Essay for Standard MSW Program Applicants

Taking the place of Graduate Entrance Exam (GRE), the Division of Social Work requires an *academic essay* (4-6 typewritten pages, double-spaced, approximately 2500 words) be written as a part of the application packet.

**Topic choices:** This essay must address *one of the following topic areas:*

1. What do we mean by the “graying” of America? How can social workers prepare to serve tomorrow’s aging population?
2. What contributes to the widening of the economic gap between the rich and the poor in the United States? Can social workers address this gap in practice?
3. Identify the role of the U. S. in global development efforts. Should America take the lead as a developed nation to raise the economic level in poor countries? How can social work contribute to social development in international communities?
4. There are many professional settings where social workers work. How does the generalist perspective prepare social workers to work in varied professional settings? What are the benefits to preparing some graduate level social work students as advanced generalist social workers?

**Guidelines:** As guidance, we provide the following instructions:

- Provide a concise introduction, which outlines the importance of the issue to social work. Include information from professional resources to support your introduction. Please note that these resources must be from peer-reviewed professional journals or professional web sites.

- Provide your personal perspective on the problem or issue. Provide a focused discussion (based on information from the professional literature) which defines the problem, its possible causes, and possible methods for resolving or dealing with it. In your discussion, please refer to evidence-based practice if applicable. You should use a minimum of three to five (3 – 5) professional resources to support your discussion.

- Indicate if there are cultural considerations and/or issues which are important in your discussion.

- Provide an integrated summary of your perspective and the literature you have cited. Are your ideas and perspectives supported by the literature? Are there areas which you believe require further research?

- Provide a reference page for the resources you have cited. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2001) should be used for citations and references (APA, 2001). See [http://www.apastyle.org/previoustats.html](http://www.apastyle.org/previoustats.html). The professional resources that you cite should be current (published within the past 10 years).

Your essay will be used in the screening process to evaluate your critical thinking skills, writing skills, your ability to use a social work perspective, and your ability to organize and integrate information. We also hope you will examine an issue with attention to differences that may be attributable to cultural or ethnic differences. Most importantly, this paper must be prepared entirely by you. Please do not solicit outside input, editing or ideas from others including family, instructors, friends, associates, colleagues, etc. You will be required to sign a statement on the face sheet of this application indicating that you have received no assistance with this essay.