



2020-2021 MSW Application Requirements

Congratulations on taking the next step in starting or advancing your social work career – applying to the MSW program in the Grace Abbott School of Social Work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO).

We take a number of different factors into consideration during the admissions process, including your academic background, work experience, writing and critical thinking skills, and your understanding of and commitment to social work values and ethics. Your application will require transcripts from all post-secondary educational institutions you have attending, three professional references, an updated resume, and a personal statement. Applicants to our advanced standing program (those who have a BSW or BSSW degree) will also submit a social issue essay.

All of these materials are collected by the Office of Graduate Studies at UNO. You can go to <https://www.unomaha.edu/admissions/apply/index.php> to start the application process and upload your materials. The Office of Graduate Studies (gradschool@unomaha.edu) can answer your questions about the online application and uploading your materials.

Once all of your materials have been submitted, including your transcripts and three professional references, your application will be forwarded to the Admissions Committee at the Grace Abbott School of Social Work. The Admissions Committee will review, score, and make an admissions recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Liam Heerten-Rodriguez (lheerten2@unomaha.edu) is the Admissions Chair and can answer your questions regarding the admissions requirements and the review of your materials.

January 15 is the MSW application deadline. Remember that your materials will not be forwarded to the Admissions Committee until they are complete, including transcripts and references. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. It is your responsibility to ensure that your application is complete by the January 15 deadline.

Below you will find additional information on the requirements for your personal statement, resume, references, and the social issue essay (for advanced standing applicants only). The online application will also have supplemental questions for applicants who had an undergraduate cumulative GPA below a 3.0, have ever been charged with a misdemeanor or felony, or are reapplying to the Grace Abbott School of Social Work. None of these circumstances disqualify an applicant from admission, they simply require additional information.

Personal Statement

The personal statement is an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of and fit for the social work profession, as well as your aptitude for graduate-level social work education. The Admissions Committee pays close attention to both content and writing skills. In your personal statement, please address each of the items listed below. Your personal statement should be no more than five (5) pages, double-spaced, in a 12-point font. Your response to each of the items should be roughly the same length. If your personal statement does not clearly and directly address each of the items or does not follow the instructions, it may not be considered.

- Why have you chosen social work? Your response should demonstrate a basic understanding of the social work profession, including what distinguishes it from other helping professions.
- Social work is a values-based profession dedicated to mitigating inequality and enhancing human wellbeing, especially for vulnerable, marginalized, and oppressed populations. From the core values and ethical principles identified in the [NASW Code of Ethics](#), identify and discuss one that resonates with you and one that may challenge you.
- Social workers are self-reflective, strengths-based, and growth-oriented. Identify a strength that you possess and an area for growth. Discuss how you became aware of these, how they show up in your current professional practice, and how they may influence your future professional practice.
- The social work profession is rooted in social justice. Social workers adopt a stance of cultural humility and strive towards cultural awareness. Discuss a time when you realized that one of your personal or cultural identities influenced your reaction to a social situation. Reflecting on that experience, how might it influence your future social work practice?

If you have a compelling autobiographical story relevant to your application, but that falls outside of the items addressed within the personal statement, you may attach a letter to the Admissions Committee. Your letter will be considered, but will not be scored.

Resume

Applicants are highly encouraged to have professional experience in the human service field. Please submit a professional resume that identifies:

- Educational experiences since high school
- Honors or distinctions received
- Field placements, internships or practicums
- Professional experiences, especially in human services
 - o List start and end dates with month and year
 - o Identify whether the position is part or full-time
 - o Identify whether the position is paid or volunteer

References

Three references are required. These references should be from professional and academic sources who are directly familiar with your skills and experience. At least one reference should be from an immediate professional supervisor. If you have graduated from an academic program within the past three years, at least one reference should be from a faculty member who can speak directly to your academic preparation for graduate social work education. References from family members, family friends, personal friends, personal therapists, or other non-professional/academic sources will not be scored.

Advance Standing Applicants Only

Applicants qualified for admission at the advanced standing level (applicants who have a BSW or BSSW degree from a CSWE accredited program) should submit a researched, APA-style, original essay addressing a social issue relevant to social work practice. Your social issue essay should be no more than five (5) pages of content, double-spaced, in a 12-point font, with a reference page. Your essay should address each of the following components:

- Identify a contemporary social problem and its relevance to social work practice
- Discuss the origins and causes of the social problem
- Discuss potential solutions to the social problem
- Evaluate potential solutions to the social problems in the context of the core values and ethical principles of social work

Misdemeanor/Felony Charges

If you have ever been charged with a misdemeanor or felony, please list the charges, the year you were charged, and the outcome of the charges. What would you like the Admissions Committee to know about these experiences and the implications for your future social work practice?

(Misdemeanor or felony charges do not automatically disqualify an applicant from admission, but may affect practicum placement and future licensing. Accurate information will help us advise you.)

GPA

If your cumulative undergraduate GPA was below a 3.0, what would you like the Admissions Committee to know about your academic experiences and aptitude for graduate-level social work education?

Reapplication

If you have previously applied for admission to the MSW program at the Grace Abbott School of Social Work, please list the year and the outcome. What would you like the Admissions Committee to know about your experiences since your original application?