



VCU School of Social Work

M.S.W. program: Admissions review consideration

The admissions review process involves an evaluation of each application in four broad areas.

Educational preparation

- What is the quality of the applicant's undergraduate education?
- If the undergraduate grades are not very strong, is there other evidence of academic ability? For example, has the applicant already successfully completed graduate-level course work and received high grades?

Applicants accepted tend to have strong social science undergraduate preparation and good grade-point averages. While the GRE or MAT is not required, some applicants present the test results as evidence of academic ability. A B.S.W. degree is required only for the advanced standing program.

Work experience

- Is the applicant making informed decisions in seeking to become a professional social worker?
- Have they worked with those in need?
- Do they have voluntary or paid experience in the human services?

Almost all applicants accepted have had prior experience in human services through internships, employment and/or volunteer experiences.

Personal statement

This is a very important part of the application packet.

- What is/are the reason(s) for seeking the M.S.W. degree?
- Does the applicant understand the mission of professional social work and the nature of the careers available?
- Are there specific career goals that build on prior life, work, educational and/or volunteer experiences and that are appropriate for students in our program?
- Does the statement demonstrate commitment to, and understanding of, the values of the social work profession and the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics?
- Are the essays well-written, thoughtful, reasoned and substantial?
- If there are weaknesses in the application (e.g., low grade-point average), does the applicant adequately explain them?
- Does the applicant understand, and plan for, the time and resource commitments of the M.S.W. program?

Recommendations

- Are the recommendation letters specific, detailed and thoughtful?
- Do the recommenders understand the nature of professional social work and graduate education?
- Are the recommendations from those who can speak to the applicant's professional practice, academic ability and/or the potential to perform as a social worker?