



**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**  
College of Health and Human Services  
School of Social Work

**MSW Application Supplementary Statement Essay Questions**

1. **INTEREST:** Describe your interest in social work. What draws you to the social work profession? Are there any areas of practice, social issues or populations that interest you?
2. **PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES/LIFE EXPERIENCES:** Describe how your personal background and experiences have influenced your decision to pursue a career in social work. What do you believe you contribute to the profession?
3. **RESILIENCE:** Social workers often exhibit great resiliency. Resilience has been defined as a multifaceted process of well-being demonstrated by “a sustained adaptive effort that prevails despite challenge, as a bouncing back or recovery from a challenge, and as a process of learning and growth that expands understanding, new knowledge, and new skills” (Kent et al., 2014, p. xii). Please describe what has contributed to your personal and professional resiliency that you believe will enhance your future social work practice.

*Kent, M., Davis, M. C., & Reich, J. W. (2014). The resilience handbook: Approaches to stress and trauma. New York: Routledge.*

4. **VALUES:** The social work profession shares a set of values, which include: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity and competence. You can view the list of social work values and our full code of ethics [here](#). Describe your personal values and how you think they are a good fit with the values of the social work profession.
5. **DIVERSITY:** Social work practitioners often work with diverse clients and communities. Describe your understanding of diversity and your personal philosophy regarding working with people who are different from yourself (e.g., race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, mental abilities, physical abilities, etc.). Please include one example of how your philosophy helped you work with someone different from yourself.

6. **ACADEMIC PREPARATION:** The WMU School of Social Work uses a holistic application review process. We understand that grades don't reflect your whole self, and that people have more to offer to the social work profession than their grade point average (GPA). If your GPA is below our minimum requirement (3.0 Cumulative GPA), please use this question to tell us why your undergraduate GPA is not an accurate reflection of your academic abilities or what circumstances may have impacted your undergraduate GPA. Please describe strategies for how you plan to maintain the required 3.0 GPA in graduate school.

If your GPA is above our minimum requirement, simply enter "My GPA meets the minimum requirement."

**POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

7. **SOCIAL WORK ETHICS:** The profession of social work follows an ethical code known as the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics ([link](#)). All students will be expected to ascribe to these values and follow this code. Failure to uphold these ethics may result in disciplinary actions, up to possible program dismissal.
- a. I acknowledge that I have been informed of expectation that as a social work student I will be held to the NASW Code of Ethics. I agree to abide by this code and understand that failure to uphold these ethics may result in disciplinary actions, up to possible program dismissal.
8. **CRIMINAL HISTORY:** While criminal history does not prohibit a student from employment or a successful career as a social worker, it may impact a student's ability to obtain a field placement, social work license, or employment. Many field placements will conduct a criminal background check as part of the interview process. For these reasons, the School of Social Work requires all students to report any/all criminal history (defined as of substantiated charges of abuse and/or neglect of a child or adult, civil adjudication, and/or criminal conviction(s)) upon admission to the MSW or BSW programs, and to notify the school of any convictions that occur while enrolled as a student. Acknowledging this policy below does not qualify as disclosure of criminal history.
- a. I acknowledge that I have been informed of and understand the criminal background policy of the School of Social Work. I agree to inform the School of Social Work about any criminal history upon admission to the program.