

MSW Application Instructions & 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 summer term only.
- All admitted Advanced Standing students must attend the new student orientation scheduled for May on campus.

Advanced Standing Conditional Admits

Students who completed a BSW more than five years before applying to the MSW program may be considered for Conditional Admit.

In addition to the standard admissions requirements, these students must also:

- Submit a current Resume
- Submit a Technology Statement (1-2 pages, Times New Roman, 12-point font, double spaced) that gives an overview of their experience with technology since graduating from a BSW Program. For example, students should share any experiences with online courses or trainings, familiarity with videoconferencing tools such as Zoom, use of Microsoft Office, and any other technology used.

If the student does not successfully meet the above requirements, they may be considered for the Traditional MSW Program.

- 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 bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution.
- Students who do not meet Advanced Standing criteria must apply to 60-hour program.
- Offered fall term only.
- All admitted Two-Year students must attend the new student orientation scheduled for July on campus.

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
 - a. Select "Prospective Student"
 - b. Select "Apply Now"
 - c. Select the admission term

d. 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 Reflecting on Code of Ethics and Accreditation Standards

Social work professionals address the complex needs of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities emphasizing the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. They are bound by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) [Code of Ethics](#) that guides their professional behavior. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) also sets Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards ([EPAS](#)) for the UA MSW Program including identifying competencies that articulate the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise social work practice. Specifically, CSWE EPAS emphasize nine competencies including the following:

- “Social workers advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.”
- “Social workers demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels and demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.”

The UA MSW Program is looking for individuals who exhibit strong potential for developing professional competence, understand and can apply social work core values to education and practice, and have demonstrated academic promise to be able to perform successfully at the graduate level. Faculty members will evaluate students’ qualifications for a professional education in social work and the appropriateness of the MSW Program for their educational needs and goals.

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

Before you write:

- Reflect on your educational and professional goals.
- Evaluate your expectations regarding the MSW degree program and your professional future.
- Review the NASW Code of Ethics and reflect on the social work values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence.
- Review the Nine Core Competencies described in the CSWE EPAS.

Reviewer's expectations:

**Note: All essays should be written in a professional format.*

- Strong written communication skills (grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction, clarity, and organization).
- Essay Content: Your essay should address the following statements.
 - a. Describe your motivation for social work education and pursuing a social work career.
 - b. Provide evidence of experience and/or interest in working with underserved, vulnerable, and oppressed groups. Discuss how your experience and/or interest with these populations relate to the NASW Code of Ethics and CSWE Accreditation Standards noted above.
 - c. Describe your understanding of social and economic justice and its connection to social work values and ethics.
 - d. Discuss your potential to become a competent social worker.
 - e. Discuss your potential and plan for academic success.
 - f. Describe the resources that you will use to support yourself academically.

5. Letters of Recommendations

Criteria:

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

**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.*

6. Admission Requirements

Regular Admission:

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

- **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.

- **GPA Standards:** All applicants must have at least a 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) on the overall GPA.
- **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.

- **Test Scores:** A student 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 550 on the paper-based test or 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

Note: Official transcripts sent from the undergraduate institution will be required 6 weeks after the first day of classes during the admitted term.