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# **I. BA in Social Work Admissions Policies and Application Process**

Before applying to the BA Social Work program, you must be admitted to the University of Iowa. You can find university admission requirements for undergraduate students at <https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/requirements-bachelors-degree>. The BA in Social Work is a selective admissions program, so you must apply and meet additional criteria detailed below. Due to class size restrictions, not all students who meet the School's admission requirements are admitted when the applicant pool is large. Applications are due **February 15**.

## **A. Criteria for Selective Admission to the BA in Social Work Program**

### Academic Potential

You must have a cumulative GPA of 2.50 (on a 4.0 scale) at the time of admission. The admissions committee will still consider for admission applicants who do not meet the minimum GPA but demonstrate strengths/potential in other areas on an individual basis.

### Prerequisite Course

You must have earned a grade of C or above in SSW:1022 Social Justice and Social Welfare in the United States or comparable course(es) taken at another college and approved by the School of Social Work. If you received a P grade for SSW:1022 in Spring 2020 (due to COVID-19 pandemic), you are eligible for admission. However, the admission committee will contact the instructor for more information about your academic performance in the course. You may be enrolled in SSW:1022 in the spring semester you apply. If admitted, you must earn a C or above in the course before entering the program.

## **B. When to Apply**

We strongly recommend you enroll in SSW:1022 Social Justice and Social Welfare in the United States in your first or second year at Iowa and apply to the School in the spring of your second (sophomore). Students admitted as juniors complete the program over four semesters (two academic years). You may also apply in the spring of your third (junior) year and complete the program in two semesters and a summer. If not accepted on your first attempt, you may apply the following year; however, only two attempts to apply to the BA program are allowed.

You cannot register for required social work major courses until you are admitted to the School. However, you can take social work electives before you apply.

The School of Social Work does not accept references except for those required for transfer students.

## **C. Who Can Apply**

### Social Work Interest Majors

If you are planning to apply to the School of Social Work, we encourage you to declare a Social Work Interest major through the University's Academic Programs Office. Declaring a Social Work Interest major can be done any time before earning 72 semester hours. As a Social Work Interest major, you can participate in the Student Association and other School activities before being admitted to the program.

### Applicants with other majors

Students who have declared another major or are an open major can apply to the School.

### Transfer Students

Transfer students from a community college or another BA in Social Work program can apply to the School. You must be admitted to the University of Iowa when you apply to the Social Work program. Transfer students must follow the admissions process described in this document, and submit the following additional information by the **February 15 deadline**:

#### *Transfer Students from a Community College:*

The School has approved introductory level social work courses from numerous area community colleges (see [equivalency tables of approved courses](#)). If the introductory course you took is not on this list, contact Kate Kemp ([kate-kemp@uiowa.edu](mailto:kate-kemp@uiowa.edu)) for approval before you submit your application.

#### *Transfer Students from another Accredited BSW/BASW Program:*

If you completed social work courses at another CSWE accredited social work program, you can request to have these courses applied to the Social Work major. The School will evaluate and approve courses on a case-by-case basis. Generally, courses completed more than ten years ago will not be accepted. To have your prior social work courses considered to fulfill our social work major courses, you must provide the course outline(s) from these courses. If these courses are accepted, your advisor will adjust your plan of study accordingly. If you are transferring from another social work program, you should submit your course outlines to Kate Kemp ([kate-kemp@uiowa.edu](mailto:kate-kemp@uiowa.edu)) before applying so you know what courses are approved towards the major if you are accepted.

## **D. Admission Decisions**

The admissions committee will notify applicants of the outcome of their application (accepted, declined, or wait-listed) before the spring early registration. If you are enrolled in SSW:1022 Social Justice and Social Welfare in the United States in the spring semester, your admission is contingent on earning a C or better in this course. Final admissions decisions for students whose GPA does not meet the minimum 2.5 will not be finalized until we review your spring semester's grades to assess if you have made adequate progress towards raising your GPA. The School of Social Work makes every effort to assure a diverse body of admitted students from underrepresented groups and representing diversity in gender identity, ethnicity, race, age, religion, sexual orientation, ability, and socioeconomic class.

## **E. Academic Advising Before and After Admission**

### Academic Advising Before Admission

The Academic Counseling Center advises first-year students. CLAS Senior Academic Advisor Tiffany Phillips ([tiffany-b-phillips@uiowa.edu](mailto:tiffany-b-phillips@uiowa.edu)) advises Social Work Interest students with more than 24 semester hours. If you have currently earned more than 72 hours, you must declare another major to register for classes. If admitted, we will change your major to Social Work.

### Academic Advising After Admission

Once admitted, you are assigned either a faculty member or a professional staff member as your academic advisor. If your academic advisor is a staff member, you are also assigned a faculty mentor. Your social work advisor will assist with course planning in the major and advise you on the School's certificate programs (Aging and Longevity Studies, Critical Cultural Competence, Trauma and Resilience). We are less familiar with minors or majors in other departments, so we encourage you to consult with an advisor in those departments.

### Academic Advising when Transferring to the UI

The Undergraduate Admissions and the Registrars' Office will evaluate your transcripts to determine which transfer courses fulfill the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences' general education requirements. Your Degree Audit will indicate what, if any, remaining general education requirements you need to complete. When admitted to the UI, you are required to attend a transfer orientation. This orientation includes a meeting with your social work academic advisor, who will review your Degree Audit and create a plan of study to complete the major.

## **F. Deferring your Admission**

If you cannot enroll for the academic year accepted, you must submit a written request to defer your admission until the next academic year so we can hold a spot for you. You can defer admission for only one year. If you need a longer deferral, you will need to reapply to the School.

Students must enter the program as juniors or seniors. If you are not yet a junior but are accepted to the program, we may ask you to defer your admission until you have junior status. You can take social work elective courses, but cannot begin courses in the major. You will be classified as a social work major and advised by a social work academic advisor.

## **G. Records**

The School retains all admission materials until a student graduates. We keep materials submitted by non-accepted students for two years.

## **II. Guidelines for Completing the Application**

The application deadline is **February 15<sup>th</sup>** for enrollment in the fall 2022 semester. You must complete the application online using the following link: [BA application link](#). You need to upload several documents with your application. **You should gather or complete these documents before accessing the application link.**

The completed application form includes:

- Demographic and academic information (name, email, student ID number, address, phone number, GPA, number of semester hours completed, grade in SSW:1022 Social Justice and Social Welfare)
- Five required essays (use and upload the [Admission Essay Template](#) provided on the Admissions webpage).
- One optional essay if your GPA is below 2.50 (included in essay template)
- One reapplication essay if you are applying to the program a second time (included in essay template)
- A table of social service-related volunteer, community engagement/activism and/or work experiences essays (use and upload the [Social Service Experience Table Template](#) provided on the Admissions webpage).
- For current UI students, your UI grade report (follow [instructions to access your UI grade report](#) on Admission webpage).
- For transfer students, an unofficial transcript from your current institution (upload as a pdf file).

The following is a detailed description of how to complete each part of the application.

## **A. Demographic and Academic Information**

The application asks you to provide some required and optional demographic and academic information. If the information is required, you will not be able to complete the application until you enter the necessary information. We ask you to provide: your current GPA, number of semester hours completed, number of semester hours you are currently taking, grade in SSW:1022 Social Justice and Social Welfare, and name of the course instructor, so please have this information available before starting the application.

## **B. Essays**

The admission essays are your opportunity to help us understand more about who you are and what you hope to accomplish in the School of Social Work and your future career. Please use the [Admission Essay Template](#) provided. Download the template, insert your essays, and upload your saved document.

There are five required essays (1, 2a, 2b, 3, & 4) to be completed by all applicants. For students whose current overall GPA is below the required minimum 2.50, there is an optional essay that allows you to share any information about your GPA you think would be helpful for the admissions committee to know.

For students applying a second time, you must complete a required essay describing what you have done to strengthen your application since you last applied.

Each essay has a maximum number of words allowed per response. Please adhere to the word limit for each essay. Compose your statements in a word-processing program to take advantage of spelling and grammar tools, as well as the word count. Proofread once more to make sure there are no odd characters or line breaks. If you are reapplying to the School of Social Work, your responses should be different from those previously submitted. The admission committee will review your prior application and statements.

Upload your essays to the ESSAYS section in the online application.

## **C. Social Service Experience Table**

We are interested in relevant social service, community engagement, advocacy, or volunteer/work experiences that have informed your decision to pursue a social work degree. Use the [Social Service Experience Table Template](#) provided.

- List and describe any volunteer and/or paid social service related experience(s) you have had.
- In the Other Relevant Activities section, list other activities and offices you have held (designate if held in high school/college/other) that you feel are important to share.

Upload the completed volunteer/work experience table to the SOCIAL SERVICE EXPERIENCES TABLE section in the online application.

## **D. Unofficial Grade Report/Transcript**

Upload a copy of your most recent unofficial Grade Report or transcript.

### Current UI students taking courses at UI

Current UI students can find their Grade Report in MyUI by following the instructions on the [Admissions](#) webpage.

Upload your Grade Report to the GRADE REPORT/TRANSCRIPT section in the application. DO NOT upload a copy of your degree audit.

### Transfer Students

Upload a copy of your most current transcript. You do not need to provide an official, certified transcript. The transcript should include all courses and grades taken to date, your overall GPA, and courses you are registered for in the Spring semester. Your name and the institution must be visible on the transcript.

Upload your grade report to the GRADE REPORT/TRANSCRIPT section in the application.

If you have any questions about the application process contact us at 319 335-1250 or [ssw-admissions@uiowa.edu](mailto:ssw-admissions@uiowa.edu)

### **E. Naming and Uploading Files**

For all uploaded files, make sure your name is clearly printed on the document.

When saving the file, name the file with your last name, first name.

For example:      Addams Jane Essays.docx      OR      Addams Jane Essays.pdf.  
                         Addams Jane Transcript.docx      OR      Addams Jane Transcript.pdf

### **F. Incomplete Applications**

You are responsible for making sure your application is complete. The admissions committee will not review applications that do not include all required fields or uploaded documents, documents that do not contain your name, or are not named correctly.

The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination in employment, educational programs, and activities on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, status as a US veteran, service in the US military, sexual orientation, gender identity, associational preferences, or any other classification that deprives the person of consideration as an individual. The university also affirms its commitment to providing equal opportunities and equal access to university facilities. For additional information on nondiscrimination policies, contact the Director, [Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity](#), the University of Iowa, 202 Jessup Hall, Iowa City, IA 52242-1316, 319-335-0705 (voice), 319-335-0697 (TDD), [diversity@uiowa.edu](mailto:diversity@uiowa.edu).

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all University of Iowa-sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this program, please contact School of Social Work Student Services Center, in advance at: [ssw\\_office@iowa.uiowa.edu](mailto:ssw_office@iowa.uiowa.edu) or phone: 319 335-1250.

### III. Tips for Writing your Application Essays

The admissions committee assesses each applicant's fit for the social work program by considering the following qualities deemed essential for the professional practice of social work:

- 1) intellectual capacity and analytical skills as evidenced in your academic performance in courses considered foundational to social work;
- 2) a commitment to social justice, empowering individuals, and serving underrepresented groups;
- 3) an understanding of and willingness to adhere to the profession's Code of Ethics;
- 4) the ability to be self-reflective;
- 5) a recognition of the strengths and resources of cultures different from your own; and
- 6) written communication skills as evidenced by the clarity of writing in your personal essays.

You need to provide evidence of these qualities in your application.

1. In thinking about your life experiences and beliefs that have shaped your interest in the Social Work profession, you might consider the following prompts as you compose your essays:
  - What life events and people have influenced your choice of the profession? What did you learn from these experiences?
  - How have your experiences with persons who are different from you (by race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, belief systems, etc.) influenced your choice of the profession?
  - How have your paid or volunteer experiences influenced your choice of the profession? What important lessons did you learn from these experiences that led to your decision to pursue a social work degree?
  - Using the [Code of Ethics](#) of the National Association of Social Workers and its Preamble, how are your values consistent with the Code?
  - What are your strengths, and how do you hope to grow in the social work program?
  - What are your short term and long-term goals as a professional social worker? Do you have special interests in working with a particular social problem (such as homelessness, violence, substance abuse, etc.) or with a specific population (youth, the elderly, etc.)? How do these special interests connect to your goals?

Because of the word limit of each essay, be selective in the material you present. You cannot respond to each prompt, but consider these prompts as you reflect on what content you will include in your essays.

2. The admissions committee will use your essays to evaluate your written communication skills. Make sure to proofread (grammar and spell-check) before submitting your essays. Use topic sentences to begin paragraphs. If you need additional writing assistance, you can get help from the UI Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/>).
3. Get feedback on your essays. Ask someone who knows you well to read your essays and give you critical feedback about their organization and content. The admission committee cannot provide feedback on your essays before you submit them, but we encourage you to seek input from social workers you may know from your volunteer or work experiences.
4. Give yourself time to reflect on the points you want to make. Seek information that you need from books, websites, etc. Write a draft. Sleep on it. Revise. Get feedback. Revise again. Proofread your final versions before uploading.