

## Laurier MSW Application-Statement of Interest and Social Issue Analysis

The MSW curriculum emphasizes the development of critically reflexive practice skills through the ongoing integration of knowledge, theory and practice within a framework that promotes the advancement of equity, inclusivity, reflexivity and social justice.

We welcome applications from prospective students from all walks of life and value the representation of diverse social locations, ideas, perspectives, and life experiences in our student body, and the field of social work as a whole.

The FSW is committed to meaningfully facilitating an atmosphere that values the diverse contributions, talents, and lived experiences that our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners bring to the MSW program, all of which strengthen us as a community of learners, scholars and future social workers.

### Applicants to the MSW Programs (non-IFS only):

To be considered for admission to the MSW program, this document must be completed by all applicants. We are interested in understanding:

1. how your personal and paid/unpaid experiences, values and social location(s) influence your interest in pursuing graduate social work education at Laurier;
2. your ability to critically analyze and address a contemporary social issue.

**We understand that applicants will have differing levels of knowledge and understanding of the field of social work and related issues and are applying to the program to learn more.**

In assessing your responses below, we are looking for a demonstration of:

- An interest in social work
- A commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Analytical, critical thinking, and writing skills
- Relationship building skills and abilities
- A critical understanding of contemporary social issues
- A critical level of self-awareness and awareness of one's social location(s)

GPA requirements: While the minimum average for admission into the MSW program is a B in your final year, we understand that certain factors may impact a student's GPA. We recognize that other experiences such as professional and lived experience, in addition to GPA, also contribute to an applicant's suitability and readiness for a graduate social work studies and a career in social work. As such, if applicable, we encourage you to include information providing relevant context for your academic record in the Statement of Interest section.

#### Length:

Please pay close attention to word count limits.

- Your Statement of Interest must not exceed 500 words.
- Your Case Example of Social Issue must not exceed 500 words.

- Together, the Statement of Interest and the Social Issue Analysis must not exceed 1000 words total.
- If you choose to use references in either section, please use a consistent referencing style for in-text citations and the reference list. The use of references is **optional**. References are not counted in the word count and can be included after each question.

### **Part 1: Statement of Interest (500 words)**

Write a brief statement of interest discussing how your personal, academic, volunteer and/or professional experiences have informed your decision to pursue graduate studies in social work at Laurier. Please address how these experiences:

- Would influence your approach to social work practices with individuals, families, groups, communities, and/or organizations;
- Have shaped your understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion;
- Have contributed to your short-term and long-term career goals; and,
- Influence how you might contribute to the student community, the learning environment, and life of the Faculty of Social Work community and the larger Laurier community.

Please be sure to address the four points above. You are encouraged to use “I” statements.

## **Part 2: A Critical Analysis of a Social Issue (500 words)**

Write a critical analysis of a contemporary social issue (this can be at a local, national or global level) that is relevant to the field of social work. This analysis allows you to explore an area of interest as it relates to social work practice and allows assessors to be able to evaluate your analytical and critical thinking skills and academic writing skills. You are encouraged to use “I” statements and to draw from your first-hand paid and/or unpaid/volunteer work experiences in the area of social services and/or your personal lived experiences. Please be as specific as possible rather than giving generalities.

Please consider the following prompts in your analysis:

- What is the social issue that you have identified and why is it relevant to the field of social work?
- What are the factors that influence this issue, including issues of power?
- Why does this particular social issue deserve public attention and resources? If the issue is not being addressed by policymakers, why do you think this is so?
- What, if any, are the differing opinions on how to address this issue?
- Describe some specific possible ways that you as a social worker might contribute to addressing the issue; include a discussion of roles (e.g., leadership, ally, advocate, direct service provider, etc.) you might adopt and potential considerations related to your positionalities/social location and ethics.
- Feel free to add any personal reflections you hold with regards to the issue you have chosen to present.

## **Applicants to the MSW Indigenous Field of Study (IFS) only:**

1. Describe your relationship to Indigenous peoples, community and what motivating factors lead you toward attaining your MSW in the Indigenous Field of Study.
2. What issue(s) that affect Indigenous people greatly interest you? Describe a time when your efforts had a positive impact at the individual, community, nation or policy/societal level.
3. What does becoming a wholistic practitioner mean to you?

Maximum: 1000 words total

## Course Exemption Request (Graduate-level course only)

A course exemption request based on previous course work must be made at the time of application and consideration is given prior to admission to Laurier's MSW program. Exemptions may only be granted for university courses taken at the graduate level within the last five (5) years, with a grade of 73% or higher. Courses taken more than five (5) years ago will be considered for a course substitution rather than an exemption.

On the recommendation of the Associate Dean, MSW programs, the Dean of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies may grant exemptions, to a maximum two (2) half-credit courses, for the Regular Track programs, and a maximum of one (1) half-credit course for the Advanced Standing programs.

List the course(s) you want the university to consider for exemption and submit a full course syllabus for each course to [socialwork@wlu.ca](mailto:socialwork@wlu.ca). Documents that are not in English must be accompanied by a translated version. Carefully review the MSW course descriptions in the Graduate Academic Calendar to determine similar courses.

I wish to request an exclusion(s) and provide details below and will email the relevant course syllabi to [socialwork@wlu.ca](mailto:socialwork@wlu.ca) for assessment.

Course	University	Course code or number	Course Title	Grade Received	Laurier MSW course
Course 1					
Course 2					
Course 3					
Course 4					
Course 5					
Course 6					

## MSW Field Placement Agreement

All MSW applicants must read and agree to the following declarations:

- I have read the information on the Faculty of Social Work website pertaining to the [MSW Field Education](#) and have reviewed the time-frames and planning procedures that apply to my MSW program.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to review all field documents prior to the start of my field course(s): MSW Field Education Manual, Student Guidebooks, and other field resources provided by the field office.
- I understand that I will be required to adhere to the [Professional Practice Guidelines and Ethical Standards](#) if admitted to the program.
- I understand that the Faculty of Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University requests field placements without remuneration in order to complete the MSW program.
- I understand that students are generally not paid while completing their field placement course. Students may participate in paid workplace placements, should they meet the conditions of approval identified by the Faculty of Social Work. Field placement is a course with a curriculum for which students are assigned a grade.
- I understand that financial planning is important before I commence the MSW program in order to ensure I can fulfill the requirements of the field courses within the timelines provided. Students in placement should expect additional costs such as travel to and from the agency, as well as parking fees.
- I understand that the Field Education Office at the Faculty of Social Work will determine a suitable placement and assign me to a placement.
- I understand that the Field Education Office does not guarantee placements in a student's home city.
- I understand that students are required to follow the placement term structure in order to graduate in a timely manner. The MSW Field Education website lists the placement timelines for each cohort of students.
- I understand that students must not arrange their own placement without approval from the Field Education Office.
- I understand that placements generally do not offer highly specialized training in, for example, psychotherapy. More specialized certifications, some of which are offered by our Professional Development Department online, may be pursued when they are available and do not interfere with MSW program requirements.
- I understand that it is important to make every effort to have access to a vehicle, as most agencies require possession of a car for the work they do. I understand that placement opportunities may be more limited for students who do not have access to a vehicle.
- I understand that many placement settings have requirements for a criminal record check and/or vaccinations prior to commencing the placement and that I am responsible for any expenses associated with these tests.

- Agencies conduct interviews to determine a suitable student for the placement opportunity. The Field Education Office will make the final decision.
- I understand that placements in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) are competitive and limited.
- I understand that if I wish to undertake a practicum in an agency where I have any prior relationships, I must declare a potential conflict of interest to, and discuss the appropriateness of the situation with the Field Office. I understand that I may have a potential conflict of interest if I am, or have been, or an immediate family member is or has been a client or an employee of the agency, or if I have, or an immediate family member has relatives at and/or other close relationships with staff members of an agency. It is my responsibility to either inform the Field Office of a potential conflict of interest or to refrain from requesting a placement setting in which there is a conflict of interest if I choose not to enter into the necessary discussion. I understand that if the Field Office discovers a conflict of interest that I have not declared with respect to my placement, the Field Office may in its sole discretion, terminate that placement, and makes no guarantee that it will be able to arrange a substitute placement within the time limits of my program.
- I understand that if I have been subject to a finding of professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity by a regulated health profession in any jurisdiction, or if I have been convicted of a criminal offence for which I have not received a record suspension (pardon) there may be challenges to secure a field placement. Placement agencies may screen and impose restrictions for the protection of their agency and client population. Please be aware that you are required to complete all placement hours for the field courses that are part of your MSW program in order to meet the degree requirements for graduation.

#### For online MSW applicants:

- I understand that as a student in the online MSW program I am required to lead the field planning process and propose viable placements in order to continue my registration in the program.
- When the proposed placement is not possible, we require student flexibility in terms of geography and placement settings.
- Students attend placement for a minimum of 16 hours across two days/week, during the agency's hours of operation, and during the availability of the field instructor. Working professionals are expected to negotiate time off with their employers prior to starting the MSW program. The majority of agencies expect students to attend placement during a structured timeline during weekdays. Students who are unable to take time off from work (e.g. 2 days/week or a leave of absence) to attend placement in a structured manner will likely be unable to secure a placement.

#### For in-class MSW applicants:

- I understand that the Field Education Office does not guarantee placements in a student's home city.

- I understand that students may be placed by the Field Education Office in centres that are normally located within a radius of 150 km of the Kitchener campus.
- I understand that the Field Education Office at the Faculty of Social Work will determine a suitable placement and assign me to a placement.
- I understand that I will be required to participate in the field planning process and accept any field placements selected by the Field Education Office of the Faculty of Social Work in order to continue my registration in the program.
- Flexibility is required of students in terms of geography and placement settings.
- If you are in the two-year program: one of your field placements may be completed at your workplace in accordance with the criteria outlined in the workplace placement policy.

I have read and understand the above procedures that guide the field placement planning process. By checking the box below, I agree to abide by these procedures and understand that I am required to accept any placements selected by the Faculty of Social Work in order to continue my registration in the program.

Application information is collected under the authority of the Wilfrid Laurier University Act to administer the university-student relationship. This includes but is not limited to maintaining your academic and ancillary records, contacting you, and others on your behalf, and releasing such information as is appropriate for the operation of the university. Visit our [privacy coordinator's web-page](#) for more information and the Notice of Collection and Use or Disclosure of Personal Information.

I have read and agree to the declarations (check the box to agree)