Social Work CAS Instructions

The Western Michigan University School of Social Work is participating in the Social Work Centralized Application Service (SocialWorkCAS). Applicants applying to our master’s-level programs will apply online using the SocialWorkCAS application beginning on October 1, 2018. The application can be found at socialworkcas.liaisoncas.org. The CAS application fee is $75. For financial assistance, visit the SocialWorkCAS Fee Waiver Program page.

The Central Application System includes a general application that can be used to apply to all participating schools of social work. This application includes four quadrants: Personal Information, Academic History, Supporting Information, and Program Materials. The first three quadrants make up the centralized application, and the fourth quadrant of “Program Materials” is unique to each university. The following are the questions included in WMU’s “Program Materials.”

Program Interest

Please indicate your preference for location and program schedule. While admissions requirements are the same for all programs and all campuses, students will be accepted into the program and location that they indicate on their application and will be expected to complete their program at that site. Requests for location or program transfers will be considered only if space becomes available in that cohort, and cannot be guaranteed. Each program schedule has a separate application. If you wish to be considered for two programs, please only submit your application for your first choice; the admissions committee will offer you alternate admissions if they feel a different program would be a better fit.

* Which campus do you want to attend?

- ☐ Kalamazoo (Full-time Advanced Standing, 9-15 credits/semester for one year; Full-time 60 credit hours, 9-15 credits/semester for two years; Extended Study, 6 credits/semester for three years) Extended Study, 6 credits/semester for three years)
- ☐ Grand Rapids (Part-time Advanced Standing, 6 credits/semester for two years; Extended Study, 6 credits/semester for three years)
- ☐ Southwest Campus in Benton Harbor (60 credit hour MSW, Extended Study, 6 credits/semester for three years)

* Which concentration do you intend to pursue?

- ☐ Policy, Planning and Administration
- ☐ Clinical/Interpersonal Practice

Which specialization, if any, do you intend to pursue? Please note that specializations are not required and may extend the time it takes to complete your degree.
Essay Questions

We recommend that you prepare answers to these essay questions in advance, and copy and paste your responses into the online application. Typically, each of the six questions have responses about a page long, for a total of approx. six pages. Each answer will be evaluated on content and writing skills.

a. Problems and concerns relative to social work

1. Describe your understanding of the social work profession and the problems social workers address by using one example to discuss a particular social problem and how a social worker could intervene.

a. Understanding of diversity

2. Describe your personal philosophy and understanding of working with people different from yourself (e.g., race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, mental abilities, and physical abilities).

3. Using one example, discuss a personal experience with someone who is different from you. Briefly describe your understanding of issues that may affect this individual.

Please note that due to an error in our webpage, this question appears twice on the application. You only need to answer the first time.

a. Personal background factors and experience

4. Describe your personal background and experiences such as culture, family, and community, which have influenced your professional choices as well as recent or past personal experiences that relate to your interest in social work.

a. Personal values

A key ethical principle in the NASW Code of Ethics (1999) states the following:

“Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society.
They seek to resolve conflicts between clients’ interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession” (p.5).

5. Briefly discuss how your personal values and beliefs coincide or conflict with this ethical principle.

6. How will you resolve any conflicts between your personal values and the requirements of the profession?
   a. Personal attributes

7. Provide a statement about your personal qualities and aptitudes which you consider as most pertinent to graduate studies and/or social work practice.

8. What limitations do you recognize that you need to work on in order to be successful in graduate studies and in the professional practice of social work? How do you plan to address these limitations?
   a. Academic preparation

9. Describe previous knowledge and skills that you gained in your undergraduate and/or graduate studies and how these will assist you in your graduate social work education.

10. Describe to what extent you believe your final undergraduate grade point average accurately reflects your ability to obtain an MSW degree at Western Michigan University.

History of Criminal Conviction

The school of Social Work requires all applicants to report any/all criminal history on the application to the MSW program. Criminal history is defined as a history of substantiated charges of abuse and/or neglect of a child or adult, civil adjudication, and/or criminal conviction(s). The School of Social Work reserves the right to deny any applicant whose civil adjudication and/or criminal conviction is of a nature that is contrary to the NASW code of ethics. In some circumstances, the SSW may request additional information from a higher level background check before an admission decision is reached. Final acceptance is depending upon the applicant signing a waiver, holding the school and university harmless for possible problems associated with obtaining an internship placement, licensing, and/or employment. The student is responsible for paying any fee required for the criminal background check(s).

* Have you even been convicted of a criminal offense?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

If yes, what was the conviction?

Please provide a statement of rehabilitation concerning your criminal offense.
Applicants should understand that felony convictions and/or misdemeanors will likely limit opportunities for field education, professional licensing and future employment. I certify that I have read and understood this statement.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Additional

WMU recognizes that not all students identify with the categories “Male” or “Female” listed in the CAS general application. For this reason, if you would like, you have the option of sharing your current gender identity and preferred pronouns. This is not a required question.

What is your current gender identity?