

**MSW APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

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Term

Choose the term based on the program to which you are applying

**Summer** – Indicates application to the Advanced Standing program (applicants must have a BSW)

**Fall or Spring** – Indicates application to the Regular MSW program

Personal Statement Requirements

The personal statement should be a 3-4 page, double-spaced, typewritten document that addresses the following points:

1. Describe how your interest in social work developed, and the philosophy upon which this interest is based. Include the influence of personal, professional and/or volunteer experiences on your interest in a social work career.
2. When you apply to the UConn School of Social Work, you must select your concentration. Discuss the factors influencing the concentration you have selected. How does this relate to your career goals? Complete descriptions of the concentrations can be found at: <https://ssw.uconn.edu/msw/>. Please be certain that your concentration selection is correct since this is how your application will be evaluated.
3. Having read our mission statement below, please describe how your career goals align with our objectives and mission.

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The mission of the University of Connecticut School of Social Work is to provide professional master, doctoral and continuing professional social work education which will promote social and economic justice, and the improvement of human well-being. This mission derives from the University’s commitment to excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, service and outreach, an expanding international role, and commitment to public service. The School is committed to helping students

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become professional social workers by developing professional values and ethics, judgment and skills that equip them for life-long critical analysis of their practice, of social welfare services and of the context of society's social, economic and political structures. The School is also committed to teaching advanced, research-informed practice methods, focusing on strengths of individuals and families, groups, communities, and organizations, and the practice of social policy. Graduates are prepared to lead in contexts that shape practice by valuing human diversity, working for human rights and against oppression and discrimination, preventing and alleviating the effects of violence and poverty, particularly in urban centers, and advocating for improved social policies and services, locally and globally.

4. If you have prepared for, or been employed in another field of work, discuss why you want to change to social work.
5. If you are now employed in a social service agency, describe in detail how a professional social work education would improve your practice.
6. What do you consider to be your personal strengths and limitations in relation to your development as a professional social worker?
7. If you are transferring from another school of social work, discuss your reasons fully.
8. The NASW Code of Ethics (<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>) expresses the value of respect for individuals regardless of age, culture, class, ethnicity, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Discuss how your personal values are or are not compatible with this professional standard. How will you reconcile any conflicts between your personal values and the requirements of the profession?

### Advanced Standing Essay (Summer applicants only)

In addition to the Personal Statement, Advanced Standing Applicants are required to submit an additional essay. The Advanced Standing Essay should be a double-spaced, typewritten document that addresses the following questions based on your concentration. There is no required page limit as long as all questions are thoroughly answered.

#### Individuals, Groups and Families

Please provide a specific example from your practice describing your work with an individual, group or family. Be sure to respond to all the following questions. Please refrain from including actual names and agencies.

- a. Briefly describe the agency.
- b. Briefly describe the practice assignment, including your understanding of your role with the client, group, or family.

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- c. Describe and evaluate the extent to which you and the client, group or family developed a mutual agreement for your work. What could you have done differently?
- d. Present a brief case assessment. Present relevant data and inferences about the client, group, or family and the environment.
- e. Critically evaluate your helping efforts, analyzing strengths and limitations. Be sure to include brief excerpts from a process recording that illustrate your analysis. If you have not written process recordings, please reconstruct the interaction between you and the client, group or family, including some of the dialogue. In retrospect, how might you have intervened differently?
- f. Please comment on any social work values or ethical issues posed by this case.
- g. What did you learn about yourself as a social work practitioner from your BSW program?

### **Community Organizing & Policy Practice**

Please provide a specific example from your practice describing your work with an individual, group or community. Be sure to respond to all the following questions. Please refrain from including actual names and agencies.

- a. Briefly describe the agency/organization/community and its mission.
- b. Briefly describe the practice assignment, including your understanding of your role with the population and issue.
- c. Describe and evaluate the extent to which you developed a mutual agreement (mutually agreed plan for your work). What could you have done differently?
- d. Present a brief assessment. Present relevant data and inferences about the population, the environment and planned intervention.
- e. Critically evaluate your helping efforts, analyzing strengths, challenges and limitations. Be sure to include brief excerpts from a process recording that illustrate your analysis. In retrospect, how might you have intervened differently? Any implications for the community, society and/or policy?
- f. Please comment on any social work values or ethical issues that arose.
- g. What did you learn about yourself as a social work practitioner from your BSW program?

### **Advanced Standing Application Evaluation**

In addition to the Advanced Standing admission qualifications, the Personal Statement and Advanced Standing Essay are important parts of the evaluation of the application. Each concentration has specific criteria that will be evaluated by faculty. Please see below.

- Individuals, Groups and Families
  - Applicants will be evaluated on the basis of their understanding of the social work profession, capacity for self-awareness and self-reflection, and critical thinking. Successful applicants will demonstrate these abilities at the level expected of advanced-year graduate students.
- Community Organizing
  - Applicants will be evaluated on the basis of their understanding of the social work profession and of the macro causes of social and economic injustice and have a commitment to using community organizing and other forms of macro practice to resolve social problems.
- Policy Practice

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- Applicants will be evaluated on the basis of their understanding of the social work profession and their regard for social and economic justice. Statement and essay need to show the capacity for self-awareness and self-reflection about values and ethics to evaluate social conditions and dilemmas. Successful applicants will demonstrate analytical and critical thinking abilities at the level expected of advanced-year graduate students.

### Three Professional Recommendations

The application provides the ability for recommendations to be completed electronically. Applicants must provide the name and contact information for 3 recommenders. The application system will then send an email to each recommender providing instruction and access to a website where they will be able to submit their recommendation electronically. **It is preferred that the recommendation be written on letterhead and uploaded.** Applicants will be able to monitor the status of the online recommendation process.

As an applicant you will have the opportunity to indicate whether you waive your right to inspect the recommendations. **Please note:** if you waive this right, the contents of the recommendation will not be released to you or anyone other than the person reviewing applications.

Recommendations should be from three people who have recent knowledge of your qualifications and be professional or academic in nature. For those with work experience in social services, a recommendation from the most recent employer or supervisor must be provided.

### Advanced Standing Applicants

Of the three required recommendations:

- Two must come from the applicant's BSW program, in any of the following roles: program director, advisor, or classroom instructor who knows the student well.
- One must come from a work setting (i.e. a field instructor or employment/volunteer supervisor). It is helpful if the work setting is social work related.

It is essential that one of the two recommendations from the applicant's BSW program, address the following:

- a. How long they have known the applicant
- b. Describe the applicant's academic ability
- c. Describe the applicant's roles and responsibilities at their field placement/s and describe the field placement setting/s
- d. Evaluate the applicant's performance in their field placement/s
- e. Describe how ready the applicant is prepared to move into 2nd year of an MSW program
- f. Please include your recommendation for admission using one of the following choices in your letter:
  - i. I strongly recommend this advanced standing applicant for admission and feel the applicant has the capability to perform at a superior level.
  - ii. I recommend this advanced standing applicant for admission and feel the applicant's performance should be comparable to that of most graduate students.
  - iii. I do not recommend this applicant for advanced standing admission.