

MSW Admission Essay

As part of your application for admission to the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work, please address the five areas listed below (maximum 250 words for each response). These answers will be used both to assess your writing and critical thinking skills and to aid the Admissions Committee in making a decision about your application. Note that some of the questions contain multiple parts, so be sure to read and answer the questions fully.

1. What motivates you to pursue a Master in Social Work degree at this time?
2. The profession of social work is committed to social, political, and economic justice, the alleviation of poverty and oppression, and the reduction of social problems. Please choose one social problem of concern to you and explain how it relates to social, political, and economic justice. Utilize the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics to help you understand the concepts and support your discussion. How can your unique contributions to the profession of social work advance justice and help those affected by this social problem?
3. Describe your most significant experiences and achievements in school and work (volunteer or paid). Be sure to identify any strategies that you found helpful in overcoming any challenges that you encountered.
4. In regards to diversity, the NASW Code of Ethics provides explicit guidance on behavioral expectations for social workers that begin during your time in the MSW program and extend throughout your career as a professional social worker. If there are terms below that you are unfamiliar with, please take the time to research what they mean in the context of social work values and ethics in order to properly respond to the question. Consider the two ethical principles below:

Discrimination 4.02.1

Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability.

Cultural Competence 1.05.3

Social Workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability.

- (a) Please explain your comfort level in upholding these ethical principles by providing examples from your educational and/or professional career. Discuss any challenges you may have in upholding these ethical principles as well as how you plan to address those challenges.
 - (b) Social workers by nature must be willing to work with, and respect, diversity and differences among those they serve in practice. Social workers must actively work to develop and refine a habit of cultural humility throughout their career. Please briefly describe what this statement means to you and how you plan to develop your humility to work with diverse peoples, groups, and communities that are markedly different from yourself.
5. Adding a new role to your life as a graduate student involves planning and preparation for success. Please describe a specific plan to balance your work, education, and personal life, as well as practice self-care as you engage in graduate study. In addition to traditional coursework, you will spend approximately 16-39 hours per week at two practicum experiences during your educational program, which could be above and beyond your employment. These practicums will most likely be during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 8am – 5pm) over one to two semesters each. Considering this, describe how you will adjust your school/work/life balance for the foundation year(s) as well as the concentration year(s) of the MSW program?