MSW APPLICATION PROCESS

FLORIDA A & M UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM
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Tallahassee, Florida 32307
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Florida A & M University provides equal treatment and opportunity to all persons without regard to race, ethnicity, culture, class, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation or political orientation, except where such distinction is required by law.
GRADUATE ADMISSION POLICY

General Admissions Information
Due to the sequential nature of graduate professional education in social work, students may begin their studies only in the fall of the academic year.

MSW Admissions Information Sessions
Recognizing that many prospective applicants have questions about the MSW program, its requirements, and curriculum, as well as about the social work profession, the Department of Social Work offers a series of admissions information sessions throughout the academic year. Interested persons should telephone the Department of Social Work at 850/561-2590 (Ms. Gwendolyn Parker, Senior Secretary for the MSW program) or via e-mail at Gwendolyn.Parker@famu.edu for information about upcoming dates and times and for information regarding the submission of applications. Interested persons are also invited to contact the Interim MSW Program Director (Dr. Robin Perry) at 850-561-2253 or via e-mail at Robin.Perry@famu.edu for general information regarding the program and curriculum.

MSW Applicant Procedures

Applicant materials are sent to those requesting admissions information regarding our MSW program. Each must apply to both the Graduate Studies Admissions Office and the Department of Social Work's MSW Program. Two application packages, therefore, must be completed: 1.) the “Application for Admission into Graduate Studies,” and 2.) the entire application packet for admission into the MSW program. The admissions application for the MSW program contains several University and Departmental forms that must be completed prior to the evaluation for admission. The deadline for applications for Spring semester is November 1st. The deadline for admissions for the Fall semester is June 30th.

Admissions Requirements

Applicants requesting admission into the MSW program must meet the following requirements and complete the following forms:

1. An “Application for Admission to the Graduate Program at Florida A & M University.” This application is completed and sent back to the Graduate Admissions Office of Florida A & M University. Applications and information regarding this process can be obtained on-line at http://www.famu.edu/index.cfm?a=graduatestudies. Do NOT submit this form to the Department of Social Work. A copy of the form will be sent to the MSW program by the Office of Graduate Studies to indicate that the student has applied at the University level and has been entered into the FAMU computer system. A $20 application fee (check or money order), payable to Florida A&M University must accompany the application to the Graduate Admissions Office. Do not send this application fee to the Department of Social Work.
2. **An official transcript indicating completion of a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university.** The applicant’s undergraduate education must reflect a sound liberal arts foundation, including a course that includes introductory statistics, a course that includes human biology, and at least 21 credits in the humanities, the social sciences, the behavioral sciences, and the biological sciences.

3. **A grade point average of 3.0 or better (4.0 scale) for the last 60 credits of academic course work, as evidenced on the official transcript.** NOTE: Applicants holding law degrees and those with grades in law courses must have a grade point average of 3.0 or above, exclusive of law school grades, for the last 60 hours of academic course work, and a grade point average in law courses of 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) or 75 (on a 0-100 scale). Students whose grade point average is below 3.0 may be admitted under “Special Student Status” for the first semester of graduate course work, permitting them to take up to 12 credits in the graduate program.

4. **A total Graduate Records Examination (GRE) score of at least 1000 (combined Verbal and Quantitative scores) or an equivalent score on a measurement approved by the Florida Board of Regents.** While the GRE is a requirement of graduate admissions at the University level, the MSW program uses the GRE score only if the applicant’s grade point average is below 3.0. Students whose grade point average is below 3.0 and who’s GRE score is below 1000 may only be admitted under “Special Student Status” for the first semester of graduate work. Please refer to the section on “Special Student Status” admissions in this section of the Handbook for further details regarding such admissions.

5. **Three professional letters of recommendation** from persons who can address the applicant’s ability and potential for successful graduate education and professional social work practice (e.g., former professors, employment supervisors, etc.).

6. **A personal narrative statement** reflecting the applicant’s academic and employment history, as well as a discussion regarding her/his interest in the social work profession.

7. **A professional resume.** The applicant will submit a current resume that includes his/her work history.

8. **Proficiency in English.** Any student prior to admission or during their course of study, may be required to demonstrate English proficiency through submission of a satisfactory score on a test designated by the Chair of the Department of Social Work. Students whose written or spoken English proficiency is marginal in relation to the communication skills needed for effective social work practice may be required to seek instruction outside of the Department of Social Work to bring his/her communication skills up to an acceptable level.
9. **A current Florida State Immunization Record.** The Health Services Student Clinic ensures that all students entering Florida A & M University are current on all required immunizations. A copy of that record must be included in the application package sent to the MSW program. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in a “hold” being placed on the student’s registration, preventing the student from completing the registration process.

10. **Completion of the “Certification of Eligibility Form”.** This form allows the MSW program to process and award any financial aid given to you by the University or the Department of Social Work. This form is available through the Graduate Studies program office (http://www.famu.edu/index.cfm?a=graduates). Failure to complete this form will result in your financial aid monies being forfeited and applied to another student.

11. **Personal Interview.** In some cases, a personal interview with the MSW faculty may be required of an applicant in order to better evaluate her/his potential for developing into a professional social worker.

**International Applicants**

Any applicant who is the holder of a nonimmigrant type visa (F-1 or J-1) is classified as an international student or applicant by Florida A & M University. Important University regulations pertaining to international applicants or students are found in the Florida A & M University Graduate Catalog. While some of these regulations are listed below, persons in this category should contact the Office of Graduate Studies for more detailed information regarding admission forms and requirements.

**General Regulations for International Applicants:**

Applicants from countries where English is not the usual means of communication must submit a TOEFL score of no less than 550. Test scores may not be more than two years old.

International students on nonimmigrant visas must carry hospitalization and medical insurance.

Nonimmigrant international students are prohibited from participation in employment, unless authorized by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Services.

**Special Student Status Admission**

Special conditional admission may be granted to applicants who have grade point averages of less than 3.0 (A=4.0) only if the applicant: (1.) has a grade point average of at least 2.5 in the last 60 semester (or 90 quarter) hours of academic work; (2.) meets all
other admissions requirements; and (3.) submits a written request to be considered for special student status admission based on having met at least one of the following criteria:

(a.) completion of six hours of graduate level course work taken **outside of the Department of Social Work** with a grade point average of 3.0 or above (4.0 = A), with documentation on an official transcript; **or**

(b.) submission of **official** GRE (Graduate Records Examination) scores on both the Verbal and Quantitative sections of the general test, taken no more than five years prior to application to the Department of Social Work; **or**

(c.) evidence of **outstanding** paid or volunteer experience in social work agencies or related human service organizations (documentation by **additional** letters of recommendation is required). To be considered “outstanding,” experience must 1.) clearly be experienced in a **social work** capacity, 2.) be no less than the equivalent of **two years of full-time experience**, and 3.) entail performance that **far exceeds the norm**, convincingly documented in support letters from persons who supervised the applicant.

Students who are admitted under “Special Student Status” may only take 12 credits of graduate social work courses. They are also not eligible for **departmental** financial aid/funding opportunities (e.g., department assistantships, fellowships, and scholarships). If, after completing a semester of graduate social work courses, the student is able to maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or above in all graduate social work courses, the student will be readmitted to the MSW program as an unconditional admission. **NOTE**: Students holding visas (F-1 or J-1) are not eligible for special student status admission at the graduate level.

**Deadlines**

Since the Department of Social Work admits students in the spring and fall semesters. The deadline for receipt of all materials for entry in the fall semester is **June 30th**. Applications completed after this deadline will be reviewed only if there is a reasonable likelihood that space will be available in the incoming fall class. Interested persons are urged to begin the application process far in advance of the June 30th deadline, as the school reserves the right to close the application cycle at an earlier date if all available slots are filled. Additionally, financial aid packages for the upcoming academic year are awarded to newly-admitted graduate students at the end of the previous spring semester, making early application particularly important. International applicants should complete their application by March 30th to ensure review of their completed folders. Students who fail to enroll in the semester they are admitted must reapply for admission to a future academic year and are not guaranteed automatic admission in any future year. The deadline for receipt of all materials for entry in the spring semester is **November 1st**. **Please note that given the sequencing of courses in the MSW program, those**
admitted in the spring semester can ONLY take select elective courses, not required courses.

The Review Process

Applicants will receive postcard updates on the status of their application, including a notice that the application is complete and ready for faculty review. The admissions process is coordinated by the MSW Admissions Committee. In evaluating applicants, faculty admission reviewers take into consideration many factors and no one criterion alone automatically determines acceptance or non-acceptance into the program. Among the factors examined carefully is the applicant’s undergraduate course work in relation to a strong liberal arts base and past academic performance as reflected in the cumulative grade point average (last 60 credit hours of academic work)? Consideration is also given to employment or volunteer efforts in social work, letters of recommendation, demonstrated ability to communicate effectively in writing (as evidenced by the Personal Narrative Statement and other written forms of communication presented by the student), and the applicant’s motivation for a career as a professional social worker.

After carefully reviewing the student’s application package, the MSW faculty votes on whether to admit, deny or defer the application. This decision is then forwarded to the Chair of the Department of Social Work on a “Graduate Student Status Form” for official departmental signature and approval. The form is then sent to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for review and signature, and then to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies for review and signature. The applicant is notified by a letter from the College of Graduate Studies of their acceptance or denial into the program. The MSW program is then notified by the College of Graduate Studies on the status of the application and all accepted students are contacted by letter informing them of upcoming orientation dates and pertinent information they need to know as a new graduate student in the MSW program.

SPECIAL ADMISSIONS CATEGORIES

Advanced Standing Students

Applicants holding a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited undergraduate program may request consideration for “Advanced Graduate Standing” (the waiver of specific foundation courses).

A. To qualify for advanced standing, you must:

1. have earned a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (based on A = 4.0 scale) for The last 60 semester credit hours (or 90 quarter hours) of your total academic work; and
2. have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (where A = 4.0) for all undergraduate social work courses; and
3. have earned a BSW degree from a CSWE-accredited program within the last
B. How to apply for advanced standing:

1. Request the “Application for Advanced Standing” from the MSW program and mail it in with your social work admission application. All documents are to be returned to the Department of Social Work to the attention of the Graduate Admissions Committee.
2. At least one of your three references for your application must be from your faculty advisor or from the Chairperson of the Social Work Department at your college or university.
3. Upon acceptance into the MSW program, you will be asked to supply copies of your undergraduate research papers, field education contracts/plans, field evaluations, college catalog, and course syllabi, unless the Department of Social Work at Florida A & M University has them on file for your BSW degree. Please check with the Department of Social Work to see if your materials are on file. Advanced standing waivers are assessed after your acceptance into the graduate social work program.

C. The Outcome:

1. You may be waived from any or all of the MSW foundation courses – up to 33 credit hours –which repeat content that you already mastered in your undergraduate program. The materials from each applicant are evaluated individually. Waivers are not automatic.
2. An individualized plan of study will be developed to guide you in completing any required foundation courses and beginning your advanced concentration courses. In most cases, your course work will begin the fall semester for which you were admitted.

The MSW Program Director, in consultation with faculty, will assess competencies already achieved for students requesting advanced standing. Deadlines must be met to allow adequate time for review of materials and to arrange for special advising.

Social Work Transfer Students

Students who transfer to the MSW program at Florida A & M University from another CSWE-accredited graduate program must meet all admissions requirements and have at least a 3.0 (B) average in all graduate social work courses in order to receive transfer credit. A maximum of 33 hours credit, earned within five years of the student’s enrollment at Florida A & M University’s Department of Social Work, with grades of “B” or above, may be transferred for credit toward the MSW degree. In addition to the usual application materials, transfer students must also submit an evaluation of first year field performance, course syllabi, a “Statement of Good Standing” from the Dean or Chairperson of their previous program, and a catalog from the institution in which s/he
has been enrolled. Transfer student applications and materials are reviewed by the MSW Program Director in consultation with MSW faculty on a course-by-course basis.

Non-Social Work Transfer Credit

The Department of Social Work recognizes two categories of transfer credit for courses that are taken in disciplines or fields other than social work.

1. A maximum of six semester hours of graduate credit, earned within five years of the student’s enrollment at Florida A & M University’s Department of Social Work, with grades of “B” (3.0) or better, may be transferred as credit toward the MSW degree’s elective credits, providing they meet the program’s mission and objectives. That is, if a student has taken a series of graduate courses, but did not earn a master’s degree, a maximum of six graduate credit hours may be applied toward the MSW.

2. A maximum of six semester hours of graduate credit, earned within five years of the student’s enrollment at Florida A & M University’s MSW program, with grades of “B” or better (where 4.0 = A), may be transferred from an earned master’s degree toward the MSW now in progress. That is, a student may have earned a master’s degree in a different discipline, and may now wish to apply that credit toward the MSW degree, providing the credits meet the mission and objectives of the MSW program.

In both cases, the student must request consideration of transfer credit with the MSW Program Director after admission to the MSW program. Students will need to present course outlines and related information in order for the MSW Program Director to evaluate the request. Request for non-social work transfer credit are evaluated largely on relevance to the student’s present course of study and career objectives, as well as for academic soundness. The student’s request, accompanied by supporting information and the MSW Program Director’s written recommendation, will be submitted to the Department Chair for final approval. In all cases, graduate credit from other disciplines must be consistent with the goals and objectives of the MSW program as well as with our accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

Graduate credit is not granted for correspondence courses, extension courses, continuing education courses, advanced standing examinations (except as pertaining to advanced graduate standing in the Department of Social Work), life or employment experience, or if an equivalent course offered by Florida A & M University does not warrant graduate credit.

Postbaccalaureate Students

The Department of Social Work at Florida A & M University does not have a post baccalaureate program. Only those persons who have been admitted formally into the Department of Social Work may be part of the MSW program.

Post baccalaureate students who later decide to apply for admission to the Department of Social Work will be allowed no more than six (6) credit hours earned as a post
baccalaureate student. Graduate students from other colleges who wish to enroll in social work courses must obtain prior approval from the MSW program before enrolling. College approvals come from (1.) the instructor of the course, who determines the student’s academic preparedness for the course and (2.) from the MSW Program Director, who considers the demand for the course by formally-admitted MSW students. Post baccalaureate students are only permitted to enroll in courses which have excess slots after degree candidates have registered. The Department of Social Work regrets that it is sometimes necessary to retract approvals when expected enrollment exceeds actual enrollment in a course. A written request to enroll in a course should be sent to the MSW Program Director. It is the post baccalaureate student’s responsibility to speak with the course instructor, and to obtain written approval to enroll.