



MSUSM
DENVER

Master of Social Work
Department of Social Work

Summer/Fall 2023 Master of Social Work Program Case Study Requirements & Prompts

The Case Study should be completed by Advanced Standing applicants and must be written and saved to the applicant's computer as a **Word or PDF file** prior to being uploaded to the application checklist. You will upload the case study **after** you submit your MSU Denver graduate application. The case study is only a requirement for Advanced Standing applicants.

Case Study Requirements

The case study is an important part of your application because it reflects your ability to think critically about a situation and indicates your level of knowledge about social work. The case study is assessed based upon its level and quality of comprehensiveness, appropriateness, clarity, and academic writing.

Your essay must incorporate the following:

- not to exceed 4 double-spaced pages, using 12-point Times New Roman font;
- be written from the perspective of the school social worker;
- provide the Admissions Committee a clear picture of your ability to construct a cohesive, academic essay that demonstrates your readiness for graduate-level work;
- synthesize your foundational social work knowledge and combine academic sources to support your rationale (references are expected and APA 7th Edition style should be followed); and
- provide the information requested below in a well-formed essay (that is, incorporate the required information into an essay) and NOT in short answer form.

Case Study Prompts

1. Very briefly describe the current situation.
2. Assess the family. What are the major issues, the dynamics, the strengths and challenges this family faces? Your explanation should be supported by scholarly sources.
3. Develop an action plan. Describe your action plan to address all the identified issues.
4. What are the cultural considerations for working with this family? Support with scholarly sources.
5. How do the macro systems impact the way you serve this family? What changes would you like to see in these systems and how would you go about creating change?

Case

Paula Romero, age 35, was born and raised in El Salvador. She has lived in the US for eight years and her daughter Beatriz, age 8, was born here. Paula does not have papers for legal residency in the US. Her husband and son, Edgar, age 37, and Tomás, age 15, live in El Salvador and have been trying for years to join Paula and Beatriz. They have applied for Visas to the US but have been denied. The family has typically communicated several times a week by phone and computer. Paula's sister Evelyn and her husband Mario were also born and raised in El Salvador and have lived in Denver area for 15 years. Evelyn has a work visa and has had an application pending for a green card for the past three years. Evelyn's husband, Mario, does not have a visa or green card.

Until recently, Paula worked long hours at a small, family-owned (no relation to her) restaurant six days a week. With her limited income, she has been able to support Beatriz and herself. They have a small, one-bedroom apartment. Paula is a devout Catholic and loving mother. Beatriz is a good student and attends the second grade at a local elementary school. She walks home from school, heats up dinner her mother would prepare, does homework, and reads or watches television until her mother arrives at about 8 p.m. On weekends while her mother works, Beatriz sometimes stays at home but often stays with her aunt or friends.

Six months ago, Paula began experiencing multiple health issues. She lost her appetite and experienced extreme pain and fatigue. After several visits to the doctor, she was diagnosed with Stage 4 Ovarian Cancer and underwent surgery and chemotherapy at Denver Health. The treatment was unsuccessful and her condition has deteriorated. She is expected to live for just a few days longer.

Beatriz and Evelyn and several friends and neighbors have been caring for Paula at home during these past several months. Since Paula is unable to work, Edgar and others were sending money to help pay the bills. Church members from their parish also have provided financial and other support to Paula and Beatriz during Paula's illness. For the past two months, Beatriz has been quiet and seems disinterested in any activities.

Both Evelyn and Mario work full-time. They are renting a small, two-bedroom apartment, where they have lived for the past two years. They have no children. They are hoping Beatriz can stay with them. Beatriz is probably open to the idea but worries about her father. If she stayed with Evelyn and Mario, Beatriz would remain in the same school district but would have to change schools, as they live too far away from her current school. Evelyn and Mario are concerned about any state support or interference, due to Mario's residency status. Edgar would like to be with Beatriz but would prefer for Beatriz to remain in Colorado, as he thinks it too dangerous for her to be in El Salvador.

You are the School Social Worker at Beatriz's school. You received a referral from Beatriz's teacher, Ms. Ochoa. Ms. Ochoa has been concerned about Beatriz for the past several months. She reports that Beatriz has missed approximately 20 days of school in the past four months and has not been in school at all for the past week. When in attendance, Beatriz has been uncharacteristically quiet and unprepared for her lessons. She also appears tired and a little unkempt at times. When Ms. Ochoa has talked with Beatriz, Beatriz has teared up and has only said her mother is ill.