



**Program: Master of Social Work**

**Document:** Document Upload Instructions and Additional Applicant Guidance [v1.1]

## How to Compose and Format Your Application Documents and Additional Applicant Guidance

During the application process, you will be asked to submit a personal statement and Work Experience Summary (resume). To help you prepare these documents, please use the following instructions. Additional guidance regarding the MSW Ethics & Program Participation Agreement, guidelines for applicants about recommendations, and **additional requirements** for applicants **who previously attended another graduate social work school/program** are also included in this document.

### 1. Instructions for Uploading Your Personal Statement:

**Personal Statement Content:** Each applicant is required to complete a personal statement which will be used for the purpose of evaluating your application to the MSW program. This statement is an opportunity for you to describe your interest in social work and to demonstrate how your academic, personal, and professional experiences have contributed to your choice to enter an MSW program. Please answer ALL six of the following questions:

1. What brings you to the field of social work?
2. What barriers or challenges do you anticipate in working with diverse populations?
3. What do you envision a social worker's role in addressing a social justice-related problem that concerns you?
4. What professional and/or personal experiences have you had in dealing with:
  - a. forms of oppression (such as ageism, homophobia, racism, sexism)?
  - b. your own biases?
  - c. your own privilege(s)?
5. What interests you about the CSUN MSW social work program's urban community focus?
6. Given your education and life experiences, what is it that you hope to unlearn in this program.

**NOTE:** Please include any additional information you would like to bring to the attention of the MSW Admissions Committee.

*\*\*\*Please note that you are encouraged to write on topics that matter to you, and while this can elicit writing and reflection that may be deeply personal, please be aware that if you disclose a situation involving any sexual misconduct, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and/or stalking while you were a CSUN student, university policy (based on state and federal law) requires that the admissions officer inform the Campus Title IX Coordinator to ensure you are advised of your rights and options. The admissions officer is obligated to provide the Title IX Coordinator with information regarding details of incident, including individuals involved, so that you can be aware of resources and options that are available to you. Please know that you can contact the Campus Care Advocate at (818) 677-7492 who is a confidential resource or the Title IX Coordinator directly at (818) 677-2077 for assistance and options for moving forward.*

**Personal Statement Formatting:** Please use the following guidelines to properly format your Statement of Purpose:

Your personal statement must be five to seven pages, typed and use a question and answer format (type the full text of the question followed by your corresponding answer).

- Five to seven pages, typed and using a question and answer format (i.e., type the full text of the question followed by your corresponding answer)
- Double-spaced, 12-point type, Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins
- Include your full name and the page number at the top of each page (e.g. Matty Matador 1).
- PDF or Word file formats only

## **2. Instructions for Uploading Your Work Experience Summary (Resume):**

**Resume Content:** Each applicant is required to submit a professional resume which includes all educational, professional, and volunteer experience. **For each volunteer and/or paid experience, include dates (MM/YY-MM/YY), hours per week worked at each position, and the total number of hours worked for each position.** For your current employment, total the number of hours as of the end of the week prior to submitting your application. The resume is an opportunity for an applicant to showcase their paid and/or volunteer experience with an emphasis on any work that has been done in the field of social work. While experience in the field of Social Work is not required to gain admission to the MSW program, it is helpful.

**The resume should include the following:**

- **Current Work Experience** - Please describe your current or most recent paid employment. Include the following details: company name and location, job title, dates of employment, your tasks and responsibilities, and the number of hours you worked each week. This can include work experience that is not explicitly social work related.
- **Professional Social Work Experience** – Please describe any paid work you have done. Please highlight any social work experience. Include the following details: company name and location, job title, dates of employment, your tasks and responsibilities, and the number of hours you worked each week.
- **Volunteer Social Work Experience** – Please describe any volunteer work you have done in the field of social work or in the helping professions. Include the following details: company name and location, job title, dates of employment, your tasks and responsibilities, and the number of hours you worked each week.
- **Leadership and/or Advocacy Experience** – Please indicate any leadership and/or advocacy experience you have gained. Include the following details: organization/community/agency name and location, length of time and the number of hours you contributed to the activity, your personal tasks and responsibilities, and the overall activity description.
- **Miscellaneous** – Please indicate any professional organizations of which you are a member and/or information on any honors or recognitions (professional or academic) you have received.



**Required Resume Formatting:** Please use the following guidelines to properly format your resume:

- No longer than two pages with 1-inch margins and 12pt or larger font
- File naming convention: last name\_first name\_resume (ex. Smith\_John\_Resume).
- PDF or Word file formats only.

**Sample Excerpt:**

*Intern*, CSUN Pride Center  
Northridge, California

September 2015 to May 2016  
20 hours/week, Total = 640 hours

- Provided mentorship to undergraduate staff one-on-one
- Co-facilitated Tuesday Talks student discussion group with one other staff member
- Collected and inputted data for version two of the Campus Pride Index

### **3. MSW Applicant Agreement**

All applicants to the CSUN MSW Program are required to thoroughly read and confirm their understanding of the responsibilities outlined in the MSW Ethics & Program Participation Agreement, before commencing their application. The link to the current Agreement is linked under STEP 1 on the Application Instructions webpage and here: [https://tsengcollege.csun.edu/sites/default/files/programs/MSW\\_Agreement.pdf](https://tsengcollege.csun.edu/sites/default/files/programs/MSW_Agreement.pdf) A question in the online application will ask you to acknowledge your understanding of the MSW Ethics & Program Participation Agreement.

### **4. Recommendation Instructions for All Applicants**

Applicants are required to have recommendation letters submitted to the department by three (3) references. The recommendation letters should be from individuals who are able to comment on your qualifications for graduate study. Optimally, two recommendation letters should be obtained from individuals who can speak to your academic qualifications (e.g. professors or academic advisors) and one can come from an individual who can speak to your professional skills (e.g. a current or former employer or supervisor of a paid or volunteer position). Applicants who have been out of school for more than five years may submit three recommendations from professional references. **Please note that personal recommendations from friends or family are not acceptable.**

Recommendations requests are only sent once your online application is submitted to the email addresses you provide, so please give your references ample time to complete their recommendation.

### **5. Additional Requirements for Applicants Who Attended Another Graduate Social Work Program**

Applicants who have attended another graduate social work school/program must be prepared to supply a letter of good standing from the director of the social work school/program and a recent field placement evaluation, upon request from CSUN staff at any point during the application process.

**What If I Have Content Questions or Technical Issues?**

For help with content: Please contact The Tseng College Office of Graduate and Professional Education (GPE) at (866) 873-6439 / [programs@csun.edu](mailto:programs@csun.edu) (Mon-Fri, 8AM-5PM).

If you need technical assistance, please review our "[Helpful Tips](#)" page if you encounter any problems while completing the online application. If you are still having problems, you may email [collexl@csun.edu](mailto:collexl@csun.edu) and a staff member will assist you (Mon-Fri, 8AM-5PM).