

Auburn University Social Work Program

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

# STUDENT HANDBOOK



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

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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 of the 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.

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# 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 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 of people in the State of Alabama, the southeastern region of the country, and beyond.

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.

This student handbook was prepared as a guide to obtaining your Master of Social Work degree from Auburn University. The handbook is by no means a replacement for on-going individual advising with departmental faculty. 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. 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,  
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 their 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 behavior and dress.

## Section I: General Information

### A. Social Work as a Profession

The primary focus of the Social Work profession is the well-being of an individual in their environment. Social Workers pay special attention to the environmental forces that create and influence problems such as poverty, disability, mental illness, abuse, addiction, unemployment, divorce, and discrimination. Social workers provide care and attention to people in every stage of life; childhood 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 the oppression and discrimination that affect individuals and groups belonging to diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. 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 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education, the primary purpose of the profession is to:

*promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social*

*and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons, locally and globally.*

Graduates of the MSW program will find a diverse field of employment opportunities to actualize the profession's purpose. Opportunities for employment include inpatient hospitals (both adult and pediatric), outpatient medical clinics, Veteran's Administration (currently employs over 10,000 social workers), active duty (or civilian service) military (regionally Ft. Rucker, Maxwell AFB, Ft. Benning), nursing homes and rehabilitation centers, home health care, hospice, dialysis centers, mental health clinics (inpatient/outpatient), substance abuse treatment centers, public health, policy advocacy, and disaster services and many others.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics expects an overall projected growth for social workers of 12% from 2014 to 2024; faster than the average of all occupations. The proposed areas of concentration for the MSW program – health and mental health are both projected to see larger than average increases in demand.

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 through 2024 from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

### ***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 he or she applies and passes the test for the bachelor or masters level.

The licensing law in Alabama is administered by the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners (ASBSWE) <http://abswe.state.al.us/>. One of the first things that students do upon graduation is to apply for licensure. The application is available online from ASBSWE [http://abswe.state.al.us/apps\\_forms.aspx](http://abswe.state.al.us/apps_forms.aspx). 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/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Candidate-Handbook.pdf>. Please note licensure regulations vary by state. Students who plan to practice clinical social work in another state are encouraged to become familiar with that state's licensing regulations. It is the responsibility of the student, or graduate, to fully understand and comply with licensing requirements in the state in which they intend to practice.

Please note licensure regulations vary by state. If you plan to practice clinical 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 the [Office of Institutional Research's website for professional licensure](https://auburn.edu/administration/ir/temp_licensure.html). [https://auburn.edu/administration/ir/temp\\_licensure.html](https://auburn.edu/administration/ir/temp_licensure.html)

#### ***D. 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. Information about faculty can be found on the program website: [www.cla.auburn.edu/socialwork](http://www.cla.auburn.edu/socialwork).

The MSW program is part of the Auburn University Graduate School 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 whole. As a land grant institution, Auburn University has the privilege and responsibility to address state and national needs to benefit the public. Part of the University's mission is to "provide high-quality graduate and professional programs in areas of need and importance to the state and beyond." 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.

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

Auburn University complies with applicable laws prohibiting discrimination, including applicable provisions of and amendments to Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in the Employment Act, Executive Order 11246, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or veteran status in admission or access to, or treatment, or employment in, its programs or services.

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* and consistent with Auburn University Diversity & Inclusion 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 and intersection of social diversity and oppression.

### ***F. ADA Awareness Statement***

The AU MSW program endorses the University policy regarding students with disabilities:

<https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/Policies/ADAAccommodationsPolicy.pdf>.

The AU MSW program will provide accessible programs, services and activities and reasonable accommodations for any student with a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. 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 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 29,000 (graduate and undergraduate students), Auburn University has 15 colleges or schools and approximately 140 majors.

### **University Mission & Vision**

Auburn University's vision is to "emerge as one of the nation's preeminent comprehensive land-grant universities in the 21st century." Auburn University's mission is defined by its land-grant traditions of service and access. "The University will serve the citizens of the State through its instructional, research and outreach programs and prepare Alabamians to respond successfully to the challenges of a global economy. The University will provide traditional and non-traditional students broad access to the institution's educational resources. In the delivery of educational programs on campus and beyond, the University will draw heavily upon the new instructional and outreach technologies available in the emerging information age." 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. In order for students to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to perform in their career fields upon graduation from Auburn University, it is important that each student complete his or her 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 documentation or recognition.
- Signing the attendance roster for a classmate
- Using unauthorized sources in preparation of your work.
- 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 he or she considers 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

### *1. Mission Statement, Program Goals and Educational Competencies*

#### ***MSW Program Mission:***

The Auburn University MSW Program mission is to make a positive impact on the health care needs and social problems unique to Alabama's citizens, by preparing students for specialized social work practice with diverse populations through the 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 and our region.
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 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 31 behaviors in practice.

The 9 competencies are:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
4. Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

### ***J. MSW 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 with 432 field hours, and a second clinical placement with 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 focuses on the advanced clinical social work courses. Course descriptions and example plans of study can be found at the end of this document.

#### **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 or full-time 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 and sample plans of study can be found at the end of this document.

### ***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 social work 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 to enter field placement. No student with an active PIP will be allowed to enter field placement. 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** 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, individualized Field Application and interview 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** 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 a Bachelors of Social Work program prior to acceptance.

### 1. First Year Generalist Placement

The first generalist field placement (SOWO 7920) provides generalist year 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 the first semester of the generalist year. 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.

### 2. Second Year Advanced Clinical Placement

The Advanced Clinical field placement (SOWO 7930; 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. Students in the Full time **Traditional Program** complete this field placement in a full-time format during their final semester while **the part time and Advanced Standing** students complete it over two semesters.

### 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, 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.

### *M. 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.

### *N. Graduation Requirements*

Specific deadlines are published by the graduate school for 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 Graduate Program must complete a Committee Selection Form no later than one term before graduation. 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.

### *O. Graduate Assistantships*

Social Work Graduate students can apply for available Graduate Assistantships through the University's Graduate School online application system. All Master of Social Work assistantships are competitive. The MSW graduate admissions committee will review all applications and 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.

### *P. Student Support Services & Activities*

Please see the Graduate School website for more information about graduate student support services.

#### Office of Inclusion and Diversity

<https://cws.auburn.edu/diversity>

Auburn University and the Social Work program recognizes and values the educational benefits of a diverse campus community. The office of Inclusion and Diversity 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. Call 844-4184 or visit the website.

#### The Miller Writing Center

<http://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 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 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the library or one of the satellite locations across campus (see website).

### *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 special needs 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](mailto:burquad@auburn.edu) or see her in Haley 7016.

### *BraveHearts Center for Place and Purpose (BCPP)*

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

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 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](mailto:burquad@auburn.edu) or see her in Haley 7016.

### *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. The Social Work Club meets monthly and participates in service projects each semester. Membership is open to all students. 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.

### *Social Media Facebook-Auburn SOWO*

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](https://twitter.com/AUsocialwork). Program announcements and upcoming events are shared on the Facebook & Twitter page. Students can also network with current social work students and social work graduates through the Facebook page.

### *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
- National Association of Black Social Workers

Visit <https://socialworklicensure.org/resources/social-work-organizations/> for a more complete list of professional organizations.

# Section III: MSW Program Policies

## *Q. 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. Our program is committed to the recruitment and admission of students who expand this diversity.

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, the student must meet the following requirements.**

Students must have:

1. A bachelor's degree from a regionally-accredited institution.
2. A GPA of 3.0 based on a 4.0 scale overall or a 3.0 average for the last 60 semester hours of coursework in a degree program. (*Students with less than 3.0 must take the Graduate Record Exam to be considered for admission*).
3. Three letters of recommendation from professional sources. These need to address professional behaviors and Social Work specific Admission Information. Please choose online option in Apply Yourself.
4. A current Resume or CV.
5. All transcripts of undergraduate and any graduate credits from each school previously attended received by the Graduate School, 106 Hargis Hall, Auburn University, 36849.
6. A completed Auburn University Graduate School Application.
7. A personal statement. The personal statement should be 4-5 typed, double-spaced pages and address the 4 items below. The content, critical thinking, and writing style will provide important information about the student's understanding of the goals and values of the social work profession and the student's ability to engage in graduate level education:
  - Motivation for social service and/or social change, interest in a social work education and career in the profession. Explain why you want to pursue professional social work education and your reasons for applying to Auburn University. Address your social work interests and career goals.

- Capacity for professional social work education. Comment on the nature and circumstance of any strengths and/or problems that might enhance or limit your study.
- Professional ethics statement. Utilizing the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) *Code of Ethics* discuss how your personal values and beliefs are or are not compatible with the professional standards. How will you reconcile any conflicts between your personal values and the requirements of the profession?
- Social Concern Analytical Essay. Concisely describe what you consider to be a major social problem. Address the following areas in your essay:
  - Key societal and other factors that contribute to the problem
  - Plausible strategies to solve the problem, including leadership roles that you might use
  - Challenges, including ethical dilemmas, which might arise in seeking to solve the problem
  - If relevant, personal experiences that have contributed to your interest in this social problem

### **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 for the Advanced Standing program, the prospective student must have all of the general requirements listed above and a 3.0 average or better in all undergraduate social work 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:**

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

### **International Students:**

TOEFL - Written and oral communication is extremely important to academic success and clinical proficiency. The MSW Program reserves the right to require evidence of written and oral proficiency. International students whose first language is not English or who has obtained a degree from outside of the United States must present a TOEFL score of 600, a score of 250 on the computer-based test (CBT), or a score of 100 on the internet-based test (IBT).

### **R. Admission Dates & Review**

Applications are due depending on when students want to begin the program.

- Fall start application are due May 1<sup>st</sup>. (early decision is March 1<sup>st</sup>)
- Spring start applications are due November 1<sup>st</sup>. (early decision is September 1<sup>st</sup>)
- Summer start applications are due February 1<sup>st</sup> (Advanced Standing only). (early decision is December 1<sup>st</sup>)

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

The MSW Admissions Committee, comprised of the MSW Director, Assistant Field Director, and two MSW faculty, meet to review student applications for admission to the MSW program. Only

complete applications will be considered. Applicants will be assessed on potential academic achievement, social service experience, personal strengths, references, test scores, and commitment to the profession. Applications are usually processed within six weeks of the application deadline. Students are notified by the MSW program and by the Auburn University Graduate School in writing of admissions decisions.

### *S. Admission Decisions*

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 requirements for admission to the MSW Program. Students are provided written notice of the Admissions Committee's actions.

Conditional acceptance may be for academic or non-academic reasons. In the case of conditional acceptance, specific conditions which must be met before the student can be fully admitted to the program are provided. Students admitted conditionally to the graduate program will remain in conditional status until they have satisfied the specific conditions outlined in their admissions letter.

In the event a student is denied admission to the Auburn University MSW program, 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 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.

### *T. 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.

### *U. Returning Student Policy*

All Auburn University Graduate Students must be continuously enrolled. Students who leave the Auburn University MSW program 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 as required by Auburn University (See the Auburn University Bulletin, Student eHandbook)

### *V. 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. Details on the limits and procedure for transferring graduate credit can be found in the Auburn University Graduate Bulletin, Student eHandbook.

### ***W. Registration & Tuition***

All social work courses and their availability can be found through the online registration system. 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/> under the heading of "Financial Information".

### **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 pre-approved 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. It can also be helpful to review the [9 CSWE competencies](#) to help determine relevancy.
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.

### ***X. Financial Aid***

All applications for financial assistance must be made through the University Financial Aid Office located in 203 Mary Martin Hall. Application forms are available online at [www.auburn.edu/administration/business\\_office/finaid/](http://www.auburn.edu/administration/business_office/finaid/).

### ***Y. Communication Policies***

#### ***Email***

Email (Tigermail) is the official means of communication for graduate students. Course email use will be detailed in specific courses. Questions about the information technology and Tigermail 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 should be viewed as confidential and not shared with anyone not enrolled in the class.

### 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 Graduate Program should notify the Department Program Specialist and the Registrar's office.

## **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. 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. Students 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 provided with and expected to read the MSW 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.

### Z. Program Progression

The goal of the MSW program is to prepare students for advanced, clinical professional social work practice. In order to meet this goal and provide quality professional education to ensure that graduates are able to function in advanced, clinical situations, the MSW 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 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 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.

- In order 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. In the event that 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 may not be offered each semester, course failure could result in not graduating from the program when planned.
- 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. 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 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.

- A grade of incomplete makes the student ineligible to progress to the next social work course.
- 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, 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.

## 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, 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 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;
- 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.

## 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.

### **AA. Denial of Admission and/or Termination from the 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; and
6. Evidence of certain criminal or unlawful activity.

## ***BB. 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 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 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, 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 at this time.

**Step 5:** The committee will then meet to decide what action should be taken. The following 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 she or he 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.

#### *CC. 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.

#### *DD. University Academic Grievance Policy*

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

# Section V: MSW Course Listing

## 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

(3) LEC 3. 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

(3) LEC 3. 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

(3) LEC 3. 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

(3) LEC 3. 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

(3) LEC 3. 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

(3) LEC 3. 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

(3) LEC 3. 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

Developing effective grant writing skills are essential to acquire competitive funding from government agencies and private foundations. Writing a successful grant proposal is a blend of art and science. It requires basic know how, content knowledge, writing proficiency, strong research skills, creativity, organizational ability, patience, and a great deal of luck. This course will provide students with the background necessary to develop a competitive funding proposal.

SOWO 7970: Special Topics

Study of a topic of special interest in professional social work practice beyond current departmental course offerings.

# 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**



# 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.

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Signature

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Printed Name of Student

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Date

**Sample Plans of Study**  
**Traditional Program Full Time Curriculum Fall Start**

**Year 1: Generalist Year**

- Fall Semester- SOWO 7000 Introduction to the Social Work Profession (3)  
SOWO 7060 Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families (3)  
SOWO 7800 Human Behavior and the Social Environment (3)  
SOWO 7090 Advanced Social Welfare Policy (3)
- Spring Semester - SOWO 7070 Social Work with Groups and Communities (3)  
SOWO 7700 Foundations of Social Work Research (3)  
SOWO 7920 Generalist Field (10)
- Summer Semester - SOWO 7030 Evaluation in Social Work Practice (3)  
SOWO Elective (3)  
SOWO Elective (3)

**Year 2: Specialized Year**

- Fall Semester - SOWO 7020 Psychopathology (3)  
SOWO 7010 Advanced Clinical Practice (3)  
SOWO Elective (3)
- Spring Semester - SOWO 7030 Advanced Field (12)  
SOWO 7950 Integrative Seminar (3)

**Traditional Program Part-time Curriculum**

**Year 1: Generalist Year**

- Fall Semester- SOWO 7000 Introduction to the Social Work Profession (3)  
SOWO 7060 Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families (3)
- Spring Semester - SOWO 7070 Social Work with Groups and Communities (3)  
SOWO 7700 Foundations of Social Work Research (3)
- Summer Semester - SOWO 7020 Psychopathology (3)  
SOWO Elective (3)

**Year 2:**

- Fall Semester - SOWO 7800 Human Behavior and the Social Environment (3)  
SOWO 7090 Advanced Social Welfare Policy (3)
- Spring Semester - SOWO 7920 Generalist Field (10)

### **Year 3: Specialized Year**

- Summer Semester - SOWO 7030 Evaluation in Social Work Practice (3)  
SOWO Elective (3)
- Fall Semester - SOWO 7010 Advanced Clinical Practice (3)  
SOWO Elective (3)
- Spring Semester - SOWO 7940 Advanced Field I (6)\*  
SOWO 7950 Integrative Seminar (3)
- Summer Semester - SOWO 7960 Advanced Field II (6)\*

\* Students must successfully complete Advanced Field I (256 hours) before enrolling in Advanced Field II (256 hours). Advanced Field placement is traditionally completed at the same agency for a total of 512 hours.

### **Advanced Standing Full-Time Curriculum Summer Start**

#### **Year1:**

- Summer Semester - SOWO 7030 Evaluation in Social Work Practice (3)  
SOWO Elective (3)  
SOWO Elective (3)
- Fall Semester - SOWO 7010 Advanced Clinical Practice (3)  
SOWO 7020 Psychopathology (3)  
SOWO 7940 Advanced Field I (6)\*  
SOWO Elective (3)
- Spring Semester - SOWO 7960 Advanced Field II (6)\*  
SOWO 7950 Integrative Seminar (3)  
SOWO Elective (3)  
SOWO Elective (3)

### **Advanced Standing Part-Time Curriculum**

#### **Year1:**

- Summer Semester - SOWO 7030 Evaluation in Social Work Practice (3)  
SOWO Elective (3)
- Fall Semester - SOWO 7010 Advanced Clinical Practice (3)  
SOWO 7020 Psychopathology (3)
- Spring Semester - SOWO Elective (3)  
SOWO Elective (3)

**Year 2:**

Summer Semester - SOWO Elective (3)

Fall Semester - SOWO 7940 Advanced Field I (6)\*  
SOWO Elective (3)

Spring Semester - SOWO 7960 Advanced Field II (6)\*  
SOWO 7950 Integrative Seminar (3)

\*Students must successfully complete Advanced Field I (256 hours) before enrolling in Advanced Field II (256 hours).  
Advanced Field placement is traditionally completed at the same agency for a total of 512 hours.