

MSW Admissions Essay Questions

Your personal statement will address how your experiences, strengths, and distinguishable qualities will make a positive contribution to the Master of Social Work program and the field of social work.

Your statement should reflect your best professional writing. You need to answer all prompts below in no more than seven (7) double-spaced pages with 1-inch margins on all sides. You must begin each section of your statement with the required heading. Your statement will assist the Admissions Committee in evaluating your capacity and readiness for graduate social work education. In essence, this is an opportunity for the Admissions Committee to get to know more about you and your previous experience, and why you want to pursue an MSW.

Your statement must include headings and follow the format outlined below:

Heading for section 1: Pursuing an MSW

What has led you to seek a graduate degree in social work? Why do you want to be a social worker? What specifically led you to apply to a social work program rather than programs for other helping professionals such as psychology, counseling, or healthcare? Do you have specific career goals within social work? (1-2 pages).

For Advanced Standing students: How has your BSW education prepared you for graduate work and influenced your decision to pursue your graduate degree?

Heading for section 2: Case Review

Read the following case study. Write a short statement (1-2 pages) using the questions that are provided as a guide.

You are a social worker in a community health clinic, and you will be seeing a new client today, named River who is 52 years old and lives with their long-time partner. The clinic where you work serves people who are uninsured and come from low socioeconomic backgrounds. It is a common part of your job to give out bus passes, referrals to the food bank, and help your client navigate the application process for various needs-based programs, such as food stamps. River has set up this appointment to address some of these

tasks, but also the doctor at the clinic felt they would benefit from counseling as they have been experiencing some depressive symptoms. As you begin the meeting with River, they note to you that the intake forms that they completed prior to your visit only included binary gender options (i.e., female/male), and River identifies as genderqueer. They found the intake form troubling and non-inclusive, especially for a clinic that seeks to serve a wide range of underserved populations.

- Discuss professional values and ethical principles outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics that apply to this case. How might you address River's concern professionally during the session? After the session? What specific guidance from the Code of Ethics informed your response?
- What issues are raised for you as you consider this case? How will you approach those issues as a professional social worker?

Heading for section 3: Social Issues & Navigating Different Beliefs

- Take a position on a social issue of your choice (e.g., "The death penalty prevents violent crime"). Prepare 1-2 pages of argument, including facts/research in support of that position. (*You will be assessed on the quality of your argument, not on the position you have chosen to take on the social issue*)
- Imagine you are leading a group with another clinician from your agency. After the group ends, while clients are still in the room, the other clinician expresses an opinion about a social issue and denigrates people who hold the opposite opinion. In a brief statement (1-2 pages), explain what you would say or do. What are important principles and practices to utilize when discussing different personal and/or professional beliefs?