



CSUSM MSW PROGRAM INFORMATION AND PERSONAL STATEMENT PROMPT

Thank you for your interest in the CSUSM Master of Social Work (MSW) program! We strive to provide a supportive, competency-based educational experience that prepares students for professional social work practice. The program is rigorous and combines classroom instruction with supervised field education to provide a strong foundation in the knowledge, values, and skills of the social work profession.

Before applying to the program, we strongly encourage you to thoroughly review the MSW program [website](#) and either attend a live or watch a recorded online [information session](#).

Time Commitment/Educational Plan

The CSUSM MSW program requires a significant investment of time and commitment. In addition to attending class and completing internship requirements, students should expect to spend approximately 1 to 1.5 hours per week outside of class reading, studying, and completing assignments for each unit of course credit. For example, a 3-credit course requires a minimum of approximately 4 hours of outside-of-class work each week.

Program Type	In-Class Hours	Work Outside Class *per 3-Unit Class	Field Practicum	Total Hours/Week each semester
2-Year (1 st Year)	15 hrs	4 hrs (x 5 classes)	16 hrs/week	51 hrs/week
2-Year (2 nd Year & Adv. Standing)	15 hrs	4 hrs (x 5 classes)	20 hrs/week	55 hrs/week
3-year (1 st Year)	6 hrs	4 hrs (x 2 classes)	--	14 hrs/week
3-year (2 nd & 3 rd Year)	9 hrs	4 hrs (x 3 classes)	16-20 hrs/week	37-41 hrs/week

PERSONAL STATEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Your personal statement includes a required video response and a written statement.

- Maximum two double-spaced pages (12-point font with one-inch margins).
- Address each prompt in the order presented.
- Write in narrative form (not question-and-answer format).
- Include the required section headings:
 - Video Response
 - Difficult Situation
 - NASW Code of Ethics
 - Social Justice and Diversity

Your personal statement will be evaluated for evidence of critical thinking, self-reflection, and advanced writing skills. We value your authentic voice and personal perspectives. The use of generative AI tools (e.g., Copilot, Gemini, ChatGPT/GPT) to develop or formulate your responses is not permitted.



Respond to each prompt exactly as written below and address every prompt thoroughly. If using a screen reader or if something seems unclear, contact us for an accessible version.

Section One-Video Response

A video response is a required component of a completed MSW application. Your video response will be your response to Prompt 1. Do not include any written response for Prompt 1 other than the YouTube link to your video.

Video Requirements

- Record and upload a personal video no longer than three (3) minutes.
- Your response should be natural and conversational and should not be read from a script.

Please Address the Following Three Prompts in your Video

- 1) Why do you want to pursue a career in social work?
(Please clearly discuss your 500 hours of work/volunteer experience in social services.)
- 2) What do you hope to contribute to the field of social work?
- 3) At the end of the video, verbally affirm in one sentence that you are the author of your MSW personal statement (both verbal and written components) and did not use generative AI.

Recording and Upload Instructions

- Use recording software on your computer, smartphone, or other device to record your response.
- Upload the video to YouTube. A step-by-step guide is available [here](#).
- Set the video's privacy to **Unlisted (do not set it to Private)** so it is accessible to reviewers.
- Verify that the YouTube link is accessible before submitting your application.
- Include **only the YouTube link** in your personal statement for Prompt 1.

Section Two-Difficult Situation

Reflect on and discuss a difficult situation that you did not handle well in a volunteer, professional, or educational setting.

In your response, address the following:

- What was the situation?
- What was your role, and how did you approach it?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- What, if anything, would you do differently in the future? Why or why not?

Please maintain the confidentiality of others in your response.



Section Three-NASW Code of Ethics

Review the six National Association of Social Workers (NASW) core values described in the *Preamble* and *Ethical Principles* sections of the NASW Code of Ethics

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>.

As a social worker, you will be expected to uphold the six NASW core values: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. Choose two of these core values and explain how you have applied them in situations you have encountered through your work, education, or personal life.

Section Four-Social Justice and Diversity

What do you believe is the role of the social work profession in advancing social justice? Describe an experience that raised concerns for you about diversity and/or a social justice issue. Explain the situation and discuss your thoughts, reactions, and reflections.

Additional Information (Respond Only if Applicable)

Please be prepared to successfully pass drug (including marijuana) and background screenings as part of the internship application process, which begins soon after acceptance to the program.

a. GPA Below 3.0

If your cumulative GPA is below 3.0, explain the factors that contributed to your academic performance and describe your plan for improving future academic success.

b. Academic Reference

If you were unable to obtain a letter of recommendation from an academic source, explain why. In this case, please submit a third professional reference.

c. Criminal Record

If you have a criminal record, disclose all prior convictions, including DUIs that occurred within the past 20 years. Describe the circumstances, the year(s) of conviction, and how you plan to address the impact of your record on your future career in human services. Please note that many field placement agencies require background checks. Although a criminal record does not preclude admission to the MSW program, it may limit practicum placement options and future employment opportunities.

d. Additional Information

Include any other information you believe is important for the admissions committee to consider when reviewing your application.