Master of Social Work Program

Application Instructions for Fall 2015

I. Admission

Admission to the Master of Social Work (MSW) program is limited to the Fall semester only. Application materials may be submitted beginning on October 1, 2014.

The Fullerton (2 year) MSW program is administered by the Department of Social Work and all classes are conducted on Fullerton’s main campus on weekdays. The MSW Flex program (3 year) is administered by Department of Social Work in conjunction with University Extended Education (UEE), and all classes are conducted at the Irvine campus in the evening.

Currently, the CSUF MSW program offers students two direct practice concentration options: Child Welfare and Community Mental Health. The Child Welfare concentration focuses on services in the public child welfare system, such as child protective services, foster care, and adoption assistance. The Community Mental Health concentration prepares students to work with various client populations across the mental health care system, with opportunities to specialize in adults, children and families, health, or older adults. In addition to Child Welfare and Community Mental Health, students may now choose the Aging Concentration, which is offered only in the Fullerton MSW Program.

II. Application Procedure

There are TWO separate application processes that must be completed for admission to the MSW program.

1. Application to the University as a Graduate Student

The applicant must apply to the University as a graduate student. This application is available online at CSUMentor. For the two-year program on the Fullerton campus, applicants must select Social Work as their academic objective; for the MSW Flex program at the Irvine campus, applicants must select Social Work-ExEd.
2. Application to the Social Work Department

The second application for admission to the MSW program must be submitted directly through the Department of Social Work. This can be done online at [http://hhd.fullerton.edu/msw/application.htm](http://hhd.fullerton.edu/msw/application.htm). To complete the MSW program application process, applicants will need to submit all information related to previous academic work, including GPA for their last 60 semester or 90 quarter units, TOEFL scores (if applicable), and transcripts from all post-secondary educational institutions. Applicants not graduating from a California State University or University of California institution must complete the Educational Foundation in Liberal Arts/Social Sciences section of the MSW program application. Applicants will also need to provide information concerning past social service related experiences and upload a resume.

Ideally, an applicant’s transcripts will be available in electronic format so they may be uploaded into the online MSW program application. Applicants may begin the online application process, stop and save their work, and return to the application at a later date. Any MSW program application requirements not included by applicants in the online application can be sent directly to the Department of Social Work office (see address below); however, electronic submission of all admission materials is strongly preferred!

III. Criteria for Admission

Admission to the MSW program is highly competitive. The selection process includes an evaluation of each applicant’s demonstrated and potential abilities as a student, practitioner, and leader in the field of social work. Admission decisions are based primarily on an evaluation of an applicant’s previous academic work, experience in social work related fields, letters of recommendation, and a personal statement. The most qualified applicants will be invited for a personal interview prior to a final admission decision. Invitation to a personal interview does not guarantee admission to the MSW program.

Applicants for admission to the MSW program are expected to meet the following criteria:

1. Completion of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution no later than Spring 2015.

2. A minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 for the most recent 60 semester or 90 quarter units completed. Transcripts are required by both the University and the
Department of Social Work. See separate instructions concerning transcript submission on the CSU Mentor site and the MSW program application site.

**GRE: MSW Applicants who have an upper division GPA of less than 3.0 are strongly recommended to take the GRE general test.** It is **optional** for all other MSW applicants.

3. An educational foundation in liberal arts/social sciences. Any graduates of a California State University or University of California automatically meet this requirement. Applicants with baccalaureate degrees from other institutions are required to demonstrate an educational foundation in liberal arts/social sciences.

4. Paid, volunteer, or internship experience relevant to the field of social work or an activity closely related to the social services. This may include direct services, or activities such as teaching, mentoring, tutoring, counseling, program administration, advocacy, social activism, community organizing, research, and program evaluation. Paid employment in public agencies providing formal social services (e.g., case management) is highly valued.

5. Personal and academic qualifications considered essential to the successful practice of social work, such as a genuine concern for the needs of others, emotional maturity, professional demeanor, adaptability, creativity, integrity, sound judgment, interpersonal skills, oral and written communication skills, and the ability to think critically. A commitment to working with disadvantaged, vulnerable, and marginalized populations is also strongly desired.

**IV. Educational Foundation in Liberal Arts/Social Sciences**

Applicants applying for admission to the MSW program must have an educational foundation in liberal arts/social sciences. The purpose of the liberal arts/social sciences perspective is to prepare students for the intellectual and practical challenges they will encounter in a social work education, as well as throughout their social work careers. To help assess your academic preparation in the liberal arts/social sciences, you are required to identify coursework related to a number of educational domains. These domains, broadly defined, are **human diversity, human behavior, human development, communication, social policy, and research methods:**

1. **Human diversity:** Knowledge of diverse social conditions, social problems, and cultures including one’s own cultural and historical heritage – anthropology, sociology, ethnic studies, economics, foreign languages, geography, and history;
2. **Human behavior**: Knowledge of the social and psychological determinants of human behavior – psychology, child development, human development, sociology, criminal justice and human biology;

3. **Human development**: Knowledge of family and group processes and dynamics, and organizational and community functioning – child development, human development, family studies, psychology, sociology, and social work;

4. **Communication**: Ability to communicate knowledge, attitudes, and ways of thinking that are characteristic of a broadly educated person – literature, philosophy, communications, journalism, creative writing, public speaking, debate, and linguistics;

5. **Social policy**: Ability to think critically about social policy and its effect on people, and knowledge of the policy making process – political science, history, economics, public administration, urban studies, public policy, and social work;

6. **Research methods**: Knowledge of research methods and scientific inquiry – research methods, data analysis, program evaluation, logic, and statistics.

**Note**: If you have a baccalaureate degree from a California State University or University of California, you meet the liberal arts/social sciences requirement and do not have to complete the Educational Foundation section.

V. **Transcripts**

Include transcripts of coursework completed at all post-secondary educational institutions. **All applicants must provide transcripts to both the University and the Department of Social Work**. The University graduate student application (CSUMentor) requires official transcripts; the MSW program application accepts copies or unofficial transcripts.

For the MSW program application, applicants are strongly encouraged to upload scanned copies of transcripts directly into the online application. If on-line submission of the transcripts is not possible, applicants may send hard copies to the Department office.

VI. **Social Service Experience**

Applicants are required to list chronologically (starting with the most recent) all social service or related experience since graduating high school. This experience can be paid,
volunteer, or in the context of an internship or field practicum. This may include direct services, or activities such as teaching, mentoring, tutoring, counseling, program administration, advocacy, social activism, community organizing, research, and program evaluation. For each job or volunteer experience, please include your title, the number of months and/or years you held the position, and the number of hours worked each week. A minimum of one year of social service experience is recommended for admission to the MSW program. Applicants are also required to upload a resume that highlights pertinent educational and work/internship/volunteer experiences.

VII. Letters of Recommendation

Three (3) letters of recommendation are required for admission to the MSW program. One letter must be from an academic source (e.g., professor, instructor); one letter must be from a professional source (e.g., supervisor, program or agency director); and the final letter can be from either an academic or professional reference. Personal references will not be considered by the admissions committee. We suggest that you submit evaluations from persons who have been directly responsible for assessing your social work-related work/volunteer/internship experience and academic performance. Enter your recommenders' names and email addresses on the MSW Online Application. Upload instructions will be sent to them by the online system.

If on-line submission of the recommendation letters is not possible, the Recommendation Form is available at http://hhd.fullerton.edu/msw/documents/RecommendationForm2011.pdf Recommendation forms and accompanying letters of recommendation must be submitted to the Department office in sealed and signed envelopes. Letters of recommendation must be received in the office and processed by the admissions staff before the online application can be submitted. Applications will be treated as on time, provided that all letters are received in the Department of Social Work prior to the MSW program application deadline. Do not send letters of recommendation to Graduate Studies; Send all letters of recommendation directly to the Department of Social Work.

VIII. Personal Statement

A personal statement outlining your qualifications for a graduate education in social work is required. The quality of the writing in the personal statement will be evaluated, as will the applicant’s ability to thoroughly address the questions outlined below (max 300 words for each question):
1. Describe how your personal background and life experiences have influenced your decision to pursue a graduate education in social work. Please include any challenges or hardships you may have overcome on your journey.

2. What are your expectations of graduate education at Cal State Fullerton in terms of your own development? Indicate any problems or limitations that should be taken into account in planning your graduate program.

3. Specify your career objectives as a professional social worker as you now conceive them. Indicate the fields of practice in which you are interested.

4. Describe your experiences with diverse populations and groups, and how those experiences have contributed to your interest in social work. Which population (defined by culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, psychological and/or physical functioning) would you like to serve and why?

IX. International Applicants

International applicants must include Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores with their applications. Unofficial transcripts submitted with the MSW program application must be translated copies. In addition, the University will require the following: financial affidavit signed by your financial sponsor, a bank statement from your sponsor’s bank showing funds for at least $25,000, and a copy of your current I-20 or I-94. Please contact International Education & Exchange at iee@fullerton.edu or (657) 278-2787 for complete information regarding admission as an international student.

X. Reapplication

Previous MSW program applicants who were denied admission, were accepted but declined admission, or were admitted but failed to enroll in any courses must follow regular application procedures to reapply for a future academic year. If the previous MSW program application is still on file, the applicant is not required to resubmit copies of transcripts or letters of recommendation, provided no additional academic work has been completed since his or her last application and the letters of recommendation are not more than one year old. All other application materials must be resubmitted. Applicants will be held to the admission criteria in the academic year for which they are reapplying.
XI. Application Dates

The deadline for submitting MSW program online applications is January 30, 2015 at 5:00 pm. Late or incomplete MSW program applications will not be considered. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their online applications as early as possible. The University graduate student application should also be completed by January 30, 2015.

XII. Submission of Application Materials

All application materials not included in the MSW program online application must be received in the Department of Social Work Office by 5:00 pm on January 30, 2015. Send materials to:

Admissions Committee
Department of Social Work
Education Classroom Building #207
California State University, Fullerton
P.O. Box 6868
Fullerton, California 92834-6868

Any questions regarding the MSW program application process can be addressed at the Department of Social Work office (EC 207) or by calling (657) 278-8452.