

# Auburn University

## Undergraduate Social Work Program

### STUDENT HANDBOOK

Dear Social Work Major:

The faculty and staff in the Social Work Program are proud that you have chosen social work as your major.

Auburn University's Social Work Program has been fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education since 1978 and is accredited through 2024. The Council on Social Work Education is the accrediting body for all social work programs nationwide. In order to maintain accreditation, social work programs and schools must meet all of the standards set forth by the Council on Social Work Education.

You may declare the pre-social work major at any time. As a junior, you must formally apply and gain admission to the program in order to proceed to the Methods of Practice classes.

This student handbook was prepared as a guide to obtaining your Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work from Auburn University. The handbook is by no means a replacement for the ongoing one to one advising process with your departmental faculty advisor. The information here provides a framework through which you may structure your educational process. This handbook should be used in conjunction with the [Auburn University Bulletin](#) and with the Auburn University Student Policy eHandbook.

We hope this handbook will be useful for you and if there are any questions concerning its contents, please make an appointment with your faculty advisor.

Sincerely,

Dr. Hilary D. Joyce  
Associate Professor and Undergraduate Program Director  
Social Work Program  
Auburn University

Updated: 4/2018; 10/2020

## **Section I: Introduction**

### ***A. Social Work as a Profession***

Since its inception, the social work profession has concerned itself with helping people who are experiencing social problems to find ways of living more satisfying and productive lives. Social workers interface with an array of diverse populations in their attempt to achieve this goal. They serve people found in the welfare system, health and mental health agencies, schools, corrections facilities and in the courts, substance abuse programs, community action agencies and religious organizations. Social workers are engaged in tasks ranging from counseling individuals to cope with emotional and special problems to the broad based efforts of planning, administration, legislation and social reform.

The Auburn University Social Work Program seeks to train students in the “generalist” practice model for beginning professional social work practice. This model teaches the student to work with a variety of system levels to enhance individual, family, small group, organizational and community functioning. The flexibility and broad knowledge base afforded to our students allows them to apply various methods and interventive techniques, to identify situations requiring the attention of those with advanced specialized knowledge and skills, to make appropriate referrals, and to evaluate the effectiveness of ones’ efforts.

The Auburn University Social Work Baccalaureate Program has adopted the Association of Baccalaureate Program Directors’ generalist social work practice definition as follows:

“Generalist social work practitioners work with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations in a variety of social work and host settings. Generalist practitioners view clients and client systems from a strengths perspective in order to recognize, support, and build upon the innate capabilities of all human beings. They use a professional problem-solving process to engage, assess, broker services, advocate, counsel, educate, and organize with and on behalf of clients and client systems. In addition, generalist practitioners engage in community and organizational development. Finally, generalist practitioners evaluate service outcomes in order to continually improve the provision and quality of services most appropriate to client needs.”

The need for beginning level generalist social work practitioners is evident in the Bureau of Labor projections from 2012. Employment in the social work field is projected to grow faster than average through 2022. Competition for jobs is expected in cities; however, in rural areas, jobs will be just as plentiful. The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) has been and continues to be the largest employer of social workers in the state,

however, social workers who specialize in the aging population or rural areas will be in high demand due to the aging Baby Boomer population. Employment in local agencies will also grow in response to the aging population and needs of public welfare, family services, and child protective services. Social workers who work in mental health, schools, substance abuse, and medical settings will also see an increase. In the state of Alabama, to obtain employment as a Social Worker, one must possess a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work or an MSW licensure.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest organization of professional social workers in the world with members in 56 chapters throughout the United States and in the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Europe. NASW's primary functions include professional development, establishing professional standards of social work practice, advancing sound social policies, and membership services. Membership in NASW is open to all social work students and practitioners. More information can be found at [www.naswdc.org](http://www.naswdc.org).

## ***B. The Social Work Program at Auburn University***

The Social Work Program is located on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of the Haley Center in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work within the College of Liberal Arts. The program was begun in 1975 and has been accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1978. In its 40 years of existence, the majority of Auburn's Social Work graduates have obtained employment in the field.

The Social Work Program curriculum integrates with the university core classes, which provide students with a broad liberal arts educational background. The Social Work foundation is also built upon the ethical principles of the Social Work profession. These ethical principles are based on the core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence (NASW).

The Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work at Auburn University is a wise choice for the student committed to the advancement of human welfare and social justice. Whatever the social work field of special interest, the prospective social work student must be both intellectually able and committed to the ethics and purposes of the profession as set forth in the [Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers](http://www.naswdc.org). (See [www.naswdc.org](http://www.naswdc.org))

## ***C. Auburn University Social Work Program Mission Statement/Goals and Educational Competencies.***

### **Mission Statement**

**The Auburn University Social Work Program mission is to make a positive impact on the social problems within the State of Alabama by educating and training generalist social work personnel who are capable of addressing the problems unique to Alabama's poor, advocating on behalf of the disenfranchised, including children and families at risk, and dealing with diverse populations. We do so by establishing and maintaining community partnerships, as well as developing and implementing research techniques and evaluative strategies designed to address these problems in a collaborative manner.**

### **Program Goals**

The goals of Auburn University's Social Work Program reflect the university's strong commitment to teaching, research and outreach. The goals that serve as an organizing framework are the following:

**Program Goal #1:** *To provide a generalist practice curriculum that prepares beginning generalist social workers to engage in critical thinking in order to work effectively at all system levels, using social work values and ethics.*

**Program Goal #2:** *To provide a learning environment and curriculum that promotes an ability to understand and practice with diverse populations and that focuses on the roots, dynamics and consequences of social and economic injustice and equips students with the skills to promote social change directed toward remedying injustice and oppression faced by populations at risk on individual and collective levels.*

**Program Goal #3:** *To promote research on social welfare issues, and practice based on social work research findings.*

**Program Goal #4:** *To develop and nurture partnerships with community stakeholders through provision of training, education, civic engagement and research opportunities for graduates, faculty and the community.*

The Auburn University Social Work curriculum prepares its graduates for generalist practice through mastery of core competencies and associated practice behaviors (as identified by the Council on Social Work Education.) These competencies (identified below) are comprised of knowledge, values and skills. Students must demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

### **Educational Competencies and Practice Behaviors**

- I. *Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.***
  1. Advocate for client access to the services of social work.

2. Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development.
3. Attend to professional roles and boundaries.
4. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication.
5. Engage in career-long learning.
6. Use supervision and consultation.

**II. *Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.***

7. Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice.
8. Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles.
9. Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts.
10. Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

**III. *Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.***

11. Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom.
12. Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation.
13. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

**IV. *Engage diversity and difference in practice.***

14. Recognize the extent to which culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create/enhance privilege/power.
15. Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups.
16. Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences.
17. View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.

**V. *Advance human rights and social and economic justice.***

18. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination.
19. Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice.

20. Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.
- VI. *Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.***
21. Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry.
  22. Use research evidence to inform practice.
- VII. *Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.***
23. Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation.
  24. Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.
- VIII. *Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.***
25. Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being.
  26. Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.
- IX. *Respond to contexts that shape practice.***
27. Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services.
  28. Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.
- X. *Engage assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.***
29. Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
  30. Use empathy and other interpersonal skills.
  31. Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.
  32. Collect, organize, and interpret client data.
  33. Assess client strengths and limitations.
  34. Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives.
  35. Select appropriate intervention strategies.
  36. Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals.
  37. Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities.
  38. Help clients resolve problems.

39. Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients.
40. Facilitate transitions and endings.
41. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

#### ***D. Social Work Program Values Statement on Non-Discrimination***

As stated in the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and consistent with Auburn University Diversity Goals, we the administration, faculty, staff, and social work program:

- Affirm that social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, economic status, or mental or physical ability.
- Are committed to teach, encourage, and promote an appreciation for and understanding of diversity in the Social Work Program at Auburn University within our profession, and our community. Social workers should continually obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression.

#### ***E. Professional Licensure***

In the state of Alabama, the social work licensing law requires that anyone employed as a “social worker” must have been tested and licensed by the state. It is possible only for persons having a social work degree from an accredited program to obtain such a license. Since Auburn’s program is fully accredited, the graduated social work major will qualify to take the examination for licensure. More than three quarters of our graduates who have taken this examination have passed it on the first attempt. The application for licensure can be obtained by calling the [Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners](#) at 334-242-5860.

Please note licensure regulations vary by state. If you plan to practice social work in another state, you are encouraged to become familiar with that state’s licensing regulations. It is your responsibility to fully understand and comply with licensing requirements in the state in which you intend to practice. For more information, please visit the [Office of Institutional Research’s website for professional licensure](#).

## ***F. Graduate Study in Social Work***

Students interested in advanced study may attend graduate school to obtain a Master's Degree in Social Work (MSW). Many Auburn Social Work graduates have chosen to continue their professional education by pursuing the MSW degree. Such training expands job opportunities, allows one the chance to specialize in various practice modalities and therefore, increases the likelihood of employment in supervisory or managerial levels with substantially higher salary.

Typically, MSW programs are two full years in duration; however, many graduate schools now offer "advanced standing programs" to BSW graduates with exceptional grade point averages and degrees from CSWE accredited programs. Completion of an advanced standing program takes only one calendar year as compared to two academic years for the traditional 2-year program. The Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work from Auburn University makes it possible to enter into an advanced standing program. Majors in other fields, even if they have taken some social work courses, will not qualify for such programs.

## **Section II: Academic Guidelines**

### **A. The Social Work Curriculum**

The Social Work Curriculum requirements account for three quarters of the total number of hours required for a degree (120 hours).

We urge you to pay special attention to the time constraints in signing up for the fieldwork courses as well as the course sequencing as some courses are taught only once per year. It is advisable that the major be declared prior to one's junior year. This may be done at any time by scheduling an appointment with your College of Liberal Arts Advisor. Please note that in addition to declaring Pre-Social Work as a major a student must be formally admitted to the program, prior to enrolling in SOWO 4060. The Methods courses (SOWO 4060, 4070 and 4080) must be taken sequentially.

### **Faculty Advising**

Full-time social work faculty serve as advisors. Advisors are determined by the first letter of a student's last name. The advising schedule is posted in several locations surrounding the Social Work Program office and on the Program's website. The advisor serves to assist the student with negotiating the University system, to monitor progress in the program, and make recommendations regarding further studies, counseling, job opportunities and/or changing majors. **As an Auburn University student, it is imperative that students meet with both their social work advisor and liberal arts advisor each semester.**

## **College of Liberal Arts Advisors**

Each student will have a Liberal Arts Advisor when they declare social work as their major. The Social Work Program works very closely with these advisors on issues of transfer credit, course substitution, and final credit counts. A file is maintained in their office on each student in 308 Tichenor Hall. In order to graduate on schedule, it is helpful to make sure that both advisors have the same information. **Students are advised to contact their assigned College of Liberal Arts Advisor to schedule advising sessions or other appointments.**

## **B. Scholarships**

There are a variety of academic scholarships available to Social Work students, all of which must be applied for through the Auburn University Scholarship Opportunity Manager (AUSOM). AUSOM has many useful online features and benefits. Students can easily search, review requirements, apply, and accept awards for available scholarship opportunities, and more! Interested students apply for all institutional scholarships using this online application. Students are only required to complete the AUSOM application once each academic year by March 1<sup>st</sup>. There are two scholarships available from the program for Social Work students: The Betty Seale Barlow & Frieda Scoggins Baker Annual Scholarship in Social Work and the Elizabeth Grace Byrd Endowed Memorial Scholarship Award. Eligibility guidelines are listed on the AUSOM website <http://www.auburn.edu/scholarship/ausom/>. The College of Liberal also offers a number of scholarships. Information and eligibility guidelines can be found on their website <http://www.cla.auburn.edu/cla/student-services/scholarship-information/>

Social Work faculty will assist you in finding additional scholarships relevant to the profession including the NASW Torchmark, and the Phi Alpha Honor Society.

## **C. Field Instruction**

A vital part of the social work curriculum is the fieldwork educational component. Students complete two such experiences, one during their sophomore year; Field Practicum (SOWO 3910) for 3 credit hours and their senior field placement (SOWO 4920) Internship for 9 credit hours, which is taken concurrently with (SOWO 4950) Integrative Seminar for 3 credit hours.

The fieldwork component is designed to give the student the opportunity to familiarize him/herself with a given community agency and the role of the social work practitioner within the agency, to observe and practice skills learned in the classroom, and to develop, implement, and evaluate a set of competency-based practice behaviors. Ultimately, the student will be ready for employment as a beginning level generalist practitioner and

have an idea of the practice arena they are best suited for at the completion of the final field work experience.

**SOWO 3910:** Field Practicum is a requirement for admission into the Social Work Program and must be pre-arranged with the Field Coordinator prior to registration for SOWO 4060 – Methods I. Details of this process are covered in the Field Instruction Manual and during advisement or can be accessed on the Social Work Homepage link to field instruction (<http://cla.auburn.edu/sociology/social-work/undergraduates/field-instruction/>).

**SOWO 4920:** Internship, the final field placement, is typically undertaken during the student's final semester in school and can only be arranged after the following: obtain a grade of "C" or better in all SOWO 4000-level courses and above and have maintained an overall Social Work course GPA of 2.5. Since it is a full-time 480-hour obligation, some students elect to intern and live at home and commute to the weekly integrative seminar. Such arrangements will only be considered following careful assessment of the student's maturity, readiness to undertake fieldwork, motivation and commitment, sense of responsibility, and upon availability of a suitable placement. Out of area placements are within the purview of the Field Coordinator and are considered on a case by case basis. During the social work practice sequence, all students will engage in several self-assessments, which will assist the Field Coordinator in determining the final field placement site.

The purpose of these processes is to encourage students to think and grow with respect to their interest in social work and to provide opportunities for faculty to assess the readiness of students to effectively place their clients' rights and interests as primary.

The field practicum course is evaluated via a letter grade, which is based upon performance in the agency, seminars, written assignments, and a written evaluation from the agency supervisor. The senior field placement (4920) is evaluated on a pass/fail basis. The seminar (4950) is graded. A student must make a C or better in order to pass the field component. In rare cases, students are allowed to re-take the fieldwork component to obtain a satisfactory grade. Students must be fully accepted into the Social Work Program prior to entering their final field placement (SOWO 4920) and must satisfactorily pass this placement in order to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work degree.

Life experiences and/or previous work experience cannot substitute for either of the field placement courses. While these experiences often prove to be instrumental in the student's choice of social work as a career and can enhance the student's education, they will not be able to count towards course credit.

The state's Title IV-E Traineeship provides stipends to university students at Alabama higher education institutions to help create prospective child welfare workers and provide

continuing educational opportunities for existing child welfare workers. Interested students should visit the [Title IV-E website](#) to review eligibility criteria and application information. Students can also direct questions to the AU Field Director or [TitleIV-E@ua.edu](mailto:TitleIV-E@ua.edu).

## D. Student Activities

- a. *Auburn Association of Student Social Workers (AASSW), aka The Social Work Club*  
The Student Government Association charters the Social Work Club. Its purpose and our mission are to provide fellowship, education, and service to students, the university, and community. AASSW officers are elected yearly and meetings are held at least five times per semester. Typically, the president attends all Social Work Faculty Meetings. The club hosts guest speakers from local agencies of interest to majors as well as undertakes various service projects. The Association officers are listed on the Social Work Bulletin Board and membership is open to all students. Membership dues and fund raisers assist in performing civic projects, social events, and purchasing of T-shirts.

- b. *Phi Alpha – Social Work Honor Society*

The purposes of Phi Alpha Honor Society are to provide a closer bond among students of social work and to promote humanitarian goals and ideals. To be eligible for membership of the Tau Gamma Chapter of Phi Alpha, students must meet the below criteria:

1. Students must have completed 9 credit-hours in Social Work.
2. Students must have completed 37.5% (45 hrs.) of the required coursework (120 hrs.) toward the degree. The student will be at least a second-semester sophomore.
3. Students must have an overall GPA in the top 35% of all Social Work majors in the AU SOWO Program who meet all of the criteria listed above.
4. Students must have successfully completed SOWO 4060 Social Work Practice Methods I with a B or better.
5. Students must have earned an average faculty rating of 3.3 or higher on the following 8 professional behaviors from the Rubric for Assessing Professional Behaviors: initiation of communication, respect, self-awareness, diversity awareness, course engagement, written expression, initiative and reliability, responsiveness to feedback, and quality and quantity of work.

This chapter of the National Social Work Honor Society holds a yearly initiation ceremony jointly each spring with the Tau Theta Chapter at Tuskegee University. The initiates work closely with the Auburn Association of Student Social Workers (AASSW) and the faculty to sponsor educational programs and community projects. For more information: <http://www.phialpha.org/index.html>.

- c. *Alabama-Mississippi Social Work Education Conference*  
Auburn University's Social Work Program is a member of this conference along with all of the accredited social work programs in the two states. The purpose of the organization is to promote education, research and collaboration among schools of social work through student involvement in the planning and participation in a yearly conference. Typically a group of students and faculty attend/or present papers at the conference. Auburn University hosted the conference in 2008 and is usually involved in planning or presenting at the conference.
  
- d. *Social Media*  
The Social Work Program has both a Facebook page and a Twitter handle. Find our page and like us on Facebook, Auburn University Social Work Program, and follow us on Twitter @AUsocialwork. Program announcements and upcoming events are shared on the Facebook page. Students can also network with current social work students and social work graduates through the Facebook page.

## **E. Support Services**

- a. *Office of Accessibility*  
<https://fp.auburn.edu/disability/>  
Services for students with documented disabilities or those desiring evaluation are coordinated from the Office of Accessibility located in 1228 Haley Center. Contact 844-2096 for information or e-mail [accessibility@auburn.edu](mailto:accessibility@auburn.edu)
  
- b. *Office of Inclusion and Diversity*  
<http://diversity.auburn.edu>  
  
The primary purpose of the Office of Inclusion and Diversity is to establish diversity as a core value at Auburn University. The office Multicultural Affairs provides professional services, assistance, support, leadership, and guidance to students, faculty, staff, and groups associated with the Program. Mentors are available to counsel and advise, advocate for and support minority students and other under-represented groups on campus. Located at 108 M.W. Smith Hall 381 Mell Street or call 844-4184. [diversity@auburn.edu](mailto:diversity@auburn.edu)
  
- c. *Academic Support*  
[https://cws.auburn.edu/academis/provost/undergras\\_studies/support/](https://cws.auburn.edu/academis/provost/undergras_studies/support/)  
  
This is a set of programs designed to help students refine and strengthen the academic skills necessary for success at Auburn University.
  
- d. *The Miller Writing Center*  
<https://wp.auburn.edu/writing/writing-center/>

The Miller Writing Center offers free, one-on-one consultation for all writers at Auburn University. Their highly trained staff of undergraduates and graduate peer tutors will help students with any kind of writing, for class or otherwise, at any stage in the writing process.

e. *Expressions of a BraveHeart Fine Arts Program*

The Social Work Program faculty, students and volunteers provide art, music, and dance activities for teens with moderate to severe special needs on a bi-monthly basis at the Opelika Sportsplex. Student volunteers are trained to provide support and encouragement and to help develop talents and confidence in the teens. For more information contact Angie Burque at [burquad@auburn.edu](mailto:burquad@auburn.edu) or see her in Haley 7016.

f. *Expressions of a BraveHeart Center for Place and Purpose*

Braveheart CPP is an inclusion focused program serving young adults ages 21 and up with moderate to severe disabilities. It is a collaboration of university, faith, and general community partners with a focus on integration, participation, and empowerment through health and wellness, life skills and academic activities. The program creates a place that is safe, fosters belonging, and provides a consistent daily routine and purpose. For more information contact Angie Burque at [burquad@auburn.edu](mailto:burquad@auburn.edu) or see her in Haley 7016 or contact the program director Angela Powell at [azp0043@auburn.edu](mailto:azp0043@auburn.edu)

## Section III: Auburn University Social Work Program Policies

### A. Admissions Policy and Guidelines

The process of becoming a professional social worker begins by formally declaring your major with an advisor at the College of Liberal Arts office in Tichenor Hall. Once this is done, you will be classified as a Pre-Social Work student (PSWK).

Once you have declared as a Pre-Social Work major, you may take all Social Work classes up until SOWO 4060, which requires one to have been fully admitted into the program prior to enrollment in the class. Admission to the program usually occurs during the first semester of the junior year.

If you are a freshman or a sophomore and know from the outset that you wish to be a Social Work major, please see a Social Work faculty advisor as soon as possible. You need not be a Social Work major to take most lower level Social Work classes. The exception is SOWO 3910 – Field Practicum which is only for Social Work majors and minors, and Women’s Studies students.

The admissions process is designed to result in an educational atmosphere most conducive to the development of professional social work practitioners. The intention is to ensure inclusion of students who not only have potential for academic achievement but who also exhibit behaviors and attitudes congruent with the values commonly upheld by the profession.

The program is committed to the promotion of diversity in its student population with regard to age, class, color, culture, ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation, and has special concern with the recruitment and admission of students who expand this diversity.

We encourage students with disabilities to consider Social Work as a major and urge them to utilize the Office of Accessibility. This office, in conjunction with the Social Work Program, can work to establish accommodations for students both in class and in fieldwork settings. They are located at 1228 Haley Center or can be reached by phone at 844-2096. Their website can be found at: <http://www.auburn.edu/academic/disabilities/>.

Students’ potential for social work practice, stability, serious student interest, and willingness to engage in ongoing assessment of one’s appropriateness for the profession, will be examined at the time of the admissions process. The Social Work Program faculty reserves the right to deny admission or to counsel students out of the program at any time if they do not meet the aforementioned criteria in addition to the requirements below. The following courses are required and must be completed with a grade of C or better prior to application for admission:

- SOCY 1000: Sociology: Global Perspective (Introductory Class)
- SOWO 2000: Introduction to Social Work

- SOWO 3910: Field Practicum

Students must complete SOWO 2000 prior to enrolling in SOWO 3910. Additionally, the student must have a cumulative G.P.A. of 2.5 in all social work classes and be in good academic standing with Auburn University to be fully accepted into the program.

Students must begin the Methods sequence (SOWO 4060) within 6 months of program admission, otherwise they must reapply to the program. Students should complete the Methods sequence (SOWO 4060, 4070 and 4080) within 2 years of acceptance into the program. If courses are not completed within this time frame, students must reapply to the program.

Based upon your last name, you will be assigned a faculty advisor who will help you to plan your course schedule, discuss scholarship opportunities, and involvement in the social work club. It is of the utmost importance that you maintain regular contact with your faculty advisor in order to graduate within four years. We recommend visiting your advisor once per semester. An updated list of faculty advisors may be found on the Social Work Program website and is also posted outside the main Social Work office (7030 G) in Haley Center. Additionally, you need to maintain regular contact with your Liberal Arts advisor. He/she can assist you with all University requirements for graduation. They are located on the third floor of Tichenor Hall and you can make an appointment online at <http://www.cla.auburn.edu/cla/student-services/>.

### Application Process

Application to the program is encouraged during the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of the junior year and/or at the end of your Social Work Practicum class, or if you transfer in, prior to enrollment in SOWO 4060 – Methods I.

Application forms are available from:

- The Social Work Homepage: <http://www.auburn.edu/sociology/social-work>.
- The Social Work Administrative Assistant  
Social Work Program  
7030G Haley Center  
Auburn University, Alabama 36849

To apply to the Social Work Major, please complete the following steps (see checklist attached to the application packet):

1. Complete the application form. Include a picture for identification purposes.
2. Complete the Rubric for Assessing Professional Behaviors-Student Self Evaluation

3. Write and include an admission's essay of not more than four typewritten pages, double spaced, and with 12 font. Topic: "Why Social Work is a Good Fit for Me."

#### Guidelines for Admission's Essay

The following areas should be thoroughly addressed:

- A. Why do I believe that Social Work is an appropriate career choice for me given my personal values, life experience, interest in and ability to contribute to the Social Work profession? Please include any history of helping others, or personal events which have contributed to your growth in understanding, sensitivity, and acceptance of diversity with regard to age, class, color, culture, ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation.
  - B. What social problems in American society am I most concerned with and wish to impact as a professional Social Worker?
  - C. How are my personal values similar, dissimilar, or a "good fit" with the profession of social work? Please discuss this in detail after thoroughly reviewing the NASW Code of Ethics.
    - a. If I have some conflict with the values of social work and still want to work in this profession, what can I do to improve my ability to work with clients who challenge me?
  - D. What strengths do I possess? What are the areas in which I need to grow during the course of my education? Include how you manage stress and /or crisis situations.
4. One letter of recommendation must be included in your admissions application. This recommendation should come from a person who knows you well and is **NOT** related to you. This letter may come from a professor, social worker, supervisor from work, youth organization advisor, or social agency personnel. The person must have observed you in a class, employment, or service related activity so they can speak to your professional behaviors and potential. **Auburn University Social Work Faculty cannot write recommendation letters for this purpose.** In addition, a copy of your final practicum evaluation from your field instructor will also be added to your application packet by the Field Director.
  5. Include a current unofficial transcript.
  6. When your application packet is complete, please submit to the Social Work Program Office in 7030G Haley Center. Applications are due each year on April 15<sup>th</sup>, August 1<sup>st</sup> or November 15<sup>th</sup> and are usually submitted at the end of the semester when students are enrolled in Practicum (SOWO 3910).

The Admissions Committee meets once per semester to review student applications for admission to the program. Applications are usually processed within six weeks of submission. The student is notified in writing of admissions decisions within one week of the decision.

The Admissions Committee may take any of the following actions regarding a completed application for admission: (a) acceptance into the program, (b) conditional acceptance, or (c) denial of admission. Acceptance into the program generally means the student has presented evidence of meeting the minimum requirements for admission to the BSW Program. Conditional acceptance may be for academic or non-academic reasons.

Students may be denied admission to or terminated from the BSW Program at any time for, but not necessarily limited to, any of the following non-academic reasons which are personal or professional:

1. Overly expressed attitudes, values, and behaviors in opposition to or contrary to those found in the NASW Code of Ethics:
2. Evidence of chemical, alcohol or drug abuse;
3. Personality, emotional, attitudinal, or personal issues or difficulties which may or actually impair performance, interactions, and relationships with classmates, faculty, agency staff, and/or clients:
4. Dishonesty, including lying, cheating, or plagiarizing in course work and/or Field Placement; and
5. Evidence of certain criminal or unlawful activity.
6. Earning a 2<sup>nd</sup> D in any social work course.
7. Failure to meet the goals and objectives of Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

Students are provided written notice of the Admissions Committee's actions. In the case of conditional acceptance, specific conditions which must be met before the student can be admitted to the program are provided. In the event acceptance is denied, the Committee's decision may be appealed. Re-application for admission to the program is possible unless the student has been previously terminated from the program. When re-application is possible, the student is notified in writing of that possibility. Those denied admissions are not guaranteed readmission after appeal.

The Admissions Committee reviews the records of all social work students admitted to the BSW Program regarding continued enrollment and readiness for Field Placement during the semester prior to enrollment in SOWO 4920 (Field Placement) and SOWO 4950 (Integrative Seminar). Action taken by the Admissions Committee regarding any student is reflected in the student's BSW file. Any information relevant to a student's continued enrollment may be placed in the student's BSW file by members of the faculty or staff. <http://www.cla.auburn.edu/sociology/social-work/undergraduates/application/>.

Students considering earning a degree in social work who have been charged with or convicted of a misdemeanor or felony should be aware of the following:

1. Agencies and organizations that provide Field Instruction placements for social work students may require a criminal background check prior to agreeing to provide Field Instruction.
2. Agencies employing social workers may also require criminal background checks prior to hiring employees.
3. Alabama and most other states licensure laws for social workers inquire about whether the applicant has been charged with or convicted of a misdemeanor or a felony prior to allowing the applicant to sit for the licensure examination.

## **Section IV: Policies and Procedures for Review of Student Performance**

Social work is a professional practice that has different expectations of students than do non-professional programs. Social workers traditionally serve vulnerable and/or disadvantaged populations. Social work programs have a responsibility to protect consumers and to ensure that Social Work students are competent to begin practice and meet professional ethical standards. The Policies and Procedures for Review of Student Performance are linked to the student's ability to become effective social work professionals and are provided so that students and faculty can be clear about the expectations and procedures to address academic performance, professional behavior, and ethical conduct. Students are expected to exhibit behaviors that are in compliance with the Auburn University Social Work Program's policies, Auburn University's policies and standards, the *NASW Code of Ethics*, and professional ethical standards in the classroom, field placement, and community.

All social work students will be provided with and expected to read the BSW Student Handbook and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. Students will then be asked to sign a statement that they have read, are aware of the contents of, have been given a chance to ask questions, and will abide by the documents. The statement will be kept in students' files.

### **A. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS**

The expectations of a professional education program with a commitment to service to individuals, groups, families, organizations, communities, and society places additional demands on students. The Auburn University Social Work program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education which ensures students their education meets national standards for professional social work practice. Students are responsible for pursuing excellence in their social work practice. Listed below are some of the roles and responsibilities of undergraduate students.

***Students in the Auburn University Social Work Program have the right to:***

1. Academic freedom which includes the right within the academic program to examine, study, and write about controversial issues that relate to a program of study and to discuss or present these issues as they relate to course content and context;
2. Freedom from harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, class, religion, disability, political affiliation or any other qualification or characteristic that could prove discriminatory;
3. Freedom from arbitrary or capricious evaluation and grading;
4. Due process when appealing or grieving a grade, disciplinary action, or negative student personnel decision;
5. A comprehensive syllabus that details course content, objectives, policies, grading criteria, and assignments within the first week of classes;
6. Timely feedback on assignments and exams;
7. Reasonable access to advisors and instructors outside of class;
8. Confidentiality as detailed in course syllabi and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA);
9. Advising and an opportunity to improve when academic performance or behavior places their status in the Social Work Program in jeopardy (the student is responsible for monitoring his or her own grade point average to assure retention);
10. Freedom to organize when following the policies established by Auburn University;
11. Reasonable accommodation of documented disabilities; and
12. Input into the evaluation of the Program, courses, and instructors.

***Students in the Auburn University Social Work Program have the following responsibilities:***

1. To deal responsibly and maturely with controversial issues related to course content drawing on sound research and documented sources;
2. To realistically assess their fit with the social work profession, taking into consideration the ability to practice within the value base, standards, and ethics of the profession;
3. To respect the rights and dignity of classmates, faculty, agency personnel, and service recipients and to model civility toward these persons as individuals and groups;
4. To responsibly and ethically address disagreements, conflicts, complaints, or grievances informally with the appropriate persons before initiating a formal procedure;
5. To carefully read and familiarize themselves with program and course policies, handouts, and syllabi;
6. To meet the requirements of the major and of each course;
7. To come to class prepared, to attend regularly, and to contribute positively to the class environment and to the learning of self and others;

8. To practice timeliness of attendance in class and field, submission of work, and completion of field education assignments;
9. To follow through on commitments to the Program, classmates, personnel and service recipients in the field;
10. To take responsibility for their own learning, identifying their own learning needs and taking steps to meet them, responsibly addressing concerns with instructors if problems or issues arise, and monitoring one's own progress seeking remediation when necessary;
11. To conscientiously follow the *NASW Code of Ethics*, classroom and field confidentiality policies and to observe academic honesty in keeping with the Auburn University Honor Code;
12. To make responsible efforts to contact instructors when they cannot be reached immediately, making appropriate use of e-mail, answering machines, and messages;
13. To use mechanisms such as evaluation of the work of fellow students and student rating of courses responsibly, observing honesty and objectivity, and providing constructive feedback;
14. To give appropriate advance notice when special accommodations are requested for any reason; and
15. To maintain their Auburn University e-mail accounts and to check their e-mail and Canvas or course website on a daily basis. Faculty use Canvas and e-mail as a primary method of communication for course material and students are expected to take responsibility for using both of these forms of technology on a regular basis.

## **B. PROGRAM PROGRESSION**

The goal of the Auburn Social Work program is to prepare students for the professional practice of social work. In order to meet this goal and provide quality professional education to ensure that graduates are able to function in a broad variety of professional situations, the Social Work Program evaluates the performance of its students in three areas: academic performance, professional behavior, and ethical conduct. The program is responsible for determining whether each student has demonstrated the required level of achievement in the outlined areas to sufficiently interact positively with client systems.

**Progression is a means by which faculty ensure that each person who graduates with a social work degree from Auburn University has the adequate skills, knowledge, and judgment to assume responsibilities of a professional social worker.**

Progression of students from one semester to the next is contingent upon satisfactory progress each semester. Students are automatically advanced and should consider themselves advanced unless they are otherwise informed.

Students must maintain satisfactory progress towards meeting expectations in the following areas: Academic Performance, Professional Behavior, and Ethical Conduct.

## 1. **Academic Performance and Conduct**

Students are expected to maintain academic requirements as described in the Auburn University Tiger Cub ([http://www.auburn.edu/student\\_info/student\\_policies/](http://www.auburn.edu/student_info/student_policies/)) and outlined below.

Expectations:

- Receive a grade of C or better in all social work classes;
- Students may repeat only one social work major course or professional elective; thereafter a D or F in any social work course will result in automatic dismissal from the social work program.
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0;
- Maintain a GPA of 2.5 in the major;
- Achieve a passing grade in Field Placement;
- Complete all Field Placement hours during the assigned semester;
- Successfully complete the prerequisites as outline in the course catalog;
- Plans and organizes work effectively;
- Turns in assignments that are complete and on time;
- Makes arrangements for special needs in a timely manner and through the appropriate channels;
- Attends class regularly.

Indicators of concern:

- Student receives a grade of less than C in any social work course;
- Student GPA falls below 2.0 cumulative;
- Student GPA falls below 2.5 in major;
- Student does not complete field placement hours during the assigned semester;
- Poor organizational skills;
- Repeated requests for extensions on assignments and exams;
- Turns in late or incomplete assignments;
- Multiple absences from class or field placement;
- Lying, cheating or plagiarizing.

## 2. **Professional Behavior**

Students will exhibit behaviors that are in compliance with Auburn University policies, Social Work program policies, and professional ethical standards in the classroom, field, and community. Students are evaluated in 3 areas of professional behavior: communication skills, conduct/behavior, and self-awareness & self-control.

### **a. Communication Skills**

Students must demonstrate sufficient communication skills.

Expectations:

- Writes clearly, demonstrates good organization that follow a logical sequence;
- Applies the appropriate writing style (American Psychological Association (APA) latest edition) and uses correct grammar and spelling in all assignments;
- Demonstrates use of critical thinking skills in communication;
- Able to clearly articulate ideas, thoughts, and concepts;
- Able to communicate effectively, clearly, and respectfully with clients, supervisors, peers, and faculty;
- Demonstrates an ability to listen to others.

Indicators of concern:

- Inability to express information clearly and concisely either verbally or in writing;
- Inability to master the conventions of writing such as writing style, use of grammar, spelling, etc.;
- Inability to clearly articulate ideas, thoughts and concepts;
- Inability to communicate effectively, clearly, and respectfully with clients, supervisors, peers, and faculty;
- Inability to listen to others.

### **b. Conduct/Behavior**

Students must demonstrate potential for responsible and accountable professional social work practice.

Expectations:

- Appearance, dress, and general demeanor reflect a professional manner when representing the Auburn University Social Work Program outside of the classroom;
- Demonstrates ability to work cooperatively with others;
- Actively attends and participates in class;
- Regularly observes deadlines;
- Keeps appointments and makes appropriate arrangements if an appointment must be rescheduled;
- Uses technology appropriately and in a professional manner, without disruption to the classroom, field placements, or community;

- Shows respect for others' opinions;
- Shows a willingness to receive and accept feedback and supervision in a positive manner, as well as use such feedback to enhance professional development;
- Demonstrates a willingness to understand diversity in race, gender, ethnicity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, class, religion, disability, political affiliation or any other qualification or characteristic that could prove discriminatory.

Indicators of Concern:

- Creates conflict in class;
- Uncooperative or unwilling to participate in class activities;
- Consistently late for class or field placements and/or leaves class or field placements early;
- Sleeps during class;
- Disrupts class process by talking to others;
- Uses derogatory language or demeaning remarks;
- Uses technology inappropriately causing disruption in the classroom, field placement or community;
- Appears unwilling or unable to accept feedback from faculty or peers;
- Monopolizes class discussions;
- Inability to develop an understanding of people different from oneself;
- Discriminatory behavior or harassment towards other on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, class, religion, disability, political affiliation or any other qualification or characteristic that could prove discriminatory.

**c. Self-awareness & Self-Control**

Students are expected to engage in an ongoing process of self-evaluation related to individual strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice.

Expectations:

- Demonstrates a willingness to examine how his/her values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior, and relationships;
- Shows awareness of self and how one is perceived by others;
- Demonstrates an awareness of one's own personal limitations;
- Demonstrates willingness to examine and change behavior when it interferes in working with clients, peers, faculty and supervisors;

- Uses self-disclosure appropriately;
- Able to engage in discussion and processing of uncomfortable topics;
- Deals appropriately with issues that arouse emotions;
- Understands the effect of one's behavior on others;
- Able to form and maintain positive working relationships with clients, peers, faculty and supervisors;
- Demonstrates ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms;
- Recognizes and handles stress effectively by using appropriate self-care and communicates needs for additional resources with supervisors and/or faculty.

Indicators of Concern:

- Inability to examine how personal values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experience impact current thinking, behavior, and relationships;
- Uses self-disclosure inappropriately;
- Inability to work through unresolved person issues;
- Inability to control emotional reactions;
- Demonstrates behavior consistent with impairment as a result of using alcohol or drugs;
- Demonstrates emotional problems that interfere with his/her ability to work effectively with clients, peers, faculty or supervisors;
- Makes verbal threats to clients, peers, faculty or supervisors;
- Demonstrates impaired judgment, decision-making, or problem solving skills;
- Inability to form effective relationships with clients, peers, faculty or supervisors.

### 3. Ethical Conduct

Students must exhibit a strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession, as specified in the *NASW Code of Ethics*.

Expectations:

- Students must adhere to the *NASW Code of Ethics* (<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>);
- Demonstrates commitment to the core values of social work;
- Students must maintain confidentiality as it relates to, classroom activities, field placement and community activities;

- Demonstrates honesty and integrity by being truthful about background, experiences, and qualifications; doing one's own work; giving credit for the ideas of others; and providing proper citation of source material;
- Demonstration of respect for the rights of others and the right to self-determination;
- Demonstration of clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. Does not sexually harass others; make verbal or physical threats; become involved in sexual relations with clients, supervisors, or faculty; abuse others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways; or participate in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.

Indicators of Concern:

- Violating the *NASW Code of Ethics*;
- Inability to make a commitment to the Core Values of Social Work;
- Inability to maintain confidentiality;
- Breach in honesty and integrity;
- Disrespecting others and their right to self-determination;
- Inability to maintain appropriate, professional boundaries.

### C. PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCEDURES

The following guidelines are provided so that students and faculty can be clear about the procedures to address academic performance, professional behavior, and ethical conduct. When students exhibit behaviors that are not in compliance with the Auburn University Social Work Program's policies, Auburn University's policies and standards, the *NASW Code of Ethics*, and/or professional ethical standards in the classroom, field placement, and community, faculty will initiate the following procedures. If a student is suspended or dismissed for any reason from Auburn University or the Social Work Program the student must reapply to the Social Work Program to obtain major status.

**Step 1:** When a faculty member has identified that a student demonstrates at least one of the indicators of concern, he or she will meet with the student. At this meeting, the student and faculty member will develop a plan for addressing the concern. The plan will include a description of specific behaviors/concerns, goals for improvement, specific tasks for achieving goals, and time limit for accomplishing the changes (See Appendix A at the end of this document for a template of the plan). The student, faculty member, and Social Work Program Director will receive a copy of the plan. The Program Director will meet with the student periodically to review his or her progress.

**Step 2:** If the student has not made significant progress within the time allotted or continues to demonstrate indicators of concern, the faculty member will submit a brief written statement to the Student Standards Review Committee (all social

work faculty members) regarding the issues, concerns, and a recommendation regarding the student. The statement should include a copy of the plan and any pertinent documentation. The faculty member should inform the student that he/she is proceeding with this step in the review process and send a copy of the letter with the guidelines for the Review Process.

**Step 3:** The Program Director will call a meeting within seven working days of receiving the statement. The student is informed, in writing, of the time and date of the meeting. In addition, the student will be given the name(s) of witnesses and faculty members who will be attending, and the specific issues that are to be addressed. This notice will also include a list of possible documentation on his/her own behalf.

**Step 4:** The committee members, faculty member, and the student meet at the designated date and time. Issues and concerns are presented. The student is given the opportunity to present his or her own response and produce oral testimony or written statements of witnesses. The student may present any other supportive documentation.

**Step 5:** The committee will then meet to decide what action should be taken. The following may be recommended:

- a. Dismissal of the original Performance Improvement Plan
- b. Continuation of the original Performance Improvement Plan
- c. Revision of the original Performance Improvement Plan

Please note the student may also be terminated from the program at this time (Refer to p. 17 for list of reasons students may be terminated at this time). If either b or c is recommended, then the committee will set up another date with the student to review the student's progress.

**Step 6:** If the student again fails to complete the revised plan or abide by the plan or the student's academic behavior is such that she or he would be unable to satisfactorily perform as a social worker, then the committee shall have the authority to:

- a. Recommend to the faculty member in whose course the student is enrolled that a failing grade be given to the student for the course.
- b. Institute a probationary period for the student with specific tasks, goals, and timelines.
- c. Suspend the student from the Social Work Program for a period of up to one year.
- d. Terminate the student from the Social Work Program.

If the decision is made to suspend or terminate the student from the Social Work Program, the student has the right to appeal.

**Step 7:** The student is informed of the decision in writing within three days of the meeting of the Student Standards Review Committee.

**Step 8:** A copy of the decision of the Student Standards Review Committee is placed in the student's file.

#### **D. APPEALS PROCESS**

A student can appeal with a written statement to the Social Work Program Director within ten days of the letter of notification from the Student Standards Review Committee. The statement must specify reasons for disagreement with the committee's decision and the rationale for considering a different decision. The committee will then convene within ten days of receipt of the statement to review the appeal. The student initiating the appeal will be invited to address the committee. The committee will render in writing a follow up decision that may involve a revised decision or continuation of the original decision. If the student believes the committee's appeal decision was made in error, a written statement of appeal may be submitted to the Department Chair, who will confer with the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, the Social Work Program Director, and the Provost.

#### **E. UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE POLICY**

If at any time a student in the Social Work Program has a concern regarding advisement, academic performance, faculty behavior or the outcome of the Student Standards Review Committee (see Appeals Process above), he/she should first seek to resolve the grievance with the faculty member or administrator involved. If these discussions are not satisfactory, the complaint would be taken to the next highest level pursuant to the University Student Academic Grievance Policy published in the TIGER CUB Student Policy e-Handbook. Students may at any time apprise the BSW Program Director or the Department Chair of the problem for added support. Students should refer to the TIGER CUB for the Student Academic Grievance Policy and to the [Auburn University Bulletin](#) for all academic guidelines.

#### **F. ACCOMMODATIONS for DISABILITIES**

No otherwise qualified student shall, on the basis of ability, be subjected to discrimination or excluded from participation in the Social Work Program. A student with a disability may be protected by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and be eligible for a reasonable accommodation(s) that will provide an equal opportunity to meet the academic criteria related to professional behavior and scholastic performance.

Any otherwise qualified student with a protected disability who requests a reasonable accommodation(s) must notify the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center. Contact 844-2096 for information or e-mail [accessibility@auburn.edu](mailto:accessibility@auburn.edu). The Social Work Program,

in close consultation with the Office of Accessibility, will review academic performance criteria in light of individual student circumstances to determine issues of appropriate accommodation.

**Appendix A. Student Performance Improvement Plan**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Behavior(s)/Concern(s)</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Specific Tasks/Objectives</b>	<b>Timeframe for Completion</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*The student, faculty member, and Social Work Program Director should each receive a copy of this plan.

\*\* The program director will meet with the student periodically to review his or her progress.

