



MSW Preview Day Unanswered Questions

Colorado Free Application Day – UPDATE!

Colorado Free Application Day is October 13, 2020

To inspire more Coloradans to continue their education, the Colorado Department of Higher Education has teamed up with colleges and universities all across the state of Colorado to waive college application fees for all Colorado residents on Tuesday, October 13, 2020. If you submit your MSU graduate application between 12:01 AM and 11:59 PM on the 13th, you can apply for free! You can feel free to start your application and enter your recommenders prior to that date, but the automatic fee waiver is available on the 13th only and you must submit your application that day to receive the waiver.

Good news – after MSW Preview Day, we learned that the way MSU Denver is handling Colorado Free Application Day is to just turn off the application fee requirement system-wide for that day! ***All students who submit their application on October 13, regardless of if they are a Colorado resident or not, will have the application fee automatically waived.***

Can we submit the app before the CO free app day? Will it let us pay it later? Do you have to pay the app fee right when you submit?

To receive the automatic fee waiver on October 13, you must submit your application that day (i.e. click the “Finalize and Pay” button). If you click that button prior to October 13, the \$50 application fee will be applied to your account. If you are not submitting on CO Free Application Day, you can click the “Finalize and Pay” button and then come back later to pay the fee, but you will no longer be eligible for the automatic fee waiver on the 13th or to enter an application fee waiver code.

If you want to submit on Colorado Free Application Day to receive the automatic fee waiver, we recommend taking the following steps to make sure you are set-up for success and can continue work on your application:

- Enter your recommenders into the application ASAP – as soon as you submit their information, they will receive a link where they can complete their recommendation *even before you submit your application*
- Start work on your additional materials (essay and, for Advanced Standing applicants, case study) – you can find the prompts for these materials in our step-by-step walkthrough under Step Two at <https://www.msudenver.edu/socialwork/apply/mswprogram/clickheretobegintheapplicationprocess/>. If you have them all written and polished, then as soon as you submit your application you can upload them on into your application.



General Information on Admissions & Application

Are we allowed to apply for both programs? If we apply to the Advanced Standing Program but don't get accepted could we do the Regular Program instead?

Applicants can only submit an application to one program (Advanced Standing or Regular Program) per admissions cycle, and the review committee only reviews your application for admission into that one program. However, if you are denied from Advanced Standing during the 2021 Admissions Cycle and wanted to apply to the Regular Program during the 2022 Admissions Cycle, for example, that is allowed.

Do priority deadline applicants receive notice of acceptance sooner?

Yes. If you're accepted at the priority deadline, you'll find out 10-12 weeks after the priority deadline (typically in mid-December to early January). If your application is being moved to the final deadline to be reviewed with the entire pool of applicants, you'll also find that out in that time frame. Applicants who submit their materials by the final deadline or who have their application rolled forward from the priority deadline receive their admissions decision 10-12 weeks after the final deadline (typically in late March to mid-April).

Do we also have to apply to MSU masters admissions as well?

No – you only need to do one application to apply to both MSU Denver and the MSW Program.

If we get accepted and then something happens or we need to work more to meet the prereqs, could we delay starting the program until the next year or do we have to reapply?

If you're accepted to Summer or Fall 2021, you're able to defer one academic year to start in Summer or Fall 2022. We will hold your spot in the program and you won't need to fully reapply.

Do we need to take the GRE prior to the application?

We do not require the GRE or any other comparable exams as part of our admissions process.

Transcripts and Prerequisite Reviews

Do you have to list every college or university that you attended?

Yes – applicants are required to list and submit transcripts for all colleges and universities attended. Even if you attended one school and transferred the credits to another institution, we still need you to list that first school and submit a transcript.

The one exception is if you did a study abroad program – we do not need you to list or submit transcripts from the international school you did a study abroad program with, since that is part of your academic record at the U.S. institution you were attending at the time.



If MSU has transcripts from me transferring from an out of state school during undergrad will I still need to add that school to this page?

If you previously submitted transcripts to MSU Denver when applying as an undergraduate student, we should still have those on record and you shouldn't need to re-submit them. However, you should still list the institutions you previously attended in your academic history on the graduate application.

If we sent transcripts for evaluation in the summer, will that show up as completed in our application?

They will show up... eventually. We have to manually mark transcripts as received in the system so it can take time for us to reconcile our lists with submitted applications. This is true for both unofficial and official copies of transcripts received by our office. However, please be aware that if you previously submitted unofficial copies of transcripts, you will eventually be required to submit official copies if accepted.

I took college credit courses in high school. Do I need to send those transcripts as well?

It depends on how you received the college credit. If it was through AP or IB exams, those test scores need to be submitted if it's to fulfill a prerequisite. If it was through a college that you also enrolled in post-high school, you just need to submit one transcript from that institution and it should show all your credits. However, if you did concurrent enrollment through a local community college and then enrolled elsewhere for your undergrad degree, we will need for those community college transcripts to be submitted too.

I submitted an official transcript within the last year. Do I need to pay for another one, or do you still have it?

Please email socialwork@msudenver.edu to have us check if they are still on file in our internal system. In your email, please include your current name, any former names the transcript(s) could be listed under, your date of birth, and the names of the institutions you submitted transcripts from.

Can we request an informal prerequisite review prior to submitting our official transcript through the application system?

Yes! We can do a prerequisite review with an unofficial transcript.

If I need to take missing prerequisite classes, then how can I apply for the program for Fall 2021?

Prerequisites do not need to be complete prior to applying or being accepted to the MSW Program – they just need to be complete before classes start in August if accepted. Many of our accepted students take missing prerequisites in the spring or summer before classes begin.

If I have a BSW (RP), I won't need any prereqs?

The undergraduate prerequisites are required for all students applying to the Regular Program. If you have an undergrad in social work *and* are applying to the Advanced Standing program, the prerequisites are not required. However, if you have an undergrad in social work and are applying to the Regular Program, the prerequisites are required.



Can you speak more to what the prereq review entails? As in, will you tell us specifically what we still need to fulfill before beginning the semester?

When the Office of Social Work Student Services completes a prerequisite review, it is sent to you via email. In that email we list exactly which prerequisites still need to be complete, attach a prerequisite review form showing what courses fulfilled what prerequisites, and include an MSW Prerequisite Requirements and Completion Options packet to help you navigate your options for completing anything that is missing.

Professional History Form

I noticed on the professional history section there is no option to choose "present" for the from x date, to x date. Should we just choose the current month if we're still working there?

If you are still working at a job, volunteer opportunity, or internship, you can enter January 2021 as the end date. When we review the professional history form, we use that month as the cut-off for evaluating the duration of the experience. When we see a January end date, we assume it means "to present".

If I am doing my Internship in the Spring of 2021, how am I able to include this within my application?

You can include this information in the professional history form, by future dating the start and end dates, however please be aware that it may not be factored into your professional history review as we can only evaluate duration and relevance of completed experience. You are also welcome to discuss your future internship in your admissions essay.

Admissions Essay

In the admissions essay prompt it mentions including cited sources. I haven't seen this for any other MSW program. I'm wondering if this is strongly encouraged or only for when it's necessary?

Only when necessary. The admissions essay is how you are demonstrating your writing skills to the admissions committee and the expectation is that you use APA 7th edition standards for all formatting and citations. However, if you do not have any outside sources that you need to cite then you do not need to worry about adding citations – just make sure everything else follows APA formatting.

Do you have advice for the admissions essay in general?

The biggest piece of advice we can give to applicants regarding their admissions essay is to not rush it and leave time for editing/revising. The MSW Program is writing intensive, and the admissions committee is using your essay both to evaluate your suitability for the profession and study of social work, but also to make sure you are able to succeed in a graduate-level academic program.



Letters of Recommendation

I know that we need 3 letters of recommendation. what would you recommend us doing if we don't have a professor or field placement letter?

For Advanced Standing applicants – you must have at least one letter of recommendation from someone associated with your undergraduate social work program. You have options for who it could be from, such as a faculty member, program director, field instructor, faculty advisor, field supervisor, etc., but you are required to have at least one letter come from someone who is associated with your undergraduate social work program.

For Regular Program applicants – you are not required to have a recommendation from a faculty member. The requirement is three professional letters of recommendation. Faculty members are considered professional recommenders, but employment supervisors and volunteer supervisors also make excellent recommenders and professional colleagues can also serve as professional recommenders if need be.

Will we see the recommenders response? Say we enter 4 and we can see which 3 are the strongest and can know which to remove for the final 3?

No – you will not be able to view your recommender's submissions during the application process.

When you enter a recommender into the system, you will select whether or not to waive your right to view the recommendation. Under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) regulations, once a post-secondary student is admitted and matriculates (i.e. registers for classes) at an institution, they have the right to request their academic record which includes admissions materials. If you do not waive your right, you have the ability to request a copy of your recommendation letters post-matriculation, but not during the admissions process.

I graduated with my bachelors in 2009. I don't have contact with any previous instructors from my undergraduate time. Can they all be current or previous professional supervisors instead?

Yes – for Regular Program applicants it is fine if all recommendations come from volunteer and/or employment supervisors. However, applicants to the Advanced Standing Program must have at least one recommendation from someone associated with their BSW Program (faculty advisor, program director, field supervisor, field director, etc.)

Would be acceptable for a client/student of mine to write me a letter of recommendation?

Having clients or students write a recommendation can get into a fuzzy territory of if the recommendation is professional or personal in nature. In general, we recommend sticking to faculty, supervisors, and professional colleagues (peers) whenever possible as those recommendations are more highly valued by the admissions committee.



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Department of Social Work

I got my BSW almost 30 years ago. I believe most of the profs and anyone associated with my program are retired or wouldn't remember me. I have worked in the field since and do have other excellent professional references. Would not having a BSW Program related reference simply due to my age be a "ding" from my application points?

Due to the age of your BSW degree, you would be applying to the Regular Program where there is no requirement for academic recommendations. You would not be dinged for a lack of BSW Program related references in this case!

I graduated with my Bachelor's about 5 years ago. Should I stick to people from work experience for my letters of recommendation? Would past professors still be beneficial?

It depends – you want to select three individuals who can write you the strongest possible recommendations, who can speak to your abilities to succeed in the field of social work and/or in graduate school. If you were close to a professor during your undergraduate who you still think would be a strong recommendation for you five years later, then go for it! But if you think you could get stronger recommendations from folks you have worked with post-graduation, that may be the better route.

General MSW Program Information

If you have a desire to continue working full time is the program flexible with working an 8-5 job?

While there are flexible class scheduling options especially with online classes and the part-time enrollment option, it is quite difficult to be working full-time 8-5 while also completing your field placement as most (though not all) placements operate during typical business hours. We strongly recommend having some weekday flexibility to be able to complete field placements.

I saw that during summer, there are two required courses for Advanced Standing students. Are we able to take two electives as well during the summer to lighten the load to four classes for fall and spring?

Unfortunately not, the prerequisite for any of the electives is the completion of either the 30 credits of foundation coursework (for Regular Program) or the 2 summer bridge courses (for Advanced Standing).

In the mixed delivery option, how often are classes only online where we wouldn't have the option to take them in-person if we wanted to?

We have many mixed traditional students who take all of their classes in person. The only time this may happen is with the electives in your concentration year. If we can only offer one section of a specific elective (and it's one you'd like to take), it's possible that it may only be offered online. However, for all of your required courses, there will be in person options.

Have you seen a greater preference for hybrid classes or fully face-to-face?

While many students express that they would like to do all of their classes fully face-to-face, there are often elements (work, family, etc.) which don't make that feasible. Therefore, the hybrids can actually be a great



option, where students have more flexibility but still get the face-to-face connection – just every other week. There isn't a clear preference within the program, but rather comes down to students' personal schedules.

Would it be advisable to do a part-time program and work full-time?

If you need to work full-time, doing the program part-time is exactly what we recommend! The fully online option can also help provide some additional flexibility since the courses are done asynchronously.

Is there a thesis required?

We don't have a thesis requirement in the MSW Program, but students do a year-long capstone in their final year of the program that can take a lot of different forms.

Are there TA and GA opportunities available as an MSW student?

Yes, there are. The MSW Program has options for teaching assistants, graduate assistants, and research assistants. While the number of openings depends on budget and faculty needs, you can always read more about these options and applying to the pool here: <https://www.msudenver.edu/socialwork/studentpositions/>

Does this program set you up for the potential of applying for a PhD later on?

Yes, students with an MSW can choose to pursue a PhD in the future. However, an MSW is considered the terminal degree in the field of social work and pursuing a PhD in Social Work (or a DSW – Doctor of Social Work) is typically seen in folks interested in teaching at the college or university level in a tenure/tenure-track position.

Are there benefits? Medical, dental, etc. Do I have to be full time to get benefits? Can I get more info on benefits in general?

Yes, MSU Denver offers health insurance for graduate students. If you are taking a minimum of six credits as a graduate student (which would be considered part time in the MSW Program), you will automatically be enrolled (though this can be waived if you provide proof of insurance from another provider). You can read more about coverage and benefits here: <https://www.msudenver.edu/healthcenter/msudenverplans/>

Please note that they may refer to nine credits as being the minimum, but that is the minimum for undergraduate students.

MSW Program Pathways

Does the MSW Program at MSU Denver offer concentrations or tracks (like a clinically-focused program)?

The curriculum in the MSW Program is advanced generalist. This means that students are taught both micro and macros elements of social work. We want students to have a strong understanding of both. However, we do offer pathways, which are advising recommendations of electives that help students enhance learning in special areas. For example, you can do a clinical pathway, where your electives, field work, and capstone are all clinically focused



If I get my MSW degree and do the Leadership and Management pathway, am I able to later become a therapist?

All MSU Denver MSW Program graduates are eligible to apply for Licensed Social Worker (LSW) and/or Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) status regardless of their pathway and are capable of working with a variety of populations in a variety of roles.

Can you have multiple pathways?

All MSW electives can be applied to multiple pathways. For example, SWKM 6635 (School-Based Social Work) falls into the following pathways: Children and Families, Mental Health, School Social Work, and Children and Youth. If you took two other electives that both cover mental health and school social work, you would be able to have two pathways. Therefore, depending on which electives you choose, it would be possible to cover content needed for more than one pathway.

For that future application, what are the benefits of a clinical focus during the MSW?

Having a more clinical focus in your coursework and field placement will help you launch into job opportunities doing therapeutic or more clinical work more quickly. Additionally, it better positions you to take the LSW/LCSW exam (necessary to pursue licensure). However, social work is a field where you can and should continue to grow and learn and evolve throughout your career.

Field of Social Work Information

Does healthcare social work and social work in general involve lots of paperwork, management hierarchies, and bureaucracy? If so, are there career paths that involve less of those things i.e. independent work, professional autonomy, and managing your own schedule, etc?

We recommend setting up an informational interview with a faculty member or a practitioner in the field if you want to learn more about the day-to-day nitty gritty of what social work is in various settings. The MSU Denver faculty directory can be found at

<https://www.msudenver.edu/socialwork/facultystaff/socialworkfacultydirectory/>

Is it common to teach at a university level with a Master's degree instead of a PhD?

In the field of social work – yes. The minimum requirement for faculty in social work programs is typically the completion of an MSW degree (sometimes with an additional requirement for a certain number of years of experience in the field). Some institutions may require a PhD or DSW to obtain a tenure/tenure-track position, but this varies by institution. The majority of our affiliate faculty in the Department of Social Work (part-time faculty members) hold an MSW as their highest degree and teach part-time while also working full-time in the field!



Out-of-State & Residency Information

I live out of state – if accepted, can I complete the MSW program out of state?

With our fully online course delivery option, students can complete the entire MSW program out of state, including your field placement. However, please be aware that out-of-state students are accepted on a case-by-case basis that is partially dependent on the Office of Field Education's ability to support additional out-of-state students. As an out of state student, you would have to do a bit more of the research for your field placement. Our field team can work with you remotely, but you'll do most of the groundwork to find the agency.

I currently live out of state. Will tuition change to resident tuition after living in CO for a year? What is required to obtain resident tuition?

Tuition should change from non-resident to resident after residing in Colorado for 12 months. However, for all specifications and requirements, please contact the residency team at residency@msudenver.edu or visit their website at: <https://www.msudenver.edu/admissions/residency/>

Program Cost & Financial Aid

Is tuition cost different if you do mixed traditional or fully online?

While tuition isn't different between mixed traditional or fully online, there are some fees related to attending school on campus (for example, the campus recreation fee and the RTD pass fee) that mixed traditional students are charged, but fully online students are not.

Does the Colorado Opportunity Fund (COF) apply for grad school?

Unfortunately not – the COF stipend is only available to undergraduate students.

Are there scholarships or financial aid available? Are they only reserved for full-time students?

Our MSW students used a variety of funding types for their education. Many students still complete the FAFSA and take out student loans, but may also supplement their tuition costs with scholarships or stipends. We have multiple departmental scholarships and stipends, but outside scholarships can be applied to your tuition, as well. Departmental scholarships and stipend information can be found here: <https://www.msudenver.edu/socialwork/scholarshipsstipends/>

How many students typically receive the BHWET stipend?

The 2020-2021 academic year is the last year of the current HRSA BHWET stipend program. However, as additional stipend/scholarship opportunities become available, they will be shared with students.



Field Placement Information

I am currently employed as a county caseworker, could employment count as field placement? During that first year?

Our program does allow for employment-based field placements for students in both levels of the MSW program so long as they meet specific requirements for this type of internship. Students interested in pursuing an employment-based field placement work with a member of the Office of Field Education to complete an application for employment-based field placement to ensure all requirements for supporting student learning are able to be met.

If you do your field placement with an employer, are you able to be paid for these hours?

If students complete an approved employment-based field placement, it is up to the employment agency to determine whether these hours can be paid. Agencies do need to take into account that this can impact areas such as worker's compensation and professional liability during the student's internship hours.

Are you able to change field placements?

Students must complete their placement in the same agency for the entire year (30 weeks). In order to form a sound knowledge base, develop rapport with clients, establish yourself as an integral part of the agency, and complete learning objectives, longevity in a field placement is required. In the rare occasions where it would be necessary for a student to change their field placement mid-year, the student must work in consultation with the Office of Field Education for support. However, students can be at different placements for their foundation year placement and their concentration year placement.

Does the field supervisor need an LCSW?

Each student must be supervised by a qualified Field Instructor (FI) - an individual who has primary responsibility for the student's learning experience in the field placement and ensures appropriate learning experiences are provided that integrate social work theory, values, and practice. For MSW students, the FI must have a MSW degree and at least two (2) years of post-degree experience. They do not need to be licensed.

Claire mentioned that full-time students typically spend 50 hours/week on the program. Does this include time spent at your field placement?

Yes, that 50 hour/week estimate includes classes, homework, and field placement hours

Is the field seminar course also included in the required placement hours?

The seminar is separate from the 16 hours/week (foundation year placements) or 20 hours/week (concentration year placements) at your internship.



Are field placements the same in the part time program?

The placements have the same requirements in the part-time program, they just occur at slightly different times. For the Regular Program, field placements occur in years 2 and 4 of the part-time plan and for the Advanced Standing Program, the field placement occurs in year 2 of the part-time plan.

Could you split the field placement hours across your years as a part-time student to reduce the number of hours/week?

No, the field placement takes place during a full academic year since it aligns with the seminar in your Field I and II (and then Field III and IV) courses, it can't be split across two academic years.

For students who are accepted in the part time program, do you interview a full year before you'd start as field placement is Year 2?

If you're part-time, you'll start the placement process in December/January of year 1 of your time in the program.

I know what populations or areas want to work with/in -- can my placement be in that area right away?

All students are assigned a Placement Navigator who assists them with identifying potential internship sites that align with populations and/or areas of interest.

Are we only able to apply to agencies that we are referred to by the Placement Navigator meeting? Or will we be able to have more freedom over that?

All agencies that students apply to must be approved by the Field Office but you can work with your Placement Navigator if you're interested in applying to a site that is not a current partner of ours.

Does this program prepare you for a job regardless of where you concentrate field experience? For example if I did placement in child welfare, but I'm hoping to eventually secure a job as a therapy or counseling?

Your field placements will definitely help you to develop skills which will serve you in a variety of different practice settings. These are things you can talk with your Placement Navigator about as well.

Do you have field placement in surrounding rural counties?

We do have some placements in rural counties across Colorado and if we don't in your area, we're happy to work on opening new sites.

Do I need to move for field placements? If I move elsewhere, does that interfere?

Our Field Team works with students to identify possible internship sites within their geographic location. Students must complete their placement in the same agency for the entire year (30 weeks) so moving during the academic year while enrolled in field is not advisable.