

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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About the MSW Program

1. Why should I pursue a master's degree in social work from SDSU?

For over 60 years, SDSU School of Social Work has been committed to excellence in all aspects of professional social work education and training with a long history of community engagement and involvement. We have an excellent faculty who strive to make your educational experience a good one. Our academic program is rigorous, exhilarating and absorbing. Students have many opportunities to examine, probe and challenge their ideas and capabilities.

2. How long will it take to earn my MSW degree?

We offer four curriculum plans, allowing you to complete the MSW program according to your own schedule:

- One-year plan: Advanced Standing Program
- Two-year plan
- Three-year plan
- Four-year plan

Refer to the course sequence for the different program plans on our website at www.socialwork.sdsu.edu

3. Why should I attend SDSU for my MSW degree?

SDSU provides an environment that fosters advanced training and original scholarship across all disciplines. It offers prospective graduate students and faculty the opportunity to engage in the highest caliber graduate training, academic scholarship and research, in one of the most beautiful and diverse settings in our nation. SDSU has been described by the Carnegie Foundation as a “research university with high research activity”;

a statement reflecting the strength and commitment of the campus to its Masters and joint-doctor programs. Our programs emphasize a low student- to-faculty ratio, which provides you with excellent opportunities to work closely with faculty. This enhances the quality of your graduate education and gives you the individual attention that ensures an excellent graduate training experience. The University is a world-class institution, recognized not only for its distinguished academic scholarship but also for its commitment to and success in attracting a diverse cohort. SDSU embraces the rich diversity of its student body and recognizes that this diversity is an integral component to furthering our academic excellence. SDSU's student population ranks as one of the 25 most racially diverse in the country.

4. What practice areas are offered?

You may choose from one of two method concentrations: direct practice or administration/community development. Within each concentration, a student may design their own program of study according to their interest (e.g. child welfare, mental health, health and aging).

- Direct Practice: Concentration with a micro and mezzo level approach focusing on counseling and therapy for individuals and groups.
- Administration/Community Development: Concentration with a macro level approach focusing on policy and leadership.

5. Are there dual degree programs?

The MSW/MPH and MSW/JD programs are not being offered for the upcoming admission cycle

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6. Do you offer an online or part-time program?

No, we do not, however, we offer a three-year and a four-year curriculum plan that allow students to complete the program over the course of three or four years. All programs are only offered in-person.

7. Do you offer the MSW program at locations other than San Diego?

Yes, we offer a program at the Imperial Valley SDSU Campus, which begins once every three years. For additional information about this program contact: mwadmissions@sdsu.edu The next MSW admission that will be offered at the Imperial Valley Campus will be in the **Fall of 2026**.

8. What orientation activities does the school provide for new students?

We require all new students to attend an incoming orientation session that will introduce the program, curriculum, field instruction, student organizations and campus resources, which generally takes place one week before classes start. Additionally, we encourage students to set up a campus tour through SDSU Prospective Student services that will provide an introduction to other campus resources and support services, <http://sdsu.edu/campustours> The SDSU International Student Center is also available to help foreign students become oriented to the school, <http://www.isc.sdsu.edu>.

9. Do I need to complete a thesis?

MSW students have the option to complete a thesis (SWORK 799A, Plan A) in their last semester. Completing a thesis is not required by those who choose Plan B. However students with Plan B must pass the comprehensive exam.

Dual degree students do not have the option to take the comprehensive exam. All MSW/MPH students must complete a thesis. All MSW/JD students must either complete a thesis or complete a scholarly writing article.

About Applying for MSW Admission

10. What are the admission requirements for the MSW program?

Applicants must hold a bachelor's degree (liberal arts perspective) from an accredited college or university. We strongly prefer at least a 3.0 cumulative undergraduate GPA. Applicants must also take the GRE, have 500 hours of human services experience (paid, volunteer, or internship), and have successfully completed an undergraduate statistics course prior to admissions.

11. What type of experience counts towards the 500 hour requirement?

Any paid, volunteer, internship or work experience that is relevant to the field of social work or human services will count to satisfy this requirement. This includes, but is not limited to, working in a multicultural or diverse environment, with underrepresented groups, disenfranchised populations; direct work with clients is highly desired. This may also include any human service work experience in MICRO (individual/direct practice), MEZZO (families, groups or management), and/or MACRO (policy or administration) work with special populations, in addition research experience would count toward the 500 hour requirement. We are looking for applicants who can demonstrate their desire and ability to work in the field of social work.

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The hours will be reported on the School of Social Work application at the time you apply. While it is highly advised to have the hours completed by the time you apply, you are able to complete hours after the application date if you indicate this on your application and provide a description of the type of work you will be doing.

12. What type of undergraduate degree do I need?

A liberal arts background, spanning both social and biological sciences, is the ideal preparation for the MSW program, but you are encouraged to apply even if your bachelor's degree was not in the liberal arts. We accept all majors.

13. Do I need to take the GRE and when should I take it?

No, students applying for Fall 2023 are not required to submit a GRE score.

14 Do I need to take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)?

Yes, if your medium of instruction was in a language other than English. Test scores are reported to the Graduate Division and the School of Social Work by the Education Testing Service, SDSU Institution Code 4682. It generally takes 3-4 weeks for scores to be reported.

15. What are the requirements for international applicants?

If you have international coursework, you must have your school send Graduate Admissions one official original-language copy of all records of academic coursework and proof of degree. For each document you must also send a certified literal English translation, which can come directly from the school itself or from a professional, certified translator. The translation must contain all information shown on the original-language documents. For details on which documents are required, check <http://www.isc.sdsu.edu>. All graduate applicants (regardless of citizenship status) applying to SDSU from an international institution where the medium of instruction was not English, must submit proof of English proficiency. A list of acceptable English proficiency tests can be found on the Graduate Admissions Steps to Apply: <https://admissions.sdsu.edu/graduate/steps-apply>.

16. How many students are accepted?

Out of roughly 500 applicants we enroll approximately 110 new students in the MSW programs each fall.

17 . When will I hear whether I am accepted?

Decision letters are emailed between March and **June 5**. Wait list students will be notified the first week of June.

18. What is the MSW program application deadline?

The deadline for all MSW-Only programs is **December 1st** (Advanced Standing, 2-year MSW, 3-year MSW, 4-year MSW).

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A completed application includes:

- Cal State Apply application and School of Social Work (Interfolio) application
- Transcripts
- Personal statement
- Three reference letters
- Application Information Certification
- Employment/Volunteer/Experience Form
- Resume

YOU ARE REQUIRED TO CHECK YOUR WEB PORTAL TO ENSURE YOUR APPLICATION IS COMPLETE.

We strongly encourage each applicant to monitor their application status on the web portal throughout the application process. Please note the School of Social Work will not review any file that is incomplete.

19. Can I transfer credits from other graduate programs?

Yes, with certain restrictions. Transfer applicants must have at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average at their original institution. Class credit will be evaluated and allowed on a case-by-case basis.

A maximum of 30 credit hours may be transferred. Please contact Kellie Scott, MSW Admissions Director, kscott@sdsu.edu with:

Transfer applicants must fill out a Cal State Apply and Interfolio application found on the SDSU MSW Admissions webpage. The following will be required to be submitted in your Transfer Interfolio application:

1. A Personal statement using the prompt provided on the website. In addition include a one-two page letter containing information on your career goals, area of concentration (Direct practice or Administration/Community Development), how many semesters of internship you have completed and describe the reasons that you are transferring. If you took leave of absence from your major, describe why you needed to take a leave of absence and why you are now ready to resume your social work education. Any problems at your previous school or intern-ship should be explained.
2. A letter from the student's previous School of Social Work stating that the student is in good academic and professional/ethical standing.
3. Evaluation or progress report on your field placement from your previous school.
4. Transfer students are only considered for admission in the Fall semester. The deadline to apply for Fall is **December 1st**.



About Paying for your Graduate Education

20. What is the cost of attending graduate school at SDSU?

Please refer to our estimates of tuition and expenses for the MSW Program students and visit the SDSU Money Matters website for more information about the cost of attendance <http://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/admissions/costs.html#costs>

21. Does SDSU provide financial aid?

Yes. The SDSU Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship administers federal aid programs and provides information on private financing programs. Please read our overview of financial aid for MSW students and visit SDSU Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship website http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/financialaid/ for detailed information about the financial aid application process, deadlines and downloadable forms. To ensure maximum financial aid eligibility, complete all financial aid documents by the deadlines, regardless of your application status.

22. Are there any additional financial aid resources?

We offer departmental scholarships to MSW students. Awards vary and are based on individual merit and financial need. Refer to our scholarships page for more information <http://socialwork.sdsu.edu/student-resources/financial-aid/scholarships/>

Specialized MSW Stipend Programs

- CalSWEC Title IV-E Child Welfare Services Stipend Program: 2-year plan students receive educational stipends of \$25,000 annually and specialized training in public child welfare in exchange for committing to work in a California public child welfare agency upon graduation. Full time county employees may be reimbursed for educational expenses.

University scholarships are available. Also, private loans are available. Please refer to the SDSU Financial Aid Office website http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/financialaid/financialaidindexpage.aspx for more information.

23. What financial aid opportunities are available for international students?

Please visit the SDSU International Student Center web site <http://www.isc.sdsu.edu> for more information.

24. Do you offer graduate assistantships?

Yes. Please request a Graduate Assistant (GA) application from <https://socialwork.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/ga-application.pdf>, then submit your completed GA application with your resume to socwork@sdsu.edu

25. Can I apply to multiple program at SDSU?

No, only one application per student per term will be considered. You can apply to as many campuses as you wish, each with a \$70 application fee, but note you can only apply to one program per campus.

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26. Is student housing available?

Yes. SDSU Housing Services offers a wide variety of housing options for graduate students, from residence halls to apartments. Most MSW students do not live in university housing since the San Diego area has numerous interesting communities in which to live, many within a reasonable commuting distance from SDSU. Housing applications may only be submitted once you have been admitted to SDSU. Please see the SDSU Housing website <http://housing.sdsu.edu/> for more information.

27. Are International Students allowed to apply for the three or four year program?

No, all international students must enroll in a full course load every semester (9 units for graduates, 12 for undergraduates) to maintain their F-1 status. If they plan to take less than a full load of study, they must complete the Application for Reduced Course Load (ARCL) form https://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/internationalstudents/isarcl.aspx every semester which they are under enrolled to maintain their F-1 status. If an international student fails to submit the ARCL form and is not enrolled in a full course load status, they have voided their F-1 status and their SEVIS record will be terminated.

