

MSSW Professional Statement

Summer & Fall 2018

As part of your application to the MSSW program you are required to submit a professional statement that addresses each key area described below. The Admission Committee considers your professional statement to be an essential part of your application. Your content, critical thinking, and writing style will provide important information about your understanding of the goals and values of the social work profession and your ability to successfully engage in graduate level education.

Please note that your statement is considered a writing sample and is reviewed for content and writing quality. Your statement must be 4-5 typed, double spaced pages. Please use headings for each key area (1-5) that is to be addressed.

1. *Motivation for social service and/or social justice, social work education, and a career in the profession*

The Preamble of the NASW Code of Ethics states, “the primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession’s focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.” Explain 1) why you want to pursue professional social work education, 2) how you will use your social work education to enhance the well-being of those who are vulnerable, oppressed and living in poverty and 3) your reasons for applying to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville MSSW program.

2. *Capacities for professional social work education*

Comment on the nature and circumstance of any strengths and/or problems, including emotional or social, that might enhance or limit your study.

3. *Field practice*

The [field practicum](#) is an integral component of social work education, requiring a substantial time commitment. As a social work student, you will be expected to plan your schedule in order to meet all of your degree requirements, including field. Students in the full time or extended study program will complete a minimum of 1024 clock hours in placement, as well as a required seminar. Advanced standing students will complete a minimum of 672 clock hours in placement. Field placements that include evening and weekend hours are very limited and availability is not guaranteed; therefore, students should plan to be in field practice during weekday, business hours. Students will be in field practice 2 days per week for their foundation practicum and 2-3 days per week

(depending on program of study) for their concentration practicum. How do you plan to manage the rigorous demands of coursework and field practice during graduate study?

4. National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics

The [NASW Code of Ethics](#), which defines clients as individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, includes the following statement: *“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”*. Discuss how your personal values and beliefs are or are not compatible with this professional standard. How will you reconcile any conflicts between your personal values and the requirement of the profession?

5. Social concern

Concisely describe what you consider to be a major social problem. Address the following areas in your essay:

- a. Key societal and other factors that contribute to the problem.
- b. Plausible strategies to solve the problem, including leadership roles that you might use.
- c. Challenges, including ethical dilemmas, which might arise in seeking to solve the problem.
- d. If relevant, personal experiences that have contributed to your interest in this social problem.

Transfer Applicants (applicants seeking to transfer from another CSWE accredited MSW or MSSW program)

Please also include a statement describing why you are requesting to transfer to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville MSSW program.

Your professional statement must be uploaded with your online Graduate Admissions application. http://www.csw.utk.edu/mssw/mssw_apply_now.htm

Questions? Please contact the Office of MSSW Admissions at mssw@utk.edu

The College of Social Work and the University of Tennessee welcome and honor all people. In accordance with the U.S. National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the U.S. Council on Social Work Education (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement), “the dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including” age, class, color, culture, mental or physical disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, immigration status, marital status, national origin, political ideology, race, regionality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. The College values intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, and academic freedom and integrity. “A person’s diverse life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim” (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement). The College of Social Work promotes social justice and social change, and strives to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice.

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