

**Guidelines for Graduate Education
Raymond A. Kent School of Social Work and
Family Science: Master of Science in Social Work,
Master of Science in Couple and Family Therapy,
Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work & Doctor of
Social Work**

University of Louisville

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Minimum Guidelines for Graduate Education

To ensure high quality graduate education programs, the university and the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science maintain minimum guidelines for admission and performance of graduate students, for faculty involvement in graduate education and for proper academic administration. The faculty of the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science has the academic authority and responsibility to establish rigorous and effective admission requirements, curricula, instruction, examinations, and recommendations to the Board of Trustees for granting degrees for programs within the unit. (Redbook Article 3.3.2.)

The faculty of each Unit shall establish and publish its own set of policies and procedures for its graduate programs in the university catalog. Individual academic units and graduate programs may establish policies that are more stringent than those set forth in the Board of Trustees approved Minimum Guidelines for Graduate Education but may not establish standards that are lesser.

I. Academic standards for students in graduate programs of the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science.

A. Admissions Standards

1. Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) Program

- a. Each application for graduate program admission shall include (a) a completed graduate school application, (b) an application fee, (c) official transcript(s) for all previous post-secondary coursework, (d) admissions essay and (e) at least two letters of recommendation. All transcripts not in English must be certified as authentic and translated verbatim into English.
- b. The minimum requirement for admission to the MSSW program is a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent from a regionally accredited institution.
- c. The minimum undergraduate grade point average that will be considered for unconditional acceptance and admission to the MSSW program is 2.75. However, in rare situations, prospective students with less than 2.75 GPAs, strong writing skills, and exceptional letters of reference, may be considered.
- d. Unconditional admission to degree seeking status shall be made only if all admission credentials shall have been received, evaluated, and approved.

- e. Any provisional acceptance shall be made on an individual basis and shall require a statement of the rationale for the exception, plans for monitoring progress and performance and stated success criteria. Such justification must be provided in writing and must be accepted by the faculty, Dean of the enrollment Unit and Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs. This will allow consideration of special circumstances in which the potential for high quality graduate performance has been clearly demonstrated by other means.
 - f. Students who fail to meet other requirements as outlined in the admission letter may be subject to academic dismissal from their programs.
2. Master of Science in Couple and Family Therapy (MSCFT) Program
- a. All applications for MSCFT admissions shall include: (a) a completed application, (b) an application fee, (c) official transcript(s) for all previous post-secondary coursework, (d) A professional statement, (e) A family of origin paper and (f) three letters of recommendation. All transcripts not in English must be certified as authentic and translated verbatim into English.
 - b. The minimum requirement for admission into the MSCFT program is the baccalaureate degree or its equivalent from an accredited institution and a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0. Applicants with a GPA below 3.0 must submit an addendum discussing gaps or deficiencies in applicant's academic record and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - c. Unconditional admission in good standing to degree seeking status shall be made only if all application materials have been received, and all admission credentials meet the Unit/program published standards.
 - d. Any provisional or special conditions acceptance shall be made on an individual basis and shall require a statement of the rationale for the exception, plans for monitoring progress and performance and stated success criteria. Such justification must be provided in writing and must be accepted by the faculty and Dean of the enrollment unit and approved by the Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs. This will allow consideration of special circumstances in which the potential for high quality graduate performance has been clearly demonstrated by other means.
3. Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work (Ph.D.) Program

- a. Each application for graduate program admission shall include (a) a completed graduate school application, (b) an application to Ph.D. program, (c) an application fee, (d) official transcript(s) for all previous post-secondary coursework, (e) a current resume or vita, (f) three letters of recommendation, (g) an example of the applicant's scholarly writing, and (h) a personal statement. All transcripts not in English must be certified as authentic and translated verbatim into English. Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores are optional.
- b. The minimum requirement for admission to the PhD program is the documented successful completion of a master's degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) or its international equivalent. Applicants with a master's degree in a related or other field will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- c. Unconditional admission in good standing to degree seeking status shall be made only if all application materials have been received, and all admission credentials meet the Unit/program published standards. The minimum undergraduate grade point average that will be considered for unconditional acceptance and admission to the Ph.D. program is 3.0. However, in rare situations, prospective students with less than 3.0 GPAs with strong standardized test scores, strong written skills and exceptional letters of reference, may be considered.
- d. Any provisional or special conditions acceptance shall be made on an individual basis and shall require a statement of the rationale for the exception, plans for monitoring progress and performance and stated success criteria. Such justification must be provided in writing and must be accepted by the faculty and Dean of the enrollment unit and approved by the Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs. This will allow consideration of special circumstances in which the potential for high quality graduate performance has been clearly demonstrated by other means.

4. Doctor of Social Work (DSW) Program

- a. Each application for graduate program admission shall include (a) a completed graduate school application, (b) an application fee, (c) official transcript(s) for all previous post-secondary coursework, (d) three letters of recommendation from individuals familiar with the applicant's work and/or academic ability and performance such as current or former supervisors or instructors, (e) an application to Kent Schools DSW program, (f) a current resume or vita, (g) scholarly writing sample responding to the required writing prompt, and (h) a statement about the applicant's reason for pursuing the doctoral degree. All transcripts not in English must be certified as authentic and translated verbatim into English.

- b. The minimum requirement for admission to the DSW program is the documented successful completion of a master's degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) or its international equivalent, and two years of social work practice experience post attaining an MSW/MSSW degree.
- c. Unconditional admission in good standing to degree-seeking status shall be made only if all application materials have been received, and all admission credentials meet the Unit/program published standards. The minimum graduate grade point average that will be considered for unconditional acceptance and admission to the DSW program is 3.0. However, in rare situations, prospective students with less than 3.0 GPAs with, strong written skills and exceptional letters of reference, may be considered.
- d. Any provisional or special conditions acceptance shall be made on an individual basis and shall require a statement of the rationale for the exception, plans for monitoring progress and performance, and stated success criteria. Such justification must be provided in writing and must be accepted by the faculty and Dean of the enrollment unit and approved by the Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs. This will allow consideration of special circumstances in which the potential for high-quality graduate performance has been clearly demonstrated by other means.

B. Academic Performance

1. MSSW Program

- a. Each Unit shall establish and publish in the university catalog current curricular and program offerings which include all requirements for degrees. The MSSW Program offerings and degree requirements are found at: <https://catalog.louisville.edu/graduate/programs-study/master-science-social-work/index.html> .
- b. Each Unit shall establish and publish in the university catalog a minimum grade point average requirement and any other performance criteria for maintenance of good standing and progress toward degree. The minimum grade point average requirement for good standing: 3.00. Other performance criteria for maintenance of good standing and progress toward degree: Students must have completed all requirements for the MSSW degree 6 years from the date of matriculation (first enrollment). This applies to both full-time and part-time students. In cases where circumstances dictate, the Dean may extend the time to 7 years, but no more. The performance criteria for the MSSW program are found at: <https://catalog.louisville.edu/graduate/programs-study/master-science->

[social-work/index.html](#).

- c. Any student who does not satisfy the published performance criteria shall be placed in probationary status. Any student who remains in probationary status for two consecutive terms may be considered for dismissal from the program.
- d. Students receiving graduate assistantships (teaching, research or service) shall be provided adequate training and shall be required to understand and adhere to university policies related to these areas. The performance of teaching, research and service duties by such students shall be periodically evaluated. Students with teaching assistantships shall be evaluated annually.
- e. Students who fail to meet performance goals or who do not meet other requirements as outlined in the admission letter, program requirements or the university's catalog may be subject to academic dismissal from the MSSW program.

2. MSCFT Program

- a. Each Unit shall establish and publish in the university catalog current curricular and program offerings which include all requirements for degrees. The MSCFT program offerings and degree requirements are found at <https://catalog.louisville.edu/graduate/programs-study/master-science-couple-family-therapy/#text>
- b. Each Unit shall establish and publish in the university catalog a minimum grade point average requirement and any other performance criteria for maintenance of good standing and progress toward degree. The performance criteria for the MSCFT program are found at <https://catalog.louisville.edu/graduate/programs-study/master-science-couple-family-therapy/#degreerequirementstext>
- c. Any student who does not satisfy the published performance criteria shall be placed in probationary status. Any student who remains in probationary status for two consecutive terms status may be considered for dismissal from the program.
- d. Students receiving graduate assistantships (teaching, research or service) shall be provided adequate training and shall be required to understand and adhere to university policies related to these areas. The performance of teaching, research and service duties by such students shall be periodically evaluated. Students with teaching assistantships shall be evaluated annually.
- e. Students who fail to meet performance goals or who do not meet other

requirements as outlined in the admission letter, program requirements or the university's catalog may be subject to academic dismissal from their programs.

3. Ph.D. Program

- a. Each Unit shall establish and publish in the university catalog current curricular and program offerings which include all requirements for degrees. The PhD program offerings and degree requirements are found at: <https://catalog.louisville.edu/graduate/programs-study/doctor-philosophy-social-work/#admissiontext>
- b. Each Unit shall establish and publish in the university catalog a minimum grade point average requirement and any other performance criteria for maintenance of good standing and progress toward degree. The performance criteria for the PhD program are found at: <https://catalog.louisville.edu/graduate/programs-study/doctor-philosophy-social-work/#degreerequirementstext>
- c. Any student who does not satisfy the published performance criteria shall be placed in probationary status. Any student who remains in probationary status for two consecutive terms status may be considered for dismissal from the program.
- d. Students receiving graduate assistantships (teaching, research or service) shall be provided adequate training and shall be required to understand and adhere to university policies related to these areas. The performance of teaching, research and service duties by such students shall be periodically evaluated. Students with teaching assistantships shall be evaluated annually.
- e. Students who fail to meet performance goals or who do not meet other requirements as outlined in the admission letter, program requirements or the university's catalog may be subject to academic dismissal from the PhD program.

4. DSW Program

- a. Each Unit shall establish and publish in the university catalog current curricular and program offerings which include all requirements for degrees. The DSW program offerings and degree requirements are found at: and <https://catalog.louisville.edu/graduate/programs-study/doctor-social-work/index.html#degreerequirementstext>

- b. Each Unit shall establish and publish in the university catalog a minimum grade point average requirement and any other performance criteria for maintenance of good standing and progress toward degree. The performance criteria for the DSW program are found at: <https://catalog.louisville.edu/graduate/programs-study/doctor-social-work/index.html#degreerequirementstext>
- c. Any student who does not satisfy the published performance criteria shall be placed in probationary status. Any student who remains in probationary status for two consecutive terms status may be considered for dismissal from the program.
- d. Students who fail to meet performance goals or who do not meet other requirements as outlined in the admission letter, program requirements or the university's catalog may be subject to academic dismissal from the DSW program.

C. International students: MSSW, MSCFT, PHD & DSW Programs

- a. All international students shall comply with regulations of the U.S. Department of Immigrations and Customs, its Student and Exchange Visitor Program and all related policies of the University of Louisville International Center.
- b. All international students must be registered with the University of Louisville International Center including presentation of evidence of financial resources adequate to support their educational and living expenses in the United States for the duration of their studies.
- c. International students for whom English is not their primary language must show English language proficiency by demonstration of a specified level of proficiency on the TOEFL, IELTS and Duolingo examination or by demonstration of a degree award from an acceptable English language institution. International students for the MSSW, MSCFT, PHD & DSW Programs for whom English is not their primary language must show English language proficiency by (a) a score of 213 on the computer-based TOEFL, (b) successfully completing the exit examination for the advanced level of the Intensive English as a Second Language Program (c) Duolingo score of 105 or higher or (d) providing documentation of a degree awarded by an acceptable English language institution.

D. Academic Program Administration: MSSW, MSCFT, PHD & DSW Programs

- a. Policies for administration of academic programs shall be promulgated by the Dean of the Graduate School following appropriate consultation with: (1) an advisory body of deans or their designees, (2) directors of graduate programs, (3) representatives of the Graduate Student Council and/or (4) the Graduate Council. Final approval of these guidelines shall be made by the University Provost.
- b. These administrative policies shall be published in the university catalog, and shall include policies and procedures for: the academic calendar and catalog maintenance, requirements for maintenance of good academic standing, course, credit and degree requirements, grades and grading policies, honors and awards, requirements for theses and dissertations, residency policies, and policies for award of stipends, benefits, tuition and fee remission.

E. Conflict resolution: MSSW, MSCFT, PHD & DSW Programs

- a. Any student who believes that he or she has been treated unfairly, discriminated against, or has had rights abridged may seek resolution of this conflict. Students, faculty and administrators shall first seek to resolve the matter through informal discussion and through administrative channels, and through the University Student Complaint Process. Should the complaint result in an academic grievance, a student may initiate a grievance at the unit level within one year of the event giving rise to the complaint. All grievance procedures shall be conducted in accord with Redbook Section 6.8.

II. Faculty Participation in Graduate Education: MSSW, MSCFT, PHD & DSW Programs

A. Certification for teaching graduate level courses.

1. Faculty who participate in teaching graduate level courses shall meet the requirements of the University of Louisville Faculty Credentials Policy. This policy is consistent with the guidelines of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools which state that faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work should have earned doctorate/terminal degrees in the teaching discipline or a related discipline. However, units may consider other qualifications (e.g., work experience, research) when determining whether a person is qualified to teach graduate level courses. Such exceptions must be documented and approved by the Dean of the appropriate academic unit and recorded by the Dean of the Graduate School.
2. Certified graduate teachers may teach outside of their unit with approval of the program within that unit.

B. Certification for membership to the Graduate Faculty

1. Membership to the Graduate Faculty requires certification for teaching graduate level courses as described above, as well as certification to serve as a member of a thesis or dissertation committee member or as a committee chair.
2. Faculty who serve as members of a thesis or dissertation committee must have experience in independent research, scholarship or creative activity.
3. Faculty who serve as the chair of a student's committee must be currently active in research, scholarship or creative activity, as defined by the faculty of the academic unit. The faculty member shall also make provisions for continuous availability of student mentoring.
4. Each Academic Unit must establish the process by which individuals are nominated and approved for Graduate Faculty status. Each Unit shall publish its criteria for participation in graduate education and the process for periodic evaluation for continuation of such status in the unit's minimum guidelines for graduate education. A graduate faculty appointment in Kent School remains active as long as the faculty member is associated with the university. Each Unit will forward the graduate faculty list to the Dean of the Graduate School annually for publication in the Graduate Catalog.
5. Ph.D. dissertation committees shall be composed of a minimum of four graduate faculty members and masters' thesis committees a minimum of three members. One of the members of the doctoral committees shall come from outside the program; a committee member from another institution may fulfill this requirement. All dissertation and thesis committees shall provide sufficient expertise in the area of study and sufficient faculty availability for necessary student guidance.
6. Members of the Graduate Faculty may serve as committee chairs or committee members for graduate students outside of their unit with approval of the student's enrollment unit.
7. If a prospective committee member does not meet the standards for a graduate faculty appointment in the student's enrollment unit, but brings professional expertise or value to a student's program, this person may be granted ad-hoc membership to the Graduate Faculty by the Dean of the student's enrollment unit. This pertains to persons from outside the university, as well as faculty and staff employed by the university.
8. Exceptions to these guidelines for involvement with graduate education at the masters' and doctoral level must be documented and approved by the Dean of the enrollment unit and approved by the Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs.
9. Faculty who serve as clinical supervisors of client contact hours counted toward the MSCFT degree must maintain American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT)- approved supervisor or supervisor candidate status.

10. The MSCFT Program Director must maintain AAMFT approved supervisor or supervisor candidate status.