

## I. Criteria for Admission, Fall 2007

Admission to the Master's program at The University of Iowa School of Social Work is granted on a selective basis as determined by the merit of the total application. An applicant is expected to meet the following requirements:

### A. Academic Background

1. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, (or an equivalent degree from another country as determined by the Office of Graduate Admissions), with a distribution of courses reflecting a liberal arts perspective, including courses in the humanities, as well as in the social, behavioral, and biological sciences.
2. Competency with word processing and spreadsheet application on personal computers is expected.

### B. Academic Potential

A 3.0 minimum grade point average on a 4.0 scale of undergraduate study (or foreign equivalent as determined by the Office of Admissions) or for 12 semester hours of graduate course work.

### C. Proficiency in English

Applicants from other countries whose first language is not English must have a score of 600 (written) and 250 (computer-based test) on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Automatic waivers of the TOEFL requirement are granted for persons who have completed a bachelor's degree (or higher) at an accredited university in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada (excluding French Quebec), Africa (English speaking), Australia, or New Zealand. For further information <http://www.ets.org/toefl/>.

### D. Appropriateness for Professional Social Work Education

Applicants must provide evidence of a combination of personal qualities and values that are considered essential for the professional practice of social work: good intellectual capacity and analytical skills combined with an ability to work constructively with others, good communication skills, judgment, adaptability, sense of responsibility, resourcefulness, caring and compassionate qualities, and a personal commitment to social justice, empowering individuals, and serving vulnerable and under represented groups. Employment or practice experience in social work related areas is highly valued. These qualities are to be evidenced in the following completed application materials:

- The University's Graduate College Application:  
<https://apply.admissions.uiowa.edu/admissions/login.page>
- Transcripts from all colleges attended
- School of Social Work Application  
[http://www.uiowa.edu/~socialwk/msw\\_program/MSW%20App%20FM%2006.doc](http://www.uiowa.edu/~socialwk/msw_program/MSW%20App%20FM%2006.doc)
- Applicant's Statement of Purpose

- Three references, at least two of the three should be from people who have known you in a professional or academic setting.  
[http://www.uiowa.edu/~socialwk/msw\\_program/MSW%20ref%20fm%2006.doc](http://www.uiowa.edu/~socialwk/msw_program/MSW%20ref%20fm%2006.doc)
- Resume including relevant employment and volunteer experience

Please note: Applicants with a criminal history record may not be eligible for social work licensure. For more information contact the Board of Social Work licensure in the state that you wish to reside and be licensed. (A listing of Boards by state is available online: [http://www.aswb.org/lic\\_req.shtml](http://www.aswb.org/lic_req.shtml) )

E. Transfer into the M.S.W. Program

Applications from students seeking to transfer from another M.S.W. program are processed if the applicant meets the following conditions:

- All admission criteria previously specified.
- Letter(s) of reference from advisor and other faculty from previous school.
- Agree to complete at least 30 semester hours of coursework after admission to the M.S.W. program at Iowa and agree to meet all requirements of the Iowa program.
- Timeline: Transfer requests may be made in any semester, but accepted applicants may only register for required courses when prerequisites have been met. This may mean a delay in matriculation.
- Transfer requests must be first directed to the School's Admission Office so that the School can notify Graduate Admissions that a transfer request is coming and should be reviewed. Graduate College deadlines for application are stated on the Graduate College Application form.

F. Reapplication

Reapplication is required of students who:

- Withdraw from the program.
- Do not enroll in classes for two (2) consecutive semesters.
- Were admitted to the program but did not enroll in classes and did not receive written permission to defer enrollment.
- Submitted completed applications but were denied admission.
- Were dismissed from the program.

G. Deferment

If an applicant cannot enroll for the academic year accepted, a written request for delaying the enrollment date until the next academic year may be made. Granting of the request is at the discretion of the Admissions Director. Generally, such requests are granted only because of extenuating circumstances.

## II. Application Process

Applications will be accepted starting in November for the following academic year. All applications must be completed and received no later than February 1.

- A. 2007-2008 applicants to the Iowa City part- and full-time programs will be reviewed by the admissions panel as soon as the file is complete. Applicants who meet the admission criteria will be notified when that review process is complete or no later than April 15, 2007. The entire pool of applicants to the Des Moines full and part-time programs will be reviewed by the admissions panel in February/March and will be notified of their status no later than April 15, 2007. Applicants to the Ottumwa 4-year modified cohort will be reviewed Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, and notified of their status no later than March 15, 2007.
- B. An application is considered complete when the following items are received:

- Graduate College application and fee:  
<https://apply.admissions.uiowa.edu/admissions/login.page>
  - School of Social Work Application
  - Statement of Purpose and essays
  - Three completed reference forms, including one employment and one academic reference
  - Undergraduate and graduate transcripts
  - Resume
- C. Completed applications will be reviewed with the timelines indicated in II above. At least two members of the Admissions Panel will read each application and make recommendations to the Admissions Coordinator. The Admissions Coordinator will make the final recommendation to the Director of the School and to the Graduate College.
- D. The School is limited in the number of students it can admit. Qualified applicants may be declined for lack of space in a class.
- E. Social Work has a long history of dedication to social change and to the improvement of the well-being of oppressed groups. Oppressed groups include but are not limited to: African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders, Gays, persons with disabilities, Hispanics, Lesbians, Southern Appalachian Anglos, the poor and women. Effort will be made to assure representation in the class of persons from the above groups, and diversity will be sought from among persons of different ages.
- F. Applicants will be notified in writing of the admission decision by April 15 for all programs.

The admission process is not complete until the applicant has:

1. confirmed acceptance of admission and practicum assignments in writing.
  2. read, signed, and returned to the School an agreement to be bound by the following policies:
    - a. Advancement Policy
    - b. Statement on Academic Dishonesty
    - c. Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers
    - d. Practica Structure and Process Policy Statement
- G. Reapplication
1. For students who were never accepted to the program, applications materials are kept on file by the Graduate College for 12 months and the School of Social Work for 36 months. For students who were accepted, enrolled and became inactive, materials are kept for ten years.
  2. Applicants who have not applied within 12 months to the Graduate College, 36 months to the School of Social Work must submit a complete new application.
  3. If an applicant still has a School of Social Work application on file (that is, has reapplied within 36 months), the following additional materials must be submitted for reapplication:
    - a. A statement discussing the applicant's activities since the previous application and describing any changes in the applicant's personal situation which would affect program planning.
    - b. A reference from the applicant's current employer and academic advisor (if formerly a student in the Iowa program).

- c. Transcripts for any graduate study completed since previous application.
  - d. An updated current School of Social Work Application form.
  - e. An interview and additional reference(s) may be required.
4. Readmitted students must meet all requirements of the current M.S.W. program.

Readmission is not complete until the applicant has:

- a. confirmed acceptance of admission and practicum assignments in writing.
- b. read, signed, and returned to the School an agreement to be bound by the following policies:
  - 1) Advancement Policy
  - 2) Statement on Academic Dishonesty
  - 3) Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers
  - 4) Practica Structure and Process Policy Statement

### III. Additional Information about Admission Criteria to Assist with Application

#### A. Academic Background

- 1. Students entering the professional curriculum must be capable of thinking critically about society, about people and their problems, and about expressions of culture such as art, literature, science, history and philosophy. Students must have a liberal arts academic background, including knowledge about social, psychological, and biological determinants of human behavior and of diverse cultures, social conditions, and social problems. This background is usually part of general education requirements in liberal arts programs. The School recommends that one of the science courses should be human biology. The University of Iowa provides course opportunities to students whose pre-professional work may require additional content in a certain area and the admissions panel reserves the right to recommend such course content as a condition of admission.
- 2. Students will be expected to demonstrate proficiency in basic word processing and spreadsheet applications prior to beginning the program.

#### B. Academic Potential

- 1. An undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale is required. The GPA is calculated by the Graduate Admissions office. It may be cumulative, or may be based on 60 or more semester hours from the degree school. All coursework completed at conferring institution must be figured in the undergrad GPA. 12 semester hours or more of letter-graded graduate work will replace the undergraduate GPA. If you need assistance in calculating your admissions GPA, submit transcripts to the Graduate Admissions office and they will assist you.

There was a gradual inflation of grades during the period 1965-1975. To compensate for this, a GPA inflation factor of .05 per year will be added for grades earned 1965-1975; and a GPA inflation factor of .5 will be added to the total GPA if the degree was earned prior to 1965.

- 3. Students with less than 3.0 may be recommended by the School to the Graduate College for admission if other evidence of scholastic ability has been presented. In cases where the GPA is below 3.0, the school must petition the Graduate College Dean for admission, which is granted only if there is sufficient evidence of the student's academic and/or professional achievement indicating his/her potential for success in a graduate program.

C. Proficiency in English

1. Non-native English speaking students who are admitted are required to pass the overall English Proficiency Composition exam administered by the University's Linguistics Department/ESL Program. Failure to pass this exam will result in an automatic transfer to the part-time program. If and when the exam is passed, the student may be reinstated to the full-time program in consultation with the Advisor and Admissions Coordinator.
2. The course structure for international students may be individualized depending on English language proficiency, educational background, and professional experience.

D. Guidelines for Completing the Statement of Purpose, Reference Forms, and Resume

Evidence of a combination of personal qualities and professional experience will be provided through a statement of purpose, references, and a resume. It may be helpful for you to visit the NASW website and review the Code of Ethics: <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

1. The statement of purpose is a significant part of the application materials. Part I and Part II combined should be approximately 1000-1500 words, and should be double spaced and typed. In addition, there are 2 essays, as described in Part III. The statement of purpose should address the following qualities and competencies of the applicant:

**Part I:**

Discuss your motivation for, expectations regarding, and commitment to the program at The University of Iowa. Include particular assets that you would bring to the School and the profession, as well as areas in which you would most like to grow academically and professionally. Discuss any major challenges you have faced or are facing with regard to your choice of the social work profession and your readiness to undertake graduate study. Address how you intend to balance graduate study with other responsibilities you have. Identify your short and long term goals as a professional social worker.

**Part II:**

Provide a description of paid, volunteer, practicum and life experience relevant to social work and how those experiences have influenced your decision to pursue a career in social work at the master's level. Include a description of any experience relative to working with those who are different from you in background or other characteristics and include any experience relative to problems of economically and socially disadvantaged people. Discuss your current career interests and goals.

**Part III:**

Provide a two page essay for each of the following:

- a. Select and describe a real or hypothetical professional situation in which social work values and your personal values are in conflict (identify relevant values). Discuss how you would resolve the conflict and how values will guide your behavior. It is expected that you will consult the NASW Code of Ethics: <http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/default.asp> .
- b. Discuss a social problem about which you are concerned and the course of action you would recommend or have implemented for social change.

The Admissions Committee will review the statement of purpose with the following competencies in mind: communication skills, breadth and depth of experience, orientation to social work practice, social work values

and ethics, ability to analyze and synthesize and emotional capacity and judgment. A demonstration of graduate level writing skills is expected.

2. Reference Forms

- a. Reference forms will be examined for evidence of the same criteria as listed for the statement of purpose previously (section D.1. above). A separate letter of reference may be attached to the completed reference form.
  - b. The applicant is responsible for providing three completed reference forms that show evidence of the applicant's potential for graduate social work education and practice. References from social work practitioners, allied professionals, and educators are preferred.
    - 1) At least one should be an academic reference regarding the applicant's college experience.
    - 2) If ever employed in social work or a related field, at least one of these references should be provided from the applicant's most recent employer.
    - 3) Forms requesting the references are provided in the application packet. The applicant will indicate whether she/he has waived the right to review the recommendation. All recommendations are destroyed once an applicant has matriculated. Applicants not approved for admission have no access to their file.
3. Provide a resume which includes relevant employment and volunteer experience with dates and whether part-time or full-time.

E. School of Social Work Application Form – explanation of each item.

This information is intended to clarify the items to which you must respond on the School of Social Work Application Form:

Item 1. Academic Background

Please report your undergraduate degree, date conferred, major area(s) of study, and grade point average. GPA may be cumulative, or may be based on 60 or more semester hours from the degree school. All coursework completed at conferring institution must be figured in the undergrad GPA. 12 semester hours or more of letter-graded graduate work will replace the undergraduate GPA. Graduate Admissions will make the final determination of the official admissions grade point average after analysis of all transcripts.

Item 2. Related Employment experience

Note your employment experience in Social Work or related field in full-time equivalence.

Item 3: Minimum hours required for the degree

Applicants who have completed a BA in Social Work from a Council on Social Work Education accredited program (accredited July 1, 1974 or later) must complete a minimum of 48 semester hours for the MSW. Students who do not have a CSWE accredited BA in social work or BSW degree must complete a minimum of 60 semester hours of coursework for the MSW program.

Item 4: Choice of Center and Program

Choice of Center

The University of Iowa School of Social Work offers the MSW program in four locations: Iowa City, Des Moines, the Quad Cities and Sioux City. You are completing the application for a one time modified cohort in Ottumwa, beginning 2007.

Students must enroll for courses in the semester in which they are admitted and must thereafter follow the structured sequenced program which has been designed for each center. The sequence of courses at each center requires enrollment during the fall, spring, and summer semesters.

#### Choice of Program

The University of Iowa School of Social Work offers the MSW degree on a full-time and a part-time basis.

- a. The full-time program requires completion of the MSW in five or six semesters.
- b. The three year program requires students register for an average of three courses each semester
- c. The part-time program requires completion of the MSW within 4 calendar years with a minimum registration of 2 courses in each of the fall and spring semesters. It is intended for students for whom full-time study would be a severe hardship due to financial or family reasons. However, courses are not always offered during evening and weekend hours. Please be aware that there are times in the MSW program when students will find outside employment very difficult, if not impossible. These times are when students are fulfilling the requirements for the Foundation Practicum (30 days in the spring semester of the first year) and the Advanced Practicum (100 or 120 days in the fall and spring semester of the second year). Combining 3-4 days/week in practicum with course work obviates the possibility of continuing in full-time employment. Before registering in the MSW program, students should make plans to reduce or eliminate their outside employment while they are in Foundation and Advanced Practicum.
- d. Joint Degree Applications
  - 1) If you intend to pursue a joint degree, please indicate this and the name of the other department or college.
  - 2) Formal joint degree programs are possible with the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and the College of Law. Students must be accepted into each department through its regular admission process. Up to 10 semester hours in each program may be applied to the other.
  - 3) Informal joint degrees are possible as well with other Master's programs in Liberal Arts such as Third World Development Support, and with other colleges, such as the College of Business Administration and the College of Education.

- 4) Joint degree applicants to the School of Social Work will be evaluated on the same basis as full-time applicants and the same admission procedure will apply.
- 5) Joint degree applicants must have an interview with a faculty person or the Admissions Coordinator regarding their program.

Item 5: Concentration

The family-centered practice concentration teaches specific knowledge and skills necessary for advanced social work practice with individuals and families. The integrated practice concentration teaches methods of advanced practice that empower organizational and community change at multiple system levels. Applicants are asked to indicate the concentration they are most likely to pursue, as well as their specialized interest areas. Concentrations are discussed at the Informational Meetings. Complete descriptions are found in the University catalog reprint: <http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/registrar/catalog/CollegeofLiberalArtsandSciences/SocialWork.html>

Item 6: Practicum Location

The applicant's preferences for a practicum location assist the School with planning. Practicum planning occurs in the fall semester for spring semester foundation practicum, in the spring for summer foundation practicum and in February for fall advanced practicum placements. Please see the practicum policy enclosed.

Item 7: Financial Arrangements

The School of Social Work has a limited number of research and teaching assistantships for MSW students. Faculty select applicants based on financial need, previous experience and interests related to the position. After decisions are made, admitted students will be directed to assistantship application materials on our web site. For UI financial aid information including loans and work study: <http://www.uiowa.edu/financial-aid/> or call 319-335-1450, or call the admissions toll-free number 800-553-4692(IOWA), and ask for financial aid.

Item 8: Statement of Purpose

The Statement of Purpose and essays provide the admissions panel evidence of an applicant's communication skills, breadth and depth of experience, orientation to social work practice, social work values and ethics, ability to analyze and synthesize and emotional capacity and judgment. A demonstration of graduate level writing skills is expected.

Item 9: References

References provide the admissions panel with corroboration of the applicant's personal and professional qualities and experience as well as potential as a future professional in the field of social work.

Item 10: Resume

A resume functions as a summary for the admissions panel to view the applicant's educational, volunteer and work history.

Item 11: Graduate College Application

Applicants who wish to be admitted to the School of Social Work at The University of Iowa are required to apply and be admissible to the University of Iowa Graduate College. Complete the application and pay the fee online: <https://apply.admissions.uiowa.edu/admissions/login.page>

## SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICA STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

### I. Structure and Sequence

Practicum at the University of Iowa School of Social Work is composed of two levels of courses.

- A. **Foundation Practica Course.** Students admitted to the M.S.W. program without a Bachelor's Degree with a major in social work from an accredited program are required to take Foundation Practicum: a 30 day placement during the spring semester of the **first year** for full-time students, during the summer semester of the **first year** for 3 year program students, or the spring semester of the **third year** for four year program students. Three (3) semester hours of credit will be earned for successful completion of the Foundation Practicum.
- B. **Advanced Practica Course.** All students admitted to the M.S.W. program are required to take the Advanced Practicum during the fall and spring of the **final year**.
  - 1. All students are required to complete 100 days of Advanced and earn 10 semester hours of credit.
  - 2. The required 100 days of Advanced Practicum will earn 10 semester hours of credit.
- C. **Co-Requisite Courses.** Foundation Seminar for Foundation Practicum and Advanced Seminar I and II for Advanced Practicum.

### II. Placement Assignment Process

Approved placement sites and agencies are within a 50 mile radius of Iowa City/Cedar Rapids, Quad-Cities, Des Moines, Sioux City and Ottumwa. The sites provide learning opportunities for the two concentrations and many fields of practice. Placements outside these practicum centers are permitted only in extraordinary circumstances and are contingent upon the ability of the practicum instructor and student to travel to the School of Social Work center for meetings with Field Coordinators.

- A. **Foundation Practica** are assigned by either the Practicum Director or, in the Quad Cities, Des Moines, Ottumwa, and Sioux City centers, by the Center Practicum Administrator.
- B. **Advanced Practica** are developed during a process that starts in the first year. **Failure to obtain a practicum after five interviews will result in reconsideration of the student's suitability for advancement in the MSW program.**

### III. Employment While a MSW Student

The School of Social Work is committed to part-time graduate social work education. The School endeavors to educate as broad a cross section of students as possible, including non-traditional students who are older, who must work to support families, and who therefore find it difficult to be full-time students.

There are times in the MSW program, however, when part-time students will likely find concurrent full-time employment very difficult, if not impossible. These times are when students are fulfilling the requirements for the Foundation Practicum (30 days in the spring semester of the second year) and the Advanced Practicum (100 days in the fall and spring semesters of the final year). Combining 3-4 days/week in practicum with course work obviates the possibility of continuing in full-time employment.

**Before registering in the MSW program, part-time students must make plans to reduce or eliminate their outside employment while they are in Foundation and Advanced Practicum.**

Practica are designed to extend and integrate learning achieved in class with practice in the field. The student has an opportunity to employ social work interventions and ethical decision making processes with different client populations at multiple levels. A particular focus is the application of research to social work theory and practice, including the evaluation of interventions and outcomes. Because of the importance of practica to the overall preparation of students for the profession, as dictated by the Council on Social Work Education Accreditation Standards, work experience prior to admission into the M.S.W. program cannot meet the practica requirements.

11/06