



Master of Social Work Program

Application Instructions for Fall 2026

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, 2025**.

The full-time (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 through University Extension, and all classes are conducted on Fullerton's main campus in the evening.

Currently, the CSUF MSW program offers students three direct practice area of focus options: **Child Welfare**, **Community Mental Health**, and **Aging**. Child Welfare focuses on services in the public child welfare system, such as child protective services, foster care, and adoption assistance. The Community Mental Health area of focus 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. The Aging focus area prepares students to practice professional social work with aging populations and their families. Currently, Aging is only offered in the full-time program.

II. Application Procedure

There are TWO separate application processes that must be completed for admission to the MSW program. The two applications can be completed in any order.

1. Application to the University as a Graduate Student (Cal State Apply)

The applicant must apply to the University as a graduate student. This application is available online at <http://www.calstate.edu/apply>. For the two-year program on the Fullerton campus, applicants must select **Social Work (Fullerton Graduate)** as their academic objective; for the MSW Flex program, applicants must select **Social Work (Fullerton Extension)**.

After application completion, within 5-7 business days, the applicant will receive, by email, a Campus Wide ID number (CWID) and instructions on how to create a CSUF

email address. Both the CWID and the CSUF email address should be entered into the MSW program application. If you are a current student or alumni of CSUF, the CWID and CSUF email address will be the same. **Please note that there is a \$70 application fee.**

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 <https://hhdapps.fullerton.edu/SOCWApps/Default.aspx>. This link is also available in the 4th quadrant of the Cal State Apply application. 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, English language proficiency scores (if applicable), and transcripts from all post-secondary educational institutions. Applicants not graduating from a California State University or University of California 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.

Unofficial transcripts will need to be **uploaded** into the online MSW program application by the applicant. Transcripts will need to be from all post-secondary institution(s) the applicant has attended. Applicants may begin the online application process, stop and save their work, and return to the application later. **All application materials should be submitted electronically.**

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 2026.

2. A minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 for the most recent 60 semester or 90 quarter units completed. Transcripts must be submitted to both the University and the Department of Social Work separately. See separate instructions concerning transcript submission for Cal State Apply site and MSW program applications.

GRE: *The GRE general test is recommended for those applicants who do not meet the GPA requirement.* It is optional for all other MSW applicants. **Please send in copies of your GRE scores if applicable, as well as uploading them into the MSW Application.**

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. Experience working with and helping the types of populations a social worker would serve. 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**:

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.

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 effects 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.

V. Transcripts

The University graduate student application (Cal State Apply) requires that **official transcripts** be sent to the Admissions Office. Please send official transcripts from your bachelor's institution. Please also be aware that the Admissions Office may require official transcripts from any other school(s) attended. These requests will show on your Student Portal To-Do List, and can come at any point during the admissions process. Electronic submission of transcripts is preferred, where possible. See the Transcripts section of the Admissions Office website for further information: <https://admissions.fullerton.edu/newly-admitted-students/transcripts.html>

If the applicant is a current student or alumni of CSUF, official transcripts are already on file with the university as part of the applicant's records, and do not need to be resubmitted.

For the MSW program application, applicants are required to **upload copies of transcripts** directly into the online application. Scans or PDF copies of both official and

unofficial transcripts are acceptable. Submit transcripts of coursework completed at all post-secondary educational institutions.

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. Experience working with and helping the types of populations a social worker would serve. 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. If you have been out of school for more than five (5) years, the academic letter requirement can be waived in favor of a third professional letter. **Enter your recommenders' names and email addresses on the MSW Online Application. Instructions will be sent to them by the online system.**

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. Responses for each question below should be inserted into the corresponding text box in the application (max 2000 characters 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

Regardless of citizenship, all applicants whose education was not at a majority English-language country, must submit proof of English proficiency before an admissions decision can be made. Test scores should be sent to the university as well as uploaded into the MSW Application. Unofficial transcripts submitted with the MSW program application must be translated copies. In addition, the University will require the following: financial affidavit of support, proof of funding, and a copy of your current passport. An I-20 can only be issued once these forms have been approved. Please consult the International Admissions website for more complete information regarding admission as an international student.

<https://admissions.fullerton.edu/prospective-students/international.html>

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 two years 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 application is by **5:00 pm on Thursday, January 15, 2026**. 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 (Cal

State Apply) also needs to be submitted by **January 15, 2026**.

XII. Submission of Application Materials

All application materials should be uploaded to the MSW program online application, and the completed application submitted by 5:00 pm on January 15, 2026. **The completed application cannot be fully submitted until all application material is uploaded (including letters of recommendation).**

XIII. Next Steps

After the application has been received by the department, the admissions team will review each application. The applicant should check their email account around March for an interview offer by the department. The latest the applicant would hear back for any updates is late May.

Please check your email regularly for communication regarding your application. These messages may be directed to your spam/junk folder, so

Please also check your spam/junk e-mail folder for communication from the department.

Any questions regarding the MSW program application process can be addressed by emailing applymsw@fullerton.edu or by calling 657-278-8452.