



MSW PROGRAM

Academic and Professional Advising Policy

The following academic and professional advising policy is available to students on the MSW Program learning management system (Canvas) and the School of Social Work/MSW Program website.

POLICY STATEMENT

Texas State University School of Social Work is committed to providing students with academic and professional advising that ensures successful educational and career planning.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The School of Social Work/MSW Program provides multiple modes and levels of timely and thorough advising for MSW students. This advising also includes information on advising policies and practices within the university and school. Advising for MSW students includes the following entities:

- Graduate College;
- MSW Program Director (Graduate Advisor); and
- MSW Academic Advisor.

The contributions of each are discussed below.

It is recommended that students meet regularly with the Graduate Advisor and Academic Advisor to ensure proper comprehension of their degree plan and the implications of grades and academic progress each semester. The Student Acknowledgement and Agreement Contract outlines major program policies and procedures including the availability and roles of academic and graduate advisors, and opportunities for professional advising.

ADVISING AT TEXAS STATE

As an integral part of teaching and learning in the School of Social Work, advising is a student-centered, collaborative process that engages students in educational planning to promote academic, personal, and professional development, while considering diverse interests, abilities, and goals alongside achievement of mandatory professional social work competencies.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

The School of Social Work MSW Program is part of the Graduate College. Students must adhere to academic expectations of the Graduate College (e.g., GPA requirements, remaining in good standing, potential academic probation and suspension, etc.) which is formally monitored by the Graduate College in partnership with the MSW Program Director (i.e., Graduate Advisor) and MSW Academic Advisor.

MSW Program specific academic advising is facilitated by the Graduate Advisor (MSW Program Director) and Academic Advisor who stay abreast of all Graduate College and University-level policies to ensure skilled and responsive advising of graduate social work students. Students may reach out to the Graduate College, MSW Program Director [Graduate Advisor], or Academic Advisor at any point to discuss or clarify academic expectations.

The Graduate Advisor role is the official authority to make academic-related decisions in association with the Graduate College. For example, a graduate advisor's signature is the only signature besides the School of Social Work Director that the Graduate College will recognize as an official signature.

The primary responsibilities of the Graduate Advisor and Academic Advisor are:

- To advise and interact daily or as needed with social work students;
- To process the information derived from these interactions for individual and program decision-making; and
- To provide communication and information to ensure all graduate students are informed of all academic expectations and any modifications to expectations and academic advising policies and procedures.

ADVISING, ASSESSMENT, AND RECORD-KEEPING

The School of Social Work/MSW Program has established the following policies and procedures for academic advising, assessment, and record-keeping:

1. The Graduate Advisor and Academic Advisor will advise each new student who attends the MSW Student Orientation;
2. The Graduate Advisor and Academic Advisor will encourage new students to communicate with them during the students' first semester following entrance into the university;
3. The Academic Advisor will contact students on academic probation prior to registration;
4. The Academic Advisors will encourage students to review their degree plan prior to each registration period and communicate with any questions or needed points of clarification to ensure that students are engaged in their course progression.

5. Students will be encouraged to use the official University degree audit as basis for understanding and assessing their course progress and to determine that other standards such as grade requirements for courses, field/practicum enrollment, and graduation are maintained;
6. The Academic Advisor will develop and keep secure advising records for students in official University electronic repositories;
7. The Academic Advisor will affirm and update the catalog of record for students and monitor application of credit to degree requirements in the degree audit;
8. The Academic Advisor will facilitate the maintenance of program audit updates in the University system;
9. The Graduate Advisor will attend regular meetings at the College of Applied Arts, Graduate College, and Institutional levels where changes in policies and procedures will be explained and their implications discussed;
10. The Graduate Advisor and Academic Advisor and others with advising-related responsibilities will take reasonable precautions to ensure the security, retention, or appropriate destruction of all convenience copies or non-permanent student records under guidance from the person charged with oversight of records retention, in compliance with the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 \(FERPA\)](#).
11. The MSW Program Information Site on the School of Social Work Learning Management System (“Canvas”), facilitated by the Graduate Advisor and Academic Advisor, provides regular updates on matters related to successful matriculation through the MSW program including issues globally related to the degree plan (e.g., academic calendar deadlines).
12. The MSW Program Information Site is also used to regularly share professional opportunities like job fairs and (social work) employer outreach efforts.

PROFESSIONAL ADVISING

Professional advising for students occurs primarily with the Graduate Advisor and the School of Social Work Field/Practicum Office. Faculty are also available to provide professional advising as requested by students and usually do so based on their specific career/research expertise. Students are instructed to reach out to the Graduate Advisor and Field Director at any time with questions and concerns related to their professional and career trajectory. To help link students to more specific information about active employment opportunities that may be available, the Graduate Advisor provides access to the following web resource at or close to graduation: <https://www.careerservices.txstate.edu>. Each month a Graduate Bulletin is distributed to students with a list of upcoming professional development events. The Graduate Advisor encourages students to participate in these activities like professional networking, mentorship, and planning for their career.

Field Education is also an important time for professional development and advising for students. The path to becoming a social work professional is accentuated in the field placement where students explore and realize their career options in a more

experiential manner. Students are notified the semester before their intended practicum to begin the field application process. During this planning time, information sessions are held, applications for the field are processed, pre-placement interviews are conducted, and students are referred to agency interviews. This is a major opportunity for career advising as students discuss specific career aspirations, goals, and possibilities. Students are assigned a Field Advisor to guide the field education process for every student. All students must complete a mandatory field education orientation prior to beginning their field internship. Field Education consists of two courses taken concurrently, the experiential field practicum and the integrative seminar, both of which includes professional advising as students then transition from experiential education to job seeking and gainful employment upon graduation.