



Pacific Lutheran University Master of Social Work

PERSONAL STATEMENT INSTRUCTIONS  
Summer and Fall 2024 Application Cycle

The Personal Statement of Education and Career Goals: Answer the questions below in a double-spaced statement. The statement is required of all applicants and will be used to assess your written communication skills and to evaluate your knowledge of your career choice, your availability to complete field hours and your commitment to the social work profession. Failure to address all prompts will affect your overall application.

Once completed, upload it to the GradCAS application portal in the Document section, under Personal Statement. Before uploading, make sure:

- You have answered all the prompts in questions 1-8.
- Responses are at least the requested length, where noted.

1. What experiences and/or relationships have influenced your selection of social work as your professional career (e.g., family, education, volunteer work, paid employment, recipient of social services, etc.)? (500 words)

2. How would a social work education and career be of value to you? (250 words)

3. Discuss your understanding of the values intrinsic to the social work profession and how these are reflected in your personal values, attitudes, belief system, and/or world view. (500 words)

4. What is your understanding of the responsibilities of the social work profession and the role and responsibilities that you wish to assume as a professional social worker. (250 words)

5. Describe your experience with people of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and lifestyles, and what have these experiences taught you about human diversity and its implications? (250 words)

6. What plans have you made to ensure that you can successfully complete the program? Consider your finances, time management, family and community responsibilities, etc.

7. Field Plan: Students entering their first year (2-year program) of fieldwork are required to be in their field practicum a minimum of 320 hours per semester (~ 21 hours per week) during spring semester. Students entering their second year of fieldwork are expected to complete a minimum of 320 per semester (~ 21 hours per week), 640 hours for the year. Students must be available for field placement during regular business hours M-F 8:00-5:00. Securing an internship outside of regular business hours is NOT usually possible and is NOT guaranteed so students must plan to have two days per week available for their foundation year field placement. (If Field Plan responses are not adequately addressed, it may impact acceptance into the program). Be specific on responses.

- a. What is your plan for completing field practicum/internship in your foundation year (~21 hours a week) and advanced year (~21 hours a week)?
- b. How will you balance work, school, family, etc. when required to intern a minimum of 21 hours per week?
- c. Do you work full-time or part-time during the week? If yes, what is your plan to meet the minimum hour requirement for internship, which will take place 2-3 days a week, Monday through Friday?

8. Draw from your own paid employment, volunteer work, or personal experiences to provide examples of how you handled situations as noted in (a) and (b) below. Make sure not to use names or information that might violate the confidentiality of the individuals you decide to use in your descriptions. For both (a) and (b), be sure to explain how you may have grown or learned from the experiences you describe.

- a. Clearly describe a situation where you were confronted with a value or ethical dilemma. (500 words) How did you resolve it? What were some of the factors you considered in making your decision? If you have never confronted a value or ethical dilemma, on what knowledge would you consider relying to help you address and resolve one?
- b. Discuss a difficult or dangerous situation you encountered. (500 words) How did you handle the situation? What would you do differently in the future and why? Are there any situations in which you would feel particularly vulnerable as a student? How would you expect the social work program to assist your education and skill building concerns in order to handle that type of situation?