



MSUSM
DENVER

Master of Social Work
Department of Social Work

**Summer/Fall 2023 Master of Social Work Program
Application Walkthrough**

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Important Dates and Deadlines

The MSW Program at MSU Denver has one admissions cycle annually. The application typically opens in early September, with a priority consideration deadline in late October and a final deadline in mid-January.

The application for a Summer/Fall 2023 start opened on **Tuesday, September 6, 2022**.

The priority consideration deadline for a Summer/Fall 2023 start will be **Monday, November 7, 2022 at 11:59 PM** (Mountain Time). You can read more about the priority consideration deadline below.

The final application deadline for a Summer/Fall 2023 start will be **Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 11:59 PM** (Mountain Time).

Please note: Application processing and review takes 7-9 weeks after the deadline to complete (*not from application submission*), and applicants are notified of their decision via email. The Office of Social Work Student Services will stay in close contact with you throughout the entire process. If you have any questions as you navigate the application process, please contact us at socialwork@msudenver.edu.

Priority Consideration Deadline Overview & Requirements

Applicants who submit all their materials by the **priority consideration deadline** of November 7 will have their application reviewed during the fall and early winter by the MSW Admission Committee. Those ranked in the very top of the pool of applicants will receive their admissions decision early, granting them a head start on:

- Preparing to start the program
- Securing a field placement
- Registering for classes

All other applicants who submit their application by this deadline will have their application rolled forward and will receive their admission decision after the final application deadline review period.

Although only a select few will receive priority admission, we encourage you to give it a try, submit your materials early, then sit back and relax.

Step One: MSU Denver Graduate Application

[ACCESS THE GRADUATE APPLICATION PORTAL](#)

Your entire MSW Program application will be completed through this application system. No materials will be submitted via other methods or platforms. **Note:** you do not have to complete the entire application in one sitting – you can save and come back at a later time. You will not be able to upload your admissions essay and/or case study until after submitting the graduate application.

To submit your graduate program application, you will need to:

- Fill out all required information;
- Enter your professional and volunteer history in the **Professional History Form**;
 - A resume is not required – instead, all applicants fill out the professional history form as part of their application.
 - The committee will assess both length/quantity of time and the type of experience to determine its relevance.
 - **If you are currently employed in a position**, please put January 2023 as the end date for the position. There is no option on the application to select “current” in the professional history form.
 - **If your volunteer work or employment occurred outside of the United States**, please enter the country where the work took place in the “State” field.
- Enter 3 references for your **Letters of Recommendation**;
 - You will not be able to submit your application until you have entered three recommenders into the system.
 - Recommendations will all be completed through the online system. You should not collect or submit any physical letters of recommendation.
 - More information on the recommendation process can be found in the drop downs below
- Pay the **\$50 graduate application fee**
 - If paying the application fee is a financial hardship, please see the information below regarding Colorado Free Application Days and the Application Fee Waiver Request form.

Application Fee Waiver Opportunities

This fall, Colorado Free Application Day\$ is back! The fifth-annual state-wide initiative will be held from **Tuesday, October 18 through Thursday, October 20, 2022**. If you **submit** your graduate application on one of those three days, your application fee will be automatically waived – no fee waiver code required! Do not click the “Finalize Application and Pay” button until Free Application Days, otherwise an application fee will be placed on your account.

If you are not able to submit your application during Free Application Days and paying the \$50 application fee is a financial hardship, you can fill out the [MSW Program 2023 Application Fee Waiver Request Form](#). After submission, your request will be reviewed by the Office of Social Work Student Services. **If you are requesting an application fee waiver, please do not click the “Finalize Application and Pay” button on the review page of your application until you hear back from us.** Fee waiver codes can only be entered on the “Signature” page of the application, and once that button is clicked you can no longer enter a fee waiver code. Please be aware that if you have already paid the application fee, we cannot issue a refund.

Information on Letters of Recommendation

How many recommendations are required?

Three letters of recommendation are required for application to the MSW Program at MSU Denver. Each letter of recommendation is individually evaluated by the Admissions Committee. The committee can only evaluate three recommendations per application. Therefore, if you enter more than three recommenders into the system, it is your responsibility to exclude the recommendations you do not want reviewed by the committee prior to the deadline.

If you need assistance excluding recommendations, please email socialwork@msudenver.edu. If you have not excluded any recommendations from review, our office will take the first three letters completed for review. You must have three completed recommendations by the application deadline for your application to be considered complete and eligible for review.

Who should my recommenders be?

Recommenders **should** be professional and **should not** be family, friends, and/or personal therapists. Professional recommenders include faculty, employment/volunteer supervisors, and professional colleagues.

It is strongly recommended that at least one letter come from a faculty member (when possible – the committee understands that applicants who have been out of school for some time may not have faculty able to provide recommendations) and one letter from a supervisor (employment or volunteer based).

Professional colleagues may serve as adequate recommenders if need be, but use caution that the Admissions Committee highly values faculty and supervisor letters.

Recommenders should be able to speak to your academic and/or professional abilities as well as comment on your potential to succeed in graduate school and/or the field of social work. When considering your recommenders, think about who can write a strong letter of recommendation for you. The quality of the letter contributes to your overall application score.

Advanced Standing Applicants ONLY: you are required to have at least one letter of recommendation from someone associated with your undergraduate social work program. This could include a faculty advisor, field director, field instructor, field liaison, or program director.

How will my recommenders complete the request?

As soon as you enter your recommenders into the system, they will receive an email with a unique link to complete their recommendation. Recommenders can start work on completing the recommendation as soon as they are entered in the system, even prior to you submitting your application!

Recommenders will need to upload a written narrative (Word or PDF only) and fill out an evaluation form within the system to complete their recommendation.

What should my recommender's written narrative address?

We ask that your recommenders upload a written narrative statement that addresses/describes the following:

- In what capacity and for how long have you known the applicant?
- Applicant's suitability for professional social work practice;
- Applicant's strength (skills/values) as a candidate for professional education in social work;
- Applicant's response to supervision and critical feedback;
- Applicant's ability to collaborate with others.

If the recommender evaluates the applicant as "excellent" or "below average" in any areas on the evaluation form, they are asked to explain those ratings in their narrative as well.

Step Two: Submit Transcripts

We can accept both official and unofficial transcripts during the admission process. Applicants must submit a transcript (official or unofficial) from each college or university attended for their application to be eligible for review. All transcripts should be submitted using one of the options outlined below. Please do **not** submit any materials to the Office of Admissions at MSU Denver. Failure to submit using one of the options below may result in a delay in processing your application.

What transcripts need to be submitted?

We require the submission of transcripts from **all** higher education institutions (colleges and universities) attended before we can review your application. ***Even if you later transferred the coursework to another school, we still need the transcript (official or unofficial) from the institution you originally took the courses at.***

You do **not** need to submit high school transcripts as part of the MSW Program application process.

Special Circumstances (international degrees, MSU Denver graduates, and previously submitted official transcripts)

- If you **attended a college or university outside of the United States**, you must have your transcripts evaluated by either [WES](#), [ECE](#), or [SpanTran](#). Please make sure to request a **course-by-course evaluation**. We cannot accept un-evaluated transcripts for review or for admission to the MSW Program. Once your transcript has been evaluated, you will have it submitted directly following the official transcript instructions below.
 - If you only attended a college or university outside of the United States for a study abroad experience, an evaluation is **not** required **if** your U.S. transcript displays the course names, credits, and grades received for each course taken abroad. If your U.S. transcript does not contain this information, then you will need a WES, ECE, or SpanTran evaluation.
- If you **obtained an undergraduate degree from MSU Denver**, your official transcripts will automatically be associated with your application. This process may take up to 10 business days after application submission. Any transcripts you previously submitted to MSU Denver do not need to be re-submitted, however if you have taken coursework since graduation at another institution you will need to submit those transcripts.
- If you have **previously submitted official transcripts to MSU Denver**, they will be associated with your application after submission. This process may take up to 10 business days after application submission. If it has been more than 10 business days and a transcript that you previously submitted is not showing as received, please email socialwork@msudenver.edu with your full legal name, any former names, student ID # (if known), and date of birth so we can track down your transcripts.

Official and Unofficial Transcript Submission

Unofficial Transcripts

Unofficial transcripts can be uploaded to your admissions application either prior to submitting the application (on the Academic History page) **or** after submitting the application (via your Application Status/Checklist page)

Unofficial transcripts should show 1) credits received, 2) GPA, and 3) any degree awarded (including degree date). If you are currently enrolled in undergraduate studies, your current transcript does not need to show a degree awarded.

If you choose to upload unofficial transcripts and are accepted to the MSW Program, you will be accepted with the requirement that you submit official transcripts from all institutions attended prior to the start of MSW Program courses.

Official Transcripts

If you choose to submit official transcripts for admissions, please follow the instructions below. Transcripts must be submitted directly by the college or university or dropped off in their original sealed envelope to be considered official. Once transcripts have been opened by a student, they are considered unofficial. For an electronic transcript to be considered official, it must be sent directly by the college or university. Any transcripts emailed or uploaded by an applicant are considered unofficial.

Note: Due to the volume of transcripts received by the Office of Graduate Studies, it can take up to 10 business days from when an official transcript is received to get it processed and marked received in your application checklist.

- Submit Official Transcripts Electronically (Preferred Method)
 - Request official transcripts be sent electronically to gradtranscripts@msudenver.edu.
 - We can only accept electronic transcripts as official when they are sent directly by the college or university. Any electronic transcripts emailed by an applicant are considered unofficial.
- Submit Official Transcripts by Mail
 - Request official transcripts be sent by mail to:
Metropolitan State University of Denver
Office of Graduate Studies
PO Box 173362, Campus Box 48
Denver, CO 80217-3362

Important Note About Ordering Official Transcripts:

If you are ordering your transcripts and select to send them to a school, you may be forced to choose from a list of schools and will not be able to enter the gradtranscripts@msudenver.edu email or mailing address. If this is the situation, **do not** select MSU Denver as this will have your materials sent to the MSU Denver Office of Admissions and will delay processing. Instead, you should **select to send the transcripts to a third party** at which point you should be able to directly enter our information. Sending to a third party and directly entering the email or physical address you want them sent to should be an option at all institutions. We have had transcripts from all schools in Colorado and from schools across the U.S. sent to us via the gradtranscripts@msudenver.edu account and Office of Graduate Studies mailing address.

Step Three: Upload Application Materials

After submitting your MSU Denver Graduate Application, you can [log into your application account](#) at any time to check your application status page and upload any remaining required materials. Please note that you do not have to upload all materials at once.

For your application to be considered complete and eligible for review at the deadline, the following items must be marked as “received” or “received copy” in your application checklist:

- Transcripts from all institutions attended (see Step Two for details)
- Essay/Personal Statement (prompts and requirements below)
- Case Study (Advanced Standing applicants ONLY) (prompts, case, and requirements below)
- 3 Letters of Recommendation

To re-send notification emails to your recommenders, visit the recommendations page (linked below your application checklist), click “Edit”, and then click “Send Reminder”. This is also where you can exclude a recommender and/or enter a new recommender if needed.

If you are applying to the Advanced Standing Program and your undergraduate social work degree was awarded/conferred from December 2012 to November 2016, the **Petition for Advanced Standing** will be added to your checklist after verification of degree date. You must also complete this form prior to the deadline for your application to be considered complete and eligible for review.

[CHECK YOUR APPLICATION STATUS](#)

Application Material Instructions

Admissions Essay Requirements & Prompts (All Applicants)

The Admissions Essay must be written and saved to the applicant’s computer as a **Word or PDF file** prior to being uploaded to the application checklist.

The submission requirement is an **academic essay** which helps the admissions committee to evaluate your capacity and readiness for graduate education and advanced social work practice.

The admissions essay is a critical part of your admissions application and will be the basis for evaluating your writing skills, critical thinking skills, and capacity for self-awareness and personal growth. Be sure to include all required elements in an academic essay, using academic sources where appropriate (your ability to use and cite appropriate sources is an indicator of critical thinking) and follow [APA 7th Edition style](#). We strongly encourage applicants to thoroughly review and edit their submission prior to upload.

While some personal information is required in the essay (e.g. your strengths), you should be judicious in the use of self-disclosure. You are not expected to disclose intimate details of your life; however, if you choose to do so, you should do so only briefly and make it clear how the issue has been resolved so that you may now succeed in the program and the profession.

The maximum length of the entire essay is **no more than six pages** (12 pt. font, double spaced, title page and/or reference page do not count towards the page limit). This is not short answer and should not be bullet-pointed; you should address and arrange the required information in a coherent, well-structured essay. An abstract is not required.

Your essay should incorporate the following information:

1. the alignment of your personal philosophy and values with that of the profession;
2. your understanding of and commitment to diversity and social justice;
3. your professional experience;
4. your career plans and focus in the field of social work versus another helping profession (i.e., why social work?);

5. your strengths and weaknesses that are relevant to the social work profession;
6. describe a time you were given critical feedback – what was your reaction and how did that experience inform your development?;
7. how the MSU Denver MSW Program is best suited for your educational and professional goals; and
8. how you will manage the rigorous demands of graduate education.

The arrangement of this information is up to you; all must be addressed, but the order in which you do so should be guided by your writing style. Overall, we are looking that you understand the profession, are committed to it, and are ready for graduate-level work.

Due to the large number of applications the MSW Program receives, the Department of Social Work regrettably cannot provide feedback on your admissions essay prior to submission.

However, the [MSU Denver Writing Center](#) does provide support for MSW Program applicants – please [visit their website](#) for more information and to schedule an appointment. When looking at available appointments, make sure to limit to “MSW applications” to get paired with a team member who can assist with graduate-level writing. When scheduling, make sure to select the following options:

- What is your standing at MSU Denver? **MSW program applicant**
- What type of appointment do you want? **Writing consultation** (if individual) or **group writing consultation** (if going as a group of 2-4 applicants)
- Course the writing is for (department): **Social Work – MSW**
- What department is your major? **Social Work**

Case Study Requirements & Prompts (Advanced Standing Applicants ONLY)

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.

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 rational (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.

Petition for Advanced Standing (Advanced Standing Applicants ONLY)

The Petition for Advanced Standing is built into the application checklist and will be completed there if required.

This form is only required for individuals whose bachelors degree in social work is more than 6 years old.

The Advanced Standing Program is reserved for those who have earned a bachelors in social work from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited program within the last 6 years as of the start of MSW Program courses in June 2023. However, applicants with a degree older than 6 years, but still less than 10 years old as of June 2023, may petition the MSW Program to review their eligibility for Advanced Standing. Eligibility is determined upon the applicant's extent and level of current professional activity and development in the field of social work. Applicants whose bachelors in social work degree is older than 10 years must apply to the Regular Program.

- If you earned your bachelors in social work between **December 2016 and present**, you do **not** need to submit the Petition for Advanced Standing
- If you earned your bachelors in social work between **December 2012 and November 2016**, you **must** submit the Petition for Advanced Standing as part of your MSW Program application if you want to be considered for Advanced Standing.
- If you earned your bachelors in social work degree in **November 2012 or earlier**, you are not eligible for Advanced Standing and may submit the Regular Program application.

Optional: Supplemental Items

Applicants may upload supplemental items to their application checklist. This is **not** a required step in the application process. There is no guarantee that the Admissions Committee will review any uploaded supplemental materials. As such, if an uploaded document is a critical component, applicants are encouraged to refer to the document in their admissions essay. Items uploaded as supplemental items are not evaluated as part of the formal review, but may serve to answer some questions or paint a more comprehensive picture of the applicant.

Is My Application Complete?

Your application is considered complete and eligible for review if:

- You have submitted your graduate application, including either paying the \$50 application fee, having it waived on Free Application Days, or entering a fee waiver code;
- Your transcripts from all previously attended institutions have a green checkmark on your checklist;
- You uploaded your written materials (essay and case study if applicable) and they have a green checkmark;
- Three letters of recommendation have a green checkmark

All four items listed above **must** be complete by the application deadline for your application to be eligible for review.

The only item on your list that can be incomplete at the deadline is the “UGD Degree Conferral” items if you submitted unofficial transcripts or if your undergraduate degree is still in progress (official transcripts will only be required if accepted). Even if your undergraduate degree shows as complete on your unofficial transcript, the “UGD Degree Conferral” item will remain incomplete until after we receive official transcripts showing its completion – this is fine and allowed at this point in the admission process!

Your application checklist will help you keep track of your journey to a complete application. We encourage you to check it whenever you have questions about your application status. If you are unsure of your status after reviewing your checklist, please email socialwork@msudenver.edu.