

## Frequently Asked Questions for Potential Applicants

1. I would like more information about the program, what can I do?
  - 1) Check our website <http://www.ric.edu/socialwork/>
  - 2) Attend an Information Session <http://www.ric.edu/socialwork/Pages/MSW-Information-Sessions.aspx>
  - 3) Contact the Director of Admissions, Paula Coutinho at [pcoutinho@ric.edu](mailto:pcoutinho@ric.edu)
  
2. What steps should I take before I apply to the MSW program?
  - 1) Attend an Information Session
  - 2) Order your transcripts. You need official transcripts for every undergraduate institution you attended that appear on the School's transcript that conferred your undergraduate degree.
  - 3) Scan your transcripts. Each transcript belongs in a separate PDF document (i.e. if you attend the University of Rhode Island and the Community College of Rhode Island you will have TWO PDF documents). If you attended Rhode Island College you will scan and upload your unofficial transcripts. If you need assistance scanning these documents you can go to an office supply store and they can assist you.
  - 4) Ask people who know you and can answer the letter of reference questions if they would be willing to write letters for you.
  - 5) Start thinking about what you will write in your personal statement.
  
3. Who\* should write my letters of reference?

People who know you the best and can discuss:

  1. Clarity about professional social work functions
  2. Ability for sensitive interpersonal relations
  3. Competence in intellectual thinking
  4. Ability to clearly communicate orally and in writing
  5. Overall commitment to social welfare issues
  6. Unique characteristics and special talents
  7. Greatest strength in relation to undertaking graduate-level study in the field of social work
  8. What they would expect would be the greatest challenge the applicant will likely encounter in a social work program

\*Because we are asking about social work it is helpful if the reference letter writers understand the social work profession.
  
4. Who should NOT write my letters of reference?

Relatives/Friends/Therapists should not write letters of reference

5. What should I cover in the Personal Statement?

Please answer the following questions in your personal statement:

1. Tell us how your life experiences have influenced your decision to pursue social work as a career.
2. Social justice is a key component of social work's mission. What social justice issues are important to you? Why?
3. What experience have you had with oppressed populations (racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, persons with disabilities, etc.)? How has that experience influenced you and your decision to pursue social work?
4. What do you see as your personal strengths and challenges as a professional social worker?
5. Graduate social work education requires sophisticated writing and critical thinking skills. Discuss the reasons why you believe you will be able to meet the academic requirements of a rigorous graduate program. Include evidence that indicates you are able to do graduate level work successfully.
6. A) If your grade point average is less than 3.0 please discuss.  
B) If there are any gaps in your work history or short-term positions, please explain.

6. How long is the Personal Statement?

The Personal Statement is six to eight double-spaced pages and aids the Admissions Committee in assessing the applicant's qualifications for social work practice.

7. What is the Admissions Committee looking for in applicants?

Among these qualifications are: the ability to think analytically and conceptually; clarity in self-expression; responsiveness and sensitivity in minority and culturally diverse relationships; the ability to develop professional self-awareness and self-evaluation; commitment to improving social conditions; and the ability to function creatively, responsibly and independently.

8. Can I attend the program part-time?

Yes you can attend the program part-time.

9. What does the part-time structure look like?

Please visit the webpage <http://ric.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2018-2019/Catalog/School-of-Social-Work/Social-Work-MSW> for the curriculum description.

10. What does the full-time structure look like?

Please visit the webpage <http://ric.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2018-2019/Catalog/School-of-Social-Work/Social-Work-MSW> for the curriculum description.

11. When are courses offered?  
All required first year courses are offered during the day and evening.
12. How long does it take to get an MSW?  
The program is 62 credits and it can be completed in 2-4 years.
13. What class can I take as a non-matriculating student?  
You can take 9 credits as a non-matriculating student that can be transferred towards your MSW. Potential students are allowed to take SWRK 520: Human Behavior, Diversity and Oppression I (offered only in Fall) and SWRK 522: Human Behavior, Diversity and Oppression II (offered only in Spring).
14. Who can apply for Advanced Standing status?  
Students who have a BSW from an accredited bachelor in Social Work program are eligible to apply.
15. Do I need to have completed human biology for my application to be considered?  
You can apply for the program without having this pre-requisite met. Applicants without this pre-requisite who are accepted into the program will take this course the summer before starting their MSW courses.
16. I have a GPA less than 3.0. Can I still apply?  
GPA is one of the many indicators we look at in a candidate. You are eligible to apply. Please be certain to put much thought into question 6A on the Personal Statement.