

# MSW FAQs



## **Q – What are the admission requirements for the MSW program?**

A – Please visit our admission website for admission criteria for MSW degree programs.

## **Q – Am I required to have an undergraduate degree in Social Work?**

A – No. An undergraduate degree in social work is a requirement only for the advanced-standing option. Students entering the 60-credit-hour program option, however, must have completed certain liberal arts courses.

### **Liberal Arts Requirements for Enrollment in the MSW Program**

An undergraduate degree in social work is not required for admission to the MSW program. Students entering the program must, however, have an undergraduate background in the liberal arts. The requirements that follow must be met before the student enrolls in MSW classes.

1. Two courses in English composition
2. A minimum of four courses in the humanities and/or fine arts
3. A minimum of four courses in behavioral science and/or social science
4. At least one natural science course
5. One course in mathematics at the college level

These requirements may be met through course credit from a regionally accredited institution or through a standard examination (e.g., CLEP) accepted by The University of Alabama Graduate School.

**Q – What are the admissions requirements for the advanced-standing program?**

A – To be considered for the advanced-standing program, you must have a BSW degree from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and meet additional admissions requirements.

Advanced-Standing students enroll in MSW study for one full Summer session (June-mid-August) or Spring semester (January-early May) and one full academic year. In addition to the satisfaction of all admission requirements of the School, admission with advanced standing also requires a "B" average or better in social work courses, with no more than one "C" in professional social work courses and grades of "B" or better in field education courses.

**Q – As a University of Alabama graduate or current UA student, do I need to submit my transcripts?**

A – You do not have to request transcripts if you are a current UA student or a UA graduate (unless degree was awarded prior to 1983).

**Q – Am I eligible to complete an expedited application?**

A – To complete an expedited application for the MSW program, you must be a currently enrolled senior in the BSW program at The University of Alabama. You must have completed at least 91 hours and have an overall GPA of 3.0 or better. If you are eligible to complete an expedited application, the application fee is waived.

**Q – How can I obtain an application and instructions?**

A – Visit our admissions website for application materials.

**Q – When can I begin the application process?**

A – You may begin the application process after you have completed 91 semester hours towards your undergraduate degree. If you choose to submit your application prior to

earning your degree, have one official copy of your transcripts mailed to the Graduate School both when you apply and again upon receiving the degree. If you are a UA graduate, you will not need to request transcripts.

### **Q – When is the application deadline?**

A – The School of Social Work priority application deadline for admission, scholarships, and stipends is February 1 for programs that start in the summer and in the fall and September 15 for programs that begin in the spring. Applications are accepted at any time, but applications received by the priority deadline are reviewed first and will be considered for scholarships and stipends. The Graduate School's application should be submitted 6 weeks prior to our deadline.

### **Advanced Standing**

Students with a BSW degree from a CSWE accredited program

- **Spring Term** deadline September 15<sup>th</sup>, on-campus and distance learner
- **Summer Term** deadline January 15<sup>th</sup>, on-campus and distance learner

### **60 Credit Hour Program**

Students with a four-year degree from a regionally accredited University

- **Summer Term** deadline January 15<sup>th</sup>, distance learner only
- **Fall Term** deadline March 15<sup>th</sup>, on-campus and distance learner

*\*\*\*Note: Applications will not be moved between program start terms for any reason. Candidates are welcome to submit separate applications to on-campus and distance learner options. Applications complete after the deadline will not be considered for Social Work funded stipends or scholarships.*

### **Q – Do I need to submit all application materials at one time?**

A – No. You may submit your materials as you complete them. However, be mindful of the priority deadlines for each program option. All documents must be completed by the term deadline at the date of close.

**Q – How can I submit my letters of recommendation?**

A – Letters of recommendation should be initiated by the applicant through the Graduate School's online [application](#) center under "Other Required Documents." You will need email addresses for those that have agreed to provide letters of recommendation. The Graduate School will send them an electronic form to complete.

**Q – From whom should letters of recommendation be sent?**

A – Three letters of recommendation are required. The references should be able to objectively speak to your ability for graduate study and your potential for a career in social work. If you have earned a degree in the last five years, choose at least one academic reference; a professor in your major is ideal. If you earned your degree more than five years ago, choose an academic reference if one is available, if not, choose employers or supervisors. If you have been employed and/or have served as a volunteer, choose at least one employer or volunteer supervisor as a reference.

**Q – How should I submit my transcripts?**

A – Official transcripts must be sent directly to the Graduate School from each of your postsecondary educational institutions. UA graduates do not need to submit transcripts unless they graduated before 1983.

**Q – Do I have to take an entrance exam for admission to the MSW program?**

A – Entrance exam scores are required only from applicants who do not have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 overall or a 3.0 in the last 60 semester hours (90 quarter hours) in a degree program. Those applicants are required to take the Miller Analogies Test (MAT) or the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). A score at the 50th percentile or higher on the MAT or a score of at least 300 on the GRE (combined verbal and quantitative) is required. Applicants who are required to take either the GRE or MAT must have the score sent directly from the respective testing service to the UA Graduate School. Entrance examination scores are valid for five years.

**Q – If my GPA is at least 3.0, should I take an entrance exam anyway?**

A – If you have a high overall GPA (3.8 or higher) and you are a good test taker, you might want to take the GRE. A high score on the GRE can enhance your eligibility for fellowships and scholarships and make you a more competitive candidate for admission.

**Q – Whom should I contact to be sure that all of my application materials have been received?**

A – The School of Social Work’s Registrar, [Heather Sullivan](#). This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it, receives all application materials. *She will contact you* by email when she receives notice from the Graduate School that you’ve applied and again when all application materials are completed.

**Q – When will admission decisions be made?**

A – The admissions committee begins meeting shortly after the priority deadline and about every two weeks after that until programs are full. Typically, applicants who submit their complete application by the priority deadline learn of their status within 2 months of the start of the semester.

**Q – Are there additional requirements for International applicants?**

A – International students must meet the Graduate School’s requirements for admission, including the equivalent of a four-year bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution. The [UA Graduate School](#) has provided information for international applicants.

**Q – What is your policy regarding transferring graduate credit from another University?**

A – If you have received graduate credit from a regionally accredited institution, your transcript will be evaluated for transfer credit after you have enrolled as a graduate student at The University of Alabama. Further details can be found on the [UA Graduate School’s](#) website.

**Q – Do you have an Advanced-Standing MSW Program?**

A – Yes, we offer an advanced-standing program in the spring and summer each year, both on our Tuscaloosa campus and in a primarily online program. Programs may not be offered, however, when there is insufficient enrollment. To be eligible for advanced-standing, applicants must have a BSW from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and they must meet the School's other admission requirements. Visit our admissions website.

**Q – Do you have an online MSW program?**

A – We have a distance learning program provided in a primarily online format. Some of the courses include face-to-face skills labs conducted on Saturdays at regionally-convenient locations (each skills lab meets for half a day on four Saturdays during the semester). In addition, field education placements are required. Most of our field education agencies are located in Alabama, although arrangements may be made for field education sites out of state.

**Q – What is a field education placement?**

A – Field Placement provides students the opportunity to integrate the knowledge, skills, and values learned in the classroom setting with the practical experiences that are provided at the agency. Field Placement is a required course in the foundation and advanced curriculums.

It is important for students to understand that Practicum is a class and should be treated as such. In addition, students need to prepare for the incidental cost(s) of this course. Possible costs outside of tuition include travel (gas and mileage); fingerprinting and background checks; and drug screens, as well as vaccinations and health screenings.

**Q – Do you offer part-time options?**

A – Yes. Part-time options are available for Advanced-Standing and 60-Credit-Hour Program options. Contact the School of Social Work's Registrar, [Heather Sullivan](#) for additional information.

**Q – When does the MSW Program begin?**

A – Advanced-standing programs begin in late May or early June and in January. Sixty-credit-hour on-campus programs begin in August; Sixty-credit-hour primarily online programs begin in late May or early June.

**Q – What is the cost of tuition for the program?**

A – Tuition rates for resident and non-resident graduate students can be found at [UA Enrollment Costs](#) by enrollment term and rates specifically offered for [Distance Learning](#).

**Q – What concentrations do you offer?**

A – We offer two concentration choices (a) Services to Children, Adolescents, and their Families; and (b) Services to Adults and their Families.

**Q – Are there any other areas of focus?**

A – We offer an emphasis in Program and Agency Administration. Students who choose this emphasis complete two courses in program and agency administration and complete a field education experience in an agency with an administrative component. In addition, we offer two coordinated degree programs, the MSW/MPH and the MSW/JD. More information about the [coordinated programs](#).

**Q – How do I apply for the MSW/MPH coordinated degree program?**

A – Prospective students should apply to the MSW program at the same time. Curriculum information and instructions for applying to the MPH are [available](#) with The University of Alabama-Birmingham School of Public Health. It is important to note that applicants to the MPH program are required to take the GRE. (COVID waivers may apply)

**Q- How do I apply for the MSW/JD coordinated degree program?**

A – Prospective students should first seek admission to the [School of Law](#). Students will

complete the first year of the JD Program before moving into the MSW coursework.

**Q – What is the Washington, DC field education program?**

A – MSW students may apply to complete the concentration-year field education requirement and other coursework during the spring semester in Washington, DC. The Washington, DC Internship Program for the University of Alabama School of Social Work offers students the opportunity to complete their final field placement in Washington, DC. Of the over 600 Schools of Social Work in the nation, the University of Alabama is the only school, outside of the DC Metro area, that offers students this unique opportunity, which prepares students both personally and professionally by exposing them to outstanding direct service programs as well as public policy and advocacy implementation.

**Q – What type of financial assistance is available?**

A – Several types of financial assistance are available to MSW students, including MSW stipends, Field Education/Agency Stipends, Title IV-E stipends, scholarships, fellowships, and federal financial aid. Once admitted MSW students will be sent an application for scholarships and stipends offered by the School of Social Work. Students admitted to the primarily online MSW program option may also apply for [scholarship opportunities](#) through the [College of Continuing Studies](#). Additionally, you may want to visit the [UA Financial Aid](#) website for information on how to apply for FAFSA. We do not provide graduate assistantships for MSW students; some of our MSW students, however, [apply](#) for assistantships in other divisions.

**Q – Do you host information sessions?**

A – Yes. To register for an on-campus information session you may register via the MSW Program website. For any questions email [jkwilliams7@ua.edu](mailto:jkwilliams7@ua.edu). Due to COVID on-campus information sessions have been put on hold until further notice. Our Student Service Recruitment Coordinator, Aubrey Stewart holds online [virtual MSW informational sessions](#).

**Q – Whom do I contact if I have additional questions?**

A – Our Student Services staff is available to answer questions about the MSW program and the application process. If you have additional questions, please contact Aubrey Stewart at [alstewart4@ua.edu](mailto:alstewart4@ua.edu).