



Department of Social Work

MSW Program STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025 - 2026

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INTRODUCTION

History of University, College, Department, and Program

University

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) traces its roots to the 1859 founding of the Medical College of Alabama and the 1936 opening of the Birmingham Extension Center of The University of Alabama. In 1945 the Medical College of Alabama was moved from Tuscaloosa to Birmingham and the University's Medical Center was founded. Later, in November of 1966, the Extension Center and the Medical Center were merged to form the "University of Alabama in Birmingham," an organizational component of The University of Alabama (in Tuscaloosa). In 1969, UAB became an independent institution, one of the autonomous universities within the newly created three-campus University of Alabama System (Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Huntsville). Today, the University is led by President Ray L. Watts and Provost Pam Benoit.

College of Arts and Sciences

The Department of Social Work is one of the twenty departments that together make up the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). The College was formed in 2010 and replaced the separate Schools of Arts and Humanities, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. CAS is the largest of academic units at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, consisting of more than 300 faculty and 40 baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degrees. Beyond a strong liberal arts curriculum, students in the Social Work Department have the opportunity to participate in over 250 student organizations housed in CAS. The mission of the College is as follows: To ensure that each student leaves UAB with the tools they need to succeed in an expanding and increasingly complex world, the College is dedicated to helping them develop the following skills and competencies:

- Ethical and Moral Reasoning
- The Scientific Method
- Communication
- Cultural Competence
- Confidence in the Face of Complexity

Department of Social Work

UAB's BSW program has a proud tradition of high standards and quality instruction. In 1974, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) began accrediting baccalaureate social work programs to designate beginning level professional training. In 1976, UAB began its BSW program under the direction of Dr. Norman Eggleston. Application for initial accreditation was made immediately; CSWE accredited UAB's social work program at the baccalaureate level in 1977. The program has been continuously accredited at the BSW level since 1977. Throughout

the years, the program has been housed in several different Departments according to the needs of the College. After spending time with the Departments of Government and Public Service, Anthropology and Sociology, the program became an independent Department of Social Work in 2011. Since that time, the Department has continued to see expansive growth in terms of students and faculty.

The Social Work Department seeks diversity in the student body and offers students an opportunity to collaborate with faculty from diverse backgrounds bringing unique expertise in teaching, research, and community service. The mission of the Department of Social Work is: To promote social justice and advance health equity for vulnerable populations through anti-racist and anti-oppressive teaching, research, and service designed to effect change at local, state, national, and global levels.

MSW Program Mission and Goals

The Clinical/Medical MSW program at UAB is designed to provide excellence in education to prepare students for work with populations in the areas of health and behavioral health. The program is unique positioned within the University to take advantage of the medical and behavioral health community within a diverse urban environment. Through generalist and specialized curricular content, students are equipped for clinical practice in a variety of settings, particularly health and medical contexts.

MSW Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Clinical/Medical MSW program is to educate students for careers in specialized, competent, and evidence-informed practice in health and behavioral health that responds to the complex needs of people and community in the face of an increasingly interconnected world. The program prepares graduates to become leaders who advance social justice and promote human rights for diverse, underserved, and vulnerable populations, particularly in health and medical contexts.

Program Goals

- To prepare students for specialized health and behavioral health social work practice in public and community settings;
- To equip students with skills, knowledge, and values to lead efforts to eliminate health and economic disparities in an increasingly interconnected world; and
- To promote the use of evidence in informing and evaluating social work practice.

MSW CURRICULUM & PLANS OF STUDY

Generalist Practice Curriculum

The generalist practice curriculum of the MSW program is based upon the competencies set forth in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of the Council on Social Work Education, the accrediting body for social work education. The competencies and corresponding behaviors outline the knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes required for competent generalist social work practice. At the master's level these competencies are further developed through the specialized practice curriculum selected and designed by social work faculty at UAB.

CSWE Generalist Practice Competencies

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social workers:

- advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

Social workers:

- demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
- demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.

Social workers:

- apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
- identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects wellbeing, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings.

Social workers:

- use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Social workers:

- apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making.

Social workers:

- apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
- demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

Social workers:

- engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
- incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social workers:

- select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
- critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Generalist Practice Coursework

The generalist practice curriculum addresses the competencies from a generalist perspective. Students develop knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that reflect content in Human Behavior, Research Methods, Generalist Practice and Social Policy. These courses are delivered in a single concentrated semester, laying the foundation for the specialized curriculum. Courses include:

- SW 510: Social Work Practice with Individuals, Groups & Organizations
- SW 520: Social Work Policy
- SW 530: Research I
- SW 590: Field Practicum I
- SW 591: Field Seminar I

Field Bridge Courses

- SW 690: Field Practicum II and SW 693: Field Seminar II

While the classroom coursework divides the full-time program into a one-semester generalist and a three-semester specialized sequence, our field courses are best conceptualized as following a more continuous process. The first semester of field (590/591) introduces the student to generalist practice and provides basic skills required for practice across all settings. The second “bridge semester” of field (690/693) serves as a transition, and students continue to acquire generalist competencies in a specialized health and behavioral health setting. Thus, although the classroom coursework in the second semester is focused on specialized practice, the field experience consolidates the generalist practice competencies.

Specialized Practice Curriculum (Health and Behavioral Health)

The specialized practice curriculum extends and enhances the CSWE's generalist practice social work competencies achieved during the generalist coursework. Students build specialized practice competency through coursework and practicum experiences that provide students with the knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes necessary to work with clients and constituencies in health and behavioral health. In this section, each competency is described for specialized practice with health and behavioral health settings and is operationalized through the behaviors expected of specialized practitioners working with individuals, families, and groups.

CSWE Specialized Practice Competencies

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers respect the worth, dignity, and integrity of all persons experiencing health and behavioral health needs across the life span. Social workers empower clients/patients and their constituencies and support their rights, self-determination, autonomy, and access to services and supports. They recognize ethical and professional issues in evidence-based practice and apply frameworks for decision-making, informed by principles of human rights, that support the needs and rights of those experiencing health and behavioral health needs. To ensure ethical practice, they use self-reflection, self-regulation, self-care, supervision, and consultation to support their evolving worldviews. They recognize how their personal values and lived experiences influence their judgment, attitudes, biases, and behaviors toward those experiencing health or behavioral health needs. Social workers in health and behavioral health settings serve as interprofessional team members to ensure ethical and culturally responsive care for those with health and behavioral health needs.

Social workers:

- a. Demonstrate awareness of the influences of personal experiences and affective reactions related to health-related stigma and oppression through self-reflection, self-regulation, and self-care.
- b. Select and incorporate human rights principles and ethical decision-making frameworks that integrate social work values when working in health and behavioral health settings.
- c. Demonstrate and maintain competence in the NASW Code of Ethics; evidence-based knowledge for health and behavioral health diagnoses and treatment; and relevant legal and policy-related information for health and behavioral health settings.
- d. Advocate within the health and social service communities and as ethical and professional members of interprofessional teams on behalf of clients/patients and constituencies experiencing health and behavioral health needs.
- e. Choose effective technology-mediated tools and practices for health care delivery and population and health programs and policies to promote health equity and inclusion.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers practicing in health and behavioral health settings work to advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice for clients/patients and communities experiencing health and behavioral health needs. Social workers are committed to serving as advocates to engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers while promoting human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice to ensure their civil, political, economic, social, and client rights are protected. Social workers support clients/patients and constituents to be active advocates and decision makers for their care and services. They critically analyze how policies and programs may promote health and health inequities and disparities. As members of interprofessional teams, they engage other disciplines to recognize health disparities and structural barriers to health and ensure the rights of those experiencing health and behavioral health needs.

Social workers:

- a. Advocate for health equity and inclusion as a human right for individuals and communities experiencing health and behavioral health needs.
- b. Engage individuals, their families, and groups experiencing health and behavioral health needs to become effective advocates for their own human rights.
- c. Participate in system changes to promote health equity and inclusion.
- d. Work to eliminate structural barriers in systems of health care and discriminatory health and behavioral health policies.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Social workers in health and behavioral health settings understand that persons with health or mental health needs may experience stigma, oppression, barriers to accessing appropriate and timely care, and increased likelihood of social, racial, economic, and/or environmental injustices. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development, affecting access, opportunities, equity, and inclusion. Social workers also understand how the presence of health and behavioral health conditions may lead to increased social, economic, political, environmental, and cultural barriers exclusions, resulting in the increased oppression, marginalization, and alienation of individuals, families, and groups. Social workers practice cultural humility and work ethically and professionally with diverse clients/patients and their constituencies experiencing health and behavioral health needs with the goal of promoting wellness, recovery, and health equity and inclusion.

Social workers:

- a. Analyze how dimensions of diversity, intersecting identities, and the impact of White supremacy and privilege affect those experiencing health and behavioral health needs, including their constituencies such as families and advocacy groups.
- b. Apply cultural humility to manage the influence of stigma and bias when working with those experiencing health and behavioral health needs, and as issues related to health and behavioral health conditions intersect with other dimensions of diversity.

- c. Address the cultural and spiritual histories, values, and beliefs of those experiencing health and behavioral health needs.
- d. Use knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice with those experiencing health and behavioral health needs.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

Social workers in health and behavioral health settings consistently integrate scientific evidence into their practice by translating and implementing evidence and evidence-based practices into diagnoses and clinical recommendations, shared decision-making, and interventions. They use culturally informed and relevant evaluation methods to inform practice, services, programs, and policies. They identify critical gaps and promote the adoption of evidence-based practice when working with individuals, families, and groups experiencing health and behavioral health needs. While social workers use research-informed scientific evidence to continuously guide and improve their practice, they simultaneously understand the inherent bias in research and evaluation design, analysis, and interpretation using anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessionally diverse research design, methods, approaches, and sources. They ground their use of evidence in relevant theories, particularly systems theory, and in empirically based conceptual models such as stages of change and harm reduction.

Social workers:

- a. Understand and build knowledge and skills central to maximizing health and well-being outcomes of wellness and recovery for those with identified health and behavioral health needs.
- b. Adopt, modify, and translate research-informed evidence-based practices for individuals, families, and groups experiencing health and behavioral health needs.
- c. Understand the inherent bias in research and evaluation design, analysis, and interpretation.
- d. Use anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in conducting research and building knowledge.
- e. Articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients/patients and their constituencies experiencing health and behavioral health needs.
- f. Use evidence-based practice, including theories, concepts, and models to promote health and behavioral health equity and inclusion.
- g. Develop capacity for critical thinking to inform scientific inquiry, both as it applies to improving practice, services, programs, and policies and in developing new knowledge through practice-relevant research.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers understand how policies at the local, state, national, and global levels influence the design and delivery of services for health and behavioral health, including patient/client rights, access to services and supports, end-of-life decisions, advanced medical and behavioral health directives, and self-determination and empowerment in care/service planning. They apply

critical thinking to analyze the effects of policy on individuals, families, and groups experiencing health and behavioral health needs. Social workers understand the structures of health and behavioral health policies and services and the role of these in service delivery through rights based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers are skilled at formulating actions to support evidenced-based service delivery to optimize wellness, recovery, and health equity and inclusion across the life span. They are also equipped to engage with other stakeholders to address key social, racial, economic, and environmental policy issues that affect those experiencing health and behavioral health needs. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to affect change in health and behavioral health settings.

Social workers:

- a. Educate clients/patients, their constituencies, and other stakeholders about social, racial, economic, and environmental policies that influence health and behavioral health systems.
- b. Apply critical thinking and evidence-based policymaking to analyze and formulate policies that promote wellness, recovery, health equity and inclusion, and the elimination of health disparities and injustices.
- c. Advocate for policies from local to international levels that enhance human rights, service delivery, access to care and services, and overall wellbeing of individuals, families, and groups in health and behavioral health settings.
- d. Critique the history and current structures of health and behavioral health policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, and Groups

In working with health and behavioral health populations, social workers value the importance of human relationships and engage with individuals, families, and groups to empower and support their self-determination in the acquisition of care and services care. Building on the person-environment framework, social workers use the strengths-based approach and systems theory to identify appropriate levels of engagement for those experiencing health and behavioral health needs, including but not limited to support and treatment groups, social service and health organizations, and diverse and inclusive communities. Social workers use culturally relevant and responsive engagement strategies. They are self-reflective and understand how their biases, power, personal values, and personal experiences influence their engagement with individuals, families, and groups in need of health and behavioral health services and supports. Social workers use interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients/patients, constituencies, and other professionals in maximizing the effectiveness of treatment and services with individuals, families, and groups experiencing health and behavior health needs.

Social workers:

- a. Apply self-reflection and understanding of how one's bias, power privilege, values, and lived experiences impact their engagement with individuals, families, and groups.

- b. Plan culturally appropriate relevant and responsive engagement strategies with individuals, families, and groups based on evidence-based constructs of health and behavioral health wellness and recovery,
- c. Use relationship-building and collaborative skills, strength-based approach, and systems theory to engage individuals, families, and groups in health and behavioral care.
- d. Use principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with other professionals in maximizing care effectiveness for those experiencing health and behavioral health needs.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, and Groups

Social workers utilize systems theory and a strength-based approach to effectively assess individuals, families, and groups experiencing health and behavioral health needs. They select culturally relevant, appropriate, and collaborative assessment approaches, tools, methods, and technologies, and adapt them as necessary to best meet the needs of those being assessed. Social workers critically assess data-informed evidence related to health and behavioral health treatment and services and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessments of individuals, families, and groups. They effectively communicate the results of the assessment to individuals, families, and groups as part of the collaborative process to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social Workers value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in the assessment process. Social workers understand how their personal biases, power, personal values and experiences influence their assessment with individuals, families, and groups in need of health and behavioral health services and supports.

Social workers:

- a. Use culturally relevant evidence-based assessment approaches, tools, methods, and technologies to collect, organize, and interpret data obtained from clients/patients and constituencies to diagnose or affirm and support existing diagnoses.
- b. Use culturally relevant evidence-based assessment approaches, tools, methods, and technologies to recommend treatment, care, and/or supportive services for clients/patients and constituencies.
- c. Using a strengths-based and collaborative approach to facilitate assessments that empower persons and support their self-determination in the development of a mutually agreed upon plan.
- d. Apply self-reflection and understanding of how one's bias, power privilege, values, and lived experiences impact their assessment of individuals, families, and groups.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, and Groups

Social workers practicing in health and behavioral health settings promote wellness and recovery, empowerment and self-determination, and clients/patients' rights in collaboratively selecting and implementing culturally responsive interventions with individuals, families, and groups. They critically analyze and apply evidence-based interventions as well as emerging best practices that address the health and behavioral health needs identified through the assessment process. Social workers identify relevant evidence in the research literature and apply this knowledge in evidence-based culturally responsive interventions appropriate for clients/patients and their constituencies. Social workers are equipped to engage in

interprofessional collaboration with other professionals and/or teams across multiple systems of care providing coordinated health and behavioral health interventions.

Social workers:

- a. Identify culturally responsive and appropriate evidence-based health and behavioral health interventions to improve the wellness and recovery of clients/patients and constituencies.
- b. Intervene with individuals, families, and groups using person centered approaches that respect and honor the self-determination and choices of the clients/patients' and constituencies' identified needs and preferences to maximize the likelihood of successful participation in health and behavioral health interventions.
- c. Collaborate with and participate in interprofessional treatment teams across multiple systems-of-care as appropriate to achieve improved health and behavioral health outcomes.
- d. Continuously monitor and modify interventions as necessary to respond to evolving and/or new health and behavioral health challenges identified by individuals, families, and groups.
- e. Apply self-reflection and understanding of how one's bias, power privilege, values, and lived experiences impact their interventions with individuals, families, and groups.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups

Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes using knowledge, theory and concepts, evidence-informed literature, and input from clients/patients and their constituencies. Social workers value the role of clients/patients and their constituencies in the evaluation process. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods of evaluation and results in guiding decisions during the therapeutic process. They actively use the outcomes of evaluations to improve health and behavioral health practice, programs, and service delivery. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating health and behavioral health practice and outcomes with individuals, families, and groups.

Social workers:

- a. Plan and conduct evaluations to improve practice, programs and policies that affect clients/patients and their constituencies experiencing health and behavioral health needs.
- b. Use evaluation outcomes to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of practice, programs, and policies for clients/patients and their constituencies coping with health and behavioral health conditions.
- c. Identify and apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating practice and outcomes.

Specialized Practice Curriculum: Required Coursework

- SW 610: Diagnosis and Assessment for Health and Behavioral Health
- SW 615: Evidence-Based Interventions In Health and Behavioral Health
- SW 620: Policy Analysis and Advocacy Practice For Health and Behavioral Health
- SW 630: Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations I
- SW 631: Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations II
- SW 640: Human Behavior in the Social Environment for Health & Behavioral Health
- SW 691: Field Practicum III and SW 694: Field Seminar III
- SW 692: Field Practicum IV and SW 695: Field Seminar IV

Elective Courses

Students will choose a total of 9 credits (3 courses) of SW-designated electives (12 credits/4 courses for students following the Regular Program: Part-Time program of study). **Social Work elective course offerings vary by semester and not all courses are offered every academic year.** Core electives include the following:

- SW 599: Health, Crime, and Community ^{SU}
- SW 599: Violence Across the Life Course ^{SU}
- SW 599: Practice with Aging Populations ^{SU}
- SW 599: Global Social Justice and Human Rights ^{SP}
- SW 599: Competent Clinical Practice with LGBTQIA2S+ Populations ^{SU}
- SW 599: Study Abroad ^V
- *SW 599: Other special topics courses TBA*
- SW 650: Evidence-Based Practice in Mental Health ^{SP}
- SW 651: Evidence-Based Practice in Addictions ^{SP}
- SW 653: Social Work Practice along the HIV Continuum of Care ^{FA or SP}
- SW 654: Health & Wellbeing of Black Americans: A Social Work Approach ^{FA or SP}
- SW 655: Exploring Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work Practice ^{FA or SP}

Key:

FA – Course typically offered in fall semester

SP – Course typically offered in spring semester

SU – Course typically offered in summer

V – Course offering varies from year to year

Field Education (Experiential Learning Experiences)

Institutions of higher education have recognized the importance of experiential learning in tandem with the knowledge that students acquire in the classroom. Social work has a long history of using field practicum experiences in the integration of theoretical concepts and principals learned in the classroom. Best practice in classroom integration practices include: role play, detail discussions of "real life" situations and practice of intervention skills with classmates. These practices are foundational to the development of social work skills and help student understand the helping process.

Successful social workers' most fundamental instrument or tool in the helping process is the professional, disciplined, and effective use of self. Proficiency in use of self involves recognizing and articulating how one's own strengths and limitations that may either help or hinder the helping process. Students develop the effective use of self through exposure to a variety of instructional methods including guided reading, didactic lectures, supervisory sessions, role-plays (and other experiential learning activities), and observations of various professionals working in social service agencies.

The UAB MSW program curriculum includes in classroom best practices, experiential learning outside of the classroom, and capstone assignments that show case and measure what students are learning. Students who enter the Regular (2-year) Program are required to complete 900 hours of experiential learning, and students entering with Advanced Standing will complete 600 total hours of field. Detailed information about the field experience opportunities, admissions, evaluation and policies and procedures can be found in the MSW Field Manual.

MSW Plans of Study and Degree Requirements

The MSW Program offers four plans of study. Students are approved for Advanced Standing status if they have a baccalaureate degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program; all other students accepted into the program enroll in the Regular Program. Students choose whether they wish to attend full-time or part-time at the time of application for admission. A student who wishes to change from full-time to part-time (or vice versa) once admitted must get the approval of the MSW Program Director.

Curriculum-by-Semester guides

A Curriculum-by-Semester guide is available for each of the four MSW Plans of Study, as outlined below. All MSW students must follow their assigned guide in order to successfully progress through the MSW program toward graduation. Please see the detailed guides illustrating program progressions for each plan of study on the following pages.

1. Regular Program – Full time
2. Advanced Standing Program – Full time
3. Regular Program – Part time
4. Advanced Standing Program – Part-time

Regular Full-Time Program (MSW Plan of Study 1 of 4)

Students MUST take courses each semester in the order shown below.

Semester 1 (Generalist Practice Curriculum)	Credit Hours
SW 510 - Social Work Practice (individuals, groups & organizations)	3
SW 520 - Social Work Policy	3
SW 530 - Research	3
SW 590 - Field Practicum I (2 cr.) + SW 591 - Seminar I (1 cr.) ^a	3
Semester Total	12
Semester 2 (Specialized Practice Curriculum)	Credit Hours
SW 610 - Diagnosis and Assessment for Health and Behavioral Health	3
SW 640 - Human Behavior in the Social Environment for Health and Behavioral	3
SW 630 - Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations I	3
SW 690 - Field Practicum II (6 cr.) + SW 693 - Seminar II (1 cr.) ^a	7
Semester Total	16
Semester 3 (Specialized Practice Curriculum)	Credit Hours
SW 631 - Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations II	3
SW 615 - Evidence-informed Interventions in Health and Behavioral Health	3
Elective I	3
SW 691 - Field Practicum III (6 cr.) + SW 694 - Seminar III (1 cr.) ^a	7
Semester Total	16
Semester 4 (Specialized Practice Curriculum)	Credit Hours
SW 620 - Policy Analysis and Advocacy Practice for Health and Behavioral	3
Elective II	3
Elective III	3
SW 692 - Field Practicum IV (6 cr.) + SW 695 - Seminar IV (1 cr.) ^a	7
Semester Total	16
PROGRAM TOTAL	60 hours

Elective Courses ^b	Credit Hours
SW 599 - Health, Crime, and Community ^{SU}	3
SW 599 - Violence Across the Life Course ^{SU}	3
SW 599 - Social Work Practice with Older Adults ^{SU}	3
SW 599 - Global Social Justice and Human Rights ^{SP}	3
SW 599 - Competent Clinical Practice with LGBTQIA2S+ Populations ^{SU}	3
SW 599 - Study Abroad ^V	3
SW 599 - Other special topics courses TBA	3
SW 650 - Evidence-Based Practice in Mental Health ^{SP}	3
SW 651 - Evidence-Based Practice in Addictions ^{SP}	3
SW 653 - Social Work Practice Along the HIV Continuum of Care ^{FA or SP}	3
SW 654 - Health & Wellbeing of Black Americans: A Social Work Approach ^{FA or SP}	3
SW 655 - Exploring Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work Practice ^{FA or SP}	3

FA – Course typically offered in fall semester

SU – Course typically offered in summer

SP – Course typically offered in spring semester

V – Course offering varies from year to year

^a Field Practicum and Field Seminar must be taken concurrently per each semester

^b Electives are usually offered once per year (see semester noted after each course title)

Advanced Standing Full-Time Program (MSW Plan of Study 2 of 4)

Students MUST take courses each semester in the order shown below.

Semester 1 (Specialized Practice Curriculum)	Credit Hours
SW 610 - Diagnosis and Assessment for Health and Behavioral Health	3
SW 640 - Human Behavior in the Social Environment for Health & Beh. Health	3
SW 630 - Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations I	3
SW 690 - Field Practicum II (4 cr.) + SW 693 - Seminar II (1 cr.) ^a	5
Semester Total	14
Semester 2 (Specialized Practice Curriculum)	
SW 631 - Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations II	3
SW 615 - Evidence-informed Interventions in Health and Behavioral Health	3
Elective I	3
SW 691 - Field Practicum III (4 cr.) + SW 694 - Seminar III (1 cr.) ^a	5
Semester Total	14
Semester 3 (Specialized Practice Curriculum)	
SW 620 - Policy Analysis and Advocacy Practice for Health and Behavioral	3
Elective II	3
Elective III	3
SW 692 - Field Practicum IV (4 cr.) + SW 695 - Seminar IV (1 cr.) ^a	5
Semester Total	14
PROGRAM TOTAL	42 hours

Elective Courses ^b	Credit Hours
SW 599 - Health, Crime, and Community ^{SU}	3
SW 599 - Violence Across the Life Course ^{SU}	3
SW 599 – Social Work Practice with Older Adults ^{SU}	3
SW 599 - Global Social Justice and Human Rights ^{SP}	3
SW 599 - Competent Clinical Practice with LGBTQIA2S+ Populations ^{SU}	3
SW 599 - Study Abroad ^V	3
SW 599 - Other special topics courses TBA	3
SW 650 - Evidence-Based Practice in Mental Health ^{SP}	3
SW 651 - Evidence-Based Practice in Addictions ^{SP}	3
SW 653 - Social Work Practice Along the HIV Continuum of Care ^{FA or SP}	3
SW 654 - Health & Wellbeing of Black Americans: A Social Work Approach ^{FA or SP}	3
SW 655 - Exploring Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work Practice ^{FA or SP}	3

FA – Course typically offered in fall semester
SU – Course typically offered in summer

SP – Course typically offered in spring semester
V – Course offering varies from year to year

For more for more information regarding course listings please visit the [MSW Course Catalog](#).

Notes:

^a Field Practicum and Field Seminar must be taken concurrently per each semester

^b Electives are typically offered once per year (see semester noted after each course title)

Regular Part-Time Program (MSW Plan of Study 3 of 4)

Students MUST take courses each semester in the order shown below.

Year 1 – Fall Semester	Credit Hours
SW 510 - Social Work Practice (individuals, groups & organizations)	3
SW 520 - Social Work Policy	3
Semester Total	6

Year 1 – Spring Semester	
SW 610 - Diagnosis and Assessment for Health and Behavioral Health	3
Elective I ^b	3
Semester Total	6

Year 1 – Summer	
SW 640 - Human Behavior in the Social Environment for Health and Behavioral	3
Elective II ^b	3
Semester Total	6

Year 2 – Fall Semester	
SW 530 - Research	3
SW 590 - Field Practicum I (2 cr.) ^a	2
SW 591 - Seminar I (1 cr.) ^a	1
Semester Total	6

Year 2 – Spring Semester	
SW 630 - Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations I	3
SW 615 - Evidence-informed Interventions in Health and Behavioral Health	3
Semester Total	6

Year 2 - Summer	
Elective III ^b	3
Elective IV ^b	3
Semester Total	6

Year 3 - Fall Semester	
SW 620 - Policy Analysis and Advocacy Practice for Health and Behavioral Health	3
SW 631 - Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations II	3
Semester Total	6

Regular Part-Time Program (MSW Plan of Study 3 of 4)

Year 3 - Spring Semester	Credit Hours
SW 690 - Field Practicum II (4 cr.) ^a	4
SW 693 - Seminar II (1 cr.) ^a	1
Semester Total	5

Year 3 - Summer	Credit Hours
SW 691 - Field Practicum III (4 cr.)	4
SW 694 - Seminar III (1 cr.) ^a	1
Semester Total	5

Year 4 – Fall Semester	Credit Hours
SW 692 - Field Practicum IV (4 cr.)	4
SW 695 - Seminar IV (1 cr.) ^a	1
Semester Total	5

Year 4 – Spring Semester	Credit Hours
SW 696 - Field Practicum V (4 cr.)	4
Semester Total	4

PROGRAM TOTAL	61 hours
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Elective Courses	Credit Hours
SW 599 - Health, Crime, and Community ^{SU}	3
SW 599 - Violence Across the Life Course ^{SU}	3
SW 599 – Social Work Practice with Older Adults ^{SU}	3
SW 599 - Global Social Justice and Human Rights ^{SP}	3
SW 599 - Competent Clinical Practice with LGBTQIA2S+ Populations ^{SU}	3
SW 599 - Study Abroad ^V	3
SW 599 - Other <i>special topics</i> courses TBA	3
SW 650 - Evidence-Based Practice in Mental Health ^{SP}	3
SW 651 - Evidence-Based Practice in Addictions ^{SP}	3
SW 653 - Social Work Practice Along the HIV Continuum of Care ^{FA or SP}	3
SW 654 - Health & Wellbeing of Black Americans: A Social Work Approach ^{FA or SP}	3
SW 655 - Exploring Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work Practice ^{FA or SP}	3

FA – Course typically offered in fall semester
SU – Course typically offered in summer

SP – Course typically offered in spring semester
V – Course offering varies from year to year

For more for more information regarding course listings please visit the [MSW Course Catalog](#).

Notes:

^a Field Practicum and Field Seminar must be taken concurrently per each semester

^b Electives are usually offered once per year (see semester noted after each course title)

Advanced Standing Part-Time Program (MSW Plan of Study 4 of 4)

Students MUST take courses each semester in the order shown below.

Year 1 – Fall Semester (Specialized Practice Curriculum)	Credit Hours
SW 610 - Diagnosis and Assessment for Health and Behavioral Health	3
SW 630 - Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations I	3
Semester Total	6
Year 1 – Spring Semester (Specialized Practice Curriculum)	
SW 631 - Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations II	3
SW 615 - Evidence-informed Interventions in Health and Behavioral Health	3
Semester Total	6
Year 1 – Summer (Specialized Practice Curriculum)	
SW 640 - Human Behavior in the Social Environment for Health and Behavioral	3
Elective I	3
Semester Total	6
Year 2 - Fall Semester (Specialized Practice Curriculum)	
SW 620 Policy Analysis and Advocacy Practice for Health and Behavioral	3
Elective II	3
Semester Total	6
Year 2 - Spring Semester (Specialized Practice Curriculum)	
SW 690 - Field Practicum II (4 cr.) ^a	4
SW 693 - Seminar II (1 cr.) ^a	1
Semester Total	5
Year 2 – Summer (Specialized Practice Curriculum)	
SW 691 - Field Practicum III (4 cr.) ^a	4
SW 694 - Seminar III (1 cr.) ^a	1
Elective III	3
Semester Total	8
Year 3 – Fall Semester (Specialized Practice Curriculum)	
SW 692 - Field Practicum IV (4 cr.) ^a	4
SW 695 - Seminar IV (1 cr.) ^a	1
Semester Total	5
PROGRAM TOTAL	42 hours

Clinical (Micro) Practice Electives	Credit Hours
SW 599 - Health, Crime, and Community ^{SU}	3
SW 599 - Violence Across the Life Course ^{SU}	3
SW 599 – Social Work Practice with Older Adults ^{SU}	3
SW 599 - Global Social Justice and Human Rights ^{SP}	3
SW 599 - Competent Clinical Practice with LGBTQIA2S+ Populations ^{SU}	3
SW 599 - Study Abroad ^V	3
SW 599 - Other special topics courses TBA	3
SW 650 - Evidence-Based Practice in Mental Health ^{SP}	3
SW 651 - Evidence-Based Practice in Addictions ^{SP}	3
SW 653 - Social Work Practice Along the HIV Continuum of Care ^{FA or SP}	3
SW 654 - Health & Wellbeing of Black Americans: A Social Work Approach ^{FA or SP}	3
SW 655 - Exploring Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work Practice ^{FA or SP}	3

FA – Course typically offered in fall semester

SU – Course typically offered in summer

SP – Course typically offered in spring semester

V – Course offering varies from year to year

^a Field Practicum and Field Seminar must be taken concurrently per each semester

MSW Course Descriptions

Generalist Practice Courses

SW 510: Social Work Practice with Individuals, Groups & Organizations (3 cr.)

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to professional social work practice that focuses on social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Students will learn about social work generalist practice with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. Students will be introduced to the principles of evidence-based and culturally-informed, anti-racist and anti-oppressive ethical practice. The course also explores pertinent theories and concepts, as well as the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes necessary to understand human development and behavior in the social environment. Additionally, the course explores how factors such as age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status influence human development and behavior in the social environment. The course emphasizes ecosystems theory and strengths perspectives to examine individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. The course focuses on adherence to NASW Code of Ethics and ethical practice.

SW 520: Social Work Policy (3 cr.)

This course provides the foundation for social policy and policy practice for social workers through exploration of historical background and values and beliefs that have shaped creation, implementation, and analysis of social policy. Historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy will be addressed. Issues of oppression, poverty, marginalization, alienation, and privilege and power will be explored through rights-based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses to evaluate status-quo policies and advocate for vulnerable populations.

SW 530: Research I (3 cr.)

This course prepares students to be informed decision-makers who use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Students learn to recognize bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Students learn to critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to practice with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. Additionally, students learn foundational research concepts, how to develop practice-based research questions to generate actionable findings, how to demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research, and apply critical thinking skills to begin understanding social work practice as a set of reasoned and justifiable decisions that are aligned with the goals of client systems.

SW 590: Field Practicum I (2 cr.)

Practicum I is the generalist level field experience. Students participate in a 100 hour clinical placement in an approved social service agency under supervision of master's-level social

workers. This course has a weekly one-hour seminar/lab which includes educational experiences in the classroom, simulations, and service learning opportunities in health and behavioral health settings. The course is designed to provide students entering without direct practice experience with the initial skills needed to succeed in the later Field Practica.

SW 591: Field Practicum Seminar I (1 cr.)

Practice simulation and service learning, portfolios, initial assessment of practice competencies. Taken simultaneously with Field Practicum I (see course description above).

Bridge Semester Field Courses

SW 690: Field Practicum II (6 cr.)

This is the first experience of a 600-hour (for Advanced Standing students) or 800-hour (for Regular Program students) field practicum experience (for Regular Program students) over three semesters in approved social service agencies under the supervision of an MSW with three or more years of experience. As the students' progress through Practicum II-IV they will be expected to function at increasing levels of difficulty, independence, autonomy, initiative, resourcefulness, and diligence in the performance of assigned tasks. This course has a weekly one hour seminar/lab. Students will participate in activities in approved agencies that will allow them to develop advanced generalist practice skills with populations coping with health and behavior health issues. Students will demonstrate knowledge in evidence-based interventions for individuals addressing health and behavioral health conditions and apply that knowledge in conducting interviews and assessments, development of treatment plans, and evaluating their practice. Students will manage personal and professional values and use their understanding of human behavior and diversity to advocate for clients at all systems levels. Course assignments are designed to encourage students to utilize critical thinking to analyze data and formulate plans that will improve practice, policy and service delivery. Seminar/lab sessions will utilize lectures, focused discussion questions and interactive activities to help students integrate classroom knowledge and practice experience.

SW 693: Field Practicum Seminar II (1 cr.)

Seminar on generalist practice in a health/behavioral health setting. Taken simultaneously with Field Practicum II (see course description above).

Specialized Practice Courses

SW 610: Diagnosis and Assessment for Health and Behavioral Health (3 cr.)

The purpose of this course is to educate students in the behavioral health assessment processes, diagnosis of mental disorders, and how behavioral health relates to an individual's overall health. Specifically, students will learn to conduct multidimensional and culturally relevant behavioral health assessments, as well as relevant diagnoses and differential diagnoses for behavioral health problems using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Training in assessment will include interview skills to engage with the client/patient and their constituencies in the assessment process to elicit accurate information; explore the effects of diversity, power, bias, discrimination, and oppression in reporting symptoms; and understand how social, racial, economic, and environmental factors impact behaviors and the

related observations and conclusions about them. Students will learn how to engage with clients collaboratively in the assessment process in a professional and ethical manner consistent with the social work code of ethics, as well as how to write up diagnostic statements based on the behavioral health assessment. Students will be trained in how to use this information as social workers as members of an interprofessional team as advocates for the appropriate use of diagnostic information in designing interventions for clients/patients.

SW 615: Evidence-Informed Interventions in Health and Behavioral Health (3 cr.)

The purpose of this course is to train students on providing evidence-based behavioral health interventions for individuals, families, and groups. Students will be trained in the complimentary skills of identifying appropriate evidence-based interventions, delivering evidence-based interventions, evaluating client/patient response to intervention, and self-evaluating social work intervention skills. Identifying appropriate evidence-based interventions will include the use of evidence-based interventions databases, assessing the supporting evidence for interventions, and making evidence-driven decisions based on available information. Delivering evidence-based interventions will involve a survey of relevant evidence-based interventions, understanding their key components and how they are differentiated to assist clients with specific problems, and developing practice skills for these evidence-based interventions through role-plays with individuals, families, and groups. Evaluating client/patient response to intervention will include a review of the expected length of interventions for each evidence-based intervention as well as the development of a monitoring strategy for client improvement and symptom reduction. Self-evaluating social work intervention skills will include the use of process improvement tools such as process recordings, classroom experience with writing and reviewing case notes, and how the Social Work Code of Ethics fits with the delivery of evidence based-interventions – specifically when interventions are not effective. As part of training in the evidence-based intervention process students will learn about the populations that interventions have been normed on, as well as issues in translating interventions for individuals from a variety of different backgrounds - including race, ethnicity and culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, family structure.

SW 620: Policy Analysis and Advocacy Practice for Health and Behavioral Health (3 cr.)

This course provides students with the necessary knowledge and skills to identify policies at the local, state, national, and global levels relevant to health and behavioral health settings. Students will acquire the knowledge and skills to identify and analyze the impact of these influences on clients/patients and their constituencies. They learn to apply critical thinking to analyze the effects of policy on individuals, families, and groups experiencing health and behavioral health needs and critically analyze how policies and programs may promote health and health inequities and disparities. Students will understand the structures of health and behavioral health policies and services and the role of these in service delivery through rights based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Policy issues are examined in the context of their impact on diverse populations and the oppression, marginalization, and alienation of individuals, families, and groups. This course teaches advanced advocacy skills and policy formulation.

SW 630: Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations I (3 cr.)

This course introduces quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research methods, with a primary focus on quantitative research. Students learn to integrate scientific evidence into their practice by translating and implementing evidence and evidence-based practices into diagnoses and clinical recommendations, shared decision-making, and interventions. The semester-long systematic review project is designed to teach students how to critically appraise a body of research within health and behavioral health practice areas. Students will use culturally informed and relevant evaluation methods to inform practice, services, programs, and policies. They will develop the skills necessary to identify critical gaps and promote the adoption of evidence-based practice when working with individuals, families, and groups experiencing health and behavioral health needs. Through this course students will ground their use of evidence in relevant theories, particularly systems theory, and in empirically based conceptual models such as stages of change and harm reduction. They will use anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in conducting research and building knowledge.

SW 631: Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations II (3 cr.)

This course introduces students to evaluation methodologies that include qualitative and mixed methods designs. Students will learn how to generate and evaluate data, including qualitative and quantitative analysis. This course teaches students how to apply such evaluation to clinical practice in health and behavioral health settings.

SW 640: Human Behavior in the Social Environment for Health and Behavioral Health (3 cr.)

The purpose of this course is to educate students in human behavior across the lifespan within the framework of health and behavioral health. Students will learn the reciprocal influences and effects between people and their environments with specific emphasis on health and behavioral health. The course examines the contexts of historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect human behavior. Students gain the knowledge, values, and skills to identify strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers in health and behavioral health while promoting human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice to ensure their civil, political, economic, social, and client rights are protected. Students will learn human biology, including brain functions and genetics and epigenetics. Students will learn about human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice, and how these relate to social work practice. This course also examines the critical roles of human behavior in the social environment with respect to impacts the professional social work skills of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

SW 691: Field Practicum III (4-6 cr.)

Together, Field Practicum III and Seminar III make up the second experience of a 600-hour (for Advanced Standing students) or 800-hour (for Regular Program students) field practicum experience (for Regular Program students) over three semesters in approved social service agencies under the supervision of an MSW with three or more years of experience. The practicum experience provides the opportunity for social work majors to strengthen and augment knowledge, values and skill bases acquired in the classroom through applying evidence-based theory and other theory-based methods to situations found in actual

professional practice. This course has a weekly one-hour seminar/lab. Students will participate in activities in approved agencies that will allow them to develop advanced generalist practice skills with populations coping with health and behavior health issues. Students will demonstrate knowledge in evidence-based interventions for individuals addressing health and behavioral health conditions and apply that knowledge in conducting interviews and assessments, development of treatment plans and evaluating their practice. Students will manage personal and professional values and use their understanding of human behavior and diversity to advocate for clients at all systems levels. Course assignments are designed to encourage students to utilize critical thinking to analyze data and formulate plans that will improve practice, policy and service delivery. Seminar/lab sessions will utilize lectures, focused discussion questions and interactive activities to help students integrate classroom knowledge and practice experience.

SW 692: Field Practicum IV (4-6 cr.)

Together, Field Practicum IV and Field Seminar IV make up the final experience of 600-hour (for Advanced Standing students) or 800-hour (for Regular Program students) field practicum experience (for Regular Program students) over three semesters in an approved social service agencies under the supervision of an MSW with three or more years of experience. Each field practicum experience will include a concurrent integrative seminar/lab. The course also provides the opportunity for students to examine the principles of social work practice and to develop critical thinking skills. The practicum experience provides the opportunity for social work majors to strengthen and augment knowledge, values and skill bases acquired in the classroom through applying evidence-based theory and other theory-based methods to situations found in actual professional practice. This course has a weekly one-hour seminar/lab. Students will participate in activities in approved agencies that will allow them to develop advanced generalist practice skills with populations coping with health and behavior health issues. As students progress through Practicum II-IV, they will be expected to function at increasing levels of difficulty, independence, autonomy, initiative, resourcefulness and diligence in the performance of assigned tasks. Students will demonstrate knowledge in evidence-based interventions for individuals addressing health and behavioral health conditions and apply that knowledge in conducting interviews and assessments, development of treatment plans, and evaluating their practice. Students will manage personal and professional values and use their understanding of human behavior and diversity to advocate for clients at all systems levels. Course assignments are designed to encourage students to utilize critical thinking to analyze data and formulate plans that will improve practice, policy and service delivery. Seminar/lab sessions will utilize lectures, focused discussion questions and interactive activities to help students integrate classroom knowledge and practice experience.

SW 694: Field Practicum Seminar III (1 cr.)

Seminar on specialized practice in field health/behavioral health setting. Taken simultaneously with SW 691: Field Practicum III (see course description above).

SW 695: Field Practicum Seminar IV (cr.)

Seminar on specialized practice in field health/behavioral health setting. Taken simultaneously with SW 692: Field Practicum IV (see course description above).

SW 696: Field Practicum V (4 cr.)

Field Practicum V is for students following the Regular Part-Time plan of study only. It provides an extended time frame in which to complete the field experience from Practica II-IV due to part-time students completing fewer field hours per week.

Elective Courses

SW 599: Health, Crime, and Community (3 cr.)

This course provides students with knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes focused on the intersection of public health, the criminal justice system, and social work practice. This is largely a survey course to examine these issues broadly within the context of social, racial, economic, and environmental inequities. Violence in Alabama prisons is a particularly critical topic explored in this course. Another critical topic addressed in this course is gun violence, the impact on health, crime, and community, and the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural influences on this epidemic. Students are expected to be informed and critical consumers of information and research of these current social issues. The course examines local, state, federal, and global social policies as they relate to health, crime, and community. Students will develop rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive approaches to practice in public health and criminal justice systems.

SW 599: Violence Across the Life Span (3 cr.)

This course provides an overview of the types of violence experienced by client systems throughout the life course, including intimate partner violence, child abuse and maltreatment, sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, animal abuse, sexual abuse, and elder abuse. It emphasizes the intersectional feminist framework to examine individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations and allows students to discuss and practice necessary skills for effective prevention and intervention of violence. Throughout the course, students explore the need for specialized knowledge, skills, support, and services, interprofessional approaches and collaboration, and public policy changes to address these diverse forms of violence. The course examines human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice and the intersections of discrimination and oppression as core elements for understanding forms of violence. Contributing factors of violence are presented and students will apply intersectional anti-racist and anti-oppressive frameworks and evidence-based practices to ensure relevant and effective practice social work practice.

SW 599: Practice with Aging Populations (3 cr.)

The purpose of this elective course is to educate students to work ethically and professionally with diverse older adults in a variety of settings. The course blends lecture and experiential learning to prepare social workers for anti-racist and anti-oppressive clinical social work and collaboration with older adults. Students explore power, privilege, and biases and how their worldview and personal experiences influence their professional judgment and behavior about

aging, how health and behavior health circumstances change over the lifespan, end of life issues, cultural humility, and how to effectively advocate in partnership with and/or on behalf of older adults. Students learn to identify the needs and concerns of older adults from micro, mezzo, and macro perspectives, and understand how dimensions of diversity, personal identity, and cultural practices impact aging and affect equity and inclusion. Students will use the skills, knowledge, values, and cognitive and affective processes acquired/developed through other classroom learning and field education. This course emphasizes the strengths perspectives to examine individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations, and is designed to prepare students to understand human development and behavior across these systems specific to aging.

SW 599: Global Social Justice and Human Rights (3 cr.)

This course provides students with knowledge and skills that related to the intersection of public health, the criminal justice system, and social work services and interventions. This is largely a survey course to examine these issues broadly. One of the issues of concern recently has been the COVID 19 response at the intersection of health, crime, and community. This is a particularly salient issue that has generated national and local discussions about policy changes, operating procedures, and preventive health care measures in environments that do not lend themselves to hand washing, social distancing, and other containment strategies. Another immediate critical concern is that of gun violence and its impact on health, crime, and community. Students are expected to be active participants in the course which means paying attention to the news and bringing issues to class that relate to our discussion. Students should examine Federal Policy as well as State Policy and be informed about what is happening around the U.S. and the World as it relates to Health, Crime, and community during this time.

SW 599: Study Abroad (3 cr.)

The content of social work study abroad courses will vary depending on the course location, but each course will include numerous on-campus class sessions before and after travel to explore course concepts in detail, prepare students for travel abroad, and debrief and deconstruct the experience afterward. Typical themes to be explored in these courses include: conceptualization of health and wellbeing in the destination country and their broader political, cultural, and economic contexts; the impact of social, economic, and/or health issues on the country's most vulnerable populations (e.g., indigenous communities, women, rural families). These courses will enable students to (a) study and observe the social and cultural context of another country through an immersive learning experience, (b) reflect on their own worldviews while exploring concepts such as global citizenship and social justice, and (c) expand their understanding of and skills for future cross-cultural social work practice.

SW 650: Evidence-Based Practice in Mental Health (3 cr.)

The primary goal of this elective course is to familiarize students with various culturally responsive, evidence-based interventions for individuals and groups. Students have the opportunity to develop intervention skills necessary to help clients achieve their goals – this is done via role plays, group work, and other experiential activities. This course builds on the knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes acquired/developed through

other classroom learning and field education. It provides in-depth exploration of evidence-based interventions with individuals, families, and groups in need of mental health services, and prepares students to engage, assess and implement specific interventions. There will be a focus on engagement and the utilization of the strengths perspective. While this course will mainly focus on Motivational Interviewing (MI) and Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing therapy (EMDR), and Crisis management and other complementary therapies are explored to prepare students for clinical social work upon graduation.

SW 651: Evidence-Based Practice in Addictions (3 cr.)

The primary goal of this course is to familiarize students with various evidence-based interventions in treating addiction. It focuses on addictions as a specific health and behavioral health issues and explores anti-racist and anti-oppressive evidence-informed strategies for treating substance use and other addictive behaviors among diverse client populations. The course explores individual, group, and family therapies, as well as policy and research. Students will demonstrate culturally responsive social work practice skills of engagement, assessment intervention, and evaluation via role plays and group work. Through self- self-reflection, students will gain knowledge and insight into how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies experiencing addiction.

SW 653: Social Work Practice Along the HIV Continuum of Care (3 cr.)

This elective course is designed to examine the field of HIV/AIDS and acquaints students with the basic and most advanced facts about HIV/AIDS. It takes different approaches to introduce students to the impact of HIV infection and AIDS on the individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations that provide care, and will sensitize students to the challenges that HIV/AIDS has generated in public health, social policy, and social service delivery. The course is especially framed by the HIV Continuum of Care which illustrates related social work HIV practice from prevention and testing to linkage to primary medical care, retention in care, and viral suppression. Social work students will have an opportunity to explore their own beliefs, biases, values, and approaches to HIV/AIDS, in addition to the cultural, political, social, legal, ethical, spiritual, and public health issues and the perspectives of people with HIV infection that are needed to inform practice and policy.

SW 654: Health & Wellbeing of Black Americans – A Social Work Approach (3 cr.)

This elective course uses an anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work lens to explore the health and well-being of Black Americans. Course content examines the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences on institutional, structural and systemic racism and its impact on education, criminal justice, healthcare, economic, and social systems. Students will engage in experiential learning activities to examine critical issues, reflect on their historical and current implications, and explore strategies that inform service delivery efforts to inform the development of anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices that address systemic inequalities. To attend to dimensions of diversity, intersecting

identifies, and cultural humility, this course will incorporate theories to address monolithic Black American assumptions.

SW 655: Exploring Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work Practice (3 cr.)

This elective course aims to provide students with the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes necessary for antiracist and anti-oppressive social work practice with those experiencing systematic oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation. Students will learn about intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. They will also evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Dimensions of diversity and intersectionality of human identity(ies) affect equity and inclusion – these include but are not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. This course examines the strengths, resilience, and power of those who are oppressed, marginalized, and alienated by the majority society, and how these can be used for ethical and professional social work practice. Students will explore how their own personal values, beliefs, bias, positionality, and privilege impact their practice. Students should leave this course with a better understanding and awareness of how their worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The MSW program operates in accordance with the University of Alabama at Birmingham academic calendar. The academic calendar for the current as well as future years can be found on this page: <https://www.uab.edu/students/academics/academic-calendar>

MSW PROGRAM POLICIES & GUIDELINES

MSW Program Admission

Admission Requirements

All applications are initiated through the Graduate School at UAB and forwarded to the Social Work Department for review when all required materials have been uploaded. The Graduate School has a comprehensive website providing information on programs, applications, and resources to assist student in submitting complete applications. Students are encouraged to visit the website at <http://www.uab.edu/graduate/> to learn more about the process and access resources. The admissions application portal opens each year on December 1 to begin accepting applications for the following fall. The application deadline for the fall semester is typically April 1 with an earlier priority deadline of February 1.

UAB Graduate School Admissions Requirements

To complete an application for the Graduate School the following minimum criteria should be met:

- Submission of the online application and applicable application fee.
- A recognized baccalaureate, graduate or professional degree from a regionally accredited (e.g., SACS) college or university, or an international equivalent based on a four-year curriculum.
- Applicants holding only a bachelor's degree should have earned a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (B average) in all Junior and Senior level course work.
- Applicants should have an undergraduate major acceptable in content and quality to the selection committee of the program to which they are applying.
- For international students whose first language is not English, a minimum score of 550 on the paper test, 213 on the computer version, or 80 on the internet-based test of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), or a minimum score of 6.0 - 6.5 on the IELTS test is recommended.
- The Graduate School must receive one official transcript from each postsecondary institution attended, including community colleges and high school dual enrolment. A duplicate copy of each transcript should also be mailed directly to the designated contact person on the checklist. It is the applicant's responsibility to make the appropriate arrangements to send transcripts to both the Graduate School and the social work program to which they are applying.
- Applicants who are currently enrolled at other institutions should send transcripts that document grades obtained through the most recent term completed. Submission of final transcripts indicating conferral of the bachelor's degree is required prior to enrolling in graduate course work at UAB.

Additional MSW Program Admissions Requirements

In addition to the requirements from the UAB Graduate School, MSW applicants must submit the following with their application:

1. Professional resume outlining academic, employment and volunteer/service experience
2. Two reference letters (ideally, one academic reference and one professional/practice reference). Letters should discuss the student's aptitude for graduate level academic work, personal and professional strengths, and propensity for the profession of social work.
3. A personal statement (writing prompts found in the online application)
4. A formal writing sample (instructions found in the online application)

Awarding Advanced Standing Status

Applicants who have a non-social work undergraduate degree from an accredited College or University may be admitted as a Regular Program student. Only applicants with a bachelor's degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (including those recognized through its International Social Work Degree Recognition & Evaluation Services and those covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors) may be admitted as Advanced Standing students when they meet all required admission criteria for Advanced Standing status and submit a complete application for review. Advanced Standing applicants who are not admitted are not eligible for Regular Program admissions consideration in that same admissions year but may re-apply for admission in the future.

Applicants with social work degrees from non-U.S. institutions must complete an International Degree Review through the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). If CSWE determines that the undergraduate curriculum and degree meet the necessary educational standards, an international applicant will then qualify for Advanced Standing in our program. Instructions for completing this process can be found at this link: www.cswe.org/centers-initiatives/international-degree-review/

Official transcripts from all undergraduate institutions attended are required for MSW admissions applications. An administrative review of each completed application is conducted by either the MSW Program Director or the Department of Social Work Program Manager prior to sending the application to the Admissions Committee for review. As part of the administrative review, transcripts are screened to confirm that a bachelor's degree has been awarded (or is expected soon for applicants graduating in spring).

For transcripts indicating an undergraduate degree in social work from a social work program in the United States, the administrative reviewer consults CSWE's Directory of Programs (available at <https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/directory>) to confirm accreditation status of the awarding institution. Applicants with social work degrees from non-U.S. institutions must complete an International Degree Review through the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). If CSWE determines that the undergraduate curriculum and degree meet the necessary educational standards, an international applicant will then qualify for Advanced Standing in our program. Instructions for completing this process can be found at this link: <http://www.cswe.org/centers-initiatives/international-degree-review/>

For students admitted with Advanced Standing status, the requirement to complete five generalist practice courses (designed by a 500-level course number) is waived. Advanced Standing students are guided by the Advanced Standing Curricular Guides to begin their coursework with 600-level courses.

Both Full-Time and Part-Time plans of study are available for students awarded Advanced Standing status. Students indicate their preferred enrollment option at the time of admission; a change of status during the MSW program must be requested by the student and approved by the Program Director.

Evaluating Applications and Notifying Applicants

Admissions Policy

Admissions applications must be submitted through the online portal maintained by the UAB Graduate School. Completed applications are evaluated by the MSW Admissions Committee based on four criteria: (a) academic credentials, (b) personal statement, (c) formal academic writing sample, and (d) recommendation letters. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required application materials (including those submitted by others such as recommendation letters and transcripts) have been received by the Graduate School in advance of the final admissions deadline each year. Incomplete applications are not reviewed by the Department, nor can they be carried over to the next application year.

Admissions reviews are conducted on a rolling basis each month between January and May (i.e., an applicant submitting a completed application in December would be reviewed by the Admissions Committee in January). Based on the reviews of two members of the MSW Admissions Committee, the MSW Program Director makes one of three admissions decisions (admit, wait list, do not admit) for each completed application. Applicants who are wait listed following initial review receive one of two final decisions (admitted, not admitted) by May 1. The MSW program does not operate on conditional admissions. The MSW Program Director enters the Program's decision into the Graduate School's online portal where the Graduate School makes the final determination.

Admissions Procedures

The MSW Program accepts admissions applications from December 1 through April 1 of each academic year. Admissions applications for the MSW Program are submitted by applicants through the UAB Graduate School's online application portal which is only open during this established time frame. The Graduate School shares application packets with the Program as they are determined to be complete by Graduate School staff (applications missing any of the required components remain in the portal marked as "in progress" and are not shared with the Program).

Admissions reviews are conducted on a rolling basis with reviews conducted by the Admissions Committee each month between January and April (i.e., an applicant submitting a completed application in December would be reviewed by the Admissions Committee in January).

Applications will first undergo administrative review by the MSW Program Director and/or program staff to confirm that (a) all required materials are included, (b) the applicant has been awarded a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution (or the degree is expected to be granted before the applicant would begin the MSW program in the case of spring graduates), and (c) if the undergraduate degree is in social work, it is from either a CSWE-accredited program or a program that meets international equivalencies (see Advanced Standing section below). Following administrative review, completed applications are forwarded to the MSW Admissions Committee for full consideration. Each application is evaluated by two MSW Admissions Committee members.

The MSW Admissions Committee, made up of all full-time faculty who teach MSW courses, thoroughly reviews each application packet to determine whether an applicant has met the minimum qualifications of admission, assess potential for success at the graduate level, and consider whether the applicant's academic and career goals fit within the mission and goals of the Clinical/Medical MSW program and the University.

After completing their review of an application packet, reviewers compute a total score which can range from 4 – 20. Based on this overall score, reviewers select one of the overall recommendation options on the review form. The form includes suggested score ranges corresponding to each recommendation option to help guide reviewers (e.g., a recommendation of "Definitely Admit" is suggested for an overall score between 16-20 out of 20). Reviewers are asked to add comments in a text box at the bottom of the form to explain the recommendation selected. Reviewers then submit the completed review form to a designated folder on the Department's secure shared drive.

At the end of each month, the MSW Program Director compiles feedback from each pair of reviewers then makes one of three admissions decisions (admit, wait list, do not admit) for each application. In rare instances when the two reviewers' recommendations are widely divergent (e.g., one recommends "do not admit" and the other "definitely admit"), the MSW Program Director assigns the application to a third reviewer from the MSW Admissions Committee. The MSW Program Director enters the Program's decision for each reviewed application into the Graduate School's online portal where the Graduate School makes the final determination. Applicants who were wait listed following initial review receive a final admissions decision (admitted, not admitted) by May 1. This process is followed for applicants across all plans of study including Advanced Standing and transfer applicants.

Evaluation Criteria

All reviewers use the same checklist applicable to all plans of study to evaluate applicants on four criteria. Applicants are rated on each criterion from 5=Very Strong to 1=Poor:

1. Academic Credentials
2. Personal Statement
3. Formal Academic Writing Sample
4. Recommendation Letters

Admission Decision Notification Policy

Applicants are notified of admissions decisions within 30 days of application review.

Admission Decision Notification Procedure

The UAB Graduate School automatically sends notifications of admission decisions to applicants via email, typically within 24-28 hours after the Program decision has been entered by the MSW Program Director. Additionally, the MSW Program Director creates an admission decision letter from the Program for each applicant; letters are printed along with the curricular guide corresponding to the student's plan of study and mailed via postal mail to the applicant's permanent address within 7 days of the admission decision entry. Applicants who are not admitted are eligible to apply again in the future. The MSW Program Director offers consultations with students who were not admitted on their request.

Academic Credit for Life Experience

The Social Work Department is cognizant that students come to the MSW program at different life stages, often having had significant prior work and other life experiences which enrich and inform academic paths. While this experience is valuable it may not substitute for earning academic credit in any social work generalist or specialized curriculum course or be considered in lieu of field practicum hours. The MSW program does not grant academic credit for life or work experience.

Transfer Credit

The Clinical/Medical MSW Program considers two types of transfer credits: current UAB graduate students from non-social work disciplines, and current MSW students from other CSWE-accredited programs.

Graduate Student Transfers from other UAB Graduate Programs

Students currently in good academic standing with another UAB graduate program who wish to transfer into the MSW program may initiate a transfer request by contacting the MSW Program Director. Potential graduate transfer students must submit all the same admissions materials needed for a regular admissions application, but materials may be submitted at any time of year and will be reviewed by the MSW Admissions Committee via a specially convened off-cycle review. If admitted, graduate transfer students can begin coursework at the earliest time determined feasible by the MSW Program Director (i.e., they do not need to wait until fall semester to enroll).

Once admitted, graduate transfer students may request review of previous coursework to determine whether any credits from the previous graduate program may be applied to the Clinical/Medical MSW Program. Transfer credits cannot be applied for field education or practice courses. The student making this request must provide to the MSW Program Director detailed course syllabi and other relevant course materials from the previous program. Such requests are evaluated by the Program Director on a case-by-case basis based on a thorough

comparison of previous course content (as evidenced by detailed course syllabi and other course materials as appropriate) and MSW Program course content.

Transfer of Credits from non-UAB MSW Programs

Previously earned graduate credit from another CSWE-accredited MSW program that has not been applied toward another degree may be eligible for transfer into the student's current degree program. The student making this request must provide to the MSW Program Director detailed course syllabi and other relevant course materials from the previous program. Only graduate credit earned with a grade of B or above will be considered for transfer. Transfer of credit requests are evaluated by the Program Director on a case-by-case basis involving a thorough comparison of previous course content (as evidenced by detailed course syllabi and other course materials as appropriate) and MSW Program course content.

Ordinarily no more than 12 semester hours of transfer credit can be applied to the Clinical/Medical MSW Program (in very rare circumstances, acceptance of more than 12 hours may be considered but such requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the MSW Program Director and Graduate School Dean). *All* credit transfer requests must be initiated by the student and require the approval of the MSW program director and the Graduate School Dean. *Transfer of Credit* forms are available online at <http://www.uab.edu/graduate/online-forms>. A transfer of credit application will not be considered unless the student has completed at least 9 semester hours of graduate credit in the Clinical/Medical MSW Program and is in good academic standing. Once transfer credit has been accepted, it will be included in the calculation of the GPA for the MSW Program.

Academic and Professional Advising

Academic Advising Policy

The Clinical/Medical MSW Program recognizes the benefit of both formal and informal advising for social work students. Formal academic advising includes assistance and guidance to help students move successfully through the program to graduation. All students enrolled in the MSW Program are assigned a social work Faculty Advisor responsible for Academic Advising. The Social Work Department as a whole is responsible for academic advising of MSW students.

Academic Advising Procedure

All incoming MSW students are assigned a Faculty Advisor prior to the first day of classes. Academic Advising by the Faculty Advisor consists of three components:

1. Assistance with course selection and registration. Registration happens twice each year – in the fall semester for spring courses, and in the spring for summer and fall courses. Students receive emails from the UAB Registrar announcing enrollment periods. Students are expected to meet with their Faculty Advisor to address any questions or concerns regarding course selection or course planning.
2. Monitoring progress toward graduation. The Faculty Advisor reviews the student's progress and performance in the program at the end of each semester and informs the student and the MSW Program Director of any academic issues or difficulties, including

failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing. The Faculty Advisor tracks the student's progress through the program and confirms readiness for graduation with the MSW Program Director in the final semester of the program.

3. Meetings as needed. The Faculty Advisor is available to meet with student advisees as needed to assist with academic issues or concerns identified by the student.

What Faculty Advisors cannot do

Faculty Advisors cannot do any of the following:

- Change your grade in a course
- Tell an instructor to let you (a) turn an assignment in late, (b) not penalize you for lateness or absences, or (c) take an Incomplete (these decisions rest solely with the instructor of record for the course)
- Change you from full-time status to part-time status or vice versa (this must be approved by the MSW Program Director)
- Change the availability or scheduling of MSW courses or the instructors teaching these courses (this is determined by the MSW Program Director and Department Chair)
- Allow you to enroll in a course that is full (this requires permission from the MSW Program Director). *Please note that the Program has determined the optimal class size for MSW courses, which may vary according to the course. Particularly for elective courses, students should anticipate that they may not get into their first choice of course and should consider options before going into the registration process.*

Professional Advising Policy

Formal *professional advising* includes assisting students in identifying their preferred area(s) of future practice; discussing career opportunities; offering suggestions for professional development; and tailoring educational and extracurricular experiences (e.g., volunteering) to enhance career opportunities. The Social Work Department as a whole is responsible for professional advising of MSW students. Additionally, *informal professional advising* may take place among students and faculty who have shared academic or research interests and may include topics related to academic or career trajectories.

Professional Advising Procedure

The Department of Social Work holds periodic events to provide *professional advising* to MSW students. These events are typically focused on topics related to careers and licensure. For example, career webinars are arranged by the MSW Program in consultation with employers in Alabama and nationally and designed to make MSW students aware of emerging post-graduation employment opportunities and career pathways. Similarly, licensure preparation workshops and talks are scheduled throughout each academic year.

Additionally, professional advising is provided by two administrators: The MSW Program Director holds "Chat with the Program Director" office hours on a weekly basis and the Department Chair holds "Chat with the Chair" drop-in sessions, typically 1-2 times per semester.

These informal methods allow students with either specific career questions or general concerns guaranteed access to administration.

Preferred Name/Pronouns

The MSW program supports and affirms students' right to identify their preferred names and pronouns for use in all learning spaces. Students can change their preferred name and pronouns in both Canvas and BlazerNet so that they appear on class lists and in online learning spaces. Instructions for updating preferred names and/or pronouns are available at: <https://www.uab.edu/elearning/services/canvas-requests/preferred-name>

Grading

In accordance with the UAB Graduate School policy, the following grading standards are used in the MSW program: The grade of A indicates superior performance, B indicates adequate performance, and C indicates performance only minimally adequate for a graduate student. Any graduate student completing a course at the 500 level or above with a performance below the C level will receive a grade of F; the UAB Graduate School does not use the grade of D.

Incomplete (I)

If a student has made satisfactory progress during a course but, due to an emergency or other unforeseen circumstances, is unable to finish one or more assignments within the allotted semester time frame, an incomplete grade (I) may be considered. An incomplete grade is used only when the student has (a) conferred with the instructor prior to the last class meeting date for the semester, and (b) has offered acceptable reasons for the incomplete work. Before an instructor can submit a final "I" grade, the instructor and student must complete and sign the MSW Student-Instructor Agreement for Incomplete Grades which includes agreed-upon deadlines for all outstanding assignments. Incomplete grades must be resolved within the time allowed by the UAB Graduate School (i.e., one semester); failure to do so will result in the "I" grade automatically converting to an "F" (see *Appendix for Incomplete contract*).

Fail (F)

Any student completing a course at the 500 level or above with a performance below the C level will receive a grade of F in accordance with the UAB Graduate School grading policy. A student who receives a failing grade in a required course must re-take the course in a subsequent semester and successfully complete it with a final grade of C or above to meet requirements for graduation. If a failing grade is earned in an elective course, the student may either re-take the failed course in a subsequent semester or take a different elective course that would meet the same credit hour requirement.

Withdrawal (W)

To avoid academic penalty, a student must withdraw from a course by the withdrawal deadline shown in the academic calendar and receive a grade of W (withdrawn). Failure to attend class does not constitute a formal drop or withdrawal.

Withdrawal from a course can only be accomplished using official procedures. The official course withdrawal must be completed online in [BlazerNET](#). In extraordinary circumstances, if it is impossible for the student to drop or withdraw from a course online the student may email a withdrawal request to the One Stop Office. The official date of a course withdrawal will be the date the letter is received in this office. If the official date of a course withdrawal is after the last day to drop without paying, no tuition or fees will be refunded.

Withdrawal from a course while a possible violation of the Academic Honor Code is under review will not preclude the assignment of a course grade that appropriately reflects the student's performance prior to the course withdrawal if the violation is substantiated.

Because withdrawal from an MSW course has implications for satisfactory progression through the curriculum, **it is recommended that students discuss their intentions for course withdrawal with their Faculty Advisor PRIOR to submitting the request.** More information about withdrawals can be found at <https://www.uab.edu/one-stop/registration-enrollment/add-drop-and-withdrawal-policy>

Program Withdrawals, Leaves, Time Limits, and Re-Admission

Withdrawal from the MSW Program

In accordance with UAB policy, a student desiring to submit a full-term withdrawal from the MSW Program and the University must complete the withdrawal process in [BlazerNET](#). This policy applies to all semesters & parts of term including fall and spring semesters, fall and spring 7-week sessions, and summer terms. If a student withdraws from all courses in a term, a portion of or all financial aid may be returned by the University to the original provider(s) of the funding. In such cases where the return of funds creates a balance due to UAB, the student will be required to reimburse the University for those returned funds and any associated fees. The tuition refund schedule for each semester or summer term is published in the [Academic Calendar](#). When a student requests to withdraw, their enrollment in the MSW Program is terminated and they **must** reapply via the standard admissions process should they wish to re-enroll at a later date. **It is recommended that students discuss their intentions to Withdraw from the program with their Faculty Advisor PRIOR to submitting the request.** More information about withdrawals can be found at <https://www.uab.edu/one-stop/registration-enrollment/add-drop-and-withdrawal-policy>

Medical Withdrawal

The Voluntary Medical Withdrawal policy of The University of Alabama at Birmingham establishes procedures to follow when a student suffers from a physical, emotional, or psychological condition that significantly impacts their ability to function successfully or safely as a student. The policy requires students to submit documentation through their UAB Patient Portal to the Medical Director of UAB Student Health Services from a licensed provider with whom they have established care. During the term, if a student wishes to withdraw, the Full-Term Withdrawal should be utilized. Voluntary Medical Withdrawals should only be submitted

after the term has ended. A student has 60 days after the term has ended to submit a Voluntary Medical Withdrawal.

Students wishing to pursue a medical withdrawal should review the Voluntary Medical Withdrawal process on the UAB Student Health Services website and seek guidance regarding the impact of a medical withdrawal albeit a delayed graduation or the impact of this action on financial aid or any other funding received. Please note that there is no differentiation between how Full-Term Withdrawal and Voluntary Medical Withdrawal are noted on a student's transcript. Students should only consider pursuing a medical withdrawal during the term if:

- an existing medical condition prevented a student from completing a standard withdrawal at the time the condition began, or
- if a medical condition that began at an earlier point in the semester is the reason the student is seeking to withdraw from classes.

It is recommended that students discuss their intentions for Medical Withdrawal with their Faculty Advisor PRIOR to submitting the request. If you wish to pursue a medical withdrawal and have questions related to the process, please contact the [UAB Student Health Services office](#).

Leaves of Absence

Students can request a leave of absence at any time during the academic year. When a student takes a leave of absence during a term, this action is also considered to be a withdrawal, meaning the student's entire academic course load is dropped. A leave of absence request is only appropriate when the student intends to resume their studies in the future based on an approved timeframe. The MSW Program allows leaves to be granted for a minimum of one term and a maximum of two years.

Students can request a Leave of Absence by completing the required Leave of Absence form found on the Graduate School's website (<https://www.uab.edu/graduate/students/current-students/academic-policies-progress/forms>) and having it approved by the MSW Program Director. **It is recommended that students discuss their LOA intentions with their Faculty Advisor PRIOR to submitting the form.**

Program Time Limits

In accordance with UAB Graduate School policy, MSW students are generally expected to complete all degree requirements within 5 years of matriculation. One extension of these time limits can be requested when mitigating circumstances preclude completion of requirements within the time limit. The request for an extension must include a written and signed completion plan outlining the timeline for degree completion. Instructions for preparing a completion plan are available on the Graduate School website at www.uab.edu/graduate/students/current-students/academic-policies-progress/forms. Time limit extension requests require the approval of the MSW Program Director and must be presented in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School for consideration and approval. Masters and certificate courses taken more than 5 years

before graduation will not be applied toward a degree without the approval of the Program Director and Graduate School Dean.

Re-Admission of Previously Dismissed Students

When an individual applies to the MSW program, a significant part of the admissions decision involves an estimate, based on the applicant's academic history, of whether the applicant can perform satisfactorily at the graduate level. Students who are dismissed from the MSW program, whether due to unsatisfactory academic performance or failure to meet professionalism expectations, are not eligible to re-apply for admission at a later date.

Graduation Planning System (GPS)

Students can access their degree requirements through UAB's Graduation Planning System (GPS). The personalized audit will list all courses required to earn the MSW degree and will display completed, in-progress, and outstanding requirements. GPS is accessed through BlazerNET by clicking the GPS button in the menu on the right side of the student's home page.

Students should review their GPS audit every semester to track their progress and help determine their registration plans. The GPS is not intended to replace your relationship with your Faculty Advisor but should be used in conjunction with their consultation.

If you see a discrepancy on your audit, contact your Faculty Advisor immediately to address the concern. The Graduate School uses GPS audit to award degrees at the conclusion of the MSW program, so it must be accurate and complete for a student to graduate on time. Students can learn more about the GPS at <https://www.uab.edu/students/academics/gps>.



Application for Degree

MSW students must submit an application to graduate by the deadline date listed on the Graduate School's website at <https://www.uab.edu/graduate/students/current-students/completing-your-degree/earning-your-degree> (be sure to refer to "Plan II Deadlines" for graduate students not completing a thesis or dissertation). Typically, MSW students planning to graduate in December must apply by the start of fall semester, and students planning to graduate in April must apply by the start of spring semester. Upon submission of the application for degree, a \$50 fee will be assessed to your student account which covers the verification of your curriculum requirements and your diploma and will only be assessed the first time you apply to graduate.

Satisfactory Academic Standing

Academic Performance Policy

The Clinical/Medical MSW Program recognizes that student learning is reflected through equally important indicators of process and outcome. Outcome refers to the degree of success in meeting learning objectives while process refers to the work employed in attaining those successes. Students enrolled in the Clinical/Medical MSW Program are expected to meet all academic requirements via both process and outcomes, and to do so within the guidelines set forth by the Program standards and expectations described in the handbook and the UAB Academic Integrity Code. The requirement of maintaining satisfactory academic standing is applicable to all students in the Program.

Satisfactory academic performance (or standing) consists of two evaluation standards:

1. Students must maintain satisfactory academic performance as defined by an overall minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 while in the program.
2. Students must adhere to the UAB Academic Integrity Code

Evaluation of Academic Performance

A student's GPA is based on evaluation of academic performance in each course by the Social Work faculty of record. Course syllabi serve as the academic contract between the student and instructor, providing information on objectives, attendance policy, grading policy, policy for making up missed course work, required and/or suggested texts, outline of topics to be covered, and timeline inclusive of due dates for all assignments. Sufficient notice of syllabi changes is provided to students by the course instructor. Each course includes the periodic assessment of student progress through appropriate assignments. These evaluations may take various forms as determined by the course instructor (e.g., examinations, written reports, individual or group projects, student reflections, etc.) and may vary in number and scope. Closely linked to successful academic performance is class attendance. Faculty may exercise their right to include class attendance as a component of the student's performance criteria. Faculty explicitly review the attendance policy for the course at the beginning of the semester, and this policy is

included in the course syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to clarify class attendance policies and to familiarize themselves to nuances in this policy for each course.

UAB Academic Integrity Code

The University of Alabama at Birmingham expects all members of its academic community to function according to the highest ethical and professional standards. Students, faculty, and the administration of the institution must be involved to ensure this quality of academic conduct. Academic misconduct undermines the purpose of education. Such behavior is a serious violation of the trust that must exist among faculty and students for a university to nurture intellectual growth and development. Academic misconduct can generally be defined as all acts of dishonesty in an academic or related matter. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following categories of behavior:

- **Abetting** is helping another student commit an act of academic dishonesty. Allowing someone to copy your quiz answers or use your work as their own are examples of abetting.
- **Cheating** is the unauthorized use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, study aids, the work of others, or AI-generated material.
- **Plagiarism** means claiming as your own the ideas, words, data, computer programs, creative compositions, artwork, etc., done by someone else. Examples include improper citation of referenced works, the use of commercially available scholarly papers, failure to cite sources, or copying another person's ideas.
- **Fabrication** means presenting falsified data, citations, or quotations as genuine.
- **Misrepresentation** is falsification, alteration, or the misstatement of the contents of documents, academic work, or other materials related to academic matters, including work substantially done for one class as work done for another without receiving prior approval from the instructor.

Academic Integrity and AI

Academic misconduct is defined in the UAB Academic Integrity Code as: "The use or provision of unauthorized assistance with the intent to deceive an instructor or other person assessing student performance." Academic misconduct is present in an academic work wherever AI assistance is used in the completion of course assignments in the MSW program unless explicitly permitted by the instructor as described in a course syllabus.

Procedures for Evaluating Satisfactory Academic Standing

The following procedures are followed to evaluate satisfactory academic performance (or academic standing).

Cumulative GPA

In accordance with policies of the UAB Graduate School, any MSW student who has failed to maintain good academic standing based on their overall minimum cumulative grade point average will automatically be placed on academic probation by the Graduate School. The student has one semester in which to raise their GPA. Failure to raise the GPA to the 3.0

minimum by the end of the subsequent enrolled semester of coursework will result in automatic dismissal from UAB by the Graduate School. The UAB Graduate School policy is available at: <http://catalog.uab.edu/graduate/academicprogress/#text>

At the program level, a review of each MSW student's academic performance and cumulative progress is conducted by their Faculty Advisor at the conclusion of each semester. In cases in which a student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing, the Faculty Advisor shares this information with the MSW Program director who will meet with the student to discuss and develop an Academic Improvement Plan to raise the student's cumulative GPA within the time frame specified by the Graduate School. Academic Improvement Plans are shared with the student's Faculty Advisor who monitors the student's progress.

Adherence to the Academic Integrity Code

When a violation of the Academic Integrity Code is suspected in a social work course, the instructor of record follows the procedure established by the College of Arts and Sciences:

1. Instructor consults the Academic Integrity Code policy and procedures (available at: <https://www.uab.edu/faculty/resources/academic-integrity-code#faculty-staff>) to determine which, if any, aspects of the Code may have been violated.
2. Instructor meets with the student to explain the suspected Code violation(s) and inform the student that further action may be taken at the program and/or university level.
3. Instructor files a report about the suspected instance of academic dishonesty to the appropriate academic integrity coordinator for the College of Arts and Sciences (listed here: <https://www.uab.edu/faculty/resources/academic-integrity-code/academic-coordinators>).
4. The CAS Academic Integrity Coordinator conducts an investigation and, in consultation with the instructor, determines the appropriate disciplinary action, if any, to be taken by the College and/or University. Violations of the UAB Academic Integrity Code are punishable by a range of penalties, including disciplinary letters, failing assignment grade, failing course grade, and academic dismissal. Any course grade of F for academic misconduct supersedes any other grade or notation for that class. Withdrawal from a course while a possible violation of the Academic Honor Code is under review will not preclude the assignment of a course grade that appropriately reflects the student's performance prior to withdrawal if the violation is substantiated. <https://www.uab.edu/one-stop/policies/academic-integrity-code>
5. Instructor notifies the MSW Program Director of the outcome of this process (e.g., disciplinary letter, failing assignment grade, failing course grade, academic probation, academic dismissal).
6. MSW Program Director, in consultation with the Director of Field (who consults on all student disciplinary matters), determines whether any additional disciplinary action is warranted at the Program level.
7. MSW Program Director notifies the student in writing about any additional program actions to be taken.

Satisfactory Professional Performance

Professional Performance Standards

The standard for *professional performance* as it applies in the Clinical/Medical MSW Program is multi-dimensional, encompassing (but not limited to) student's performance in terms of integrity, honesty, communication, accountability, respect, competency, cultural competence, and ability to maintain confidentiality, set healthy boundaries, use good judgment, and engage in appropriate self-care. In the classroom, field placement, and the broader University environment, MSW students are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity, civility, respect, and professional decorum. Students must demonstrate professionalism in all university-related interactions, including with peers, instructors, Department staff, campus administrators, clients/consumers, field supervisors, and other agency personnel encountered in the field placement or community interactions.

Additionally, MSW students are expected to adhere to the standards of the social work profession, as guided by the NASW Code of Ethics (<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>) and the University, as outlined in the UAB Non-Academic Student Conduct Code (www.uab.edu/students/accountability/policies/student-conduct-code). The Student Conduct Code promotes honesty, integrity, accountability, rights and responsibilities expected of students consistent with the core missions of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Students are expected to adhere to UAB drug-free campus policy, agency policies relevant for field placement, and the policy of the MSW program (below).

Enrollment in the Clinical/Medical MSW Program implies that all students will accept and adopt these standards of professionalism.

Substance Use Policy

The MSW Program strictly prohibits the illicit use, possession, sale, conveyance, distribution and manufacture of illegal drugs, intoxicants, or controlled substances in any amount or in any manner and the abuse of non-prescription and prescription drugs. Any student who tests non-negative for illegal, controlled, or abuse-potential substances and who cannot produce a valid and current prescription for the drug is in violation of the NASW Code of Ethics. A student who attends class or field while impaired by any substance is in violation of this policy.

Furthermore, the NASW Code of Ethics requires social workers to act if they have knowledge of social work colleague is engaging in impaired practice, including practicing while under the influence of substances, including legal, illegal, or prescribed drugs. An MSW Program student who is aware that another MSW Program student is using or is in possession of illegal drugs, intoxicants, or controlled substance or is attending classes or field placement while under the influence is obligated to report this information to an MSW Program faculty member.

Social Media Policy

Social work students are expected to follow the NASW Code of Ethics and UAB Student Code of Conduct at all times, including but not limited to classes, field placements volunteer work, and

in digital contexts. Digital contexts include, but are not limited to, social networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), text messaging, apps, blogging, virtual worlds, and email. For more information about social work standards in digital contexts, see: National Association of Social Workers (2017). *NASW, ABSW, CSWE & CSWA Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice*. Available online from NASW at: http://www.socialworkers.org/includes/newIncludes/homepage/PRA-BRO-33617.TechStandards_FINAL_POSTING.pdf

Evaluation of Professional Performance

Students are expected to remain in compliance with all professional performance standards described above. Evaluation of students' professional performance is multifaceted and is assessed in several contexts, including evaluation in classroom settings, in field settings by field supervisors and field liaisons, and in digital contexts by social work faculty.

Procedures for Evaluating Professional Performance

In cases where a potential violation of these standards is identified, the Clinical/Medical MSW Program maintains the right to take disciplinary action against the student. When allegations of professional misconduct are made, the following procedure is followed:

1. The MSW Program Director and the Director of Field will meet to assess the allegations of non-professional performance or misconduct and any documentation or other evidence leading to such indications. Together, the Program Director and Field Director will determine whether disciplinary action may potentially be warranted based on this documentation.
2. If possible disciplinary action is warranted, the Program Director and Field Director will meet with the student to discuss the situation, including any evidence of misconduct. If appropriate, a plan of action to address deficiencies or violations will be discussed.
3. Following this meeting with the student, the MSW Program Director and Director of Field will make one of four disciplinary decisions:
 - a. No action: No additional disciplinary action is needed. The student remains in good standing. The MSW Program Director will notify the student of this decision in writing within 7 days of the meeting date.
 - b. Disciplinary Warning: Notice in writing that continuation or repetition of conduct found wrongful may be cause for more severe action. The student remains in good standing. The MSW Program Director will document the warning and notify the student in writing within 7 days of the meeting date.
 - c. Disciplinary Probation: Students placed on probation in the MSW program are no longer in good academic standing for a specified time. The student is permitted to continue academic progress while on probation. If other infractions occur while on probation, the student may be terminated from the program. The MSW Program Director will inform the student of this decision verbally during the meeting when possible and in writing within 7 days of the student meeting date. The MSW Program Director will notify the Graduate School of the student's probation conditions.

Disciplinary Termination: A student who is terminated is administratively withdrawn from the MSW Program. Prior to a termination decision being made, the MSW Program Director and Director of Field will consult with the Social Work Department Chair, who will make the final determination. The Department Chair notifies the student of the Department's decision in writing within 14 days of the student meeting. A copy of the termination letter will be placed in the student's record maintained by the Program, and the Graduate School will also be notified.

Probation, Suspension, and Termination from the Program

A student may be placed on academic probation, suspended, or terminated from the MSW program for either unsatisfactory academic performance or unsatisfactory professional performance, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Failure to maintain good academic standing, with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0
2. Lack of adherence to the standards of professionalism specified in this handbook, UAB student standards, or the NASW Code of Ethics.
3. Violation of course sequencing as outlined in the posted MSW Curricular Plans (without prior approval) or failure to complete courses, credits, or content outlined in the appropriate Curricular Plan.
4. Violation of the UAB Academic Integrity Code.
5. Being terminated from a field placement by the field agency.

Termination Based on Academic Performance

Termination Policy

Cumulative GPA below 3.0

An MSW student who was placed on academic probation by the Graduate School and fails to raise the cumulative GPA to the 3.0 minimum by the end of the subsequent enrolled semester of coursework will be dismissed from the Graduate School and the Clinical/Medical MSW Program.

Violation of Academic Integrity Code

In accordance with UAB policy, a student who is found to have violated the university's Academic Integrity Code may face university-imposed sanctions including termination from the university.

Termination Procedure

Cumulative GPA below 3.0

The UAB Graduate School tracks the academic performance of MSW students and automatically places on academic probation those students whose cumulative GPA falls below the established 3.0 minimum. Graduate School staff notifies the MSW Program Director of students placed on probation at the conclusion of each semester after grades have posted. The

MSW Program Director alerts the student's Academic Advisor who will monitors the student's academic performance throughout the one semester probationary period. If the MSW student fails to raise the GPA to the 3.0 minimum by the end of the subsequent enrolled semester of coursework, Graduate School staff will automatically dismiss the student from the Graduate School and the Clinical/Medical MSW Program.

Violation of Academic Integrity Code

In accordance with procedures established by the College of Arts and Sciences, the CAS Academic Integrity Coordinator conducts an investigation and, in consultation with the instructor, determines the appropriate disciplinary action, if any, to be taken by the College and/or University. If the Academic Integrity Coordinator determines that the penalty for violation of the UAB Academic Integrity Code is termination from the university, the MSW Program Director is notified of this decision. The MSW Program Director, in consultation with the Director of Field (who consults on all student disciplinary matters), notifies the student in writing about termination from the MSW Program.

Termination Based on Professional Performance

Termination Policy

In cases where a potential violation of professional performance standards is identified, the Clinical/Medical MSW Program maintains the right to take disciplinary action against the student, including termination from the program. Termination from the program is evaluated on a case-by-case basis and is determined by the severity of the violation and assessment of harm or potential harm caused to others including but not limited to clients, faculty and staff, field instructors and agencies, the University, and the profession.

Termination Procedure

When allegations of professional misconduct are made, the following procedure is followed:

1. The MSW Program Director and the Director of Field will meet to assess the allegations of misconduct and any documentation or other evidence leading to possible termination from the MSW program. Together, the Program Director and Field Director will determine whether termination may potentially be warranted based on this documentation. When a violation occurs during the field experience and the Director of Field has already met with the student, the MSW Program Director may instead consult with the Department Chair.
2. If termination is warranted, the Program Director and Field Director or Department Chair will meet with the student to discuss the situation, including any evidence of misconduct.
3. Following this meeting with the student, the MSW Program Director and Director of Field or Department Chair will make one of four disciplinary decisions:

- a. No action: No additional disciplinary action is needed. The student remains in good standing. The MSW Program Director will notify the student of this decision in writing within 7 days of the meeting date.
- b. Disciplinary Warning: Notice in writing that continuation or repetition of conduct found wrongful may be cause for more severe action. The student remains in good standing. The MSW Program Director will document the warning and notify the student in writing within 7 days of the meeting date.
- c. Disciplinary Probation: Students placed on probation in the MSW program are no longer in good academic standing for a specified time. The student is permitted to continue academic progress while on probation. If other infractions occur while on probation, the student may be terminated from the program. The MSW Program Director will inform the student of this decision verbally during the meeting when possible and in writing within 7 days of the student meeting date. The MSW Program Director will notify the Graduate School of the student's probation conditions.
- d. Disciplinary Termination: A student who is terminated is administratively withdrawn from the Clinical/Medical MSW Program. Prior to a termination decision being made, the MSW Program Director and Director of Field will consult with the Social Work Department Chair, who will make the final determination. The Department Chair notifies the student of the Department's decision in writing within 14 days of the student meeting. A copy of the termination letter will be placed in the student's record maintained by the Program, and the Graduate School will also be notified.

Student Due Process Policies and Procedures

Academic Performance Due Process

Grievance Policy

Satisfactory Academic Performance as evidenced by a 3.0 cumulative GPA.

The duty and responsibility for assigning grades to students enrolled in MSW courses is at the sole discretion of the instructor of record for that course. The only legitimate criteria for changing a grade assigned by an MSW course instructor are:

- evidence that an error was made in the determination of the grade (e.g., computational error in totaling final points earned), or
- evidence that a grade was arrived at unfairly, or on the basis of inconsistent application of the stated assignment evaluation standards.

Adherence to the Academic Integrity Code

Students who are unsatisfied with the sanctions or other determinations made during an investigative process have the right to appeal the decision(s).

Grievance Procedures

Satisfactory Academic Performance as evidenced by a 3.0 cumulative GPA.

Should a student believe that either of the above listed circumstances apply and that the erroneous or unfair grade impacted their GPA, and that an appeal is warranted, the following procedures are followed:

1. The student should first seek clarification from the course instructor in an attempt to resolve the disagreement between the two parties directly involved.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved in consultation with the course instructor, the student may submit a written appeal to the MSW Program Director requesting consideration of the appeal no later than four weeks after the end of the semester in which the grade was received. This written request must be accompanied by appropriate documentation, including a description of the basis for the appeal and the failed attempt to resolve it with the instructor. The MSW Program Director will solicit information relevant to the situation from the student and the course instructor. Based on the information gathered, the Program Director will make a determination for or against the appeal and notify the student in writing of the decision within 14 days of receipt of the student's appeal.
3. If the MSW Program Director determines that there is a legitimate basis for the petition and upholds the student's appeal, the Program Director will work with the UAB Graduate School and/or Registrar's Office to ensure that the assigned grade is appropriately changed.
4. If the MSW Program Director determines that there is an insufficient justification for a grade change and rules against the appeal, the student may request a reconsideration of this finding with the Chair of the Social Work Department. This second written appeal must be received within 7 days after the student receives the written Program Director response.
5. If the Department Chair determines that there is a legitimate basis for the petition and upholds the student's appeal, the department will work with the UAB Graduate School and/or Registrar's Office to ensure that the assigned grade is appropriately changed.
6. If the Department Chair determines that there is an insufficient justification for a grade change and rules against the appeal, the student may request a reconsideration of this finding with the Dean of the Graduate School. This third, and final, written appeal must be received within 7 days after the student receives the written Department Chair response. Final disposition of grade appeals for all MSW courses resides with the Dean of the Graduate School.

Adherence to the Academic Integrity Code

Students who wish to appeal the finding of responsibility or sanctions resulting from the integrity code investigation may appeal these decisions through the convening of a Hearing Panel.

Information about this process can be found at

<https://www.uab.edu/faculty/resources/academic-integrity-code#students>

Professional Performance Due Process

Grievance Policy

All MSW students maintain the right to appeal the MSW Program's disciplinary decisions with the Graduate School and the University.

Grievance Procedure

A student may appeal a disciplinary action decision rendered by the MSW Program with the Graduate School by contacting Jesse Keppley, Graduate School Student Services Director, at jkeppley@uab.edu or 205-996-5696.

If a satisfactory resolution is not reached in consultation with the Graduate School, a student may file a formal written complaint through [BlazerNET](#). Complaints should include any involved parties so that UAB can fully investigate the concern. One Stop Student Services receives complaints submitted through [BlazerNET](#), directs them to appropriate campus offices (when necessary), and ensures that students receive feedback. Students may not make anonymous complaints in [BlazerNET](#), nor may they make complaints on behalf of other individuals.

Student Complaints

All MSW students have the right to file a complaint when it is believed that another student has committed a social or academic infraction. However, wherever possible, it is strongly recommended that conflicts be resolved informally (with the help of a faculty member if necessary). If the student is uncomfortable doing so or if an informal resolution is not achieved, students may elect to file a formal grievance in writing to the MSW Program Director who will determine whether additional action is warranted.

Program Complaints

In cases of behavior or circumstances within the MSW program or Department of Social Work that the student believes are unjust, unsafe, inequitable, or create an unnecessary hardship, the student will inform the MSW Program Director (Note: if the complaint involves the MSW Program Director, the complaint should instead be filed with the Department Chair). The MSW Program Director will meet with the student to discuss these concerns and will determine additional actions needed. These actions could include a facilitated meeting between the student and other party, reporting the matter to the Department Chair, liaising other University entities when appropriate, or other actions.

A student who is not satisfied with this resolution at the program level may file formal written complaint through [BlazerNET](#). Complaints should include any involved parties so that UAB can fully investigate the concern. One Stop Student Services receives complaints submitted through [BlazerNET](#), directs them to appropriate campus offices (when necessary), and ensures that students receive feedback. Students may not make anonymous complaints in [BlazerNET](#), nor may they make complaints on behalf of other individuals.

Unfair Treatment or Discrimination

If alleged misconduct involves discrimination, sexual harassment, or gender-based misconduct a student should file a complaint with the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, which is available at <https://www.uab.edu/dei/institutional-equity/equal-opportunity-and-affirmative-action>.

Appeal of Disciplinary Action

Students maintain the right to appeal the Program's disciplinary decisions with the Graduate School and the University.

1. A student may appeal a disciplinary action decision with the Graduate School by contacting Jesse Keppley, Graduate School Student Services Director, at jkeppley@uab.edu or 205-996-5696
2. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached in consultation with the Graduate School, a student may file a formal written complaint through [BlazerNET](#). Complaints should include any involved parties so that UAB can fully investigate the concern. One Stop Student Services receives complaints submitted through [BlazerNET](#), directs them to appropriate campus offices (when necessary), and ensures that students receive feedback. Students may not make anonymous complaints in [BlazerNET](#), nor may they make complaints on behalf of other individuals.

Grade Appeals

The duty and responsibility for assigning grades to students enrolled in MSW courses is at the sole discretion of the instructor of record for that course. The only legitimate criteria for changing a grade assigned by an MSW course instructor are:

- evidence that an error was made in the determination of the grade (e.g., computational error in totaling final points earned), or
- evidence that a grade was arrived at unfairly, or on the basis of inconsistent application of the stated assignment evaluation standards.

Should a student believe that either of these circumstances apply, and that an appeal is warranted, the following procedures are to be followed.

7. The student should first seek clarification from the course instructor in an attempt to resolve the disagreement between the two parties directly involved.
8. If the matter cannot be resolved in consultation with the course instructor, the student may submit a written appeal to the MSW Program Director requesting consideration of the appeal no later than four weeks after the end of the semester in which the grade was received. This written request must be accompanied by appropriate documentation, including a description of the basis for the appeal and the failed attempt to resolve it with the instructor. The MSW Program Director will solicit information relevant to the situation from the student and the course instructor. Based on the information gathered, the Program Director will make a determination for or against the appeal and notify the student in writing of the decision within 14 days of receipt of the student's appeal.
9. If the MSW Program Director determines that there is a legitimate basis for the petition and upholds the student's appeal, the Program Director will work with the UAB Graduate

School and/or Registrar's Office to ensure that the assigned grade is appropriately changed.

10. If the MSW Program Director determines that there is an insufficient justification for a grade change and rules against the appeal, the student may request a reconsideration of this finding with the Chair of the Social Work Department. This second written appeal must be received within 7 days after the student receives the written Program Director response.
11. If the Department Chair determines that there is a legitimate basis for the petition and upholds the student's appeal, the department will work with the UAB Graduate School and/or Registrar's Office to ensure that the assigned grade is appropriately changed.
12. If the Department Chair determines that there is an insufficient justification for a grade change and rules against the appeal, the student may request a reconsideration of this finding with the Dean of the Graduate School. This third, and final, written appeal must be received within 7 days after the student receives the written Department Chair response. Final disposition of grade appeals for all MSW courses resides with the Dean of the Graduate School.

Scientific or Scholarly Misconduct

Complaints against the Department's faculty that allege scientific or scholarly misconduct should be reported in accordance with UAB's Policy Concerning the Responsible Conduct of Research and Other Scholarly Activities which is available at <https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=398>.

Criminal Background Checks

Applicants who have a criminal history are advised that a background check may be requested prior to entering field placement and that a criminal history may limit a student's field placement opportunities and/or impact the ability to obtain a social work license after graduation.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Inclusive Language Policy

Inclusive language is an integral tool in our pursuit of inclusive excellence. Our efforts to foster an environment that values and welcomes diversity of thought, identity and experience are rendered futile without a commitment to inclusive language. The use of terminology, pronouns, and descriptors that honor the members within the UAB enterprise and the communities we serve is vital in the execution of our university's Shared Values and Strategic Diversity Plan.

The Inclusive Language Guide, created by the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, is a living document that will be revised periodically to align with current best practices in the field of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. It is designed to be the catalyst for implementing a more holistic and intersectional approach to communicating. We hope that users will find it especially helpful when referencing minoritized and marginalized identities,

populations, and communities. The Inclusive Language Guide is available at:
<https://www.uab.edu/dei/institutional-equity/inclusive-language-guide>

Non-Discrimination and Harassment Prevention

UAB is dedicated to providing a community where everyone feels secure and welcome. We strictly prohibit discrimination based on race, national origin, age, genetic or family medical history, gender, faith, gender identity, and expression as well as sexual orientation. UAB also encourages applications from individuals with disabilities and veterans. UAB does not tolerate harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment or sexual violence. We uphold all federal laws prohibiting discrimination, including Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, the federal law that requires all entities receiving federal government funds and financial assistance to prohibit sex discrimination in their programs and activities. This comprehensive law prohibits sexual harassment and sexual discrimination; termination, discrimination, or failure to promote or admit based on pregnancy; and discrimination in athletic opportunities.

The Office for Institutional Equity helps ensure an environment free of harassment and discrimination by coordinating, collaborating, and implementing UAB policies related to discrimination and harassment. Additional information about these policies, including Title IX, EO and Discriminatory Harassment Policy, and Families First Coronavirus Response Act is available at: <https://www.uab.edu/dei/institutional-equity/non-discrimination-and-harassment-prevention>

FERPA/UAB Student Records Policy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. They are:

- 1) The right to inspect and review student's education records within 45 days of the day the University receives a request for access.
- 2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.
- 3) The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- 4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning the alleged failures by State University to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Full details of the policy can be found at this link:
<https://www.uab.edu/students/policies/student-records>

Student Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (the "University" or "UAB") does not tolerate, and will respond to any reports of sexual misconduct, including, but not limited to, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual harassment. UAB is committed to

providing adequate, consistent, and impartial resolutions to complaints or reports of sexual misconduct.

Members of the UAB community, UAB guests, and UAB visitors have the right to be free from all forms of violence, including sexual misconduct as defined in this policy. All members of the campus community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others. When UAB receives notice of an alleged misconduct, and a violation of this policy is found to have occurred, serious sanctions will be used to reasonably ensure that such actions are not repeated. This Policy has been developed to reaffirm these principles and to provide recourse for those individuals whose rights have been violated. This Policy is intended to define community expectations and to establish a mechanism for determining when those expectations have been violated. The primary purpose of this Policy, like other UAB student conduct expectations and processes, is student safety and education.

This Policy applies to:

- All students regardless of sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation and regardless of where the alleged violation occurred on campus* or off-campus if it affects the campus or the access to education and the safety of a student.
- All acts of sexual misconduct, including those involving non-students and non-employees, that occur on campus or at any location involving a University-sponsored activity or event.
- Online behavior, social media, and other technology-based communication that may affect the safety and overall quality of the educational experience.

For more information, please see the link below:

<http://www.uab.edu/policies/content/Pages/UAB-UC-POL-0000761.aspx>

Student Complaint Policy

This policy establishes UAB's commitment to and process for reviewing and resolving student complaints. The policy is available at

<https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=332>.

Drug Free Campus Policy

Unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, or dispensing of illicit drugs, controlled substances, or alcoholic beverages by any UAB student is prohibited.

<http://www.uab.edu/policies/content/Pages/UAB--POL-0000046.aspx>

Dangerous Weapons and Firearms Policy

Except as otherwise stated in this policy or as otherwise allowed by law, UAB prohibits the possession, transportation, and use of firearms and other dangerous weapons on campus.

<http://www.uab.edu/policies/content/Pages/UAB-HR-POL-0000257.aspx>

Responsible Conduct of Research and Other Scholarly Activities

This policy underscores the ethical principles for responsible conduct by which all UAB faculty, employees, and trainees must abide in the performance, recording, and reporting of research and scholarly activities. It also sets forth the procedures to be followed in the case of suspected research misconduct, from preliminary assessment through final outcome of an investigation. The policy is available at <https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=398>

Inclement Weather

Students will follow the Inclement Weather Policy of the Field Agency where they are placed. During any actual emergency or severe weather situation, this site www.uab.edu/emergency will be the official source of UAB information. In addition, the UAB Emergency Management Team will use B-ALERT, the university's emergency notification system, to communicate through voice calls, SMS text messages and e-mails to the entire campus all at the same time. B-ALERT also integrates with Facebook and Twitter. To register for B-ALERT or update your existing information in the system, go to www.uab.edu/balert. All registration is connected to your Blazer ID.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Student Opportunities to Inform Policy

Students are encouraged to participate in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs. There are several formal avenues for MSW students to do this at the university level, the department level, and the program level, as detailed below.

UAB Opportunities

Graduate Student Government

UAB graduate students are represented by the Graduate Student Government (GSG), which works closely with the Graduate School and other offices of the university administration in formulating policy and meeting student needs. All graduate students are automatically members of the GSG, and the GSG Senate is composed of student representatives from graduate programs.

MSW students are encouraged to seek a position to represent the MSW Program on the GSG Senate. Nominations open each spring for GSG terms for the following academic year, and students can request a brief nomination letter from any Department of Social Work faculty member. Additionally, students can join the Student Forum to voice their opinions and talk to the Provost, Vice Provosts, deans, and other administrators. More information can be found at <https://www.uab.edu/gsg/>

Graduate Student Organizations at UAB

MSW students can join numerous student organizations at UAB which are focused on graduate students and graduate education. MSW students may be particularly interested in the following organizations:

- Black Graduate Student Association at UAB

This organization sponsors events that may include virtual meet-ups, social events and forums dedicated to issues of interest to Black students, professional development seminars and networking events, community service opportunities, and celebrations of Black Excellence.

- GRADient

GRADient is an organization dedicated to the pursuit of academic excellence and social and political awareness with respect to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) graduate students, professional students, postdocs, & their allies.

- Graduate Resilience, Outreach, and Wellness at UAB

This organization promotes connectedness, community, and support for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars in order to increase help-seeking, life skills, and resiliency.

More information about these and other graduate student organizations at UAB can be found at <https://uab.campuslabs.com/engage/organizations> (be sure to select “Graduate or Professional Organizations” from the “Categories” menu on the left side of the page)

Department Opportunities

Student Social Work Organization (SSWO)

Students are encouraged to join our Student Social Work Organization (SSWO) as mechanism for informing policies related to student affairs. The SSWO’s purpose is to stimulate interest in the field of social work within the University and community. SSWO holds regular meetings, sponsor activities and community projects throughout the year and organize student trips to attend area social work conferences. SSWO officers serve as mentors for current and interested students, providing insight into upcoming classes, practicum information, and other aspects of the Social Work program. SSWO publishes a newsletter to inform social work students about upcoming events. MSW students who wish to join the SSWO can request a membership application from the SSWO Advisor, Ms. Melton (email: ldmelton@uab.edu). The annual membership fee is \$15.00 and may be paid by check made payable to UAB Student Social Work Organization and returned with the completed application.

MSW Program Opportunities

MSW Curriculum Committee

One student representative is appointed by faculty to serve on the MSW Curriculum Committee each academic year. The Committee meets 1-2 times each semester and provides feedback and guidance to the MSW Program Director on curricular matters including new course

development, course scheduling, plans of study, and curricular procedures. Students interested in serving in this role should contact the MSW Program Director.

“Chat with the Program Director” Hours

Each week, the MSW Program Director holds “Chat with the Program Director” office hours in which current students are invited to drop by the office (or enter a Zoom space when office hours are being held online) to discuss any issue related to the MSW Program. During these “Chat” hours, students may ask questions, make requests, and offer suggestions for program improvement, among other things.

Opportunities for Student Organizing

The MSW program encourages students to organize around their own interests and around current local, national, or global events relevant to the social work profession. Creation of new student groups or initiatives is welcomed. Additionally, the existing organizations below offer MSW students important opportunities to connect and network with fellow students, to become engaged in the UAB campus community, to build leadership skills, and gain academic recognition.

Phi Alpha Social Work Honor Society

UAB's Social Work Program holds the Eta Beta chapter charter for social work's national honor society, Phi Alpha. To qualify for induction, an MSW student must have completed 9 semester hours of required social work graduate courses and at least 37.5% of the total hours/credits required for the graduate degree, whichever is later achieved, and rank in the top 35% of their class. Eligible students are notified by letter and are inducted at a reception held in their honor. The distinction recognizes students who have attained excellence in scholarship. Their website is: <http://www.phialpha.org>.

Blazer Spirit Council

The Blazer Spirit Council (BSC) is a student programming board that works to plan, market, and implement spirit & traditions activities for the student body. Programs include Homecoming events, Fall Festival, athletic tailgates, and more. The BSC provides UAB students with the opportunity for involvement, leadership experience, and the ability to create fun and exciting programs that enhance the energy of campus life. More information about the BSC is available at <https://uab.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/shc>

Whole Health Resources for MSW Students

Blazer Kitchen at Hill Student Center

The Blazer Kitchen at Hill Student Center (Suite 303) provides UAB students experiencing financial need and/or food insecurity with fresh and non-perishable food, personal hygiene items, items for students with dependents, pet supplies, and school supplies. Any enrolled UAB student has access to Blazer Kitchen at Hill Student Center. Enrolled students need to make an

appointment, bring a reusable bag, and their ONE Card. More information and appointment link can be found at: <https://www.uab.edu/students/assistance/blazer-kitchen>

UAB Student Counseling Services

Student Counseling Services supports students in achieving personal, academic, and lifelong goals by providing individual and group mental health services, prevention and outreach programming, crisis and emergency support, and consultation services. Student Counseling Services advocates for safe and inclusive learning environments in the university community. More information can be found at: <https://www.uab.edu/students/counseling/>

Affinity & Student Support Organizations

MSW students can join numerous student organizations at UAB which are focused on supporting graduate students. MSW students may be particularly interested in the following organizations:

- [Black Graduate Student Association at UAB](#)
This organization sponsors events that may include virtual meet-ups, social events and forums dedicated to issues of interest to Black students, professional development seminars and networking events, community service opportunities, and celebrations of Black Excellence.
- [GRADient](#)
GRADient is an organization dedicated to the pursuit of academic excellence and social and political awareness with respect to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) graduate students, professional students, postdocs, & their allies.
- [Graduate Resilience, Outreach, and Wellness at UAB](#)
This organization promotes connectedness, community, and support for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars in order to increase help-seeking, life skills, and resiliency.

More information about these and other graduate student organizations at UAB can be found at <https://uab.campuslabs.com/engage/organizations> (be sure to select “Graduate or Professional Organizations” from the “Categories” menu on the left side of the page)

Appendix: MSW Incomplete Contract



DEFENDING
EDUCATION

UAB Department of Social Work

MSW Student-Instructor Agreement for Incomplete Grades

Course:

Semester/Year: _____ Student ID#: _____

I, _____, have requested to receive an Incomplete in the above course, recognizing that I must meet the following deadline(s) as negotiated between myself and the instructor.

I will complete and submit to the instructor the following assignments by the specified dates below:

_____ By date: _____ **

_____ By date: _____ **

_____ By date: _____ **

_____ By date: _____ **

(list additional assignments on next page if needed)

****Due date cannot be later than the last day of classes of the semester following this course**

I understand that if I fail to meet any deadline(s) specified above it may be possible to negotiate new deadlines depending on the circumstances, but ultimately any renegotiations are done at the instructor's discretion. All deadlines for completion of Incomplete coursework must adhere to the UAB Graduate School policy on Incompletes, which states:

The temporary notation of "I" (incomplete) may be reported at the discretion of the instructor to indicate that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course but, due to unforeseen circumstances, has been unable to finish all course requirements. An incomplete is never given to enable a student to raise a deficient grade. This notation should not be used unless there is reasonable certainty that the requirements will be completed during the following semester because, **at the end of the next semester, the incomplete automatically changes to an F if it has not been replaced with a letter grade.** In highly unusual circumstances, a student may request an extension of time to complete the requirements. This request must be submitted in writing in advance of the time when the grade automatically changes to an F because the approval of the instructor, graduate program director, and the Graduate School are all required.

Signature of student

date

Signature of Instructor

date

****Instructor and student should retain a copy of this completed and signed form. Please be sure to submit a duplicate copy to the MSW Program Director****