

Applying to a Master of Social Work

Trent Career Centre

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...a place to begin

Thinking about applying to a Master of Social Work program?

Each Master of Social Work program has an application process that consists of academic requirements, and non-academic experience. Master of Social Work programs have deadlines beginning as early as mid-November. Be sure to research the institutions you have an interest in attending, and make note of the deadline dates.

Program Duration

Master of Social Work programs are delivered in one-year and two-year programs. One-year programs are considered “Advanced Standing” programs, and are offered to eligible students who have already completed a Bachelor in Social Work program. Two-year programs are for students who have completed an honours undergraduate degree in a related discipline. They often require relevant volunteer or work experience in the social work field.

Requirements for Applying

- Each school has different requirements for applying so it is important to determine the institution you have an interest in attending, and their application requirements. Most programs use an application process that considers both your academic and professional experience. It is a requirement that you have an honours degree prior to beginning a Master in Social Work program, however, your degree can be in a discipline other than Social Work.
- Grades: Most of the Master of Social Work programs in Ontario require an average around 73% in all university courses, and a 77% average in your last two years of study. Most programs also require an average of 73% or higher in Research Methods and Statistics. Check school websites for required grade levels, as they may vary. Remember that meeting minimum requirements does not guarantee admission.
- Relevant experience: Professional experience usually consists of a combination of paid work experience and volunteer experience. This may not be a requirement but considered an asset on your application. Be sure to review the requirements of the schools you are interested in attending, as professional experience may be a requirement in some institutions.
- Many Master of Social Work programs require supplemental materials, which can include: transcripts, letters of reference, a statement of intent, a resume, and a portfolio outlining your professional experience.

Choosing an MSW Program

General Considerations:

Programs vary in theoretical perspectives that help to guide and inform their program focus and teachings. Research which institutions align with your theoretical perspective and focus areas.

Specialized Programs:

Master of Social Work programs consist of coursework and practicum. Practicums require students to complete approximately 450 hours of field education for an Advanced Standing MSW program, and for a two-year program, expect to complete approximately double the amount of practicum hours. Your master's degree will consist of a combination of classroom and hands-on learning.

Some programs are offered as a part-time program to accommodate professionals who are working in the field and are pursuing their MSW simultaneously. Many MSW programs offered part-time for working professionals are delivered online.

Examples of Areas of Specialization:

Social Work and Juris Doctor – University of Windsor

Social Work, Indigenous Trauma, and Resiliency – University of Toronto

Social Work Critical Leadership in Social Services and Communities – McMaster University

Social Work Specialization in Gerontology – Lakehead University

Social Work Specialization in Women’s Studies – Lakehead University

Advanced Standing (One-Year) Programs

Carleton University

King’s University College

Lakehead University

Laurentian University

McGill University

McMaster University

Ryerson University

University of Toronto

University of Waterloo

University of Windsor

Wilfrid Laurier University

York University

Two-Year Programs

Carleton University

King’s University College

University of Ottawa (French delivery only)

University of Toronto

University of Windsor

Wilfrid Laurier University

York University

Other Pathways: Both McGill University and Laurentian University offer a one-year program called the “Qualifying Year” for students who have completed an honours degree in a related discipline. Completion of the Qualifying Year program allows students who have not completed a BSW program to apply to the Advanced Standing MSW program at the respective university where the Qualifying Year program was completed.

Online Delivery: Online delivery Advanced Standing MSW programs are available at Dalhousie University, University of Waterloo, and University of Victoria. Each university’s program has varying lengths, based on meeting individual student needs with scheduling and course load. Some online delivery programs can be completed on a full-time basis, however, they are often delivered as part-time programs for working professionals, which extends the length of the program. Full-time studies take approximately 12 months to complete, while part-time studies take between two and three years to complete. Be sure to research each program for specific program requirements and timelines, as some programs may require on-campus attendance for some aspects of the program. Also, be aware that students completing an MSW via distance education are required to complete approximately 450 hours of practicum, completed in the student’s home community.

Tuition: varies between schools, averaging around \$4000-\$4500 per semester. Program lengths also vary among institutions; some institutions define a one-year program as three consecutive semesters, and a two-year program as six semesters completed throughout two years.

Deadline to Apply:

Different schools have different time periods for applications, so it is important to research when the deadlines are. Most schools have information sessions about their programs – dates and times will be noted on their websites. Don’t hesitate to call the admissions office of any school to ask for more information.

Find more information regarding all accredited Social Work programs available across Canada on the [Canadian Association for Social Work Education’s](#) website.