



School of Social Work

Personal Statement

The CSULA School of Social Work application must include a personal statement of approximately six to eight (6-8) double-spaced pages, (one-inch margin all around, 12-point font) in essay format discussing each of the points listed below. The personal statement is an opportunity for applicants to share personal and professional experiences that have prepared them for graduate school in social work. The personal statement will also be used to evaluate applicants' critical thinking, self-reflective capacities, and advanced writing skills. Answer the questions in order and provide the headings (e.g., Personal Information). Failure to address any question or not adhering to the instructions stated above will affect the evaluation.

Personal Information

1. Describe experiences and/or people that influenced your decision to pursue a career in Social Work.
2. What goals have you developed for a professional career in social work? What is required to achieve these goals, and how will our graduate program facilitate goal attainment?
3. Which client population (Aging; Children, Youth & Women; or Forensics) are you most interested in working with and learning about in your advance year of study. Please provide a detailed explanation as to why you have selected this specific client population.
4. Our school has a strong cross-cultural emphasis and values diversity. What attributes do you possess that enrich our school's cross-cultural orientation? Describe experiences you have had with diversity such as cultural and/or ethnic groups other than your own (travel, volunteer, work and other cross-cultural experiences) and how these experiences have influenced you and your world view.
5. Social work is one of the helping professions. Discuss any experience in which you (or a member of your family) interacted with a helping professional. Analyze the quality of those interactions and the degree to which problem resolution was facilitated or impeded.

Professional Information

1. Respond to either a, b, or c:
 - a. If you have prepared for or been employed in another field of work, discuss why you want to change to social work and what you have done to prepare yourself for the field.
 - b. If you are now employed in a social service agency, describe in detail a situation in which you felt that professional training would have promoted your abilities to be helpful to clients.
 - c. If neither a nor b are relevant to your situation, please describe why you want to pursue a career in social work at this time.
2. How will your personal characteristics (strengths and limitations) influence your development as a professional social worker?
3. Describe any additional information, not reflected in the enclosed forms that might enhance your application. For example, you may include achievements, publications, awards, professional presentations, etc.

Educational Plan

1. Discuss your plan for managing the responsibilities associated with a rigorous graduate educational program. Please consider financial and time-management issues.
2. How will you accommodate the demands of the field education requirement (i.e., weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., two to three days per week for 2-year and 3-year tracks, respectively) with other responsibilities?
3. Briefly discuss learning objectives with regard to cross-cultural training, clinical/administrative emphasis in the concentration year and preferred target population/concentration.

Vignettes/ Case Illustrations

1. Draw from your own work and/or personal experience to illustrate the management of situations as noted in the questions below. Do not use names or information that might violate the confidentiality of the individuals you decide to use in your descriptions. Please be sure to respond to both a and b.
 - a. Discuss a situation in which you were confronted with a value or ethical conflict. How did you resolve it? What were some of the factors you considered in making your decision? How was the client and/or other individual affected by the situation?
 - b. Discuss a difficult or dangerous situation you encountered in working with a client or patient. How did you handle the situation? What would you do different in the future? How would you expect advanced training to promote your development in managing a similar situation?