

# MSW

## Application

### Requirements & Details

General Requirements .....	2
Additional Requirements by Program .....	5
Admissions Essays.....	4
International Applicants.....	6
Statistics Requirement.....	10

## General Application Requirements

All applicants to the Master of Science in Social Work program are required to submit the following:

### Online Application Form

#### \$75 Application Fee

The \$75 application fee is required upon submission of your application. Application fee waivers are granted to Veterans of the U.S. armed forces, and alumni of AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Teach for America, McNair Scholars, Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), and those experiencing financial hardship. To request an application fee waiver, create your online application profile and then send an email the Office of Admissions at [cssw-admit@columbia.edu](mailto:cssw-admit@columbia.edu) and include your application reference number. Please do not submit an application fee if you fall into one of these categories; all submitted fees are non-refundable.

#### Resume

Please submit a detailed current resume that lists paid work and volunteer experience separately, in chronological order. Your resume should indicate whether the experience was full-time or part-time, by whom you were supervised, and the nature of the client population served, if applicable. Part-time experience should also indicate the weekly hours worked. Be sure to use month/year to indicate the beginning and end dates for all activities on your resume. Your resume may be longer than one page but should not exceed three pages.

Your resume should include:

- complete professional, academic, and volunteer history
- direct research experience, if applicable
- descriptions of any community and leadership activities
- any awards, distinctions, honors or other recognitions received
- other relevant life experiences
- all languages read/spoken in addition to English

#### Essays

The admissions essays consist of three questions which can be answered separately or combined into a single essay. The essays give you an opportunity to tell us more about yourself, your professional interest and experiences that have influenced you to pursue an MSW degree. Please see the Admissions Essays section of this document for additional details.

### **Letters of Reference (3 are required)**

Letters of reference should come from professors, your most recent employer or volunteer supervisor, or those who know you in a professional context. Letters of recommendation may be submitted digitally via the application system. If your referee is unable to submit the letter of reference using the application system, please ask them to contact us directly at [cssw-admit@columbia.edu](mailto:cssw-admit@columbia.edu). **No personal references will be accepted, nor references from professionals with whom you have had a client or patient relationship.**

Please keep in mind that our online application system will accommodate only three letters of reference. CSSW adheres to the provisions of the Educational Privacy Act of 1974 in respect to references.

### **Transcript(s) for Application Review**

Transcripts from **all** post-secondary institutions attended where you completed 12 or more credits are required for admission. To expedite the review of your application you are encouraged to upload a digital copy of your transcripts before submitting your application. This will allow for an expedited review of your application. If you are currently enrolled at your undergraduate or graduate institution at the time of applying to CSSW, please submit a current transcript indicating all courses taken and those in progress.

If you are unable to upload your transcript(s) within the online application system, you may submit them by regular mail. Do not mail in a paper version of your transcript if a digital version has already been uploaded to the online application unless you are requested to do so by CSSW.

Upload Guidelines: The best way to upload a transcript is by requesting a digital copy of your transcript (where available) and uploading the file to your online application. If your institution does not issue digital transcripts, you should request a paper copy of your transcript and have it scanned, so it can be uploaded as a digital file. Scanned transcripts should clearly display the institution's name and other identifying marks seen on the original paper copy. Digitally submitted transcripts should include the transcript legend, which may be on the back page of the transcript. Any transcript uploaded to your application by you (the student) is considered unofficial. Unofficial transcripts are acceptable documents for admissions review purposes.

A screenshot of your coursework and grades on your institution's website will not be accepted. If you are unable to upload a legible document, you will need to have an official paper transcript mailed to CSSW. If you have any questions about uploading your transcript(s), or what type of transcript(s) will be accepted, please contact the admissions office at [cssw-admit@columbia.edu](mailto:cssw-admit@columbia.edu) or (212) 851- 2400.

## Transcript(s) Post-Admission

All applicants who receive an offer of admission are **required to provide an official copy of their final transcript(s)** prior to enrollment. A transcript is considered final if it includes the final grades for all of your coursework *and* confirms that your degree has been awarded. Transcripts will only be considered official if they have been sent directly to CSSW from your previous institution. Final official transcripts are required from all previously attended institutions where you have earned 12 or more academic credits.

Columbia School of Social Work reserves the right to rescind any offer of admission if discrepancies between unofficial and official transcript(s) are found.

Official transcripts submitted in paper form should be mailed to: Columbia School of Social Work Office of Admissions, 1255 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10027. Official transcripts can also be transmitted digitally to [cssw-admit@columbia.edu](mailto:cssw-admit@columbia.edu). Digitally transmitted transcripts must come from the sending institution or the third party your institution has contracted to send transcripts.

## Admissions Essays

Applicants are required to provide a response to three essay questions, which may change from year to year. The questions can be responded to separately, or combined into a single essay. If you choose the latter, please submit your essay within the upload option for Question 1. Admissions essay questions will be available in August for admission to the following spring and fall terms. Please create an account on our online application to view the current essay questions.

In general, you should use the essays as an opportunity to share your narrative and explain why you have chosen to study in the field of Social Work at Columbia University. You should include your professional goals, the role you intend to fulfill, your commitment to social justice, and what community or population you hope to work with in your career.

## Additional Requirements by Program

Applicants to the Advanced Standing, Reduced Residency, Professional Option, and Transfer programs must submit all the required materials mentioned on page 2 and 3, and will have the following additional requirements:

### ADVANCED STANDING PROGRAM

- 1. Specific Admission Essays:** Applicants should follow the Advanced Standing Program instructions in the Admission Essays section, answering essay questions 1, 2, and 3B.
- 2. Field Work Evaluation Form:** Applicants must have an Undergraduate Field Evaluation Form completed by a field instructor or appropriate person at your BSW program. The form can be found in the references section of the application. The form can be submitted by mail or as an email attachment to [cssw-admit@columbia.edu](mailto:cssw-admit@columbia.edu)
- 3. List of BSW Courses:** A list of all of your BSW program courses with course descriptions must be submitted for review. Please list the courses by term taken and include course names and numbers. The course descriptions can be taken directly from your school's course catalog or website.

Applicants in the process of completing their BSW program should include a list of classes you will be taking in your final semester(s). Course descriptions should be uploaded in the “Admissions Essays” section of the application. The list may also be sent by email.

### REDUCED RESIDENCY PROGRAM

- 1. Specific Admission Essays:** Applicants should follow the Reduced Residency Program instructions in the Admission Essays section, answering questions 1, 2, and 3C.
- 2. Supervisor Recommendation:** One of the three required letters of recommendation must come from your current supervisor.

### TRANSFER STUDENTS

- 1. Specific Admission Essays:** Applicants should follow the Transfer Student instructions in the Admissions Essays section, answering questions 1, 2, and 3B.
- 2. Academic Reference:** A minimum of one of the three required letters of recommendation must be an academic reference from your current/former MSW program.
- 3. Field Work Evaluation Form:** Transfer student applicants must have a Graduate Field Evaluation Form completed by a field instructor or appropriate person at your current/former MSW program. The form is located in the Reference section of the application. The form may be submitted by mail or as an email attachment to [cssw-admit@columbia.edu](mailto:cssw-admit@columbia.edu)

## **TRANSFER STUDENTS (continued)**

**4. List of MSW Courses:** A list of all of your MSW program courses with descriptions must be submitted for review. Please list by term taken and include course names and numbers. The course descriptions can be taken directly from your school's course catalog or website. Applicants in the process of completing their MSW courses should include a list of classes you will be taking in your final semester(s). Course descriptions should be uploaded in the Admissions Essay section of the application. The list can also be sent by email or regular mail to the Office of Admissions.

Note: Transfer students are admitted for a maximum of one year of full-time study at CSSW.

## **NON-DEGREE APPLICANTS**

Non-Degree applicants only need to submit their transcript(s) and a \$95 application fee. This option is based on space availability in courses.

## **International Applicants**

### **English-Language Proficiency**

Applicants who are not U.S. Citizens or Permanent Residents and who are citizens of non-English speaking countries must have a working knowledge of English. To meet this requirement, applicants must achieve the following minimum score on the TOEFL or IELTS exam:

IELTS Minimum Score = 7.0 overall

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)

Internet-based Test (iBT): Minimum Score 98

Computer-based Test (CBT): Minimum Score 233

Paper-based Test (PBT): Minimum Score 577

Applicants are not automatically exempt from taking the TOEFL if they have received a degree in the U.S. or from an institution whose official language is English. Please contact the Office of Admissions for more information.

### **Transcripts**

Applicants who attended institutions outside the U.S. must provide official records of study with your application. These should be issued from or certified by the institution and include all course titles, grades received, degree title and degree award date. Documents not in English must be accompanied by a certified translation.

### **Interview**

An online interview is required for applicants who are not U.S. Citizens or Permanent Residents and who are citizens of non-English speaking countries. The admissions office will contact applicants to set

up interviews following receipt of the online application.

## **Essential Abilities and Attributes for Admission and Continuance**

In general, successful applicants will demonstrate the “Essential Abilities and Attributes for Admission and Continuance in the School of Social Work” outlined below.

The following standards, distinguished from academic standards, describe the physical, cognitive, emotional, and character requirements to provide reasonable assurance that students can complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of social work education and practice.

Acquisition of competence as a social worker is a lengthy and complex process that will be undermined by significant limitations of the student’s ability to participate in the full spectrum of the experiences and the requirements of the curriculum.

Students in the Columbia School of Social Work are expected to possess the following abilities and attributes at a level appropriate to their year in the program. They are expected to meet these standards in the classroom, in their practice, and elsewhere. Attention to these standards will be part of evaluations made by faculty responsible for evaluating applications for admission as well as by faculty responsible for evaluating students’ classroom and practicum performance.

### **Motor Abilities**

The social work student must have sufficient motor abilities to attend class and practicum placement. Reasonable accommodation through technology for limitations in motor abilities will be allowed. The Office of Disability Services may be consulted regarding reasonable accommodations. For more information, please visit [www.health.columbia.edu/disability-services](http://www.health.columbia.edu/disability-services)

### **Sensory Abilities**

Social work students must have the ability through their senses to participate in classes and practicum placement. Students must acquire and integrate data through the use of their senses. Reasonable accommodation through technology for limitations in sensory abilities will be allowed. The Office of Disability Services may be consulted regarding reasonable accommodations. For more information, please visit [www.health.columbia.edu/disability-services](http://www.health.columbia.edu/disability-services)

### **Communication Skills**

The social work student must communicate effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients and other professionals. Students must express their ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to listen to others. They must have sufficient skills in spoken and written English to understand the content presented in the program.



**Professional Commitment**

The social work student must have a strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession. The student must be committed to the essential values of social work, which are the dignity and worth of every individual and one's right to a just share of society's resources.

**Self-Awareness**

The social work student must know how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect one's thinking, behavior and relationships. The student must be willing to examine and change one's behavior when it interferes with working with clients and other professionals and must be able to work effectively with others in subordinate positions as well as with those in authority.

**Knowledge Base for Social Work Practice**

The professional activities of social work students must be grounded in relevant social, behavioral and biological science knowledge and research. This includes knowledge and skills in relationship-building, data-gathering, assessment, interventions and evaluation of practice.

**Objectivity**

The social work student must be able to objectively and systematically evaluate clients and their situations in an unbiased, factual way.

**Empathy**

The social work student must endeavor to seek to comprehend another individual's way of life and values. The social work student must be able to communicate this empathy and support to the client as a basis for a productive professional relationship.

**Energy**

The social work student must be resilient to the undesirable effects of stress, exercising appropriate self-care and developing cooperative and facilitative relationships with colleagues and peers.

**Acceptance of Diversity**

The social work student must appreciate the value of human diversity. The social work student must serve in an appropriate manner all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation (or lack thereof), gender, ability, sexual orientation and value system.

**Interpersonal Skills**

The social work student must demonstrate the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients and other professionals. These include compassion, altruism, integrity, and the demonstration of respect for and consideration of others.

**Professional Behavior**

The social work student must behave professionally by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, adhering to the profession's code of ethics, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, and completing assignments on time.

**Statistics Requirement**

Proficiency in statistics is not a requirement for admission. However, all Master of Science in Social Work candidates at the Columbia School of Social Work must demonstrate proficiency in statistics and quantitative methods in order to graduate. Admitted students will be required to complete an introductory statistics course at CSSW during the first semester of their enrollment. The statistics course will be graded on a pass/fail scale. Students who fail the statistics course during their first term will have another chance to complete the course in the following semester. All admitted students also will have an opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency in statistics via a waiver exam that, if passed, would exempt a student from this required statistics course.

To find out more about the waiver exam, please visit:

<http://socialwork.columbia.edu/admitted-students/checklist/statistics-requirement-information/>