

## 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](mailto:Allysse.Stokes@louisville.edu); 1.502.852.3931). You may also choose to attend an information session (See program <http://louisville.edu/kent/academics/phd-social-work-apply>).

### 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 (<https://louisville.edu/kent/academics/phdapplication.pdf>). Recipients of certain government assistance programs may be eligible to waive this fee (<http://louisville.edu/admissions/apply/fee>)

All applicants must submit **official transcripts** 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 **2023-2024** 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 recommenders 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.

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 examination or by successfully completing the exit examination for the advanced level of the Intensive English as a Second Language Program at the University of Louisville or by demonstration of a degree awarded from an acceptable English language institution.

A score of 550 on the paper-based TOEFL or a score of 213 on the computer-based TOEFL or 79-80 on Internet-based TOEFL is required. Scores must be submitted before a decision will be made on an application. A test link is available at <http://louisville.edu/student/services/testing/index.html>. A minimum score of 6.5 is required if taking the International English Language Testing System

(IELTS). More information is available at [www.ielts.org](http://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](mailto:gradadm@louisville.edu) or utilize the online portal. If having any difficulty submitting documents please connect with the Graduate Admissions office right away.

## **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)

