

MSW Application Instructions and Admission Requirements



1. Determine your program

Advanced Standing (42 credit hour)

- Students holding a Bachelor of Social Work degree from a CSWE accredited institution. Offered Spring and Summer terms only.
- Admission to advanced standing also requires a "B" average or better in all professional foundation courses, with no more than one "C" in professional courses and grades of "B" or better in field education courses.

Two Year (60 credit hour)

- Students who hold a Bachelors degree from a regionally accredited institution.
- Students who do not meet Advanced Standing criteria must apply to 60 hour program.
- Offered Summer and Fall terms only

2. Choose Program Format

- Check MSW Program start dates for program options.

3. Complete online application and select application type:

- Access at graduate.ua.edu
 1. Select "Prospective Student"

- Select “Apply Now”
- Select the admission term
- Remember to select your campus under the “Program of Study” link.

**Make sure you select the correct campus type, applications cannot be changed once they are submitted*

4. Statement of Purpose w/ Diversity Experience

Social Work professionals address the needs of vulnerable populations and they are bound by a professional code of ethics that guide their professional behavior. We are looking for individuals who exhibit strong potential for developing professional competence, whose personal value system promotes social work core values and who have demonstrated academic promise to be able to perform successfully at the graduate level. Faculty members will evaluate your qualifications for a professional education in social work and the appropriateness of our program for your educational needs and goals.

Format: 5-6 pages, 12 point font with 1” margins, single or double spaced

- **Before you write:**

1. Reflect on your educational and professional objectives.
2. Evaluate your expectations regarding the MSW degree program and your professional future.
3. Read the NASW Code of Ethics and reflect social work principles such as privilege, oppression, diversity and social injustice.

- **Reviewer’s expectations:**

**Note: all essays should be written in a professional format*

1. Strong written communication skills (grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction and organization).

- **Reviewer's expectations continued:**

2. Essay Content

- A. Your motivation for social work and social work education
- B. Evidence of experience or interest in working with diverse populations or oppressed groups
- C. Address commitment to social and economic justice and other interests congruent with social work values and ethics
- D. Your potential to become a competent social worker
- E. Your potential and plan for academic success
- F. The resources will you use to support you academically
- G. Additional information that might help assess your potential
- H. Discuss two experiences you have had that are relevant to individual differences and/or diversity in relation to the NASW Code of Ethics.

5. Letters of Recommendation

**Letters from former Professors or Instructors are preferred.*

Personal/character references from family members, friends, and clergy are not appropriate. Recommendations should come from individuals who can speak to your ability for graduate study AND potential for advanced social work practice after graduation.

- **Criteria:**

1. If you earned your undergraduate degree within the last five years, choose at least one academic reference; a professor in your major is ideal. You may choose to have all three letters from academic references.
2. If you earned your undergraduate degree more than five years ago, choose at least one academic reference if one is available. You may, however, substitute a recommendation

from an employer. If you do not have an academic reference, please explain in your Statement of Purpose essay.

3. If you have done extensive volunteer work, you may choose at least one person who has supervised your volunteer work.
4. Provide each reference a copy of your resume.
5. Enter email addresses of each reference on the graduate school application. References will be sent a link once the application is submitted.

6. Admission Requirements

- **Regular Admission:**

An applicant whose credentials meet both of the following minimum requirements may be considered for regular admission:

1. **GPA requirement:** The applicant must have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 overall, 3.0 for the last 60 semester hours in a degree program, or 3.0 for a completed graduate degree program.
2. **GPA standards:** All applicants must have at least a 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) on the overall GPA.
3. **Entrance exam score requirement:** If the undergraduate GPA is below a 3.0 for both the overall AND last 60 hours, the School of Social Work requires submission of test scores. The applicant must have a 300 on the revised GRE test or a score at the 50th percentile on the MAT. Admission test scores must be less than five years old. An applicant who wishes to be nominated by his or her department for a Graduate Council Fellowship is strongly encouraged to submit a score on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test or entrance examination appropriate to the graduate program of interest

- **International Student Admission**

International students must meet the Graduate School's requirements for admission (see above), including the equivalent of a four-year bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.

1. **Test Scores:** A students whose first language is not English must submit an official score report for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the Pearson test of English (PTE), or must have earned a degree from an accredited U.S. college or university within the past 3 years.
 - A. TOEFL minimum score is a 550 on the paper-based test or a 79 on the internet-based test.
 - B. IELTS minimum score for admission is a 6.5.
 - C. PTE minimum score for admission is a 59.

Note: Scores must be less than two years old at the time of intended initial enrollment at The University of Alabama.

7. **Transcripts**

For each institution of higher education (including community colleges) at which you have completed 15 or more credit hours, obtain an unofficial transcript and upload it during the application process. Official transcripts should only be submitted after admission. Please note:

- If you upload a digital transcript obtained directly from your registrar's office, please ensure that this file does not expire.
- You do not need to submit University of Alabama transcripts.
- If admitted, degree-seeking applicants will be required to request that official transcripts be sent directly from your institution(s) prior to enrollment. Electronic transcripts should be sent to grad.transcripts@ua.edu.

Please note, official transcripts sent from the undergraduate institution will be required 6 weeks after the first day of classes during the admitted term.