



2026-2027 ADMISSIONS GUIDE

HELLO AND WELCOME!

Welcome to the Salisbury University Master of Social Work Program. This guide provides prospective students with information about program pathways, admission requirements, application materials, and important policies.

If you have additional questions that are not addressed here, please contact us at msw@salisbury.edu.

We look forward to getting to know you and assisting you throughout the admissions process!

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Important Dates

Applications open: **August 15**

Application deadlines: **November 15 & March 15**

Program Pathways

Advanced Standing vs Traditional Program

- **Advanced Standing** is for students who have completed, or are in the process of completing, a bachelor's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited college or university.
 - 32-credit program
 - (1) yearlong field practicum experience
 - Options to complete the program in 12 or 18 months
 - Hybrid or fully online program option
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- **Traditional Program** is for students who have completed, or are in the process of completing a bachelor's degree in a field other than social work, for example, psychology, sociology, business, education, etc.
 - 62-credit program
 - (2) yearlong field practicum experiences
 - Options to complete the program in 2 or 3 years
 - Hybrid or fully online program option

- Both the Traditional and Advanced Standing MSW programs admit students for the **fall semester only**.
- Matriculated **Advanced Standing** students may choose to begin coursework during the **summer session** prior to their first fall semester.
- All degree options can be completed full-time or part-time!

Campus Options

Both the Advanced Standing and Traditional MSW programs are offered in on-campus and online formats.

<u><i>Campus</i></u>	<u><i>Location</i></u>	<u><i>Format</i></u>
Salisbury University	Salisbury, Maryland	Hybrid
Eastern Shore Higher Education Center (ESHEC)	Wye Mills, MD	Hybrid
Cecil College	North East, MD	Hybrid
University System of Maryland at Hagerstown (USMH)	Hagerstown, MD	Hybrid
University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland (USMSM)	California, MD	Hybrid
Online MSW	Online	Asynchronous

Field Education & Expectations

Advanced Standing

- Students are in field (3) days per week for the Fall and Spring semester
- Students complete 560 total hours of field
 - 280 hours in the Fall and 280 hours in Spring

Traditional

- Students are in field (2) days per week for the Fall and Spring semester
- Students complete 400 hours of field
 - 176 hours in the Fall and 224 hours in Spring
- During your specialization field placement (second year), students are in field placement (3) days per week throughout the Fall and Spring semesters.
 - Students complete 560 hours of field
 - 280 hours in the fall and 280 hours in the spring

- Students must be prepared to be in-person at their field placement agency during typical daytime hours.
- Employment based field education may be an option also. You will have the opportunity to discuss this option during the field placement process.
- If you are unable to complete your Specialization Year field placement **(3) days per week**, you may have the option to extend your field placement and attend **(2) days per week** instead. Choosing this option will extend your graduation timeline from **May to August**. If you are considering this option, you should discuss it with the Field Office, who will review the requirements, additional considerations, and help coordinate the necessary arrangements.

Specializations

Clinical Social Work and Advocacy (CSWA)

- Prepares students to work with diverse individuals, families and small groups with a special focus on interventions that enhance the person-in-environment fit and address biopsychosocial and behavioral functioning.
- Graduates may assume a variety of roles in multi-disciplinary settings, including, but not limited to, mental health clinics, health care facilities, family service agencies, palliative and hospice care, schools, veterans' services, the military, in-patient treatment facilities, social service agencies, recovery programs, forensic services, court services, and private practice.

Social Change and Leadership (SCL)

- Prepares students to work with organizations and communities to address systemic issues and to promote just and equitable social structures.
- Graduates are prepared for careers in administration, policy, organizing, activism, and advocacy.

Admissions Criteria-Traditional

Minimum requirements for admission consideration are listed below.

If your bachelor's degree is not in social work

- You are eligible for the Traditional 62-credit program option.
- Students must have a completed undergraduate degree or a degree that will be conferred before beginning the MSW program.
 - Offers of admission are conditional until transcripts from a completed bachelor's degree are received
- A minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0.
 - If your cumulative GPA is below 3.0, your application will still be considered. However, you will be required to submit an additional statement explaining how you plan to be successful in the MSW program. More information about this requirement can be found in the "[GPA Statement Requirement](#)" section of this guide.
- Earn(ed) a grade of "C" or higher in each of the required prerequisite courses: Psychology, Sociology, and Statistics.
 - If you have not completed the required prerequisite courses before applying, your admission will be considered **conditional**. You must successfully complete any missing prerequisite courses by the end of your first Fall semester. A registration hold will be placed on your account until your prerequisite(s) are fulfilled.

Admissions Criteria-Advanced Standing

Minimum requirements for admission considerations are listed below.

If your bachelor's degree is in Social Work

- You are eligible for the Advanced Standing 32-credit program option.
- You must have earned or be on track to earn before beginning the MSW program, a Bachelor of Social Work (BASW) degree from a CSWE-accredited program.
 - Offers of admission are conditional until transcripts from a completed bachelor's degree are received
- If you have already graduated; your BASW must have been completed within the past (3) years. Applicants who earned their BASW within the past (5) years may also be considered for admission if they have worked in the social work or human services field for at least two of those years.
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.2 on your last 60 and a GPA of 3.0 on your last 120 credits is required.
 - If your cumulative GPA is below the thresholds, your application will still be considered. However, you will be required to submit an additional statement explaining how you plan to be successful in the MSW program. More information about this requirement can be found in the "[GPA Statement Requirement](#)" section of this guide.
- Earn(ed) a grade of "C" or higher in each of the required prerequisite courses: Psychology, Sociology, and Statistics.
 - If you have not completed the required prerequisite courses before applying, your admission will be considered **conditional**. You must successfully complete any missing prerequisite courses by the end of your first Fall semester. A registration hold will be placed on your account until your prerequisite(s) are fulfilled.

Transfer Students

For applicants transferring from another CSWE-accredited MSW program, the number of transfer credits that may be accepted depends on whether you are applying to the Traditional MSW program or the Advanced Standing MSW program.

- Students entering the Traditional MSW program may transfer up to 18 semester credit hours. Only credits where an A or B letter grade is earned will be considered.
- Students admitted to the Advanced Standing MSW program may transfer up to 9 semester credit hours. Only credits where an A or B letter grade is earned will be considered.

- Field Education credits are eligible for consideration for transfer, provided the placement was successfully completed, and a grade of A or B was earned.
- The Graduate School handbook states that a minimum of 21 credit hours must be completed at Salisbury University.
- Any social work credits to be reviewed for transfer must have been earned within five (5) years of applying to Salisbury University.

Students currently or previously enrolled in another CSWE-accredited Master of Social Work degree program who are seeking admission as a transfer student are required to submit the following materials, in addition to the full Graduate School Application:

- A brief written statement describing the reasons why they are requesting the transfer;
- A copy of Field Education/Practicum evaluations, if applicable; and
- At least one recommendation from a faculty member or Field Supervisor affiliated with the program from which the student is transferring.

Students from graduate programs that are not in social work or that are not CSWE-accredited may receive a maximum of six (6) transfer credits for courses for which they earned a grade of "A" or "B". Each course will be assessed for program equivalency.

Non-Degree Program

Applicants may wish to enroll as a non-degree seeking student if they:

1. Have already earned an MSW degree and need additional coursework for licensure or continuing education; **or**
2. Would like to explore the MSW program by taking a limited number of courses before applying for admission.

Eligible applicants who wish to enroll as non-degree graduate students (not formally admitted to a graduate degree program) are not required to complete a formal application for admission to the School of Social Work but rather must complete a [Non-Degree Registration Form](#) to the university. Prospective non-degree students are directed to first correspond with the MSW Program Director (msw@salisbury.edu) regarding any non-degree seeking course enrollment. Approval is contingent upon factors such as the prospective student's prior education, course prerequisites, and future degree-seeking plans, amongst other factors. MSW courses taken as non-degree seeking but later used toward a graduate degree in the school are subject to all University and School policies including the School of Social Work's course repeat policy and Salisbury University's 7-year time limitation for the completion of graduate coursework.

Completing the Application

The application to the MSW program is completed through the [Graduate School](#). It is important that you follow all directions when completing and submitting your application. This is something that will be evaluated as part of the decision-making process on your admission. If you have difficulty with the Application system, please contact the Graduate School at graduateadmissions@salisbury.edu.

After submitting your application to Salisbury University, you may use your application portal to track the receipt of required application materials, such as official transcripts and letters of recommendation. Please note that the portal reflects the status of submitted materials only and does not provide updates on the review process, admission decision timeline, or the progress of your application.

Traditional Program

The following materials are required for the admissions application:

- A completed application to the Graduate School
- Official transcripts from all colleges and universities you have attended or are currently attending are required
- All transcripts are to be sent to:
 - Salisbury University Office of Graduate Studies and Research
1101 Camden Avenue, Salisbury, MD 21801 *or*
submit electronically to graduateadmissions@salisbury.edu.
- Your current resume or CV
- (3) Letters of recommendation from individuals who can speak to your abilities to be successful in the MSW program:
 - Current or previous professor(s) or other university official(s)
 - Current or former work or volunteer supervisor(s)
 - Current or former co-worker(s)
- Letters of Recommendation from the following are ***not*** appropriate and will not be accepted:
 - Friends or parents of friends
 - Family members
 - Medical or mental health providers
- *Please do not list a friend or family member as a coworker or supervisor for the purpose of obtaining a letter of recommendation. As members of a profession guided by a Code of Ethics, we expect applicants to demonstrate honesty and integrity throughout the application process.*

- Personal statement covering two prompts:
 - Each statement should be no more than two (2) pages in length. The combined response to all prompts must not exceed four (4) pages.
 - You must complete **both** prompts for your application to be considered complete.
 - Double spacing and 12-point font are appropriate.
 - You must **bold** the heading to identify which prompt is being addressed.
 - *Please be aware that if you disclose instances of child abuse or neglect, including child sexual abuse, we are mandated reporters and are required to report this information to the appropriate authorities for investigation.*
 - **Prompt 1: Social Work Knowledge**
 - Discuss your motivation for choosing the social work profession and how it connects to your current and long-term career goals.
 - **Prompt 2: Respect for Diversity**
 - Identify the experiences you have had which make you feel that you can work effectively with people from diverse populations (religious, racial, ethnic, disability, socio-economic, gender, and sexual orientation differences). Also describe any difficulties you might have when working as a social worker with any of the diverse populations. Be specific.
- *Your personal statement is your opportunity to demonstrate your interest in social work, as well as your writing and critical thinking skills. We ask that you submit your own original work and do not use AI to generate your responses. Statements that appear to rely heavily on AI may be subject to further review. We reserve the right to deny an application if we determine that the contents are not the original work of the applicant. Integrity and ethical conduct are fundamental to the social work profession and begin with the application process.*
- A non-refundable \$65 application fee is required before you can submit your application.

Advanced Standing

The following materials are required for the admissions application:

- A completed application to the Graduate School
- Official transcripts from all colleges and universities you have attended or are currently attending are required
 - All transcripts are to be sent to:

Salisbury University Office of Graduate Studies and Research
1101 Camden Avenue, Salisbury, MD 21801 **or**
submit electronically to graduateadmissions@salisbury.edu.

- Your current resume or CV
- (4) Letters of recommendation
 - Current or previous professor
 - Field education liaison – the person who taught your field education course
 - Field education direct supervisor
 - Your current or most recent direct supervisor, or you can substitute a second college professor in place of an employer;
- Letters of Recommendation from the following are ***not*** appropriate and will not be accepted:
 - Friends or parents of friends
 - Family members
 - Medical or mental health providers
 - *Please do not list a friend or family member as a coworker or supervisor for the purpose of obtaining a letter of recommendation. As members of a profession guided by a Code of Ethics, we expect applicants to demonstrate honesty and integrity throughout the application process.*
- Your final first semester/term/block field placement evaluation.
 - If you are currently enrolled in a Bachelor of Social Work program, you need to have the final field evaluation from your first semester/term/block of placement
 - For example, if the first part of your field placement is completed during the Fall 2026 semester, you would submit your final field evaluation at the conclusion of that semester.
- If you have completed your bachelor's degree in social work, submit your final semester/term/block field placement evaluation
 - For example, if you graduated in Spring 2025 and completed your field placement during that semester, you would submit your final field evaluation from Spring 2025.
- Applications will not be reviewed until after this evaluation is submitted
- Personal statement covering two prompts:
 - Each statement should be no more than two (2) pages in length. The combined response to all prompts must not exceed four (4) pages.

- You must complete **both** prompts for your application to be considered complete.
- Double spacing and 12-point font are appropriate.
- You must **bold** the heading to identify which prompt is being addressed.
- *Please be aware that if you disclose instances of child abuse or neglect, including child sexual abuse, we are mandated reporters and are required to report this information to the appropriate authorities for investigation.*
- **Prompt 1: Critical Thinking and Social Work Knowledge**
 - We all face challenges in our own lives and our job as social workers is to help our clients address their problems. Please discuss a time when you, at your job/internship or in a volunteer capacity, worked to assist someone address a problem. Describe the individual's problem. Discuss how you assisted them in addressing and resolving the problem as a professional or volunteer. Identify the specific skills and information you learned from your undergraduate social work education that aided you in addressing the problem. Identify the outcome of the problem and what you learned from the experience.
- **Prompt 2: Respect for Diversity**
 - Write about your experiences working with diverse populations (religious, racial, ethnic, disability, socio-economic, gender, and sexual orientation differences). Which issues and populations do you find particularly challenging? How have you handled those challenges in the past, or what would you like to learn to handle those challenges more effectively in the future?

****Your personal statement is your opportunity to demonstrate your interest in social work, as well as your writing and critical thinking skills. We ask that you submit your own original work and do not use AI to generate your responses. Statements that appear to rely heavily on AI may be subject to further review. We reserve the right to deny an application if we determine that the contents are not the original work of the applicant. Integrity and ethical conduct are fundamental to the social work profession and begin with the application process.***

- A non-refundable \$65 application fee is required before you can submit your application.

GPA Statement Requirement

After your official transcripts have been received, your cumulative and last 60-credit GPAs will be calculated.

If your overall GPA(s) are below the stated thresholds:

- You will be required to submit an additional statement:

- **What have you learned from your previous and/or current academic experiences that will help you develop strategies for success in the MSW program?**
 - This statement should be no more than one (1) page long.
 - Guidelines on AI use apply to this statement as well.
 - If this is required, you will be contacted by the MSW Program via email to submit this documentation.

Additional Considerations

Applicants with Pending Legal Action or Convictions

Applicants to any MSW program option who have pending legal action or convictions will be asked to supply documentation on the nature of the offense and the disposition. Individuals admitted to the program who are facing pending legal actions or convictions may have restrictions placed on the area of study and field placements they may pursue, as some field placement agencies do require a criminal background check. Applicants should also be aware that the Professional Standards Committee of the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners may refuse to issue a license or certificate of registration to any person who has been convicted of any crime in this or any other state. Applicants may be denied admission to or, if enrolled, terminated from the program if they have been untruthful or provided inaccurate information on their application.

Life Experience Credit and Course Credit by Examination

Credit in the MSW Program will not be granted for life experience or previous work experience. We no longer offer the option to earn course credit by examination. All course credits must either be earned at Salisbury University or transferred from a CSWE-accredited or similar program.

International Applicants

Due to limited resources and concerns regarding field placement coordination, we do not accept applications from international applicants. At this time, you must reside within the United States to participate in our MSW Program.