

Auburn University Social Work Program

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

STUDENT HANDBOOK



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Master of Social Work

Notice!

The information contained in this handbook is critical to your success in our program. Please read it carefully as you are responsible for complying with all MSW program policies. Students are responsible for information in the handbook and for policies of the Auburn University Graduate Bulletin and website. Students are responsible for frequently checking the appropriate websites for changes that impact their success and graduation.

Table of Contents

Welcome	4
Professional Statement	5
Section I: General Information	5
A. Social Work as a Profession.....	5
B. Social Work Education- Accreditation	6
C. Professional Licensure	6
D. The Social Work Program at Auburn University	7
E. Social Work Program Values Statement on Non-Discrimination	7
F. Accommodations and Accessibility Needs	7
G. Information about Auburn University	7
H. Academic Honesty	8
Section II: MSW Program Information	9
I. Mission Statement, Program Goals and Educational Competencies	9
J. MSW Program Options.....	9
On-Campus Program Options:.....	10
Online Program Options:	10
K. Field Instruction	10
L. Life Experiences	11
M. Work-Based Field Placements.....	12
N. Faculty Advising.....	12
O. Graduation Requirements.....	12
P. Graduate Assistantships	12
Q. Student Support Services & Activities.....	13
Section III: MSW Program Policies	14
R. Admissions Policy & Requirements.....	14
S. Admission Dates & Review.....	16
T. Admission Decisions	17
U. Prior Charges or Convictions:.....	17
V. Continuous Enrollment and Leave of Absence.....	17
W. Returning Student Policy	18
X. Transfer Students.....	18
Y. Registration & Tuition	18
Z. MSW Elective Policy.....	19
AA. Financial Aid	19
BB. Communication Policies	19
Section IV: Policies and Procedures for Review of Student Performance.....	20
CC. Program Progression	20
Academic Performance and Conduct	21
Professional Behavior	22
Ethical Conduct	25
DD. Denial of Admission and/or Termination from the MSW Program	25
EE. Performance Review Procedures	26
FF. Appeals Process.....	27
GG. University Academic Grievance Policy	27
Section V: MSW Course Listing	27

Welcome

Dear MSW Student,

The faculty and staff in the Social Work Program are excited that you have chosen social work as your professional career. The Auburn University MSW program offers two program tracks: a face-to-face track and a fully online track. Students admitted to either of these programs must adhere to all university, college, department, and program policies. The MSW program prepares students for advanced clinical social work practice with a focus on the areas of health and mental health with an emphasis on health disparities, prevention, and policy. Our goal is that you will graduate with the knowledge, values and skills to assess, intervene, and evaluate clients on all levels from a health and mental health perspective. The MSW program parallels the Auburn University land grant/outreach mission and aims to provide advanced training for students in the growing field of social work that has a practical and positive impact on the lives in the State of Alabama, regionally, nationally, and globally.

The MSW program was approved by the Auburn University Board of Trustees in February 2016 and by the Alabama Council on Higher Education in September 2016. The program received initial accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in February 2020 dated back to 2017. Auburn University added a part-time Online MSW program in fall 2023 which is also fully accredited.

This student handbook was prepared as a guide to obtaining your Master of Social Work degree from Auburn University. While this handbook provides information on the MSW Program, it is not possible to elaborate on every Program, Department, College or University rule relevant to graduate students. It is therefore imperative that students take responsibility for staying up to date with university and graduate program regulations and expectations. When in doubt the student is encouraged to consult with their Advisor and/or the Program Director. The information in this handbook provides a framework through which you may structure your educational process. The handbook should be used in conjunction with the Auburn University Bulletin, regular conversations with faculty, and the Field Manual. The Graduate School nor the MSW program will waive exceptions to program regulations based on a student's lack of information or knowledge about a specific regulation or requirement.

Sincerely,
The Social Work Faculty

Professional Statement

Upon acceptance and entry into Auburn University's MSW Program, students begin a process of developing the knowledge, values, skills and cognitive/affective processes that comprise the fundamental core of the profession of Social Work. Although assimilation of competencies and transformation to Advanced Social Work Practitioners takes several years, early initiation of professional behaviors facilitates the developmental and professionalization process. Social Work is a respected profession that aims "to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty." Clients trust their Social Worker and depend upon them to act in the client's best interest while providing professional and ethical services. Each student and graduate inherits this time-honored legacy as part of their profession and is obligated to its preservation and enhancement.

Throughout history, professions have adopted standards of attire for their practitioners to collectively identify themselves as professionals and provide assurance to clients that they are interacting with individuals who can be trusted in performing services. In today's public service system, the concept of professional Social Work has introduced social workers as providers of care. Advanced Social Work Practitioners are assuming a greater responsibility and a more active role in maintaining the health of the population they serve. Image alone will not assure the desired excellence in Social Work care; however, it often provides the basis for the public's perception of the profession and particularly guides first impressions. Just as all obligations and responsibilities of the profession require some effort and sacrifice, assumption of a professional image requires an active individual resolution and may necessitate modification of lifestyle practice upon entering the professional program.

By entering the Auburn University Master of Social Work Program, students willingly accept the obligations of the profession and are expected to act accordingly including professional behavior.

Section I: General Information

A. Social Work as a Profession

The primary focus of the Social Work profession is the well-being of individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. Social Workers pay special attention to the environmental forces that create and influence problems such as poverty, disability, mental illness, abuse, addiction, unemployment and underemployment, divorce, and discrimination. Social workers provide care and attention to people in every stage of life, prenatal through older adulthood. We are advocates of social justice and social change. People who are social workers are sensitive to diverse backgrounds and strive to end oppression and discrimination. Activities that social workers use to aid clients include direct practice, community organization, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research (NASW). According to the 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education, the primary purpose of social work education is to ensure that students "are prepared to practice safely, competently, and ethically with all clients, constituents, and the public." (p.5)

Graduates of the MSW program will find a diverse field of employment opportunities to actualize the profession's purpose. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics expects an overall projected growth for social workers of 12% from 2020 to 2030; faster than the average of all occupations. The MSW program concentration is clinical social work with an emphasis on health and mental health.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration estimates that professional Social Workers comprise the largest group of mental health service providers (over 200,000 nationally), which is more than psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychiatric nurses combined. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) found that nearly half of all Social Work positions are employed in mental health (37%) or health settings (13%).

B. Social Work Education- Accreditation

The Auburn University MSW program is fully accredited from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Please visit the CSWE Accredited Program Directory for additional information on accreditation. <https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/directory/>

C. Professional Licensure

Alabama's social work licensing law provides for licensing social workers at three levels: bachelors (LBSW), masters (LMSW), and independent clinical (LICSW). One becomes licensed by completing a social work degree from a college or university, approved, accredited or in candidacy granted by the Council by Social Work Education. A person who graduates from Auburn University with a social work degree (BSW or MSW) may become licensed if they apply, pass the appropriate level professional exam and meet licensure requirements in their state of practice.

One of the first things that students do upon graduation is to apply for licensure. The application is available online from ASBSWE. The licensing law in Alabama is administered by the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners (ASBSWE) <https://socialwork.alabama.gov/>.

You will need to be approved by the ASBSWE in order to schedule your exam with the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) <http://www.aswb.org/>

Please review the ASWB's candidate handbook including information about how to apply for and take a licensure exam. The handbook can be found at <https://www.aswb.org/>.

****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 about how Auburn University's Social Work Program complies with state licensure requirements, please visit Auburn University's Office of Institutional Research website.

D. The Social Work Program at Auburn University

The MSW Program offers two program tracks:

1. On-campus face-to-face track (Full or Part Time)
2. Online asynchronous track. (Part time only- designed for working adults)

The MSW program is part of the Auburn University Graduate School <http://graduate.auburn.edu/> and abides by the Graduate School policies and procedures. The MSW program builds upon the strengths and the well-established tradition of excellence in education of the undergraduate Social Work Program and Auburn University. As a land grant institution, Auburn University has the privilege and responsibility to address state and national needs to benefit the public. The MSW program is a professional, practice-based, direct service graduate program that directly relates to the University's land grant mission and is in keeping with our increasing emphasis on fields related to healthcare.

The Social Work Program is located on the 7th floor of the Haley Center in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work within the College of Liberal Arts on Auburn University's Campus. Information about our faculty can be found on the program website: www.cla.auburn.edu/socialwork

E. Social Work Program Values Statement on Non-Discrimination

Diversity among its administrators, faculty, staff, and students is an Auburn University commitment. Auburn University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. It is our policy to provide equal employment and education opportunities for all individuals without regard to race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, protected veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other classification protected by applicable law.

The Social Work faculty are committed to teaching, encouraging, and promoting an appreciation for and understanding of diversity in the Social Work Program at Auburn University within our profession, and our community. Furthermore, the MSW is 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. All Auburn University MSW students must be committed to professional ethics and principles as set forth in the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. As stated in the NASW *Code of Ethics* (link below).

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

F. Accommodations and Accessibility Needs

The AU MSW program endorses the University policy regarding students needing accommodations. Visit the Office of Accessibility website: <https://accessibility.auburn.edu/>

Any qualified student with a protected disability who requests a reasonable accommodation(s) must notify the Office of Accessibility. Contact 334-844-2096 for information or e-mail accessibility@auburn.edu. The MSW 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.

G. Information about Auburn University

Auburn University, located in Auburn, Alabama was established in 1856 as the East Alabama Male College. In 1872, under the Morrill Act, the school became the first land-grant college in the South and was renamed the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama. In 1899 the

name again was changed, to the Alabama Polytechnic Institute. Finally, in 1960 the name of the school was changed to Auburn University, a title more in keeping with its location, and expressing the varied academic programs and larger curriculum of a major university. With a current enrollment of more than 33,000 (graduate and undergraduate students), Auburn University has 15 colleges or schools and approximately 150 majors.

University Mission & Vision

Auburn University's vision is *"to lead and shape the future of higher education."*

Auburn University's mission is defined by its land-grant traditions of service and access. Please visit the website to read the full versions of the university vision and mission.

<http://www.auburn.edu/main/welcome/visionandmission.html>

H. Academic Honesty

Auburn University views academic honesty as critical to academic integrity and an important part of the educational process. Please review the Student Academic Honesty Code before each semester located on the Office of the Provost website under Academic Honesty. For students to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to perform as professional social workers, it is important that each student complete their own work. Because Academic dishonesty is treated as a serious issue, a website has been created to give the students information and resources to avoid academic dishonesty. To access this website, visit the following link:

<http://www.auburn.edu/academic/provost/academicHonesty.html>

Examples of academic dishonesty are as follows:

- Plagiarism – using the words or ideas of another as if they were one's own without giving the author or creator credit through proper citation, documentation, or recognition.
- Signing the attendance roster for a classmate
- Using unauthorized sources in preparation of your work – Including AI sources.
- Copying from another student's exam, paper, or assignment
- Use of materials not authorized during a test; e.g., notes, textbook, etc.
- Submitting a paper, report, examination, or any class assignment which has been altered or corrected, in part or in whole, for reevaluation or re-grading without the consent of the instructor
- Serving as or enlisting the assistance of another as a substitute in the taking of examinations
- Enlisting the assistance of another to write a paper or writing a paper for someone.
- Altering or misusing a document for academic purposes. This would include university forms and doctor's excuses.
- Selling, giving, lending, or otherwise furnishing to any other person any material (homework assignments, tests, etc.), whether electronically or otherwise which can be shown to contain the questions or answers to any examination scheduled to be given at some subsequent date in any course of study, excluding questions and answers from tests previously administered and returned to a student by the instructor.
- Altering or attempting to alter an assigned grade on any official Auburn University record.
- An instructor may delineate other actions they consider a violation of the Code in a written course syllabus.

If you are found to be in violation of the Academic Honesty Code, you will be reported to the University Academic Honesty Committee.

Section II: MSW Program Information

I. Mission Statement, Program Goals and Educational Competencies

The mission, program goals and educational competencies are reflective of both the online and on-campus MSW program.

MSW Program Mission:

The Auburn University MSW Program mission is to make a positive impact on the health care needs and social problems, by preparing students for specialized social work practice with diverse populations through the development of multilevel interventions, establishment and maintenance of community partnerships, and development and implementation of research techniques and evaluative strategies.

MSW Program Goals:

1. To prepare a diverse student population for advanced clinical social work practice that adheres to professional social work values and ethics and focuses in the areas of health and mental health with a special emphasis on health disparities.
2. To advance student knowledge of the multiple dimensions of diversity and provide advanced clinical training with diverse individuals, families, groups, and communities that has a practical and positive impact on the lives of the people of the state of Alabama, regionally, nationally, and globally.
3. To develop critical thinking skills utilized to evaluate, integrate, and implement empirical research and evidence-informed interventions to enhance advanced clinical social work practice.
4. To promote policies and community partnerships that address and reduce the impact of poverty, oppression and health disparities.

The MSW curriculum (online and on-campus) prepares its graduates for advanced clinical practice through mastery of core competencies and component behaviors (as identified by the Council on Social Work Education). These competencies are comprised of knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective processes. Students must demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Educational Competencies and Practice Behaviors:

The Council on Social Work Education, the accrediting body for Social Work Education utilizes a competency-based educational model for achieving successful student outcomes.

Competency-based education is an outcomes-oriented approach to curriculum design. The goal of the outcomes approach is to ensure that students are able to demonstrate the integration and application of 9 competencies and the associated practice behaviors. The 9 competencies are enhanced and extended in the specialized year of the MSW program.

Competencies can be found on the CSWE website:

<https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/policies-process/2022epas/>

J. MSW Program Options

On-Campus Program Options:

Traditional Program (61 hours)

This program accepts students who meet admissions requirements from across a variety of disciplines, including but not limited to psychology, sociology, and human development and family studies. It can be completed in a full-time (5 consecutive semesters) or part-time format (9 consecutive semesters). Two field experiences are required; first a generalist placement of 432 field hours, and a second clinical placement of 512 hours. Students build on their undergraduate degree during the generalist year - the first year of graduate study. The generalist year consists of curriculum that covers the professional body of knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective processes required by the social work profession. The second year of the curriculum (the specialized year) focuses on advanced clinical social work courses. Course descriptions can be found on the MSW website.

Advanced Standing Program (39 hours)

The Advanced Standing Program is available to students who have graduated from a Bachelor of Social Work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). It is comprised of 39 credit hours completed in a part-time (6 consecutive semesters) or full-time (3 consecutive semesters) format. Eligible students must also have a B average or better in social work courses with no more than one C in professional social work courses, and grades of B or better in all field education courses. Course descriptions can be found on the MSW website.

Online Program Options:

Traditional Program (61 hours)

The Online Traditional Program was designed for working adults who meet admissions requirements from across a variety of disciplines, including but not limited to psychology, sociology, and human development and family studies. The online program is completed in a part-time format. The courses are delivered in an asynchronous format. Two field experiences are required; first a generalist placement of 432 field hours, and a second clinical placement of 512 hours. Course descriptions can be found on the MSW website.

Advanced Standing Program (39 hours)

The Online Advanced Standing Program was designed for working adults who hold a Bachelor of Social Work degree from a CSWE accredited program, programs recognized through CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service, or programs covered under a memorandum of understanding. It is comprised of 39 credit hours completed in a part-time format. The courses are delivered in an asynchronous format. Eligible students must also have a B average or better in undergraduate social work courses with no more than one C in professional social work courses, and grades of B or better in all undergraduate field education courses. Course descriptions can be found on the MSW website.

K. Field Instruction

MSW field experiences are a critical component of preparing students to become competent and principled advanced social work professionals. Internships provide students with the opportunity to integrate and apply knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective processes essential to professional social work practice in an increasingly diverse world. Students must have a 3.0 GPA, have successfully completed all prior course work and have a

satisfactory evaluation of Field Readiness by faculty to enter field placement. No student with an active PIP will be allowed to enter field placement unless specific exceptions have been implemented. Internships are typically weekdays between 8:00am and 5:00pm. All students are expected to modify their schedule to meet this program requirement.

Students in the **Traditional Program** (online and on-campus) are required to complete 2 field experiences: First Year Generalist Placement (432 hours) and Second Year Advanced Clinical Placement (512 hours). After MSW students complete an extensive application process and in collaboration with a field faculty member, students are guided to an available placement which best reflects their strengths, needs, interests and professional goals. See the MSW Field Manual for details about the field instruction process.

Advanced Standing (online and on-campus) students are required to complete one field placement (512 hours), the Advanced Clinical Placement. This field experience focuses on the development of advanced social work practice skills. It is expected that all Advanced Standing students will have successfully completed a generalist field placement (400 hours minimum) in an Accredited Bachelors of Social Work program prior to acceptance.

1. First Year Generalist Placement

The first generalist field placement (SOWO 7920) provides traditional students with educationally directed practice experience under the direct supervision of an approved MSW field instructor. This field experience is 432 hours and builds upon the knowledge and skills developed during generalist coursework. It focuses on the acquisition and development of generalist practice skills using a strengths perspective while providing opportunities for the application and integration of classroom concepts and principles for the development of core skills in social work practice. This field experience is completed in a full-time, block format, during one full semester for on-campus students and a part-time format for online students.

2. Second Year Advanced Clinical Placement

The Advanced Clinical field placement (SOWO 7930 or SOWO 7940 & SOWO 7960) provides students with the opportunity to engage in advanced clinical practice with diverse populations under the direction and supervision of agency-based MSW field instructors. This clinical practice field experience prepares students for effective advanced social work practice through the completion of 512 hours focusing on the integration of classroom knowledge and skills with professional ethical practice.

3. Integrative Field Seminar

Taken in connection with the Advanced Clinical Internship is the Integrative Seminar (SOWO 7950). This course integrates theoretical models and concepts with practice gained in the advanced clinical field placement. The seminar utilizes an ecosystems perspective, focusing on the dynamic interaction between individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations, and other social systems. The students will focus on the social worker's role in responding effectively to the challenges of working with and within these systems. Students will also explore their own personal views related to ethical social work practice. Opportunities are provided for case presentation, discussion and peer consultation.

L. Life Experiences

Life experiences and/or previous work experience cannot substitute for either of the field placements or other MSW curriculum 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 for any MSW program option.

M. Work-Based Field Placements

Students are permitted to complete work-based field placements if the following criteria are met:

- The agency provides a social service function to a vulnerable population at a combination of micro-, mezzo-, or macro-level(s) of practice.
- The student can obtain the required field supervision from a field instructor that **does not** provide the student with supervision within their employment role.
- The identified field instructor meets the criteria required by the Auburn University Social Work Program (see Field Manual).
- A Cooperative Agreement is completed by the agency and submitted to the Auburn University Social Work Field Director.
- The student provides documentation to their field instructor specifying the hours provided to field placement work versus hours provided to non-field placement work.

N. Faculty Advising

Full-time social work faculty serve as advisors. Advisors will be assigned at the time of admission. The advisor serves to assist the student with negotiating the University system, to monitor progress in the program, discuss job opportunities and/or other issues deemed appropriate. It is suggested that students meet with their social work advisor each semester.

O. Graduation Requirements

Specific deadlines are published by the graduate school each semester. It is the student's responsibility to know these dates and submit the needed forms/paperwork on time. Late forms/paperwork may result in delayed graduation. Students must have a minimum 3.0 GPA to graduate.

All students in the MSW Graduate Program (on-campus or online) must complete a Committee, Transfers, Exceptions and Candidacy (CTEC) Form no later than one term before graduation <http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/committee-selection/>

Students must Apply for Graduation one term before graduation.

The [Graduation Application](#) can be found under AU Access, on My Academics. These are Auburn University **requirements** for graduation. Check your progress at: <http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/graduation/>

All graduate work toward a graduate degree must be completed within a period of six calendar years.

P. Graduate Assistantships

Social Work Graduate students can apply for available Graduate Assistantships in the Social Work Program through the University's Graduate School online application system. All Master of Social Work assistantships are competitive. The social work faculty review all applications and conduct interviews to make appointment recommendations to the Department Chair. Graduate Assistantships are appointed for 9 months with a renewal possibility for summer sessions depending on program need, funding availability, and student schedule.

Q. Student Support Services & Activities

Please see the Graduate School website for more information about graduate student support services. <http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/>

Auburn Association of Student Social Workers (AASSW), aka The Social Work Club

The Student Government Association charters the Social Work Club. Its purpose and mission is to provide fellowship, education, and service to students, the university, and community. The Social Work Club meets monthly and participates in service projects each semester. Membership is open to all students – undergraduate and graduate. Membership dues and fund raisers assist in performing service projects, hosting speakers, and purchasing club T-shirts. The Social Work Club appoints an officer to participate in bi-weekly faculty meetings as the student representative and stakeholders in the AU Social Work Program.

Auburn Cares- <https://studentaffairs.auburn.edu/acsc/index.php>

Auburn Cares staff support students and families through challenging and complex situations, which may include mental health, physical health, personal and family emergencies, financial hardships or other areas of concern. Auburn Cares also oversees the [Campus Food Pantry](#), the [Safe Harbor program](#) and facilitates the [medical withdrawal process](#).

Auburn Online - <https://www.auburn.edu/online/>

The University resource for Auburn's distance and continuing education programs.

Auburn University Libraries - <https://www.lib.auburn.edu/>

The combined collections of the Auburn University Libraries contain over 3.2 million volumes as well as 2.6 million government documents, 2.5 million microforms, and over 148,000 maps. The Libraries receive over 35,000 current periodicals, many which are available online. The library also provides access to over 227 electronic databases and has over 10 million archival and manuscript items.

BraveHeart Center for Place and Purpose (BCPP)-

<https://cla.auburn.edu/braveheart-programs/bcpp/>

BCPP is a comprehensive post-high school health and wellness program that supports and enhances social skills, cognitive skills, self-esteem, creativity, and work skills for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities facing moderate to severe life challenges and their families. It is designed to provide a daily structured routine that cultivates mind, body, and spirit through an inclusion focused partnership of university, faith, and general communities. For more information about Volunteering or possible Internships contact Angie Burque at burquad@auburn.edu or visit her office in Haley 7016.

Biggio Center Instructional Technology- <https://biggio.auburn.edu/>

The Biggio Center provides resources and services to promote the use of technology in the teaching and learning environment.

Expressions of a BraveHeart Fine Arts Program (BraveHearts)-

<http://www.cla.auburn.edu/braveheart/>

The Social Work Program faculty, students, and volunteers provide art, music, and dance activities for teens with moderate to severe disabilities twice a month 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 or visit her office in Haley 7016.

The Miller Writing Center –

<https://auburn.edu/academic/provost/university-writing/miller-writing-center/>

The Miller Writing Center offers free workshops as well as free, one-on-one consultation for all writers at Auburn University. Their highly trained staff of peer tutors will help students with any kind of writing, for class or otherwise, at any stage in the writing process. Visit the main location on the 2nd floor of the library or one of the satellite locations across campus (see website).

Office of Information Technology – <https://auburn.service-now.com/it>

The IT Service Desk serves AU's faculty, staff, and students, and receives hundreds of questions each day by telephone, online chat, email, and from walk-in clients. The Service Desk consultants are Auburn University students and are supported by full-time subject matter expert specialists. Contact them by phone (334) 844-4944 or Email: itservicedesk@auburn.edu

Professional Organizations

Many professional organizations are available that may offer reduced membership rates for graduate students. Graduate students are encouraged to become an active member of organizations of their choice. Some organizations that students might consider are:

- NASW – national chapter
- NASW – AL Chapter
- Council on Social Work Education

Social Media -Auburn SOWO

The Social Work Program has both a Facebook page and Instagram. Find our page and like us on Facebook, Auburn University Social Work Program, and follow us on Instagram @ ausocial_work. Program announcements and upcoming events are shared on social media. Students can also network with current social work students and social work alumni.

Section III: MSW Program Policies

R. Admissions Policy & Requirements

The MSW admissions process is designed to result in an educational atmosphere most conducive to the development of advanced clinical professional and ethical 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 core values of the social work profession.

The MSW program is committed to the promotion of inclusion and diversity in the learning environment and beyond. We aim to create a learning environment and greater community that promotes and understands diversity as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and

expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status.

Admissions for the online MSW program follows the same process as the on-campus admissions procedures.

The admissions requirements for the MSW program are established by the Admissions Committee and are consistent with the Auburn University Graduate School (see the graduate school website <http://graduate.auburn.edu/prospective-students/>).

To be considered for admission to the MSW program (on-campus and online), the student must meet the following requirements.

Students must have:

1. A bachelor's degree or equivalent from an accredited college or university.
2. A GPA of 3.0 or better based on a 4.0 scale or a 3.0 average for the last 60 semester hours of coursework in a degree program.
3. Three letters of recommendation from professional sources. The letters need to address professional behaviors and Social Work specific Admission Information.
4. A current Resume or CV.
5. All transcripts of undergraduate and any graduate credits from each school previously attended. All transcripts must be sent electronically or by mail to the Auburn University Graduate School, 106 Hargis Hall, Auburn University, 36849.
6. A completed Auburn University Graduate School Application.
7. A professional statement. Your professional statement is a vital part of your application. It offers insight into your motivation, critical thinking, writing ability, and readiness for graduate-level education in social work. Through this statement, we hope to understand your alignment with the values and goals of the social work profession. Please submit a professional statement that is 4–5 typed, double-spaced pages in length. Your statement should address the following four areas:
 - Motivation and Career Goals: Describe your interest in social work and your motivation for pursuing a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. Why have you chosen to apply to Auburn University's MSW program? Be sure to include your specific areas of interest within social work and your long-term professional goals.
 - Readiness for Graduate Study: Reflect on your academic and professional background. What strengths do you bring to graduate-level education in social work? Are there any challenges or circumstances—past or present—that may impact your studies? How have you addressed or plan to address these challenges?
 - Alignment with Professional Ethics: Using the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics as a reference, discuss how your personal values and beliefs align with the ethical standards of the profession. If there are areas of conflict, how do you plan to navigate or reconcile these differences in your professional practice?
 - Analysis of a Social Work Issue: Choose a significant problem related to social work that you are passionate about. In your analysis, address the following:
 - What are the key societal, structural, or systemic factors contributing to this issue?

- What strategies or interventions do you believe could help address the problem?
- How do professional social workers contribute to solutions?

Advanced Standing Students:

Students who have earned a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from a CSWE accredited program, programs recognized through CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service, or programs covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors may be eligible for the Advanced Standing MSW program. To be considered eligible students must also have a B average or better in undergraduate social work courses with no more than one C in professional social work courses, and grades of B or better in all undergraduate field education courses. *A complete copy of the students' final field evaluation or a recommendation from the Bachelor's Level Field Instructor is also required.*

Application Procedure:

All MSW applicants can now apply to the Auburn University Graduate School using the online application process: <http://graduate.auburn.edu/prospective-students/>

International Students:

The MSW program complies with the Auburn University Graduate School requirements for International student admissions. Please see the Graduate School website for details on admissions and expectations:

<http://graduate.auburn.edu/prospective-students/international-instructions/>

S. Admission Dates & Review

On Campus MSW Program

Traditional Program

Fall Start: Early Admission March 1; Deadline - May 1

Advanced Standing Program

Summer Start: Early Admission December 1; Deadline February 1

Fall Start: Early Admission March 1; Deadline - May 1

Online MSW Program

Fall Start: Early Admission March 1; Deadline - June 1

To receive priority consideration for admissions and awards, students should apply to the early deadlines.

The MSW Admissions Committee is comprised of the MSW Director, Assistant Field Director, and two Social Work faculty. The committee meets to review student applications for admission monthly. Only complete applications are considered. Applicants will be assessed on all parts of the application for potential academic achievement, social service experience, personal strengths, references, and commitment to the profession. Applications are usually processed within four weeks of the application deadline. Students are notified by the MSW program and by the Auburn University Graduate School in writing of admissions decisions.

T. Admission Decisions

The Admissions Committee may take any of the following actions regarding a completed application for admission: (a) acceptance into the program, (b) waitlist, with decision to come after final deadline, (c) conditional/provisional acceptance, or (d) denial of admission. Acceptance into the program generally means the student has presented evidence of meeting requirements for admission to the MSW Program. Students are provided written notice of the Admissions Committee's actions.

Accepted students will be notified by the program and the Graduate School. All accepted students are expected to attend orientation and enroll in courses in their accepted program track (online or on campus).

Waitlist, with a decision to come after the final deadline may be for academic or non-academic reasons. In the case of waitlisted students, the admissions committee may request additional information or need more time to consider the application. All waitlisted students will be provided with a decision within 4 weeks after the final admission deadline of their cohort.

Conditional/provisional acceptance may be for academic or non-academic reasons. In the case of conditional/provisional acceptance, specific conditions which must be met before the student can be fully admitted to the program are provided. Students admitted conditionally/provisionally to the graduate program must satisfy the specific conditions outlined in their admissions letter before they can be fully admitted to Auburn University.

In the event a student is denied admission to the Auburn University MSW program (on-campus or online), the student has the right to appeal the decision by contacting the Graduate School. Re-application for admission to the program is possible unless the student has been previously terminated from either program option. When re-application is possible, the student is notified in writing of that possibility. Those denied admissions are not guaranteed readmission after appeal.

U. Prior Charges or Convictions:

Students considering earning an MSW 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 state licensure laws for social workers inquire if 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.

V. Continuous Enrollment and Leave of Absence

Students must be enrolled two out of three terms per academic year. Students who do not register for two consecutive terms will have to be readmitted using the [Readmission Form](#). Readmitted students are charged the continuous enrollment fee for each term they should have been registered unless they submitted the [Leave of Absence Request Form](#) at the time of departure.

Students may be granted a leave of absence for medical reasons, family necessity or dependent care, military service, or other approved personal reasons. Students planning to

discontinue enrollment for a semester or more must request approval for a leave of absence. Students may petition the Graduate School for a leave of absence for a maximum of two semesters during the entire program; however, the Graduate School may approve extensions to the maximum two semester leave of absence (e.g., for military service obligations extending beyond two semesters).

A petition for a leave of absence (or extension), signed by the Graduate Program Officer or head of the academic unit, must be approved by the dean of the Graduate School. The Graduate School may request appropriate documentation. The request must be filed and approved before the anticipated absence. An approved leave of absence will enable students to re-enter their program without applying for re-activation or owing retroactive tuition and enrollment fees.

A student on leave is not required to pay fees, but in turn may not use Auburn University faculty, facilities, resources, or services intended only for enrolled students; receive a graduate assistantship, fellowship or financial aid from the University or take any Auburn courses related to the plan of study.

W. Returning Student Policy

All Auburn University Graduate Students must be continuously enrolled. Students who leave the Auburn University MSW program (online or on-campus) before completing requirements must follow the Auburn University Graduate School policy. Readmission will only be considered if the student will be able to complete all MSW degree requirements within six years of admission as required by Auburn University (See the Auburn University Bulletin, Student eHandbook).

X. Transfer Students

The MSW Program accepts transfer students into the program. These applicants must meet all admission requirements of the Auburn University Graduate School and the MSW program as previously described. The MSW program limits transfer credits to 9 hours. Details for transferring graduate credit can be found in the Auburn University Graduate Bulletin, Student eHandbook and/or the Graduate School Website.

Y. Registration & Tuition

All social work courses and their availability can be found through the online registration system. Students are expected to register for the courses outlined in their plan of study and in their program track. For example, online students should follow the online plan of study and register for courses that are online, not on campus, and vice versa. If on campus students need to take an online course, it must be approved by the program director before they can enroll. Note – Graduate Assistant tuition waivers do NOT cover any online course work.

Tuition rates are set by the Auburn University Board of Trustees. Please go to the AU Graduate School Bulletin to see the most up-to-date information on tuition costs at <http://www.auburn.edu/bulletin/>

You can also check the Tuition calculator located at <https://auburn.edu/bannerappdev/tuition/>

Online tuition is detailed on the MSW website – <https://cla.auburn.edu/sociology-anthropology-social-work/social-work/master-of-social-work/>

Z. MSW Elective Policy

The MSW program is a professional program with multiple options for social work electives. We encourage all students to take electives within the Social Work curriculum. MSW students may consider additional interdisciplinary courses to fulfill elective credits, however courses must be approved by the MSW Program Director. Elective course requests should only include courses at the 5000 level or above and be relevant towards enhancing social work competency.

Please note that courses can take two-three weeks to approve, so students must plan in advance if they would like to pursue approval for an elective. Students interested in taking courses not listed on the approved curriculum must follow the below steps:

1. Review Auburn University bulletin to browse for courses of interest. Review the course description online to determine relevancy to social work.
2. If you're interested in a course outside of the department, contact the course instructor or department to request a copy of the syllabus.
3. Please review the syllabus upon receipt and write a one-two paragraph statement of interest that addresses:
 - a. Reason for interest in this course
 - b. How this course appears relevant to social work
 - c. Why this course will enhance your learning in regards to the CSWE competencies
4. Please email the syllabus and statement of interest to the MSW Program Director for approval.
5. Upon approval from MSW Program Director, you'll register for the course.
6. Please follow up with the MSW Program Director to confirm successful registration of course.
7. When completing your graduation committee selection paperwork, you will need to note the substitution to the graduate school.

AA. Financial Aid

All applications for financial assistance must be made through the Office of Student Financial Services. Application forms are available online at <https://www.auburn.edu/administration/business-finance/sfs/>

BB. Communication Policies

Email

The Auburn Email system is the official means of communication for graduate students. Questions about information technology and email at Auburn can be answered by calling the OIT Help Desk at 334-844-4944.

Confidentiality of Classroom and Electronic Communication

Information that is discussed in the classroom or on web-based assignments, discussions, etc. should be viewed as confidential and not shared or discussed outside of the classroom (in-person or virtual).

Lines of Authority in Communication

If an academic question or problem arises, the student should pursue the matter in the following sequence:

- a. Course Faculty
- b. MSW Program Director
- c. Department Chair, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work
- d. Dean of the Graduate School

If a non-academic question or problem arises, the student should pursue the matter in the following sequence:

- a. MSW Program Director
- b. Department Chair, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work
- c. Dean of the Graduate School

Name and Address Changes

Students whose name, address, and/or phone number changes while enrolled in the MSW Program (on-campus or online) should notify the Department Program Specialist and the Registrar's office.

Section IV: Policies and Procedures for Review of Student Performance

Policies and Procedures for review of student performance is the same for the online MSW program and the on-campus program.

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. MSW programs have a responsibility to protect consumers and to ensure that Social Work students are competent to practice at an advanced clinical level and meet professional ethical standards. The Policies and Procedures for Review of Student Performance are linked to the student's ability to become effective, advanced 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. All MSW students regardless of program option are expected to exhibit behaviors that are in compliance with the Auburn University MSW Program's policies, Auburn University's policies and standards, the *NASW Code of Ethics*, and professional ethical standards in the classroom, field placements, and community.

All social work students will be expected to read the MSW Student Handbook and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) *Code of Ethics*.

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

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 the student's file.

CC. Program Progression

The goal of the MSW program is to prepare students for advanced, clinical professional social work practice. To meet this goal and provide quality professional education to ensure that graduates can function in advanced, clinical situations, the MSW Program (online and on-campus) 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 and progress into Field Placements and/or continue in the program.

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

Progression of students from one semester to the next is contingent upon satisfactory progress in three areas: academic performance, professional behavior, and ethical conduct 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.

Academic Performance and Conduct

Graduate students (online and on-campus) at Auburn University are expected to adhere to established standards of academic integrity, personal conduct, and professional conduct. The primary code of conduct is detailed in the Auburn University Code of Student Conduct.

Students found in violation of policies defining academic integrity, personal conduct, and professional conduct may be subject to dismissal from the MSW Program and Graduate School.

- To be a student in good standing, MSW students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in completed courses. Students must be in "Good Standing" to progress in the program of study and graduate. If a student's cumulative GPA drops below 3.0 in completed courses, the student will be placed on academic probation. To be removed from academic probation, a student's cumulative GPA must be at least a 3.0 after the completion of 9 additional credits. If the student is not successful with a "B" in each of the next 9 hours, the student will be dismissed from the program.
- Students are not eligible to enter field placements if their GPA is below 3.0. Degrees will NOT be conferred unless the student has successfully completed all course work, and the Cumulative GPA is at least 3.0.
- The following grade scale has been approved by the MSW Program Faculty:

A = 90-100	D = 60-69
B = 80-89	F = below 60
C = 70-79	
- Since all courses are not offered each semester, course failure could result in a delay of graduation.
- The grade of I (incomplete) is a neutral grade. It is not an alternative to a grade of F, but is intended as a temporary grade to be used when a student who, for reasons satisfactory to the faculty and MSW Program Director, is unable to complete certain identifiable requirements of a course and who cannot be assigned any other grade. To be eligible for a grade of "I" the student must complete at least 50% of the course requirements. The I grade is typically used in situations in which illness or other

extenuating circumstances prevent the student from completing course requirements.

A grade of I in a course which is a prerequisite for other courses will prevent the student from enrolling in those courses. A grade of I must be removed within the period prescribed by the MSW faculty and/or the Auburn Graduate School. This applies regardless of the student's enrollment status. A student not enrolled during the following six months is not exempt from this rule.

- The grade of AW may be assigned to indicate that a student has been "involuntarily" withdrawn by the institution during the designated semester for a disciplinary issue or inadequate attendance.

Examples of instances in which the grade of AW may be recorded are:

- Disciplinary - Violation of the *Code of Ethics* or other professional behavior policies.
- Attendance - Absences seriously affecting a student's class are reported by faculty to the MSW Program Director and an administrative withdrawal from the course may be initiated after consultation with the student and the Department Chair.

Guided by the Auburn University Academic Honesty Code, the NASW Code of Ethics, and the MSW Program academic expectations, students are expected to maintain integrity in all areas, academic performance, professional behavior, and ethical conduct.

Academic Performance and Conduct:

Expectations:

- Receive a grade of B or better in all classes;
- Achieve a passing grade in Field Placements;
- Complete all Field Placement hours during the assigned semester(s);
- 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 B in any social work course;
- Students GPA falls below 3.0
- 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.
- Sustained use of AI in completing assignments.

Professional Behavior

Students will exhibit behaviors that are in compliance with Auburn University policies, MSW 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, demonstrating good organization that follows 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 MSW 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 or field;

- 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 their 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 personal issues;
- Inability to control emotional reactions;
- Demonstrates behavior consistent with impairment as a result of using substances;
- Demonstrates emotional problems that interfere with their 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.

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* (<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>)
- 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.

DD. Denial of Admission and/or Termination from the MSW Program

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

1. Fall below an overall GPA of 3.0 for 2 semesters;
2. Overly expressed attitudes, values, and behaviors in opposition to or contrary to those found in the *NASW Code of Ethics*;
3. Evidence of chemical, alcohol or drug abuse;
4. Personality, emotional, attitudinal, or personal issues or difficulties which impair performance, interactions, and relationships with classmates, faculty, agency staff, and/or clients;
5. Dishonesty, including lying, cheating, or plagiarizing in course work and/or Field Placement – including inappropriate use of AI; and
6. Evidence of certain criminal or unlawful activity.

EE. 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 in the online or on-campus program. When students exhibit behaviors that are not in compliance with the MSW Program's policies, Auburn University's policies and standards, the *NASW Code of Ethics*, and/or professional ethical standards in the classroom, field placements, and/or community, faculty will initiate the following procedures.

If a student is suspended or dismissed for any reason from Auburn University or the MSW Program (online or on-campus) the student must reapply to the MSW Program to obtain admission.

Step 1: When a faculty member has identified that a student demonstrates at least one of the indicators of concern, they will meet with the student. At this meeting, the student and faculty member will develop a plan for addressing the concern. The Student Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 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 for a template of the PIP). The student, faculty member, and MSW Program Director will receive a copy of the plan. The Faculty Advisor or a designated faculty member will meet with the student to review their 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 MSW Student Standards Review Committee (all MSW faculty members) regarding the issues, concerns, and a recommendation regarding the student. The statement should include a copy of the PIP and any pertinent documentation. The faculty member should inform the student that they are 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 MSW 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.

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 their response and produce oral testimony or written statements of witnesses. The student may present any other supportive documentation at this time.

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

- a. Dismissal of the original PIP
- b. Continuation of the original PIP
- c. Revision of the original PIP
- d. Termination from the program (See step 6 for details)

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 d is selected or the student again fails to complete the revised plan or abide by the plan or the student's academic behavior is such that they would be unable to satisfactorily perform as an advanced, ethical, professional 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. Terminate the student from the MSW Program.

If the decision is made to terminate the student from the MSW Program, the student has the right to appeal.

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

Step 8: A copy of the decision of the MSW Student Standards Review Committee is placed in the student's file. If the Committee recommends that the student be terminated from the program, the MSW Program Director will notify the Department Chair and Dean of the Graduate School.

The Dean of the Graduate School has a due process procedure by which the proposal to dismiss a graduate student is considered. As part of this procedure, the Graduate School requires that there must be a unanimous vote of the student's advisory committee to dismiss the student. Within the MSW Program, satisfying Steps #1 through #6 shall be considered equivalent to a unanimous vote of the student's advisory committee.

FF. Appeals Process

If the student believes the committee's 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 Graduate School, the MSW Program Director, and the University Provost as needed.

GG. University Academic Grievance Policy

Students should follow the complaint process as outlined in the current Auburn University Bulletin.

Section V: MSW Course Listing

Sample plans of study can be found on the MSW website

SOWO 7000: Introduction to the Social Work Profession

(3) LEC 3. This course provides a review of the social work profession, history, and values and ethics. An overview of theory, practice, policy, and research are integrated in exploring the knowledge, values, and skills base of the social work profession.

SOWO 7010: Advanced Clinical Practice

(3) LEC 3. This course provides intensive study on clinical interventions with individuals, families, and small groups across various fields of practice.

SOWO 7020: Psychopathology

(3) LEC 3. This advanced practice course teaches students to recognize selected major mental health disorders in adults, children, and youth and to become familiar with social work practice approaches used in the treatment of these disorders.

SOWO 7030: Evaluation in Social Work Practice

(3) LEC 3. This course examines quantitative and qualitative evaluation of agency programs and individual and/or small-group research projects to experience all phases of the research process.

SOWO 7060: Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families

(3) LEC 3. This foundation course prepares students to apply a generalist perspective and systems framework to social work practice with individuals and families. It emphasizes the basics of communication, interviewing, relationship building, and practice skills essential to effective assessment, intervention and evaluation.

SOWO 7070: Social Work Practice with Groups and Communities

(3) LEC 3. This macro social work course provides an advanced examination of social work practice in groups and larger systems. Students will develop knowledge, values, skills in areas of group practice, community assessment, social planning, community organization, and political strategies.

SOWO 7090: Advanced Social Welfare Policy

(3) LEC 3. This course will review the historical development of social welfare and social policies in the United States and explore their context and underlying values. This course builds knowledge and skills to analyze and make changes in social welfare policy.

SOWO 7700: Foundation of Social Work Research

(3) LEC 3. This course provides a study of quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to build knowledge for social work practice. Students will be prepared to develop, implement and communicate ethical, empirically-based scientific knowledge.

SOWO 7800: Human Behavior and the Social Environment

(3) LEC 3. This graduate-level foundation course covers theories, themes and issues that influence individual and group behavior and development across the life span and interaction with the environment as it underlies social work practice and research.

SOWO 7920: Generalist Field

This course prepares students for responsible, competent entry into the profession by providing opportunities to practice social work with a generalist perspective in agency settings under educational supervision. This course requires completion of 432 total hours in an agency setting.

SOWO 7950: Integrative Seminar

This seminar course assists students in integrating and applying classroom learning with the advanced field placement. Opportunities are provided for case presentation, discussion and peer consultation.

SOWO 7930: Advanced Field Placement

This course provides upper-level graduate social work students with opportunities to develop advanced generalist and clinical practice skills under the supervision of an MSW Field Instructor. Students complete 512 hours in an approved agency during this field experience.

SOWO 7940: Advanced Field Placement I

This is the first course in a sequence of two field placement courses that are taken successively. The course provides upper-level graduate social work students with opportunities to develop advanced generalist and clinical practice skills under the supervision of an MSW Field Instructor. Students complete 256 hours in an approved agency in one semester during this field experience.

SOWO 7960: Advanced Field Placement II

This is the second course in a sequence of two field placement courses that are taken successively. The course provides upper-level graduate social work students with opportunities to develop advanced generalist and clinical practice skills under the supervision of an MSW Field Instructor. Students must successfully complete SOWO 7940 Advanced Field I to enter this course. Students complete 256 hours in an approved agency in one semester during this field experience.

Electives

SOWO 7040: Social Work Practice in the Health Care Field

This course will focus on the development of social work practice skills relevant to health care settings, including assessment of the impact of illness, disability, treatment, and hospitalization on patients and families.

SOWO 7050: Mental Health

This course focuses on mental health social work practice with children, adolescents and adults, covering assessment and several theoretically based interventions with an emphasis on gaining practice skills. Special attention is given to strengths-based, evidence-based, and recovery-oriented practice models.

SOWO 7080: Policy Practice and Social Justice

This course will critically apply conceptual frameworks and empirical research in the examination of social issues, policies, and services, focusing on how policies affect marginalized, oppressed and disadvantaged populations.

SOWO 7100: Gerontology

This course provides a clinical foundation for clinical social work practice with older adults and their families. Primary focus will be on understanding how diversity factors into the physiological, psychological, and social aspects of later life.

SOWO 7110: Trauma Informed Practice

This course examines social work practice theories and intervention approaches as they apply to practice with survivors of crisis and trauma. The course will focus on engagement, assessment, planning, intervention, evaluation, and follow-up on all social work practice levels.

SOWO 7120: Psychosocial Context of Disability

This course prepares the social worker to be an effective practitioner for persons with disabilities by exploring the psychosocial context of the lives and experiences of person with disabilities and their families from various perspectives.

SOWO 7130: Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents

This course develops advanced clinical social work practice knowledge and skills to engage and intervene with children and adolescents with health and mental health risk and provides knowledge for community social workers serving children who are exposed to stress.

SOWO 7160: Grant Writing

This course develops effective grant writing skills are essential to acquire competitive funding from government agencies and private foundations. Writing a successful grant proposal requires content knowledge, writing proficiency, strong research skills, creativity, and organizational ability.

SOWO 7600 Veterinary Social Work Practice

This course reviews research, practice settings, and policy needs in the four areas of veterinary social work: the link between human and animal violence, animal assisted interventions, animal related grief and bereavement, and compassion fatigue. Students will be expected to become knowledgeable about research findings and apply them to social work practice skills and policy advocacy.

SOWO 7970: Special Topics

This course explores a topic of special interest in professional social work practice beyond current departmental course offerings. Examples include Disaster Preparedness and Social Work Practice with Addictions.

Student Performance Improvement Plan

Student Name: _____

Meeting Date: _____

Behavior(s)/Concern(s)	Goals	Specific Tasks/Objectives	Timeframe for Completion
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.

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's education records. The law applies to all schools which receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student, or former student, who has reached the age of 18 or is attending any school beyond the high school level. Students and former students to whom the rights have transferred are called eligible students.

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review all of the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of materials in education records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to inspect the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents and eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records believed to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record commenting on the contested information in the record.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student before releasing any information from a student's record. However, the law allows schools to disclose records, without consent, to the following parties:

- School employees who have a need to know;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Certain government officials in order to carry out lawful functions;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- Individuals who have obtained court orders or subpoenas;
- Persons who need to know in cases of health and safety emergencies; and state and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state laws.

Schools may also disclose, without consent, "directory" type information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information or technical assistance, you may call (202) 260-3887 or TDD (202) 260-8956 or contact:

**Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605**

Auburn University

Student Authorization to Release Educational Records

The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) bars the release of educational/personal identification records to parents, guardians, or third parties without the written consent of the student. If a student desires to release educational records, the following form must be signed in the presence of an AU MSW Faculty Member.

Student's Name: _____,
(last name) (first name) (middle name)

Student Banner Number: _____

Person(s) or organization(s) to whom or to which records are to be released:

List the record(s) to be released:

Purpose for disclosure of educational records:

I hereby give my consent and grant authorization to the Auburn University School of Nursing to release the educational records specified above to the party or parties identified above.

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

***AN OFFICIAL IDENTIFICATION CARD WITH A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE STUDENT IS
REQUIRED AT THE TIME OF SIGNATURE.***

Student Handbook Acknowledgement

Student signature on this page is acknowledgement that the content within the handbook has been read and the Policies and Procedures within are understood. This form will be collected at orientation.

Signature

Printed Name of Student

Date