

Application Checklist

- _____ Graduate School application
- _____ Doctoral program application
- _____ \$65 non-refundable application processing fee
- _____ Transcripts
- _____ Letters of recommendation
- _____ Writing sample
- _____ Personal statement
- _____ Resume
- _____ TOEFL (if required)

PhD Application Guidance

We appreciate your interest in PhD program at the Kent School of Social Work at the University of Louisville (U of L). This document provides guidance for applicants including (a) evaluation criteria, (b) application assembly and submission, and (c) an application checklist. For further guidance, contact the program coordinator, Allysse Stokes (Allysse.Stokes@louisville.edu; 1.502.852.3931). You may also choose to attend an information session by visiting the [Contact Us](#) tab.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate applicants' likelihood of success and fit with the program. All submitted materials should showcase the applicant's strengths in these areas.

1. *Evidence of academic success.* The applicant has the potential to perform at the highest academic level as demonstrated by, but not limited to (a) previous academic record at the undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate levels; (b) awards and honors achieved; and (c) support letters. Applicants must have a minimum of a 3.0 undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA), a graduate GPA of 3.5 or higher on 4.0 scale.
2. *Other indicators for success in graduate school.* The applicant has the potential to succeed in graduate school as demonstrated by (a) prior research experience, (b) exceptional community engagement/service, (c) leadership experience, (d) evidence of creativity and/or resilience, and (e) unique experience/background that will contribute to the program.
3. *Program support/mentorship.* The applicant fits with the program regarding their substantive area(s) of interest and potential for faculty mentorship.
4. *Non-research experience.* Evidence of relevant practice experience that could be used to inform their research, establish professional networks, and improve marketability post-graduation. Admission is typically limited to individuals who hold a Master in Social Work degree from programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) or international equivalents. We also prefer that applicants have two years of post-master's work experience. However, applicants without a Master's degree in social work, but with a Master's degree in another related discipline are welcome to apply and will be considered on a case by case basis.

Application Assembly and Submission

Applicants begin by completing the **Graduate School application** and paying the application fee (<http://louisville.edu/graduate/apply>) as well as submitting the Kent School PhD application found on this page: <https://louisville.edu/kent/academics/phd-social-work-apply> under "Application Materials". Recipients of certain government assistance programs may be eligible to waive this fee (<http://louisville.edu/admissions/apply/fee>)

All applicants must request their educational institutions to submit **official transcripts** directly to the Graduate School showing all degrees awarded and all undergraduate and graduate work (all courses) completed from each accredited college/university previously attended. Transcripts must be original documents bearing the institutional seal and official signature of the Registrar or copies verified by a school administrative officer. More on the graduate transcript policy is [here](#).

An "official final" academic transcript (or "official current" if currently enrolled AFTER Fall grades have posted) is required from each college/university attended including enrollment for

academic credit as a non-degree student and/or credits transferred to another college. All transcripts must bear the official seal and signature of the institution attended. Please *request transcripts directly from the Registrar or appropriate office of each institution* to be sent directly to Graduate Admissions at U of L. U of L transcripts are provided automatically for U of L graduates.

International applicants with transcripts that are not in English, in addition to submitting official copies of native language records, must also submit a notarized, verbatim translation in English prepared by an appropriate university or government official. The records must show both the degree granted and all coursework taken during the course of study. Applicants who are submitting transcripts from outside the United States must verify their records by submitting them to one of the following organizations: World Education Services (WES), Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE), and other NACES approved evaluators found here <https://www.naces.org/members>.

The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is not required for program applicants.

Three letters of recommendation are required. Printable recommendation forms are available online at <http://louisville.edu/graduate/apply> or select the “online” option when completing the Graduate School application to have forms sent to references electronically (recommended). Evaluations should be submitted from persons who have been directly responsible for supervising applicant’s human service-related work/volunteer experience and academic performance. Applicants are required to *submit at least two academic recommendations*. If the applicant has not enrolled in classes within the past five years, this requirement may be waived, and an additional professional reference should be substituted. Avoid personal references (e.g., co-workers, mentors, advisers, friends, clergy, personal therapists). The program reserves the right to request additional supportive material from persons acquainted with applicant’s academic and/or practice capabilities.

For the **writing sample**, the applicant should select a product in which they are the sole or first author and include a brief statement that provides context for the sample. For example, if a class assignment is submitted, describe the instructions briefly. If the applicant is submitting a co-authored sample, make the role of each author in the writing clear.

The **personal statement** is designed to supplement the written portion of the Graduate School application including (a) a description of the two skills and characteristics considered important for student success in graduate school and (b) a statement on diversity in context of the University community. In addition to these two Graduate School application requirements, please include a personal statement that does not exceed three single-spaced pages. Do not duplicate information already communicated in the written portion of the Graduate School application. The statement should be accompanied by a date, signature, and statement indicating the material is solely the applicant’s work and the applicant has neither cheated nor plagiarized in its creation.

The personal statement should note the reason for the pursuit of a doctoral program, specifically the one applied to and how it correlates with past experience (personal and or professional), notes of preparedness for the program, relation to any of our faculty areas of expertise if possible, what your passion is and what you hope to research about relating to this passion and how you may consider using the program to the advantage of reaching those goals as an academic and research scholar. The statement is designed to allow an applicant to expand on items and strengths more relevant to applying to this program and how their experience has shaped this doctorate program to becoming the next step.

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). More information is available at www.ielts.org. International students may be required to have their transcripts evaluated by a credential evaluation service in the U.S. Two possible services include World Education Services, Inc. at <http://www.wes.org> and Educational Credential Evaluators at <http://www.ece.org>. When completing the I-20, students should note that they will be placed in a practicum as part of their education.

Send all application documents to Graduate Admissions gradadm@louisville.edu or utilize the Online portal. If having any difficulty submitting documents please connect with the Graduate Admissions office right away.

NOTE: Transcripts and Letters of Reference/Recommendation should NOT be uploaded by the applicant directly. Official transcripts should always be sent directly from the previous higher education institution. International transcript evaluations should be sent directly from the evaluator agency directly to graduate admissions.

Letters of reference should be completed by the intended party once the email notification is received to submit their response. If using a PDF form, the reference should email the form directly to graduate admissions with a small blurb of what the content is and the applicant and program it is intended for. This will allow graduate admissions to upload the documents on their behalf to the applicant portal.