Ph.D. Program in Social Welfare
Application Instructions

Letters of Recommendation
Letters of recommendation are submitted electronically as part of the Graduate School Application. Please inform your recommenders of the December 1st deadline for submission and follow up with them to make sure the letters have been submitted properly. Three letters of recommendation are required.

Letters should evaluate your potential to plan and implement a program of research and independently develop original ideas that contribute to your field of study. At least two letters should be from professors or Ph.D. level researchers who can evaluate your research competency and potential. International applicants should ensure that reference letters are written in English.

Note that letters from friends, family members, or others such as therapists or clergy who cannot address academic capabilities will not be accepted and the application will not be reviewed.

Reasons for Graduate Study in Social Welfare
Submit a 2-3 page essay (single-spaced) discussing your reasons for pursuing graduate study at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Social Work Ph.D. Program. This is submitted electronically as part of the Graduate School Application. Clearly specify research interests so the Admissions Committee can determine the fit between your research interests and those of social work faculty members. Also, describe educational and career achievements and goals that support the pursuit of a doctoral degree.

Application Fee
Your application fee must be paid online prior to the application deadline in order for your application to be considered. If the fee is a financial hardship, you may be eligible for assistance. Visit the Graduate School FAQs for more information.

Résumé or CV
Submit your résumé or CV as part of the Supplemental Application.

Writing Sample
In addition to the essay, you should submit first-author journal articles, chapters, theses, term papers, or research reports that represent your writing ability. All materials must be written in English and be a minimum of 5 pages. The writing sample is submitted as part of the Supplemental Application.

Official Transcripts
One set of official transcripts from each undergraduate and graduate institution attended are required.

Note that if you are a current student and have not yet graduated, your acceptance would be conditional pending a final transcript review; however, you could be asked to provide an updated transcript before acceptance decisions are made.
Official paper transcripts can be sent to:

School of Social Work Doctoral Program
University of Wisconsin - Madison
1350 University Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Official electronic transcripts can be sent to: phdprogram@socwork.wisc.edu

Information for International Applicants:
If you are an international applicant, you must provide official certification of degrees and dates granted. Transcripts must have a seal and signature in ink of an authorized official of the institution(s) such as the registrar or other appropriate government or public official. Non-English documents should be accompanied by official English translations.

If you are living in the United States and having difficulty obtaining official transcripts, you can send a notarized copy of the original transcript; however, the Graduate School does require the original official document. Go to the Graduate School’s website for specific information about your country: http://grad.wisc.edu/admissions/requirements/.

Please also visit the School of Social Work's International Applicant Requirements page.

GRE Scores
The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is required for all applicants to the Ph.D. Program.

If you have taken the GRE, but your scores are more than five years old, you will need to retake the exam. GRE scores take approximately six weeks to reach the University if you take the paper-delivered test or 10-15 days if you take the computer-delivered test. Tests should be scheduled with the application deadline in mind. Official scores are submitted to the University of Wisconsin-Madison (institution code 1846).

English Proficiency Test Scores
English proficiency tests must be taken within two years of application date. Official scores are submitted to the University of Wisconsin-Madison (institution code 1846).

The following minimum scores are required for acceptance to the Ph.D. Program:

1. TOEFL iBT (internet-based test): 100
2. TOEFL PBT (paper-based test): 600
3. MELAB: 90
4. IELTS: 7

For more information about scores and exemption from English proficiency test requirements, visit the Graduate School's Requirements for Admission page at http://grad.wisc.edu/admissions/requirements/.