

Master of Social Work Application Process FAQs



1) I don't have an undergraduate background in social work. Can I still apply to the program?

Yes! Nearly 60% of our students come in as Regular Standing students that do not have a bachelor's degree in social work. The Regular Standing program is intended to give you the foundation level coursework that Advanced Standing students receive as part of their bachelor's degree in social work.

2) I'm not 100% sure which program completion option is right for me. Will I be able to change my mind after I submit my application?

Yes! We ask that you apply to a single program completion option, but recognize that some applicants may change their minds based on professional or personal considerations. If you would like to change the completion track to which you are applying, please email MSWinfo@stthomas.edu with this request and we can change the completion track on your application.

If you would like to discuss the MSW program completion option that is best for you, please contact us at MSWinfo@stthomas.edu. The eight completion options are as follows:

Advanced Standing (AS)

AS admission is for applicants with an undergraduate degree in social work from a program accredited by the CSWE. Advanced Standing students complete 38 credits and 600 hours of field practicum for their degree. Advanced standing program options include:

- One-year weekday/evening (full-time) - summer start
- Two year weekday/evening - fall start
- Three year weekday/evening - fall start
- Hybrid MSW: Two years - summer start

Regular Standing (RS)

RS admission is for applicants without an undergraduate degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Regular Standing students complete 56 credits and 1,000 hours of field practicum for their degree. Regular standing options include:

- Two year weekday/evening (full-time) - fall start
- Three year weekday/evening - fall start
- Four year weekday/evening - fall start
- Hybrid MSW: Three years - summer start

3) What are the admission criteria?

The admissions decision is a holistic process based on a range of criteria, including:

- **Undergraduate degree:** Students must have completed a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a GPA of 3.0 or better (on a 4.0 scale) preferred.
- **Prior experience:** Post-undergraduate social service practice experience is preferred, but not required, for admission.
- **Prerequisite content:** As of the 2023 application, St. Thomas no longer requires prerequisite coursework for application to the program.
- **Letters of recommendation:** Applicants must submit two complete (required form/checklist and letter from each recommender) recommendations
- **Personal statement:** Applicants must submit a personal statement addressing the specific questions listed on the application form.
- **Fieldwork evaluation:** Advanced standing applicants only. A copy of your final evaluation from your senior field practicum will be reviewed.

4) Do you grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience?

The MSW program does not grant course credit for life experience or previous work in accordance with [CSWE](#)'s Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. The University of St. Thomas Master's program has a written policy indicating that it does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience.

5) What if my undergraduate GPA is below 3.0?

Applicants with a cumulative undergraduate GPA below 3.0 will be considered. You should include an Explanation of GPA Statement with your application to explain any extraordinary circumstances for your low GPA and/or why your undergraduate GPA is not reflective of your potential for academic success at the graduate level. Students admitted with a cumulative GPA below 3.0 are considered provisional until they complete the first 12 credits in the program with a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

6) Do I need to take the GRE or TOEFL to apply to the MSW program?

There is no entrance exam required for admission. The only exception is for international students that would be required to fulfill English proficiency requirements before qualifying for an I-20. Requirements for the English proficiency requirement are listed at <https://www.stthomas.edu/admissions/graduate/international/index.html>.

7) Are there scholarships or financial aid available?

Yes! The School of Social Work provides a number of scholarship and grant awards from its own resources to incoming graduate students each year, including the MSW Diversity, Mission and Pathways scholarship and the MSW Service Grant. There is no separate application process for these grants/scholarships.

After acceptance to the MSW program, incoming students are provided information about additional scholarships and financial assistance programs for which they are invited to apply. We also encourage you to use outside scholarship searches to identify additional grants and scholarship opportunities.

All financial aid for the MSW program is administered through the University of St. Thomas. Graduate students may receive any of the loan funds administered by the university. For more information, visit the graduate financial aid website (see link below), or connect with the designated MSW financial aid counselor, Becky Stevenson, at (651) 962-4053 or becky.stevenson@stthomas.edu.

Visit the [School of Social Work admissions and financial aid page](#) for more information.

8) If my program track starts in the summer, how do I apply for financial aid?

If your program completion track has a summer start-date and you wish to be considered for summer financial aid, you will need to complete the current year's FAFSA application and the Graduate Financial Aid Office's Summer Financial Aid Application for Graduate Students which will become available on their website at the beginning of April. In order to be considered for aid starting in the fall, you will need to complete a FAFSA application for that academic year.

9) I am interested in applying to the JD/MSW program. How do I indicate this on my application?

If you haven't done so already, please explore our [MSW/JD dual degree web page](#).

You will need to apply to each program individually. For the MSW application, most Advanced Standing students interested in the JD/MSW will apply to the AS-one year program. Most Regular Standing students will apply to the RS-two year program. There is not an area on the MSW application to indicate that you are interested in the JD/MSW dual degree, so please email MSWinfo@stthomas.edu stating your intention to apply to the dual program. Please note that admission decisions are made and communicated by each program, not jointly.

10) Is it possible to change a reference on my application?

If you need to change one of your references/recommenders and you have not yet submitted the application, you can log back into your application and in the "Recommendation" section you can "Delete Above Recommendation," then provide a new recommender's name and contact email and "Save & Send Email to Recommender."

If you need to change one of your references/recommenders and you have already submitted your application, you will need to email the University of St. Thomas graduate admissions office at gradadmissions@stthomas.edu and identify yourself as a MSW applicant with your full name. State the new reference's name and contact email and which reference should be removed from the original list.

11) I'm an advanced standing application and I can't get my senior fieldwork instructor evaluation, what do I do?

Advanced-standing applicants must submit a copy of the senior fieldwork evaluation from their undergraduate social work program. Applicants may submit a copy of the evaluation from their own records (if they retained the paperwork after graduation). Otherwise, applicants should contact the social work department at their undergraduate institution and request that a copy be sent to the Office of Graduate Admission at the University of St. Thomas. If the evaluation is no longer on file, the social work department should submit a brief letter of explanation to our office. If your undergraduate institution sends you an email explaining that they no longer have your evaluation, you may forward this email to gradadmissions@stthomas.edu as an acceptable explanation (subject line: "Field evaluation related to MSW applicant [YOUR NAME]"). Students who have not yet completed their senior field placement may submit a copy of their junior fieldwork evaluation.

Evaluations for Advanced-standing applicants should be sent to:

University of St. Thomas
Graduate Records - Admissions
1000 LaSalle Ave., Box 5
Minneapolis, MN 55403-2005

Fieldwork evaluations can also be emailed directly to the University of St. Thomas as a PDF to: gradadmissions@stthomas.edu (subject line: "Field evaluation for MSW applicant [YOUR NAME].")

12) How will I know if my application materials have been received?

You can log back into the online application at any time (using the user name and password you established to create the application) and check the home page Application Requirements checklist. This provides a way to see which transcripts and letters of recommendation have been received. Keep in mind it takes one or two business days after the receipt of an item before it is reflected in this list. Once all materials have been received, the "Next Steps" will indicate that your application is complete.

13) How do I remind a reference to complete the process?

If you have not yet submitted your application, you can log back into the MSW online application, go to the "Recommendation" section, and click the box labeled "Resend Email to Recommender" for the recommender(s) you wish to remind.

Once you have submitted your application, you can log back into the MSW online application at any time (using the username and password you established to create the application) and check the home section of your application, which contains a checklist of completed Application Requirements. As each letter of recommendation is received, the name will be checked off the list. If your recommender has not completed the process, it is up to you to check back in with your reference to remind him/her to complete the recommendation by the application deadline. If your recommender cannot find the email request, please contact the graduate admissions office at gradadmissions@stthomas.edu with the recommender's name and email and request that the recommendation form be re-sent.

14) I have reasons to believe that a transcript should have been received and entered into my application file, but it is still missing from my application requirements checklist. What do I do?

First, keep in mind that it takes 1-2 business days after the receipt of an item before it is entered into your application file.

If you have reason to believe that a transcript should have been received and entered into your application file, you should send the relevant information in an email to the graduate admissions office, gradadmissions@stthomas.edu.

In the email, please address the following:

- Was the transcript sent by U.S. mail or electronically?
- Did you get a confirmation? (if yes, please forward the confirmation email)
- When was it sent?
- Confirm that it was sent to the correct address/email:*

University of St. Thomas
Graduate Records - Admissions
1000 LaSalle Ave., Box 5
Minneapolis, MN 55403-2005

Email: gradadmissions@stthomas.edu

15) I transferred credits into my degree-granting institution, these credits show up on my final transcript. Do I still need to request official transcripts from the other school(s)?

Yes. Official transcripts are required from all post-high school institutions* from which you received credit, even if you did not receive a degree and even if the credit appears on your degree-granting institution's transcript.

*Exceptions: Transcripts for advanced placement courses, other courses taken while in high school, and study abroad transfer credits are not required. If you took a course while in high school, we don't need the transcript, but you should include a note (either in the application or as an email to gradadmissions@stthomas.edu) that the course was taken in high school so it is not added as a requirement to your application checklist.

Important: If you do not list an institution and it appears on another transcript, the graduate admissions office will add this institution to your application checklist as a required transcript. If the graduate admissions office adds a school to your checklist DO NOT DELETE IT. If it is credit that you received while in high school or through study abroad, write a note (either in the application or as an email to gradadmissions@stthomas.edu) to this effect and it will be checked off your list.

16) I am currently enrolled in my undergraduate degree program. Do I need to submit a transcript even if I haven't completed the degree?

Yes, please request official transcripts from your current school through the most recently completed semester. This transcript will be used in the admissions process. If you matriculate into the St. Thomas MSW program, we will need your final, official transcripts before MSW classes begin (or as soon as they are available, if your program starts immediately after graduation).

17) When will I find out about an admission decision?

The timing varies slightly each year. Students applying to a full-time program completion track (Advanced Standing-1 year and Regular Standing-2 year) will receive a letter by late-February if they applied by the January 10 priority application deadline. All students applying to an "extended-time" completion track (Advanced Standing 2- and 3-year tracks; Regular Standing 3- and 4-year tracks) should receive a letter by early March.

18) Can I defer my acceptance to a future term?

Applicants may defer their acceptance for one year. You must communicate with us at mswinfo@stthomas.edu to state your intent to defer.

19) What are the requirements for international admission?

The requirements for international students to apply to the MSW program are detailed at health.stthomas.edu/info-for/international-students.