline. The [timed case study is due](#) within seven (7) days after the timed the case study is sent to you.

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 contact info is 801-581-5020, [disability.utah.edu](http://disability.utah.edu). The Center will work with you and the MSW Program to arrange accommodations.

Note: In order to create an account with Graduate Admissions, you **MUST use an email address that you check regularly. We recommend against using a Hotmail email account for your 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. Social Work Practice Case Study (120-minute timed essay)
5. Resume

Occasionally, the Admissions Committee will request an interview with an applicant. Applicants may not request interviews.

## 1. Transcripts

- You are required to upload digital copies of actual transcripts to your application from all institutions where you have enrolled in courses even if the credits were transferred and show 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 uploaded documents that are easy for the reviewer 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, request a Letter of Non-Attendance, and 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.
- We suggest asking your references 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 references 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 questions, and rating you on six 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](mailto:msw@utah.edu).
- References have the option to attach a letter. Letters will only be considered when provided *in addition to* the completed form.

- We encourage you to waive your right to examine the letters of recommendation because your references may speak more candidly.
- **Personal references and character references from co-workers, friends, family members, ecclesiastical leaders, personal therapists, and acquaintances will not be considered.**
- **Your application will not be considered complete until three recommendations have been received. For this reason, you may wish to invite more than three recommenders to ensure three responses are received no later than 11:59 PM seven (7) calendar days after the application deadline. It is your responsibility to make sure 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 life experiences (e.g., professional and educational) 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 then pasting it into the application.
- Your Statement of Purpose must address ALL of the following elements. Answers are limited to 400 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. 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.)
5. What does social justice mean to you?
6. How will you utilize your current and/or past experiences with diverse groups to solve complex client problems at the micro, mezzo, and/or macro level? Provide specific experiences and examples.
  - a. The Master of Social Work (MSW) Program is committed to creating an environment where students with diverse identities, backgrounds, and ideas are represented and supported. Thus, in your answer please describe what experiences you could bring to the classroom and field education settings that reflect values of diversity, equity, and inclusion central to the mission of the Program, College, and University. (See [CSW Anti-Racism Statement](#) and [Mission and Goals](#) in [MSW Handbook](#)).
7. References/Bibliography
  - a. Be sure to provide specific references for any sources that you cite in your statement using APA format.

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. Social Work Practice Timed Case Study (2-3 double-spaced pages)

- Please review the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics prior to starting the timed case study. You must reference at least **three specific ethical standards** from the NASW Code of Ethics that apply to the case study to receive points for your response. You can review the Code of Ethics at <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics>.
- The case study is administered through Canvas. On the Wednesday morning after you submit your application, you will receive an email from Instructure Canvas with a link to the timed case study Canvas course. Please add Instructure Canvas to your list of safe senders and check your spam folder.

- The email sender and subject line will show as follows:  
**From:** Instructure Canvas [[notifications@instructure.com](mailto:notifications@instructure.com)]  
**Subject:** Course Invitation
- The Instructure Canvas email will be sent to the email address you used to create your application.
  - Use the Canvas **guest login** to register and log in with the same email address.
  - If you created the application using your University of Utah UMail address, log into Canvas as you normally would.
  - If you have a UMail account and you did not use your UMail address to create the application, do NOT log into Canvas with your uNID or password. Do not try to access the essay through CIS.
- You may access the course in Canvas first and return to complete the essay later to avoid last-minute issues logging in. Please note that the initial invitation link only works once. Future logins must be done from the [Canvas Guest login page](#).
- You will have until 10:00 AM on the Wednesday after the Canvas invitation email is sent to access the Canvas course, read the instructions, and complete the timed case study. **If you have not completed the timed case study within this period, your application materials will be considered incomplete. Only complete applications will be considered.** If you are unable to complete the essay in the given period due to extenuating circumstances, please notify MSW Admissions at [msw@utah.edu](mailto:msw@utah.edu).
- You will have **120 minutes to complete** the timed case study. The timer starts once you view the case study scenario.
  - We recommend setting your own timer for 110 minutes on your phone or other device to be sure you have ample time to finish and submit your finished essay before the time expires.
  - If you experience difficulty submitting your essay (this is rare), please *immediately* email your essay to [msw@utah.edu](mailto:msw@utah.edu). We will determine if it can be considered.
- To request an accommodation for the timed case study, please contact the Center for Disability and Access at least three weeks prior to submitting application materials. The Center's contact info is 801-581-5020 or [disability.utah.edu](http://disability.utah.edu). The Center for Disability and Access will work with you and the MSW Program to arrange accommodations.
- The timed case study **should reflect original work and be completed independently. Please do not share the case scenarios with others.**
- When you submit your essay, you will be asked to certify the following: **I certify that all my application materials were solely authored by me and represent my own original work.** Using another's work, including work generated using ChatGPT, is considered plagiarism and will disqualify you from consideration for admission.

- Please address *all* of the following:
  - Which factors of the client’s case are most salient and should be considered first and why?
  - What would a Social Worker do to intervene on (1) micro/individual, (2) mezzo/community, and (3) macro/policy levels?
  - Clearly identify any ethical dilemmas that you see in this case study. Reference and cite at least **three specific ethical standards** found in the NASW Code of Ethics.
  - What critical information is missing from this case? Please address how you would gather the needed information.
  - Discuss one social justice consideration in this case and possible resolutions to address justice and equity.
  - Please articulate how diversity, inclusion, and equity may impact this case.
- Formatting: The essay should be two to three double-spaced pages in Times New Roman 12-point font with one-inch margins. All references and citations must be in APA format. Do not include a cover page. Please type your full name at the top of the first page.
- **It is your responsibility to supply the correct email address in your application and to check all folders of your inbox to locate the email invitation. Please contact MSW Admissions at [msw@utah.edu](mailto:msw@utah.edu) with any questions or if you do not receive the invitation.**

**Your application will be considered incomplete if we do not receive your essay by 10:00 AM on the Wednesday after the Canvas course invitation is sent. This means that you will have to reapply for the MSW Program the following year.**

### [When is my Timed Case Study due?](#)

#### 5. Resume

**Please follow our resume template exactly** (provided below)

- List all work and volunteer experience with current or most 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 one-inch margins.

**RESUME TEMPLATE**

Hours per month and supervisor information for all work and volunteer experience is **required as shown** to ensure Admissions Committee members are able to evaluate your volunteer and work experiences.

YOUR NAME

Current Address  
 City, State, Zip  
 (801) 555-1212  
 Email address

**Total Number of Field Practicum Human Service Hours** (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total Number of Volunteer Human Service Hours:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total Number of Paid Work Experience Human Service Hours:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Education**

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<b>University or College</b>	Graduation Month Year
School/College of _____	
BS/BA in _____	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minor if applicable</li> <li>▪ Certificate(s) if applicable</li> </ul>	

**Practicum Activities** (*Advanced Standing applicants only. All others, skip to next section.*)

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<b>Practicum Title/Role</b> , Agency/Organization, City, State	Month Year to Month Year
Name, telephone number and email address of immediate supervisor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Job responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Number of hours per month</li> </ul>	

**Volunteer Activities with Social Welfare or Civic Organizations**

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<b>Volunteer Title/Role</b> , Agency/Organization, City, State	Month Year to Month Year
Name, telephone number and email address of immediate supervisor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Job responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Number of hours per month</li> </ul>	

**Work Experience**

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<b>Your Title/Role</b> , Agency/Organization, City, State	Month Year to Month Year
Name, telephone number and email address of immediate supervisor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Job responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Number of hours per month</li> </ul>	

**Leadership/Honors/Activities**

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Please list any leadership, honors, or extracurricular activities below. For example:

▪ Dean's List, University of Utah, College of Social Work	Fall 2010
▪ President, BSWA	January 2011-May 2011
▪ Paper published in Undergraduate Research Journal	Spring 2011 Issue