Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work  
Department of Social Work  

MSW APPLICATION  
PERSONAL STATEMENT GUIDELINES  

Please provide us with a personal statement addressing the areas identified below. Preparation of this material will help you to reflect and better define your plans for professional social work education. It will also help us to know something about you and assist us in assessing your potential and readiness for graduate education and the social work profession.

Advanced Standing applicants: Do not use the personal statement guidelines provided here. Please refer to the Supplemental Information for MSW Advanced Standing Applicants - Advanced Standing Criteria and Instructions, and complete only the Personal Statement for Advanced Standing Applicants according to the guidelines provided in that document.

AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED

1. What key life experiences have led you to select social work as a profession? In what ways do you feel your experiences have prepared you for this profession?

2. Describe briefly some of the major social issues and problems that you are particularly concerned with in your community and country. Include your perception of the role of social workers in dealing with these issues and problems.

3. The NASW Code of Ethics states: “Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability.” Discuss your views on the importance of cultural & social diversity in social work practice. Elaborate on experiences that you have had working with diverse populations. Describe the impact that you believe these experiences will have on your practice as a professional social worker.

4. What are your objectives for graduate study in social work? What, if any, are your long-range professional goals? What work do you see yourself doing and where do you see yourself practicing social work five years from now? (What community? What agency/service? What population? What issues?) What field of practice interests you (e.g., child and family, health, mental health, substance abuse, the justice system, gerontology)?

5. If you have worked or volunteered in a human service agency, describe one case or experience that you feel illustrates the type of work you did. If you have not had any work experience in the area of human services, describe your interest and participation in activities in the community or in college that illustrate how you have been personally involved with people. Specify your duties and responsibilities.

6. Why is the School of Social Work at the University of Hawai‘i of particular interest to you?

7. For Distance Education applicants only:  
Why is the UHM MSW Distance Education Option of particular interest to you?