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# School of Social Work

*Social Work with Integrity: Promoting Global Well-Being*

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# Student Handbook

Revised May 2025

TEXAS  STATE  
UNIVERSITY<sup>®</sup>

*The rising STAR of Texas*

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**CHAPTER 1: MEET TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY & THE  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK!**

## **AN OVERVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY**

Established in 1899 as Southwest Texas Normal School, the university began as a teacher preparation school and is still known as the university that prepares the most school teachers in the state. Since the university's founding, the institution has undergone seven name changes and became officially known as Texas State University in 2013. The University is part of the Texas State University System and is governed by a nine- member Board of Regents under the oversight of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Institutional policy must comply with state education policy as interpreted by both boards.

Today, Texas State University, located on the San Marcos River in the lovely Texas Hill Country, serves more than 38,000 graduate and undergraduate students and is the fourth-largest public university in Texas. It is located in San Marcos, a community of about 60,000 people, which is in the heart of the ethnically and culturally diverse area between Austin and San Antonio.

### ***Did You Know?***

Texas State enjoys a distinction few universities can boast. It is the alma mater of a United States President: Lyndon B. Johnson. Texas State is the only Texas university to produce a U.S. President.

Throughout its rich history, Texas State has responded to the changing needs of Texas and the nation. Texas State, a comprehensive, culturally diverse university, met the benchmark in 2010 to be designated a Hispanic- Serving Institution. Although the teaching-learning experience, supported by research and creative activity, is the heart of Texas State, the University also encourages students to develop skills to prepare them as leaders for tomorrow's careers, and to explore ideas and experiences that will broaden their lives forever as we pursue:

- Comprehensive undergraduate education;
  - Specialized graduate education;
  - Research, scholarship, and creative expression;
  - Professional, educational, and cultural service to the community, state, and nation;
  - Enriched technology- enhanced learning communities; and
  - A supportive, inclusive, and welcoming learning environment that enhances personal growth.
- By enriching minds and humanizing hearts, the University intends to cultivate character and encourage life- long learning. For more discussion of the University's mission, goals, core values, and academic programs, please visit the University website:

<https://www.txstate.edu/>.

### **MISSION**

Texas State University is a public, student-centered research institution dedicated to excellence, discovery, and innovation. We create new knowledge, embrace a diversity of people and ideas, foster cultural and economic development, and educate our students to participate fully and freely in the communities of Texas, the nation, and the world.

### **SHARED VALUES**

At Texas State University, the faculty, staff, and students of Texas State University, are guided by a shared collection of values:

- Teaching and learning based on research, student needs, and the free exchange of ideas in a supportive environment;

- Research and creative activities that encompass the full range of academic disciplines;
- Meaningful student engagement built on active involvement, accessibility, and intentional educational experiences;
- The cultivation of university community that consistently practices integrity, civility, compassion, and respect;
- A shared commitment to creating a sense of belonging across unique communities, identities, ideas, and contributions;
- A welcoming spirit and a global perspective;
- Dedication to service and leadership for the public good;
- Responsible stewardship of our resources and environment; and
- Continued reflection and evaluation to ensure that our strengths always benefit those we serve locally and globally.

*Approved by the President's Cabinet on August 14, 2023.*

## **GOALS**

- Supporting student success.
- Advancing academic excellence.
- Expanding discovery, innovation, creativity, and research.
- Enriching community, collaboration, and partnerships.
- Developing infrastructure and resources.
- Please visit this site to learn more about the [2023-2029 University Plan](#).

## **AN OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

### **HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK AT TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY**

The first social work course was offered in the School of Sociology in 1975. Initially, social work was offered as a sequence in the sociology major. Later, it developed as an academic minor, and eventually expanded into an academic major. The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program was first accredited by the Council on Social Work Education in 1978, with reaffirmation of accreditation offered in 1985 and 1992. The Master of Social Work (MSW) program was authorized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in the Fall of 1994 with instruction to begin in the Fall of 1995. The MSW Program received accreditation by CSWE in 2000. Both the BSW and MSW programs have successfully maintained accreditation standards through reaffirmation.

The School of Social Work has strong BSW and MSW programs with over 500 actively enrolled students each semester. The BSW program is a campus-based program for full-time students. The School offers online MSW programs for two types of students; 1.) Foundation track for students who have a bachelor's degree in a field of study other than social work and wish to obtain an MSW or 2.) Advanced Standing track for students who have a Bachelor of Social Work degree from an accredited program. Students may complete their MSW education online as a full-time or part-time student.

### **TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK TODAY**

The School of Social Work at Texas State University is a vibrant and growing unit of the College of Applied Arts. The School offers two degree programs, both fully accredited by Council on Social Work Education:

1. The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree, prepares students for generalist practice
2. The Master of Social Work (MSW) degree, prepares students for advanced specialized practice in either administrative or direct practice.

The School also provides some outstanding advantages:

- A charming Hill Country setting and tree-covered campus on the crystal-clear San Marcos River
- A location midway between San Antonio and Austin; its site and ambiance offer the best of small-town easy living and metropolitan advantage
- A dedicated, knowledgeable, ethical, and academically prepared faculty representing a wide variety of interests and backgrounds
- A well-planned curriculum which is very relevant to the work world and which carries high expectations for student learning
- A broad array of interesting field placement settings across Central Texas (both rural and urban areas) in which students work in agencies under the supervision of licensed social workers
- Small classes (in comfortable and attractive classrooms) with lots of interaction between students and faculty
- Class scheduling that accommodates the needs of working people and part-time students
- A solid MSW program offering advanced standing

## **THE CREDO OF TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

### **OUR SCHOOL MISSION**

The School of Social Work at Texas State University prepares culturally responsive, advocacy-focused, ethical social workers who are prepared to serve as leaders for positive change. We maintain a rigorous academic culture committed to interdisciplinary cutting-edge research, community, national, and international service, and social justice. We are dedicated to upholding core values of the social work profession and CSWE competencies to train integrous effective social workers.

### **OUR SCHOOL PURPOSE**

The School, which has created thousands of graduates, has long been committed to preparing social workers to practice competently with clients who are most forgotten in our society: these are the clients who are typically served by public agencies. Not only are the School's graduates well-prepared to deal effectively with the most marginalized populations, but they are also quite competent in working with a broad spectrum of clients, other professionals, policy-makers, and organizations. A key component to their preparation is the School's extensive network of public and private agencies, both rural and urban, in which students are placed for field practicum. Contact us for more information on an exciting career in: [Social Work](#).

### **OUR SCHOOL VISION**

Social Work With Integrity Promoting Global Well-Being

### **OUR SCHOOL MOTTO**

Leadership for Change!

### **OUR SCHOOL APPROACH**

Transcending Boundaries in a Rapidly Changing World:

- Transcending the boundaries of geographic location (through online instruction), spanning from local to global through including content on social, economic, and environmental justice, globalization, and difference
- Transcending the notion of "traditional" student to include "non-traditional" learners such as student veterans, first-generation college students, and professionals in their mid-career points
- Transcending historic clinical knowledge by expanding to a variety of settings and interventions, incorporating cutting-edge intervention strategies such as contemporary music, technology, and wilderness therapy

- Transcending traditional administrative knowledge by drawing in government efforts, non-profits, and entrepreneurial ventures
- Embracing technology, popular culture, and the unique perspectives of students as vital components of the learning community

In addition to a School mission, each program has a distinct mission which informs curriculum, policies and procedures, and program-level decision making. The School of Social Work's Mission, Purpose, Vision, Motto, Approach can be found at this [website](#).

### **BSW MISSION**

The mission of the Bachelor of Social Work Degree Program at the Texas State University School of Social Work is to educate competent, ethical, generalist social workers who are prepared for beginning social work practice.

### **MSW MISSION**

The mission of the Master of Social Work Degree Program at the Texas State University School of Social Work is to educate competent, ethical, social workers who are prepared for advanced social work practice in administration and supervision, or in direct practice.

### **GOALS**

The School of Social Work aims to meet the following goals for both undergraduate and graduate students:

1. **Comprehensiveness:** The School will graduate baccalaureate social workers who can function competently using the generalist framework with systems of all sizes.
2. **Reasoning and Valuing:** The School will graduate social work practitioners who employ critical thinking and lucid self-assessment; understanding of professional history; ethical, value-based sensibilities; and scientific and creative processes to engage in competent, value-based social work with clients from a multitude of backgrounds and client groups in various settings.
3. **Dimensions of Human Development:** The School will graduate social work practitioners who comprehend, based on a broad array of liberal arts concepts and research knowledge, the needs of people (particularly the most vulnerable members of society), who grasp the ways those needs affect people's behaviors, and who can plan and implement effective practice methodologies to foster productive behaviors and ways of thinking.
4. **Diversity and Justice:** The School will produce graduates who appreciate and respect the amazing diversity of the human family, who grasp how that diversity is reflected in the families and organizations that people create, who embrace diversity as a strength, who value social justice, and who ethically lead the struggle to foster a compassionate, productive, non-discriminatory society.
5. **Acquiring and Refining Skills:** The School will graduate practitioners who employ theoretically-sound, evidence-based interventions and communication techniques, who use supervision efficiently to improve their practices, who are prepared to evaluate and refine their methodologies, who are knowledgeable consumers and producers of research, and who are life-long professional learners.
6. **Professional Leadership:** The School will produce leaders and competent organizational citizens who, because they understand the historical and contemporary contexts of social work, can develop innovative, humane, consumer-oriented policies and systems, can advocate for marginalized populations, and can build bridges between public entities, private concerns, and various disciplines to improve the well-being and productivity of people, particularly the most neglected members of society.

**The School aims to meet these goals by providing:**

- A dedicated, knowledgeable, ethical, and academically prepared faculty representing a wide variety of

interests and backgrounds

- A well-planned curriculum which is very relevant to the work world and which carries high expectations for student learning
- A broad array of interesting field placement settings across Central Texas (both rural and urban areas) in which students work in agencies under the supervision of licensed social workers
- Small classes (in comfortable and attractive classrooms) with lots of interaction between students and faculty
- Class scheduling which accommodates the needs of working people and part-time students
- A solid MSW program offering advanced standing

## **ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE**

The School of Social Work is administratively housed in the College of Applied Arts (CAA), which is a robust College that is also affiliated with other CAA units: Department of Aerospace Studies, School of Criminal Justice and Criminology, School of Family and Consumer Sciences, Department of Military Science, Organization, Workforce, and Leadership Studies and Texas State Round Rock. For more information on the [College of Applied Arts](#).

The CAA is governed by the Dean who is responsible for the overall operations of the College. The Dean of CAA works closely with the School of Social Work Director and faculty and reports to the Provost of the University.

The School of Social Work is guided by a School Director, MSW Program Director, MSW Assistant Director of Admissions, BSW Program Director, BSW Assistant Director, Field Director, and Academic Advisor/Program Specialist and who act as the administrative decision-making body for academic issues relating to social work education. The School Director reports directly to the Dean of the College of Applied Arts. The School Director is responsible for the overall operations of the School of Social Work.

The faculty of the School of Social Work administer various components of the program and is responsible for developing, monitoring, and refining the School's curriculum. Our faculty consists of members who have been or are currently active in clinical settings, hold social work licensures awarded by the state of Texas, and have been awarded MSW degrees and doctorate degrees in their respective fields. Faculty are active in research and publications. The School brings in millions of dollars in external funding, and faculty are visible presenting their work at national and international conferences. Numerous faculty serve on national and international boards and committees in positions of leadership.

### **PROGRAM CURRICULUM STRUCTURE**

The School of Social Work at Texas State University offers both the BSW and MSW degree options. The curriculum is differentiated by the type of program and method of delivery.

#### ***BSW***

Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree program at Texas State University School of Social Work prepares students intending to pursue entry-level professional social work practice or further graduate study. The Texas State University School of Social Work offers the BSW program both on-campus and online. BSW graduates will be prepared for employment in varied fields including child welfare, corrections, long-term care, rehabilitation, and public assistance. The Texas State BSW program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, and graduates are eligible for state licensure.

#### ***MSW***

The Master of Social Work degree program at Texas State University School of Social Work is an exciting opportunity for college-degreed people who are interested in pursuing a career based around improving

society. Our MSW degree program is built on a liberal arts perspective. Our graduates perform extremely well on state licensing exams and have found employment across a wide variety of service delivery fields.

The Texas State University School of Social Work offers the MSW program both on-campus and online. These degree offerings, regardless of delivery method, utilize the same textbooks and curricula and are taught by core faculty. The School of Social Work also offers interesting electives in specific topics, such as health care, diversity, international social work, gerontology, spirituality, adventure therapy, work with veterans, and others. Texas State University's Master of Social Work program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, and our graduates are eligible for state licensure.

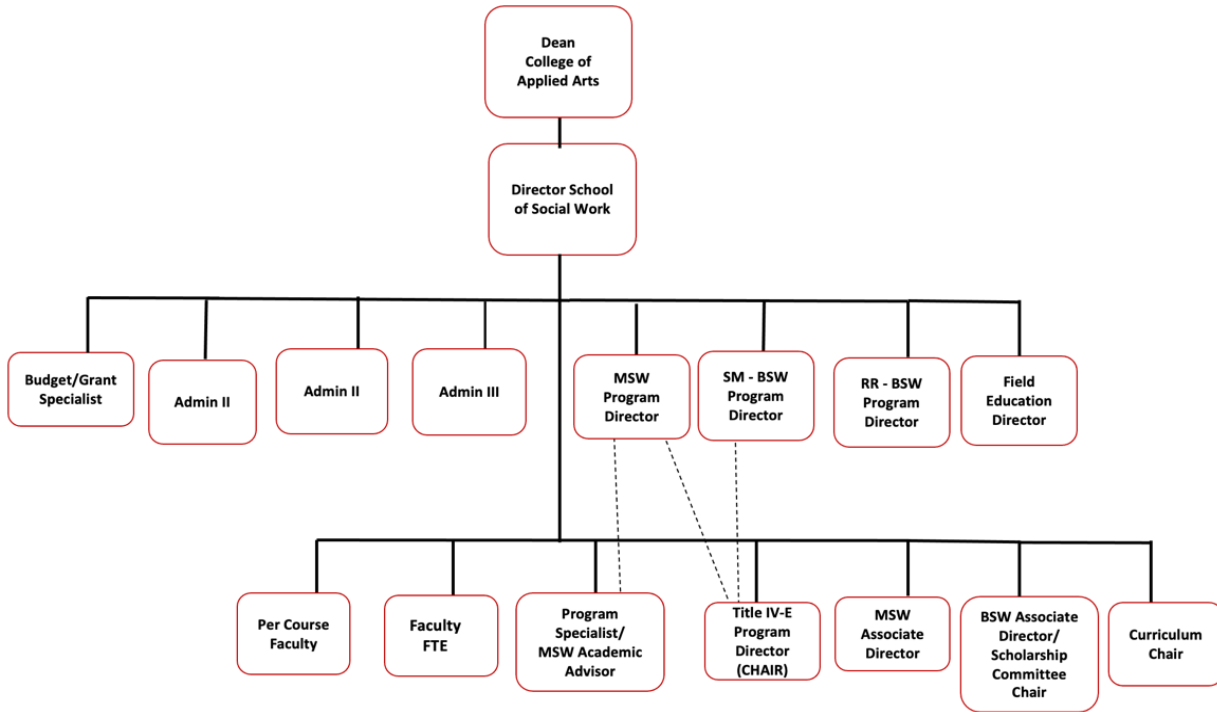
### **SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK FACULTY**

The faculty of the School of Social Work is responsible for developing, monitoring, and refining the School's curriculum. Our faculty consists of members who have been or are currently active in clinical settings, hold social work licensures awarded by the state of Texas, and have been awarded MSW degrees and doctorate degrees in their respective fields. Faculty are active in research and publications. The School brings in millions of dollars in external funding and faculty are visible presenting their work at national and international conferences. Numerous faculty serve on national and international boards and committees in positions of leadership.

Students pursue the degree of a Master in Social Work (MSW) with a concentration of **Advanced Practice Leadership (APL)**. This concentration provides opportunities for the student to develop both micro and macro skills, so graduates of our program are uniquely prepared to work in either a direct practice or administrative work environment.

The School conceptualizes the knowledge, skills, and commitment to advocacy and leadership for change as basic to social work practice regardless of specialization.

**TEXAS STATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK ORGANIZATIONAL FLOW**



<p><b>Board of Regents</b> presides over the <b>President</b>, who presides over the <b>Provost of the University</b></p>
<p><b>Dean of College of Applied Arts (CoAA)</b> works closely with the Director and School faculty, reports directly to the Provost of the University</p>
<p><b>Director of School of Social Work</b> oversees School of Social Work, reports directly to the Dean of College of Applied Arts, works closely with Programmatic Directors</p>
<p><b>Programmatic Directors</b> (i.e., BSW Director, BSW Assistant Director, MSW Director, MSW Assistant Director of Admissions, Field Director, Field Assistant Director, and Assistant Field Coordinators) work with faculty and staff. Programmatic Directors report directly to the School Director.</p>
<p><b>The School of Social Work Faculty and Staff</b> relate to and influence Constituents, and Coordinator and the Director; report to School Director</p>
<p><b>Constituents</b> (i.e., Profession, Students, University, and Community) are affected by and influence the School and University</p>

<p><b>BSW Advisor</b> our partner who is responsible to CoAA Advising Center</p>
<p><b>MSW Academic Advisor</b> provides assistance to MSW students for scheduling classes, preparation of degree audits, counseling services, degree planning evaluation of transfer work, and application of graduation</p>

## **STUDENT FACILITIES**

Texas State's School of Social Work is located in Encino Hall.

Classrooms	Rooms 213, 214, 215, 216
Student Lounge	Room 309
Roster of Office Locations	First Floor, near main entrance of building
Faculty Offices	First Floor office suites 150A, and Second Floor office suites (217 & 231)
Administrative Offices	First Floor (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM), office suites 150A
Faculty Mailboxes	First Floor, located in Office suites 150A
School of Social Work Academic Advisors	Suite 207

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO SERVE IN THE SCHOOL**

The School of Social Work accomplishes its work in committees and task forces. Most committees welcome student representation and offer a way for students to effectively serve the School and the student body. Any interested student should let the faculty know that he or she would like to be part of the school's governance structure. Student representatives to School committees and task forces are chosen through the student organization, and report back to the organization. From time to time, the School may need ad hoc committees of various types, and may ask for student representatives to be assigned to those committees.

### **STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

#### ***PHI ALPHA HONOR SOCIETY***

Many students also participate in Texas State's Alpha Chi Chapter of Phi Alpha, the National Social Work Honor Society. Undergraduate membership in Phi Alpha is open to junior and senior social work majors who have completed at least four social work courses with a Texas State social work GPA of 3.30 or above and an overall GPA of 3.0 or above. Graduate membership in Phi Alpha is open to students who have completed at least four courses in MSW graduate studies and achieved a minimum grade point average of 3.5. Phi Alpha members inducted as undergraduates may also maintain their memberships as graduate students. New Phi Alpha members are inducted in a recognition ceremony held in conjunction with the OSSW ceremony or banquet every semester. In addition to promoting and recognizing academic achievement, Phi Alpha members also participate in service projects and in professional conferences and scholarly presentations.

#### ***ORGANIZATION OF STUDENT SOCIAL WORKERS (OSSW)***

The Organization of Student Social Workers (OSSW) promotes a closer bond among students in social work and provides a means for students to have input into the BSW and MSW degree programs. OSSW, which serves as an advocacy and service organization for social work students at Texas State, is totally student-run, though a faculty advisor is assigned and is available to assist the organization in meeting its goals.

Membership is open to all School students (including pre-majors and minors). OSSW sponsors several social events and community service projects throughout the year. OSSW promotes a closer bond among Social Work students, offers opportunities for leadership development, and provides a means for students to have input into School curriculum and procedures.

The group also offers students opportunities to participate in community enrichment and enhancement efforts. The group is open to Social Work minors, BSW majors, and MSW students.

Texas State recognizes several hundred student organizations that represent many different types of interests and students. Check them out on the [Student Involvement @ LBJSC](#).

### ***Did You Know?***

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) represents over 3,000 individual members, as well as 158 graduate and 453 undergraduate programs of professional social work education. Founded in 1952, CSWE is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as the sole accrediting agency to ensure high quality social work education. Accreditation is critical to a social work program. In many states, a person seeking licensure as a social worker must have graduated from an accredited program of social work. The program's ability to secure certain grants and other benefits is also tied to its status as an accredited program.

### **UNIVERSITY-LEVEL STUDENT INVOLVEMENT**

Texas State University offers a multitude of ways for students to get involved. Whether on campus, online, or in the surrounding communities, students have opportunities to explore music, art, spirit, athletic, recreational, and other performance groups through access to over 300 student organizations. Below are links to opportunities for involvement, as well as additional resources found to be beneficial to help students find connections that fits their unique needs.

- [Opportunities for Involvement](#)
- [Student Services and Academic Support](#) (Dean of Students)
- [Dean of Students CARE Team](#)

### **STUDENT-CENTERED RESOURCES**

- The [Student Recreation Center](#) is an 86,000 square-foot fitness and recreation facility that offers basketball and volleyball and racquetball courts, a weight and fitness room, and a jogging track, as well as a Cardio Corridor. The campus also hosts a good Fitness and Wellness Program and various intramural sports. More information can be found on Department of Campus Recreation
- The [Division of Student Success](#) is available to provide a variety of services, academic programs, and organizations to provide a more inclusive community and allow for students to “get involved, stay healthy, and prepare for [their] future” (Division of Student Success, 2025, para. 2).
- [Career Services](#) provides comprehensive career assistance through all stages of career development. They can help with identifying a major, building your resume, and searching for a job after college. As a value add, the same services are available after graduation as an alumni. More information can be found at the Career Services website.
- The [Counseling Center](#) offers free and confidential professional counseling as well as online mental health resources to currently Texas State students. More information can be found at the Counseling Center website.
- [Disability Services](#) strives to promote equal access to all university programs and activities for students with disabilities. Students who have special needs or disabilities and require accommodations to successfully complete this course must notify the Texas State University Office of Disability Services Texas Office of Disability Services no later than the first week of class. If a student fails to notify that office in a timely manner, the professor may be unable to honor the request for accommodation.

- The [Student Health Center](#) provides primary care, urgent care, sexual and reproductive health, mental health, sports medicine, transgender care and travel health services to university students. More information can be found at the Student Health Center website.
- The [University Writing Center](#) is dedicated to helping Bobcats develop writing as an intellectual activity integral to productivity in their scholarly, civic, professional, and cultural lives. Students must be proficient in their written presentations including strategies for developing ideas, citing scholarly references, writing style, wording, phrasing, and using language conventions. Students must follow APA guidelines, use non-racist and non-sexist language, and include sufficient references to support their thesis and ideas in the paper. Students can book online consultations with the writing center (in person or via Zoom) as well as attend weekly writing groups and various workshops offered by the Writing Center. Additional resources available on the Writing Center's website.
- [University Libraries](#) offer research services available that include but are not limited to research databases, eBooks, eJournals, streaming media, video tutorials, scanning services, and APA assistance. Visit the [Social Work research guide](#) for subject material and to contact the subject librarian. The University Libraries offer [open computers and Techspots](#) for students. For more information, visit their website.
- Textbooks can be purchased through the [University Bookstore](#), by Student ID or by course. Texas State also offers BookSmart, a digital textbook program that provides students with quick and easy access to all materials for their academic courses. BookSmart saves money as the costs for required course materials are included in tuition and fees. You will have until the census date to be able to opt out of the BookSmart program (see the academic calendar for the census date). For more information, visit the [TXST BookSmart](#) website.
- If you plan to park on campus, students must register with [Parking Services](#) and purchase the appropriate color parking permit. You may also download the Park TXST app to assist with quickly locating available parking spots on campus.
- **Transportation Services' Bobcat Shuttle** provides shuttle service to Texas State students, faculty, staff, and the general public in San Marcos.
- The Texas State [University Police Department](#) is the principal provider of safety and security on campus. To report an emergency or crime in progress, call 911. For non-emergencies, call 512.245.2805 or view the Texas State University Police Department website.

### **ADDITIONAL STUDENT RESOURCES**

- [Texas State University Student Resources](#)
- [International Student and Scholar Services \(ISSS\) Student Resources](#)
- [Graduate College Student Support Services](#)
- [Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)
- [Graduate College Funding](#)

### **TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION RESOURCES**

- **NetID** is a computer account that Texas State provides each of its authorized users. The NetID provides access to the university's information resources. You are the only authorized user for your NetID and passphrase. Your passphrase should be kept secure and private. You are responsible for any actions taken with your NetID and passphrase. You may not use your NetID and passphrase for commercial purposes. For additional rules and regulations related to your NetID and passphrase see the [Appropriate Use of Information Resources UPPS](#). All NetIDs are subject to deactivation if they are not used (no login activity) for 180 days (about 6 months). Use the following link to find instructions on [How to Activate Your NetID](#).

- **[Duo Multi-Factor Authentication](#)** (formerly NetID 2-Step) is a secure multi-factor authentication method. Two steps are required for successful access. It is a safer way to log into most Texas State online services and adds an increased level of security for your account and Texas State confidential information.
- **[BobcatMail](#)** (TXST email system) is the principal means for students, faculty, and staff to communicate. The following links provide more information about Bobcat Mail: [How to Setup BobcatMail](#); [Ways to Access BobcatMail](#); [Email forward \(for graduated students\)](#)
- The **[Canvas Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#)** is the learning platform dedicated to enhance lessons within the student classroom. Canvas allows an instructor to build a digital learning environment to simplify teaching and elevate learning. If you are experiencing issues with Canvas, contact [Canvas Support](#).
- The **[IT Assistance Center \(ITAC\)](#)** helps with all things tech; offering over 150 different services to TXST students. They can be reached via phone or LiveChat. Visit their website for more information.
- **[Zoom](#)** is a web-conferencing tool. Its highly accessible features allow you to attend video or audio meetings, hold webinars, share presentations and transfer files, teach and attend online classes in real time, and much more. Meetings can be joined from desktop computers, laptops, tablets, or smartphones.
- **[Microsoft 365](#)** is free for students to download and includes downloadable apps for Windows and Mac computers, as well as cloud-based versions of many app, all of which can be accessed through the web. In all, there are about 20 apps available, aimed at helping productivity and increasing success.



## **CHAPTER 2: STUDENT POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

Texas State outlines its student policies in the [TXST University Student Handbook](#). This Handbook is a vital resource that outlines the standards, policies, and procedures essential for maintaining a respectful and productive campus community. The handbook includes the [Student Code of Conduct](#), the [Academic Honor Code](#), and [Policies and Procedures](#). Please read these carefully.

## **SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT**

### **PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND NASW CODE OF ETHICS**

The [National Association of Social Workers' \(2024\) Code of Ethics](#) is a set of standards that guide the professional conduct of social workers. The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's dual focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence.

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience." (NASW, 2024, para. 2).

### **ETHICAL PRINCIPLES**

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence:

**Value:** Service

- **Ethical Principle:** Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems

**Value:** Social Justice

- **Ethical Principle:** Social workers challenge social injustice.

**Value:** Dignity and Worth of the Person

- **Ethical Principle:** Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

**Value:** Importance of Human Relationships

- **Ethical Principle:** Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

**Value:** Integrity

- **Ethical Principle:** Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

**Value:** Competence

- **Ethical Principle:** Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise. Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

## **SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK STANDARDS & EXPECTATIONS**

### **STANDARDS OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION**

Social work students are held to the highest standards of academic and professional integrity. These standards, established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the CSWE's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), and the National Association for Social Workers (NASW) are foundational for skills development and are essential for ensuring the credibility and ethical responsibility of the social work profession.

Academic standards include maintaining a minimum 3.0 GPA and successful completion of all required degree coursework. Faculty evaluate students' academic achievement and professional development based on the Council of Social Work Education's (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), the University Honor Code, and the Texas State School of Social Work Student Handbooks to identify actions that can be taken to facilitate students' successful advancement or to terminate enrollment in the program if remediation is not possible.

More specifically, student responsibilities include:

- **Maintaining Professional Conduct:** Students must conduct themselves professionally in all interactions with peers, faculty, staff, and program administrators, as guided by the NASW Code of Ethics. This includes demonstrating respect, integrity, and accountability in both in-person and online environments.
- **Engaging Actively in Learning:** Students are expected to proactively engage with course content, assignments, and discussions on Canvas or other platforms to foster a collaborative and effective learning environment.
- **Fulfilling Academic Requirements:** Students must meet GPA and coursework expectations, including maintaining a minimum GPA of 3.0 and earning required grades in all core courses.
- **Advocating Respectfully/Responsibly:** Advocacy and communication are vital aspects of social work practice. Students are encouraged to raise concerns or share feedback respectfully and constructively, ensuring all parties involved feel heard and valued

The School of Social Work expects students will uphold the following throughout their academic journey at Texas State University:

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Academic honesty is a cornerstone of integrity within the School of Social Work. Plagiarism, which is using another person's work, ideas, or intellectual property without proper attribution, is a serious breach of academic honesty and integrity. Students are expected to properly cite all sources, including direct quotes, paraphrased ideas, and references to research. This also extends to the students' own work that has been previously submitted in other classes. Reusing or submitting prior work without appropriate permission or

citation is considered a violation. As a student, you are responsible for producing work that reflects your knowledge, effort, and ethical commitment to scholarly excellence. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, and the inappropriate use of artificial intelligence tools, undermines the academic and professional standards of the program. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- **Plagiarism:** Failing to properly cite resources or presenting another’s work as your own.
- **Cheating:** Using unauthorized resources, such as answer keys, electronic devices, or assistance from others, during exams or assignments without explicit permission from the instructor.
- **Misuse of Artificial Intelligence:** Utilizing generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, CoPilot, and Grammarly’s generative AI option) without disclosing their use or using them in a way that violates assignment guidelines or the TXST Honor Code Policy. For more information, please see the section below.

Students found in violation of academic honesty policies may face consequences per the TXST Honor Code and School of Social Work Program Standards, which may include failing grades, charges of academic misconduct, probation, or removal from the program.

### ***Hints for Student Success***

One event that can end a student's academic career quickly is plagiarism: stealing or using another person's ideas and/or words as your own. The way to avoid plagiarism is simple: give credit where credit is due. In the same way that moral people would not consider stealing another person's wallet, they also would not consider stealing another person's intellectual property. Bear in mind that plagiarism applies to material contained in the web, as well as material printed on paper. Be careful to use proper citations (use APA style), and check with your faculty if you have any questions about whether you are properly citing another person’s work.

## **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY**

### ***Introduction and Purpose***

Texas State University, School of Social Work is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). This competency-based education is ensuring students graduating from Texas State University are ethical and proficient in providing services to clients. We recognize that the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) may be used to help enhance the learning process but must be done so in an ethical manner that reinforces the student’s ability to critically think, problem solve and apply skills necessary to serve the community. Competency 1 of the CSWE requires social workers to demonstrate ethical and professional behavior. This requires a social worker to be able to understand and apply ethical standards in practice and in decision making. This standard also requires social workers be committed to lifelong learning and are ethical in the use of technology in their practice (CSWE, 2022).

There are many AI tools and most provide specific tasks that can be used in academic work. This is a website that shares available information that may be helpful for faculty and students:

<https://www.facdv.txst.edu/teaching-learning/ai-resources-faculty.html>

The table below illustrates the different categories of tools and common examples.

<b>Type</b>	<b>What they do</b>	<b>Example tools</b>
Chatbots	Generates written responses, answers questions, & checks work	ChatGPT (and GPT-4), Google Bard, Bing AI, Jasper AI

Type	What they do	Example tools
AI writing assistants	Edits, rephrases, & rewrites text to improve writing	Grammarly, QuillBot, Hemingway Editor
Applications	Answers questions & completes numerous “homework help” tasks	Course Hero, Photomath, Wolfram Alpha, Socratic
Voice assistants	Take voice commands to provide answers to questions & operate portions of devices.	Siri, Alexa, Google Assistant, Cortana

\* <https://honorlock.com/blog/ai-policy-online-education/Links to an external site.>

### **Acceptable Use of AI Tools**

The School of Social Work encourages the use of appropriate AI tools specifically discussed in the course curriculum or syllabi for individual classes. These tools can be used for further reflection and understanding the process of critical thought but are not a substitute for your own analysis.

### **Negative Use of AI Tools**

The social work profession is centered around navigating complex problems across the micro/mezzo/macro levels which require critical thinking and direct application of skills. You will face dilemmas where AI will not be accessible, and you will need to be prepared to navigate ever-changing situations in real time.

In academic group work, the use of AI-generated content is strictly prohibited. If any group member is found to have used AI-produced or modified content, the entire group will be held accountable unless clear evidence is provided to show otherwise.

### **AI Enforcement**

In accordance with our program standards, “Texas State School of Social Work prepares students for ethical professional social work practice. Students must meet both academic and professional standards to advance successfully through the social work program.” If there is work that is used as one’s own that is produced or modified by AI, the instructor will have a conversation with the student. If the student has not completed the necessary steps required by the faculty the student will be referred to the program standards committee. This committee will gather information and make recommendations for the student. The honor code will also be enforced by applying policies related to academic integrity and ethical behavior and will be used to consider action steps for a violation. Additional resources are as follows:

- [School of Social Work Program Standards](#)
- [Honor Code](#)
- [TXST Guidelines for the Use of AI Tools](#)

### **PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**

Social work students are in training to become professionals who uphold the values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. Professional behavior includes maintaining respect for peers, instructors, clients, and the community. Students are expected to communicate respectfully, engage in collaborative learning, and model the ethical principles of social work.

### **INFORMATION SHARING**

In the field of social work, confidentiality is a fundamental value. While sharing information and engaging in discussions with peers is encouraged, any personal or sensitive information shared in class or field settings must be treated with care and respect. Students should never disclose confidential or identifying information

about clients, colleagues, or others without appropriate consent. In academic work, any case study or scenario must be presented in a way that protects the privacy of individuals and upholds ethical standards of confidentiality.

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students are expected to uphold responsibilities that reflect the values, ethical principles, and professional behaviors of the social work profession. This section outlines key responsibilities and expectations for academic honesty and successfully moving through the curriculum.

- agreeing to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and applicable state laws, and
- acknowledging their understanding that a student can be terminated from the social work program based on failing to satisfactorily achieve academic and professional standards.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND TITLE IX**

Texas State University is committed to fostering a safe and healthy learning and working environment. The university prohibits all forms of discrimination and complies with federal and state nondiscrimination, equal opportunity, and affirmative action laws, orders, and regulations. Texas State supports the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity. It does not tolerate discrimination or harassment based on race, sex, religion, color, pregnancy, national origin, disability, citizenship status, age, ancestry, order of protection status, marital status, genetic information, gender identity, sexual orientation, unfavorable military discharge, or status as a protected veteran. The university requires that all decisions involving students and employees be based on merit and remain free from discrimination in any form.

For additional information or assistance on the equal opportunity, affirmative action and harassment policies in compliance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, please see Texas State's [Prohibition of Discrimination](#) policy.

### **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY**

Texas State University is committed to creating and maintaining a community free from sexual violence and harassment. The [TSUS Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) prohibits sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, stalking, and other types of sexual misconduct. Sexual harassment, discrimination based on sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex- or gender-stereotyping violates the law and other University policies. Such discrimination may also create a hostile work or academic environment based on sex and accordingly constitute or contribute to sexual harassment. Harassment that may not be sexual, but still encourages a hostile work or academic environment, may also violate the University's other non-discrimination policies.

Additionally, in accordance with the **NASW Code of Ethics**, social workers **must not** sexually harass clients and or constituencies/individuals in the broader society. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, electronic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

### **EMPLOYEE REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES**

All Texas State employees including any student employees, except those expressly identified as a confidential source by university policy, are legally required to promptly report to the Title IX Coordinator all relevant information regarding incidents witnessed or information received concerning sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking committed by or against a student or employee based on Senate Bill 212. Any conduct that may constitute sexual violence, sexual harassment, retaliation, and other prohibited behavior is considered "Prohibited Conduct". The University will respond promptly and equitably to such reports, and will take appropriate action to stop, prevent, and remedy the Prohibited Conduct, and when necessary, to discipline the Respondent. For complete policies and reporting procedures please refer to [TSUS](#)

[Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) for a complete description of employee reporting requirements. An employee who knowingly fails to report or provides false information is subject to termination of employment and possible criminal penalties.

### **REPORTING INCIDENTS**

The University is also committed to ensuring all students, faculty, and staff are aware of their options should they experience any form of discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct. Any member of the University community may report Prohibited Conduct.

Those who wish to report an incident to the University may do so by contacting the [Equal Opportunity and Title IX Office](#) at 512-245-2539 or [TitleIX@txstate.edu](mailto:TitleIX@txstate.edu), or by completing the [online complaint form](#). Incidents of sexual misconduct or harassment may also be reported to confidential University resources. Those include the following:

- |                                   |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| • The Counseling Center           | 512.245.2208 |
| • Attorney for Students           | 512.245.2370 |
| • RRC Counseling Practicum Clinic | 512.716.4250 |
| • Student Health Center           | 512.245.2161 |

Please visit The Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX website for [additional resources](#) relating to sexual violence.

The Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX, under the leadership of the Assistant Vice President for Equal Opportunity and Title IX, Title IX Coordinator, Alexandria Hatcher, will serve as the university's central resource for addressing all reports of alleged harassment and discrimination. Inquiries regarding these programs should be submitted to [TitleIX@txstate.edu](mailto:TitleIX@txstate.edu).

All university members are encouraged to review and familiarize themselves with the [TSUS Sexual Misconduct Policy](#), [Prohibition of Discrimination Policy](#), and [additional resources](#) by visiting the [Equal Opportunity and Title IX Office](#) website.

### **SEXUAL VIOLENCE/SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION TRAINING**

As part of Texas State University's commitment to sustaining a community that is safe and supporting, all graduate and undergraduate students, as well as faculty and staff, are encouraged to complete the sexual violence/harassment prevention and response training, available [here](#).

### **CLERY ACT COMPLIANCE**

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policies and Campus Crime Statistics Act (the Clery Act) promotes transparency by requiring institutions to publish an annual report of campus crime statistics and safety policies. This report includes:

- Crime and fire statistics for the past three years.
- Safety and security policy statements, programs, and resources.
- The rights and options for victims of sexual assault, dating or domestic violence and stalking.

For more information or to view the latest report, visit the [Clery Act Compliance – Annual Security & Fire Safety Report](#) webpage.

### **CAMPUS SECURITY AUTHORITIES REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES**

All Texas State employees identified as campus security authorities under the Clery Act are legally required to promptly report Clery Act crimes to the University Police Department via the [CSA Clery Act Incident Report](#) form. For assistance, please contact the Clery Act Compliance Office, via email at [cleryreport@txstate.edu](mailto:cleryreport@txstate.edu).

## **CRIME REPORTING**

To report a crime:

- Emergencies: 911
- Non-Emergencies: Call the University Police Department at (512) 245-2805

## **EMERGENCY RESOURCES**

- [TXST Police Department](#) – NON-EMERGENCY (512) 245- 2805
- [Texas State Dean of Students Office](#) (512) 245-2124
- [Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX](#) (512) 245-2539
- [Financial Aid](#) (512) 245-2315
- [Environmental Health, Safety, & Risk Management](#) (512) 245-3616
- [Housing and Residential Life](#) (512) 245-4663
- [Student Health Center](#) (512) 245-2161
- [Attorney for Students](#) (512) 245-2370
- [VP for Student Success](#) (512) 245-2641
- [Office of Veteran Affairs](#) (512) 245-2641
- [International Office](#) (512) 245-7966
- [Office of Disability Services](#) (512) 245-3451
- [San Marcos Police Department](#) (non-emergency) (512) 753-2108
- [Christus Santa Rosa Hospital San Marcos](#) (512) 353-8979
- [TXST Round Rock Campus Resources Counseling Center](#) (512) 245-2208
- [Student Health Center- Round Rock](#) (512) 245-2161
- [Round Rock Police Department](#) (non-emergency) (512) 218-5500
- [Ascension Seton Williamson](#) (512) 324-4000
- [Hope Alliance](#) (800) 460-7233
- [Williamson County Victim Services](#) (512) 943-1111

## **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Texas State University is dedicated to ensuring equitable access to education and complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended.

Students with disabilities have the legal right to equal access to university programs, services, and activities. Below are details on the key laws governing these rights and the resources available at Texas State University.

### **THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is the first civil rights law at the national level for individuals with disabilities. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Section 504 ensure that:

“No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely on the basis of disability, be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity provided by any institution receiving federal financial assistance.” Under this statute, institutions must appoint a Section 504 Coordinator to ensure compliance and address any grievances related to potential discrimination.

At Texas State, the Office of Disability Services (ODS) serves as the coordinating office for Section 504 compliance. ODS provides accommodation letters to students and their instructors to facilitate approved

accommodations. ODS is located in LBJ Student Center RM 506. Faculty members who encounter challenges in implementing accommodations or who believe that a specific accommodation imposes undue burden or fundamentally alters a course must consult with ODS by calling (512) 245-3451 or emailing [ods@txstate.edu](mailto:ods@txstate.edu) as soon as possible to explore alternative accommodations.

### **THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)**

The ADA is a federal, civil rights statute that extends protections against discrimination for individuals with disabilities in employment, public services, public accommodations, telecommunications, and other areas. The ADA works in conjunction with Section 504 to remove barriers and ensure equal access to opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities. At Texas State, the ADA's provisions apply to all aspects of University life, including classroom accommodations, accessibility of facilities, and access to campus resources.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Texas State University strives to create an inclusive learning environment. Students experiencing barriers to education due to a disability or who suspect they may have a disability are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS):

- Phone: (512) 245-3451
- Email: [ods@txstate.edu](mailto:ods@txstate.edu)
- Website: [www.ods.txst.edu](http://www.ods.txst.edu)

Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, communication, or chronic medical conditions. Students are encouraged to discuss their accommodation needs with both ODS staff and their instructors as early as possible.

### **RIGHTS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Qualified Students with disabilities at Texas State University are entitled to:

- Equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, and activities offered by the University.
- Reasonable and appropriate accommodations to support their learning experience.
- Timely access to information in accessible formats.
- Confidentiality of all disability-related sharing with university employees.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities are responsible for:

- Meeting the University's academic, technical and institutional standards.
- Providing documentation from a qualified professional that verifies the disability, its functional limitations, and the need for specific accommodations.
- Requesting accommodations in a timely manner following ODS procedures.
- Scheduling appointments with instructors to discuss and implement accommodations.
- Providing instructors with ODS accommodation letters in a timely manner.
- Advocating for their needs and communicating concerns to ODS staff and faculty as appropriate.
- Meeting the same academic standards, class attendance policies (with exceptions for approved absences), and behavior expectations as all students.
- Covering any costs associated with obtaining disability documentation.
- Engaging in open and ongoing communication with faculty regarding any accommodation(s). Note: Email communication should not be the sole method of contact unless agreed upon by both parties. If a student's e-mail to or telephone message is not acknowledged, additional contact is required to ensure communication.

## **GRIEVANCE POLICY**

The School of Social Work and the University offer established procedures for addressing and resolving student complaints or grievances. For information on the School and University's process, click on the following link: [Student Complaints](#)

## **10 CORE COMPETENCIES WITH 41 ACCOMPANYING PRACTICE BEHAVIORS**

### **CSWE/EPAS COMPONENT BEHAVIORS/STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: GENERALIST PRACTICE CURRICULUM**

#### 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.

- A. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;
- B. Demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- C. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- D. 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.

- A. Advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and

- B. 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.

- A. Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
- B. 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.

- A. Apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
- B. 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 well-being, 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.

- A. 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 b. 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.

- A. Apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- B. 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.

- A. 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
- B. 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.

- A. Engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
- B. 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.

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

### **CSWE/EPAS COMPONENT BEHAVIORS/STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: SPECIALIZED PRACTICE CURRICULUM**

#### Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Advanced-year social work students recognize the importance of the therapeutic relationship, the person-in-environment configuration, the strengths perspective, professional use of self with clients, and adherence to ethical guidelines of professional behavior at all levels of social work practice. Advanced-year social work students recognize their role in interprofessional teams in practice. Advanced-year social work students recognize the dynamic nature of the profession and engage ethically in their use of technology in social work practice. Advanced year social work students identify professional strengths, limitations, and challenges, and engage in ongoing professional training to further their professional development. Advanced-year social work students evaluate their own reactions to client interactions and assess alignment with professional and ethical standards of behavior, and personal coping strategies.

- a) Advanced-year social workers identify, assess, and facilitate ethical considerations, considering the NASW Code of Ethics and relevant laws and regulations, to enhance client safety and effective practice at all levels.
- b) Advanced-year social workers recognize their professional role in their work with client systems and on interprofessional teams, uphold professional boundaries, and act in accordance with their scope of practice.
- c) Advanced-year social workers engage in self-reflection, self-regulation, and personal and professional self-care to prevent secondary traumatic stress and advance their own capacity to help the client systems they serve.

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

Advanced-year social work students understand that client adaptation, growth, and recovery are most attainable when their fundamental human rights are restored and upheld. Advanced-year social work students engage with others to utilize strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental,

economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Advanced-year social work students recognize the global interconnectedness of oppression and human rights violations and intervene to advance social, economic, and environmental justice and ensure access to services. Advanced-year social work students utilize interprofessional collaboration to advocate for culturally responsive policies and services to transform the social, economic, and environmental conditions that limit human rights and quality of life, thus promoting growth and resiliency.

- a) Incorporate an understanding of regional and global interconnections of oppression and apply this understanding to social work practice.
- b) Engage in community collaborations that foster social and economic justice and social change.
- c) Analyze the consequences of social and economic injustice for constituent groups and take action to promote humane and responsive social institutions, social policies, programs, and practice.

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

Advanced-year social work students are knowledgeable about many forms of diversity and difference and how these influence the therapeutic relationship and the client's presenting issues. They engage in ongoing education to expand their own cultural humility and competency. Advanced-year social worker students recognize that various dimensions of diversity impact symptom presentation, perceptions of well-being, help-seeking behaviors, healing practices, and the therapeutic relationship. Advanced-year social work students are aware of their own dimensions of diversity and recognize the intersectional impact of diversity on themselves and clients (e.g., identity, race, gender, privilege, intergenerational history, culture, family of origin, etc.). Advanced-year social work students recognize the intersectional impact of diversity and culture on client systems. Advanced-year social work students utilize research and best practice literature to inform their work with diverse individuals, families, groups, and communities, and provide effective strengths-based interventions.

- a) Seek opportunities to strengthen knowledge and support services to an increasingly diverse and global society.
- b) Exercise leadership in the development of necessary alliances to advocate effectively for change with underserved at-risk populations and other groups
- c) Employ/model a conscientious use of self, self-regulation, self-monitoring, and self-correction in practice situations.
- d) Advanced-year students actively challenge and resist systems rooted in racism and oppression through both internal reflection and external action.
- e) Advanced-year students engage in anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work by valuing clients, constituencies, organizations, and communities as experts, emphasizing their lived experiences, and prioritizing their goals and aspirations.

### Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Advanced-year social work students apply quantitative and qualitative research to advance the science and evidence-based social work practice and to inform their practice. Advanced-year social work students demonstrate the principles of logical, ethical, and culturally responsive scientific inquiry. Advanced-year social work students evaluate and apply research findings for effective practice.

- a) Develop and design research and use evidence-based research findings to inform and improve social work practice.
- b) Implement evidence-based findings to enhance the effectiveness of social work practice.
- c) Articulate how research findings can improve social service delivery.

### Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Advanced-year social work students examine the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy and practice. Advanced-year social work students engage in advocacy with coalitions of constituents and formulate positions in the development of culturally responsive policies focused on wellbeing. Advanced-year social work students seek to advance policy that recognizes and builds on the resilience of individuals, families, groups, communities, and social service systems.

- a) Apply techniques of effective leadership with agencies, colleagues, and client systems for political action and policy changes to advance social well-being through effective service.
- b) Evaluate the intended and unintended impact of social policies and develop mechanisms that identify resources for clients.
- c) Articulate the impact of policies on service delivery and conduct assessments and evaluations on the implementation of policy.
- d) Identify gaps in policies at varied levels such as agency policies, public policies, and regulations.

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

Advanced-year social work students value the dignity and worth in engaging all clients and constituencies. Advanced-year social work students evaluate and maximize effective professional use of self, utilizing culturally relevant engagement strategies at the micro and macro levels. Advanced-year social work students engage in inter-professional collaboration, where appropriate, to maximize effective client engagement with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

- a) Employ culturally responsive engagement skills through appropriate assessment and intervention strategies that are grounded in human behavior theories and conceptual frameworks.
- b) Apply the theoretical and value-based knowledge of the profession to help understand the person-in-environment
- c) Engage in relationship-building activities in varied client systems and evaluate the client's perception of the quality of the relationship.

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

Advanced-year social work students will use enhanced interviewing skills to collect and critically evaluate client data. Advanced-year social work students will synthesize theoretical, evidence-based knowledge, and client strengths in conducting assessments of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to inform decision-making and intervention. Advanced-year social work students will utilize interprofessional collaboration in the assessment process. Advanced-year social work students will appraise and evaluate how their personal experiences and affective reactions impact their assessment of client systems.

- a) Assess complex problems in multiple levels of practice and social service settings.
- b) Evaluate the multi-systemic dimensions of client problems.
- c) Use client system approaches and design interventions that affect change at multiple systemic levels of practice.
- d) Identify the range of legalities and/ or legal risks and ethical considerations that may exist for a client or client system and/or organizational systems.

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

Advanced-year social work students develop evidence-informed and culturally relevant intervention strategies that reflect active collaboration with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Advanced-year social work students examine the person-in-environment and analyze the reciprocal and bi-directional effects when implementing intervention plans. Advanced-year social work students devise interventions that emphasize strengths-based, culturally responsive strategies for change. Advanced-year

social work students facilitate inter-professional and inter-organizational teamwork which benefits clients and constituencies at all levels.

- a) Develop and employ culturally competent strategies to enhance client self-determination, motivation, and well-being during the process of change.
- b) Synthesize and apply a broad range of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills consistent with evidence-informed practice.
- c) Engage in critical analysis and identify the most effective intervention strategies for varied client systems e.g., individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

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

Advanced-year social work students critically evaluate dynamic, interactive processes and outcomes to inform practice decisions and quality assurance, to strengthen their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Advanced-year social work students systematically utilize qualitative and quantitative methods, including standardized measures. Collaborative, strengths-based, inclusive, and culturally relevant methods are used to evaluate practice processes, outcomes, and effectiveness at all levels.

- a) Critically analyze the efficacy of client system interventions.
- b) Evaluate the integration of culturally relevant and interactive processes and outcomes.
- c) Evaluate the impact of intentional, unintentional, and evidence-based practice approaches.



## **CHAPTER 3: EVALUATION OF STUDENT FITNESS & PERFORMANCE**

## **OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM STANDARDS**

The Texas State School of Social Work prepares students for ethical professional social work practice. Students must meet both academic and professional standards to advance successfully through the social work program. Academic standards include maintaining a minimum 3.0 GPA and successful completion of all required degree coursework. Professional standards are demonstrated through the student's professional development and ethical behavior.

Students sign a contract before admission to the program: 1) agreeing to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and applicable state laws, and 2) acknowledging their understanding that a student can be terminated from the social work program based on failing to satisfactorily achieve academic and professional standards. Faculty evaluate students' academic achievement and professional development based on the Council of Social Work Education's (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), the University Honor Code, and the Texas State School of Social Work Student Handbooks in order to identify actions that can be taken to facilitate students' successful advancement or to terminate enrollment in the program if remediation is not possible.

The Program Standards Committee is a standing committee comprised of seven faculty members appointed by the School Director. Committee members will serve for the academic year and rotate off the committee on a staggered basis to ensure consistency and continuity of policies and procedures.

## **EVALUATION OF STUDENT FITNESS AND PERFORMANCE**

The Texas State School of Social Work will comply with University program standards and policies related to student fitness and performance. If there are changes in the student's academic and behavioral standing:

- The University Registrar, Graduate College, and BSW or MSW Academic Adviser will inform the student and the BSW or MSW Program Director in writing of any changes in the student's academic standing;
- The student is responsible for contacting the BSW or MSW Program Director to submit a corrective action plan indicating how the student will resolve the academic standing issue by the end of the semester in which the problem is identified; and
- Students who fail to comply with this process may not be allowed to continue in the program.
- Students will adhere to the program policies (BSW, MSW, and Field contracts) regarding academic performance.

### **FACULTY CONCERNS OF STUDENT PROCESS**

If a faculty member has a concern about a BSW or MSW student's academic or professional behavior and/or development, the faculty member will assess the concern to determine the appropriate level of intervention (level 1, level 2, or level 3):

#### **Level 1: Addressing Student Concerns**

1. The faculty member will meet with the student in person or over zoom when they observe a concern in the course (academic, ethics, and professionalism). Take notes of the conversation for accuracy of facts. Refer to any policies that are implicated in the observations. If this is a field student, a conversation with the BSW or MSW Field Coordinator may help to talk over the concerns. The faculty may consult with a Program Director to determine if there are any other faculty concerns about this student. A Program Director will provide guidance for the faculty member if multiple concerns require a Faculty Concern of Student form in conjunction with another faculty member. One faculty member will act as the principal contact and the other faculty member(s) can add their documentation to the form.
2. Follow up student meeting with an email overview of the discussion; be certain to reference course

policies, School policies, NASW code of ethics, and University conduct where appropriate based on the concern of academics, ethics, and professionalism.

3. Set an expectation of what changes should occur and by when they should be observed; a plan of action may be appropriate to support the student's work on specific professional and academic growth areas.
4. Include in the final sentence to student emails with "Please let me know if this overview matches your understanding of our discussion."
5. Use the faculty assessment of a student concern documentation tool to support faculty in capturing the elements of a student concerns, observations, conversations, and expectations.

### **Level 2: Elevated Intervention**

6. If the behavior does not change or the behavior observed is significantly detrimental to learning outcomes, prepare a formal Faculty Concern of Student form. The concern should include facts, dates, and transparency, should other levels of the University community review it. Avoid using emotional words and opinions in the write-up.
7. The Faculty Concern of Student form should be reviewed by the appropriate Program Directors, BSW, MSW, or Field to determine recommended next steps.
8. Field ONLY - In some instances, an ELP evaluation may be needed to support or corroborate concerns.
9. Once the Faculty Concern of Student form has been prepared, a copy is sent to the student and Program Director requesting a meeting to discuss the seriousness of the student concern. In some instances, the severity of the concern may elevate to a Level 3
10. After meeting with the student, the BSW, MSW, or Field Program Director will consult with faculty to determine if the concern should be forwarded for a program standard review. If the concern moves to the Program Standards Committee, the faculty will be asked to provide documentation and meet with the School Program Standards Committee.

### **Level 3: Program Standards Committee Referral**

1. The faculty member and the appropriate BSW, MSW, or Field Program Director will discuss the concern within five (5) working days to determine if a corrective action plan is needed or a referral to the Program Standards Committee is warranted;
2. If it is determined that a corrective action plan is needed, the faculty member and appropriate BSW, MSW, or Field Program Director will meet with the student to discuss the concern and develop the corrective action plan together. If requested, this meeting can be held in a university-designated safe zone;
3. If the student is unable or unwilling to participate in the development of a corrective action plan, the faculty member will develop the corrective action plan and document the student's lack of involvement on the plan;
4. A copy of the corrective action plan will be sent electronically to the student, and the appropriate BSW, MSW, or Field Program Director within five (5) working days of meeting with the student.
5. If the student's behavior improves or the concern is resolved, the faculty member will document this change of behavior or concern, inform the appropriate BSW, MSW or Field Program Director, and no further action will be pursued.

### ***THE PROGRAM STANDARDS COMMITTEE REVIEW PROCESS***

If the documented unprofessional behavior or developmental concern persists, the faculty member(s) will initiate involvement of the Program Standards Committee based on the following:

- The faculty member who had the initial concern will consult with the student's appropriate BSW, MSW, or Field Program Director, who will then refer the continued concern to the Program Standards

Committee for action and/or recommendations.

- The Program Director will submit the Faculty Concern of Student Form, corrective action plan, if there is one, and any other supporting documentation to the Chair of the Program Standards Committee within five (5) working days of determining the need to involve the Program Standards Committee.
- A copy of all documentation will also be provided to the student within five (5) working days of determining the need to involve the Program Standards Committee.
- The Program Standards Committee (PSC) will convene a hearing within ten (10) working days of receiving the documentation to make recommendations.
  - The meeting may be held in a university designated safe zone if requested by anyone attending this meeting;
  - Attending this meeting will be the faculty member who voiced the concern, the student, and a quorum (two-thirds PSC membership) of the Program Standards Committee. The Program Standards Committee may also invite other individuals who are deemed relevant to the process;
  - The student may also bring a support person to provide support or advisement to the student. However, the support person is not allowed to address the Program Standards Committee on behalf of student;
  - The Program Standards Committee members will individually hear concerns from the faculty members, student, and any other relevant parties, in the attempt to resolve the concern;
  - At the conclusion of the hearing, all non-committee member participants will be excused from the room. The Program Standards Committee members will remain in order to deliberate.
  - The Program Standards Committee is an independent review body and will make final recommendations based on documentation and interviews of involved parties.
- The Program Standards Committee will report their recommendation(s) in writing within five (5) working days to the appropriate Program Director, who will then notify the student, and the faculty member who submitted the Faculty Concern of Student form of the Program Standard Committees recommendation(s) in writing within five (5) working days.
- The student has ten (10) working days to accept/reject the Program Standards Committee's recommendation(s) in writing. If a student fails to respond in writing to the appropriate BSW, MSW or Field Program Director within ten (10) working days, this will be an indication of acceptance of the decision.
- If the student rejects the Program Standards Committee's recommendations, the student may appeal the Committee's recommendation in writing to the School Director within ten (10) working days of the notification of the Committee's recommendation.
- The student may appeal the School Director's decision in writing to the College Dean within ten (10) working days of the notification of the School Director's decision.
- The College of Applied Arts Dean's decision is final.

If a faculty member is concerned that a student's professional development and/or behavior is so serious that it requires a prompt or immediate resolution and no corrective action plan is feasible, the faculty member will follow these procedures:

- The faculty member will notify the appropriate BSW, MSW, or Field Program Director, as well as the appropriate BSW or MSW Field Coordinator if the student will be entering an internship, about the concern and the need for prompt resolution.
- The Program Standards Committee will be notified and convene with at least a 2/3 quorum of eligible committee members within three (3) working days. All procedures outlined above will be followed within an expedited timeframe of three (3) working days instead of ten (10).

***DOCUMENTATION AND RECORD-KEEPING***

The School must complete all Student Fitness and Performance Evaluation procedures by the last day of the semester (including exam week), unless the faculty member delivers the concern to the appropriate BSW, MSW, or Field Program Director within one week of the end of the semester. Should this occur, the Program Standards Committee must complete its deliberations within one week of the next semester's first class day.

The Program Standards Committee report will remain in the School Director's office, and the School Director will notify any appropriate University officials of the Program Standard Committee's decision if needed. Throughout the process, the confidentiality of the student will be maintained by all parties involved.

The appropriate BSW or MSW Degree Director will advise any student who has one or more unresolved student concerns on file with the School Director at the end of a semester that they are advanced to the next semester only on a probationary basis until a final recommendation is delivered by the Program Standards Committee and due process is completed. Students will not graduate if they have an unresolved level 3 student concern on file.



**CHAPTER 4: UNDERSTANDING THE TEXAS STATE  
BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK (BSW) DEGREE PROGRAM**

## **OVERVIEW OF THE BSW PROGRAM**

The BSW degree program in the School of Social Work at Texas State University is an accredited program by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and the expectation of our BSW students is that they will adhere to the same academic, ethical and professional guidelines, policies and procedures as instituted in program.

Our BSW program adheres to the **'Code of Ethics'** as articulated by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the **'Code of Conduct'** as codified by the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners (Texas Administrative Code Title 22, Part 34, Chapter 781, Subchapter B, 781.301 Code of Conduct)

As a student at Texas State University and a student in the BSW program, you must continue to adhere to all of the policies, procedures, rules and regulations of Texas State University and The Texas State University System, including the **'Honor Code'** and **'Code of Student Conduct'** of Texas State University

- [The Honor Code](#)
- [Code of Student Conduct](#)

If at any point my academic performance and/or professional development is deemed unsatisfactory by the School of Social Work faculty a **'Faculty Concern'** may be filed, and per the **'Evaluation of Student Fitness and Performance Policy'** the concern may be referred to the Program Standards Committee (PSC). If the behavior of concern remains/continues after going through this formal review process, or based on recommendation of the PSC review process, the School of Social Work has the right and responsibility to terminate my status as a social work student.

[Evaluation of Student Fitness & Performance Policy : School of Social Work : Texas State University \(txstate.edu\)](#)

The College of Applied Arts Academic Advisors, School of Social Work instructors and BSW, MSW and School of Social Work Program Directors will monitor and engage discussions with me regarding my academic and professional progress in the major, identify concerns and communicate information as necessary.

Our BSW program is a sequenced program that consists of Three (3) Phases. Phase I is our initial classes. The university will ask you to declare a major upon acceptance at TXST. You can declare Social Work. You will enter Phase I, below will be additional information about Phase I. Phase II requires you to apply and be accepted into our Phase II BSW program. Phase II classes are our Core Social Work curriculum. Phase II consists of 3 long semesters of sequenced classes, below will be additional information about Phase II. Phase III is the last semester of our BSW program that consists of your field internship, below will be additional information about your field internship and Phase III.

Our BSW program is offered via On-campus (San Marcos), On-campus (Round Rock), and Online.

## **ABOUT OUR BSW PROGRAM: PHASE I**

Phase I consists of your Core Curriculum, Major Coursework, Support Coursework, and Miscellaneous Requirements. This information is based on your assigned catalogue designated upon the semester acceptance at Texas State University.

Core Curriculum, in layman term, is the core classes that you would take for any major. Classes, such as ENG 1310 and 1320; MATH 1315 or MATH 1316 or MATH 319; Life and Physical Science; PHIL; Creative Arts; HIST; Government/Political Science; PSY; and COMM.

Major Coursework (PHASE I) would be SOWK 1350; SOWK 2375; and SOWK electives (6 hours).

Support Coursework would be Interdisciplinary electives (14 hours); SOWK 3312; Statistic class (SOWK 4300) or CJ3347 or PSY 2301 or SOCI 3307; and ENG 3303.

Miscellaneous requirements would be Foreign Language and US 1100.

Our Phase I course will give you the graduation requirements and an introduction to Social Work.

**Helpful Hint:** get to know your instructors! Find out about their backgrounds, interests in the field of social work, and previous work experience.

**Helpful Hint:** Read the Syllabus! The syllabus is the contract between you and the instructor of record for the class.

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of our social work courses, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

**Plagiarism**, use of my own or others writing without appropriate recognition and/or source citation according to current APA Writing Guidelines, is considered unethical academic and professional behavior by all entities and resources listed above and may be subject to result of failing grades earned and/or removal from the program.

### **GRIEVANCES AND GRADE APPEALS**

If you have any questions, reach out to your instructor, academic advisor, and/or the BSW program Directors. The biggest questions or concern that are related to grievances or grade appeals.

If you have a grievance relating to curriculum, class issues, assignments, or items relating to courses (NOT GRADE RELATED) you will need to contact the BSW Program Director.

If you have a grievance relating to faculty and/or staff related issues (NOT GRADE RELATED) you will need to contact the School of Social Work Director.

If you have a grievance relating to grades and/or appealing of grades, you will follow the official university policy and procedure for grade appeal.

[College of Applied Arts Grade Appeal : College of Applied Arts Advising Center : Texas State University \(txstate.edu\)](#)

The Social Work major is a stand-alone professional development degree and does not require a minor in other disciplines.

Once you have completed or completed all or most of your Phase I courses by the end of the semester, you should be applying for Phase II part of the BSW program.

### **APPLYING FOR PHASE II OF THE BSW PROGRAM**

Hard non-negotiable, you will have the required OVERALL GPA of at least 2.5 by the end of this semester prior to my conditional acceptance. Formal acceptance will be finalized during the orientation and the signing of the BSW Phase II contract. Please schedule a meeting with the Academic Advisor to ensure that all or most of the classes appear completed on your degree audit. If you can make a full schedule of Phase I classes, then you probably are not ready to apply for Phase II.

Starting the application process, you will go to the Social Work webpages from the TXST website.

[School of Social Work : Texas State University](#)

You will click on the Bachelor of Social Work Program Tab. This will open an overview of the BSW program. On the left are some BSW Degree Links, click on the BSW Admissions. You will need to be accepted into TXST and have your A# and TXST NetID. From the BSW Admissions page, you will see a Checklist & Tips – Steps to the BSW Phase II Application Process. Take the time, Read IT! When you are ready to open an application, click on the [BSW Application](#) on the page.

**Helpful Hint:** Fire Fox or Chrome is the recommended browser when you are working on the BSW application and within the BSW application system.

The application consists of 3 parts: 2 letters of recommendation (recommendation forms will be sent to by the BSW program, no letter of recommendation will be accepted), 1 long essay and 4 short answer questions, and an interview.

Upon opening the application, you will be asked for **Two (2) Completed Student Evaluation Forms:**

Applicants will need to enter the first and last names, correct email address and professional title of two individuals to complete evaluation forms. The application system provides the form to evaluators via email, as well as instructions for submitting the completed form back into the application system. Once the evaluation forms have been completed, they need to be submitted back into the application system by the evaluator following the instructions provided.

**\*LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED\***

Applications will be considered incomplete, or ‘Submitted Pending Recommendation’ status, until **both evaluations** have been submitted back into the system.

Here are the criteria for the person that you will professionally request to put their names down as references.

- 1) SOWK 1350 or SOWK 2375 Instructor at Texas State (**preferred**).
- 2) Volunteer Placement Supervisor from SOWK 2375 (**preferred**).
- 3) Supervisor from another volunteer placement, not related to SOWK 2375.
- 4) Employment Supervisor is acceptable only if no volunteer hours have been completed.
- 5) A second Social Work course Instructor.
- 6) If a second Social Work course Instructor is not an option, another university faculty member will be accepted.

Applicants may need to continue communication with evaluators, following up and gently reminding them to complete and submit evaluation forms back into the application system prior to the deadline.

Next step would be to fill out some demographic information. You will be asked about the Cohort (group of students and course delivery method) that you are applying for in the Phase II BSW program. Your options are the following: On-campus (San Marcos), On-Campus (Round Rock) or Online (which is considered San Marcos).

‘**On-Campus**’ is defined as **synchronous course delivery method**; face-to-face in-person instruction – CatsWeb Class Scheduling List identifies ‘On-Campus’ courses as ‘Main Campus’.

I understand that ‘**Online**’ is defined as **completely asynchronous course delivery method**; no face-to-face or in-person instruction; no scheduled meeting days, times, or classroom locations; only syllabus dates assigned for papers, projects, exams, quizzes, videos, films, and discussion forums via Canvas – CatsWeb Class Scheduling List identifies ‘Online’ courses as ‘Off Campus’ and includes an electronic course fee of \$50.00 per credit hour.

‘**Online**’ only applies to **BSW Phase II core courses** and does not apply to SOWK electives (offered online mostly during Summer semesters), Interdisciplinary electives from other departments, Minor courses or other additional courses required for degree plan completion that are offered ‘On-Campus’ only.

Upon acceptance into the BSW Phase II program, 'On-Campus' cohort students are approved to register for 'On-Campus' BSW Phase II core courses, and only 'Online' cohort students are approved to register for 'Online' BSW Phase II core courses.

During Phase III, 'Online' students may take Phase III SOWK 4374 Field Seminar fully online, the additional required course SOWK 4975 Field Internship/Placement will more than likely be completed fully in-person / face-to-face within a human service organization or social service agency.

I understand that I am expected to stay in my cohort / course delivery method for the entire Phase II and Phase III degree plan. I understand that switching from one cohort to the other requires a formal departmental request, an application process and administrative approval from the BSW Program Director – several factors are evaluated in the administrative decision-making process and not all requests to switch cohorts are approved. I understand that only one (1) departmentally approved cohort switch will be allowed during the degree plan.

You can start and return to the BSW application system. You will need to complete the Essay Question and Short Answer Questions. Your application will stay in the Saved Status until everything is completed and moves to Under Review Status.

### **Essay Question**

**Helpful Hints:** Carefully read all instructions, prompts and essay topics. Respond to all content requested in the essay instructions and prompts. Focus writing only on the topic selected – Check that the essay content matches the topic selected. Reflect on SOWK course information, such as SOWK 1350 & 2375 (or transfer equivalent). Apply SOWK Core Values in written content per essay instructions and prompts. Edit for spelling, essay format, word count and grammar. Use correct APA 7<sup>th</sup> ed. In-text and reference citation of sources if applicable – not enough space in text box for full reference page. Edit for spelling, writing format, word count, and grammar.

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

### **Short Answer Questions:**

**Helpful Hints:** Carefully read all instructions, prompts, and questions. Answers all prompts. Reflect on education, personal, professional, and volunteer experience. Apply SOWK core values. Edit for spelling, essay format, and grammar.

**Interview Process – Mandatory for BSW Phase II Application Process. Applications must be complete (essay, short answer, two completed evaluation forms) to receive an invitation to sign up for an interview.**

Interviews will be via zoom. The interview consists of 2 faculty members and up to 3-4 applicants. The interviews are 1 hour in length. The faculty members will ask 6 questions and if time permits, allow the applicants to ask questions.

Using AI during the interview is not permitted. Use of AI will result in the applicant being denied into the program.

**Helpful Hints:** How am I preparing for this Interview?

- Reflect on academic and professional education
- Reflect on your experiences
- Confirm technology access and reliable WiFi space for interview timeframe

Career Services provides resume review, mock-interview preparation, degree and career exploration for SOWK students, as well as a Clothing Closet for use of professional attire.

<https://www.careerservices.txstate.edu/>

Now it is decision time, the BSW committee will review interviews and applications to be able to hold a decision-making meeting. The BSW director will enter the decision into the BSW system, and you will be notified of the decision.

If accepted, congratulations. Please read your acceptance letter carefully as it will have additional information about registration for Phase II classes and a mandatory BSW orientation.

If you are not accepted, you have up to 3 attempts to get into the Phase II program. Any appeal would be to the BSW Director.

## **PHASE II: SOCIAL WORK MAJOR COURSES**

Once accepted and admitted into the Phase II program I do not need to re-apply each semester if I am progressing through the academic program successfully. If you sit out for one long semester (Fall or Spring) you must re-apply to the university. You must re-apply to the university and the BSW Phase II Program if I sit out for two long semesters (Fall or Spring) or more, no matter how far along I am in the program.

The BSW Phase II program is designed in a prescriptive course process, in that the following classes are taken in sequence together during the same semesters:

- **First Semester – SOWK 3420 Practice I, SOWK 3305 HBSE I and SOWK 4310 Diversity**
- **Second Semester – SOWK 3425 Practice II, SOWK 4305 HBSE II and SOWK 4355 Policy**
- **Third Semester – SOWK 4425 Practice III, SOWK 4356 Professionalism and SOWK 3340 Research**
- **Fourth Semester – Field Seminar and Internship, SOWK 4374 and SOWK 4975**

BSW Phase II and Phase III core courses are offered only in long semesters (Fall and Spring). Please note that the decision is based on school needs, faculty resources, number of students enrolled in section might require you to be moved from a specific section and assigned to another section of the same course

You must earn a grade of 'C' or better in each Phase I and Phase II SOWK course to receive passing credit – all grades earned lower than 'C' equates to reenrolling in, and successfully completing, the respective course. If you do not earn a grade of 'C' or better in one or more core courses in a semester sequence, you will not be approved to advance to the next semester sequence of courses – see prerequisite and corequisite indicators in course descriptions.

If you need to repeat a BSW Phase II course, you must meet with the BSW Program Director to create a strategic plan moving forward. If you must repeat a BSW course for a third time, you must meet with the BSW Program Director to determine my eligibility to continue in the program and to develop an academic plan.

**Helpful Hint** to remember: Statistics is a prerequisite for SOWK 3340 Research, sequenced in the Phase II Third Semester courses, and I will not be approved to take the two courses at the same time during the same semester.

All Phase I and Phase II courses, minor course, and academic requirements must be completed prior to applying for and entering Phase III Field / Internship – no additional course work will be approved during the same semester as SOWK 4374 and 4975.

## **PHASE III: FIELD / INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT – STARTING WITH ‘THE END’ IN MIND**

You will begin the Field / Internship placement process during Phase II Third Semester in coordination with the SOWK 4356 Professionalism instructor and the Field Office.

**Eligibility to apply for Phase III does not guarantee approval for placement in Field** – The School and Field Office are liable for the well-being of clients served during the placement; therefore, the placement will also depend on the professional aptitude and suitability as outlined by the Field Director.

A criminal background check may be part of an internship agency application, and that previous conviction(s) **may** impact potential placement acceptance as well as future licensure and professional certification application process. If you have any prior convictions, it is your responsibility to share this information with the BSW program Director as well as the Field Team as needed to help secure a field internship placement.

You are not authorized to secure my own internship, nor am I to contact agencies representing myself as a Texas State University School of Social Work intern. Employer-based field / internship placements **are not available at the undergraduate level** and will not be approved under any condition in the BSW Phase III process.

The BSW Field / Internship placement is completed in one long semester (Fall or Spring only) and totals 420 contact hours in a field practicum setting. Starting with the Fall 2025-2026 catalogue, the hours have been reduced to 400 contact hours.

Field / internship placements require the following commitments: 1) full-time schedule totaling 40 hours a week – no part-time schedule, 2) regular weekday business hours of 8:00am to 5:00pm – no nights or weekends only.

Students are discouraged from working full-time and attempting to complete field education concurrently. Paid internships or stipends may be available in some agencies on a case-by-case basis; however, most field / internship placements are unpaid – information regarding financial benefits will be provided to me by the School of Social Work (scholarship and grant information) and the Field Office (paid and/or stipend internship placements).

SOWK 4374 Field Seminar is a ‘grade earned’ of ‘B’ or better credit course, and that SOWK 4975 Field Placement is a ‘pass / fail’ course – I understand that I cannot rely upon these two courses to increase my final GPA for graduation.

### **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

I understand that I must have a Social Work Major GPA of at least 2.75, and a Texas State University GPA (not Overall GPA) of at least 2.5 to meet all requirements for graduation with a BSW degree.

Apply for Graduation: [Apply for Graduation : Commencement : Texas State University](#)

Walk the Stage and Jump into the River!



**CHAPTER 5: UNDERSTANDING THE TEXAS STATE MSW  
DEGREE PROGRAM**

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredits the Texas State Master of Social Work Program. Students in the MSW Program must comply with all of the academic and behavioral expectations outlined in the University, Graduate College, CSWE, NASW, and School of Social Work standards (on their respective websites) to become eligible to sit for state licensure.

## **HOW TEXAS STATE CONCEPTUALIZES AND ORGANIZES THE MSW**

### **MSW DEGREE CONCENTRATION**

Students pursue the degree of a Master in Social Work (MSW) with a concentration of Advanced Practice Leadership (APL). This concentration provides opportunities for the student to develop both micro and macro skills, so graduates of our program are uniquely prepared to work in either a direct practice or administrative work environment.

The School conceptualizes the knowledge, skills, and commitment to advocacy and leadership for change as basic to social work practice regardless of specialization.

### **MSW DEGREE TRACKS & COHORTS**

#### **MSW DEGREE TRACKS**

The **Foundation (Regular) track** is for students who do not hold a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree from an accredited program but instead have a bachelor's degree in another field of study. Foundation/Regular Applicants (also referred to as Non-BSW degree holders) must hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited university. The Foundation Track is 62 credit hours.

The **Advanced Standing track** (also referred to as students who hold a baccalaureate degree in social work or simply BSW degree holders) is for graduates who hold a baccalaureate degree in Social Work from a regionally accredited CSWE program. To be considered Advanced Standing, the BSW degree must be earned within the last 10 years. If the BSW degree is older than the 10-year requirement, the student would need to apply as a non-BSW degree holder (foundation/regular) applicant. The Advanced Standing Track is 36 credit hours.

#### **MSW COHORTS**

The MSW Program is cohort-based where students complete the course degree plan in a specific sequence. The MSW Program can be completed on either a full-time or a part-time basis. The various MSW program cohorts are offered as follows:

- The full-time on campus program is for both non-BSW degree holders and BSW degree holders.
- The part-time online program is for both non-BSW degree holders and BSW degree holders.
- The full-time online program is for both non-BSW degree holders and BSW degree holders.

### **HOW THE SCHOOL CHOOSES ITS STUDENTS**

The School of Social Work is part of the Texas State University Graduate College; all its procedures regarding student admission and retention conform to the Graduate College policies outlined in the Texas State University Graduate Catalogue or on the Graduate College website. Please see the Graduate College's [Application Policy Information](#).

Potential students apply first to the Texas State Graduate College using the Admissions System Slate found in their online application system, available on the [Graduate College website](#). A very modest application fee applies.

Applicants also provide official transcripts from all universities they have attended, though Texas State

graduates' transcripts are already available to the Graduate College.

[Applicants Can Apply Here](#). As part of this application process, applicants complete a Statement of Purpose (SOP). The application is enhanced if applicants can demonstrate that they have engaged in volunteer or paid work in social services, particularly to disadvantaged populations.

Applicants must demonstrate an undergraduate grade point average of 3.0.

Texas State School of Social Work does not require the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), but applicants who have a GRE score may report it.

Applicants are wise to submit their applications as early as possible, as School admissions are competitive. The MSW Director of Admissions is available to help applicants answer any questions about the application process. Once the Graduate College accepts the applicant, the School will examine complete application packets, reviewing them based on GPA, writing skills, paid and unpaid work experience in social services, and commitment to populations in need and enfranchisement.

Once applicants are admitted, they must confirm their intent to attend by signing a commitment document which the Graduate College will send them. They must also participate in mandatory orientation sessions; these occur on campus for on-campus students and online for online students.

After admission to your program, you are also expected to enroll in the term in which you are admitted. If you fail to enroll in the term of your admission, you are not guaranteed admission for future terms. For further information, visit the Graduate College's website regarding [Enrollment and Reapplication](#).

## **REAPPLICATION POLICY**

### ***APPLICANTS***

Applicants wishing to change their application to a different term will be required to submit a new application and pay the non-refundable application fee.

### ***ADMITTED STUDENTS***

Students who are accepted into a degree program and fail to enroll for the term of acceptance are not guaranteed acceptance for future terms. In some programs, students may contact admissions about the possibility of a deferral for a maximum of two full terms.

Once admitted, students are expected to enroll each fall and spring term (summer is optional for most programs).

Previously enrolled students must submit the [update enrollment form](#) in order to enroll if it has been less than a year since their last enrollment.

Previously enrolled students who fail to enroll within a one-year period will be required to submit a new admission application and non-refundable application fee. Other application documents may be required in certain circumstances. Students should review additional enrollment requirements and policies that relate to their program of study. Please see the leave of absence policy in the Academic and Grading Policies section of this catalog for more information.

### ***WHO IS THE RETURNING STUDENT?***

Returning students, sometimes referred to as former students or readmits, are students who have previously attended Texas State and want to return to campus to continue their studies after having been away for at least one long semester.

Returning students must reapply for admission. For guidance on how to reapply, including deadlines, refer to the [TXST Admissions Returning](#) website.

## **GRADUATE RESEARCH, GRADUATE, AND INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTSHIPS (GRA, GA, & GIAS)**

The School of Social Work offers various types of graduate assistantship opportunities that are available through faculty-led start-up research funds, faculty-led grant-funded research, and the School of Social Work department overseen by the MSW Program Director.

### **Faculty Start Up Funded Positions & Faculty Grant-Funded Research-Based Positions**

- Graduate Research Assistantship(s) (GRA)

### **School of Social Work Departmental Positions**

- Graduate Research Assistantship(s) (GRA)
- Graduate Instructional Assistantship(s) (GIA)
- Graduate Assistantship(s) (GA)
- Coverdell Fellowship(s)

Further information regarding each of these positions is presented below.

### **POSITION DESCRIPTIONS**

#### ***GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS ([GRA]; JOB CODE: 9002)***

In accordance with Graduate College (n.d., p. 2) policy, the Graduate Research Assistants (GRA) job description is as follows:

“Per UPPS 07.07.06, Section 02, “Graduate Research Assistants are currently employed students employed by a department or university office and may receive pay from grants, sponsored programs, indirect cost recovery, designated lines and faculty start-up accounts approved by the Division of Research, restricted accounts if the funding source allows, or other accounts approved by the Provost. Chapter 10 of the US Department of Labor’s Field Operation Handbook defines research assistants as students “engaged in research in the course of obtaining an advanced degree and the research is performed under the supervision of a member of the faculty in a research environment provided by the institution under a grant or contract”. If employed on a grant, the work performed must directly relate to the objectives of the grant. Graduate research assistants can be appointed for a semester, the academic year, or the duration of a research project or any portion thereof, and paid on a monthly basis.

#### **Preferences:**

- The School of Social Work GRA positions can either be online or on campus students as they primarily work remotely with faculty. However, this does change depending on the kind of need for support that faculty have.
- Faculty-funded (through start-up funds or grants) projects have different individual needs, so their requirements for in-person presence may vary depending on the project itself.

#### ***Hourly & Salary Positions***

GRA positions available within the School of Social Work that are offered by faculty through grant-related funds or research start-up funds can either be offered as a salaried (at 10 hours per week, 25% FTE; or at 20 hours per week, 50% FTE) or an hourly position. School of Social Work GRAs that are hired through the department are under the advisement of the MSW Program Director and are offered as a salaried position at 20 hours per week, 50% FTE.

### ***Dual Employment Policy***

In accordance with University policy, **1) salaried GRAs cannot have hourly positions concurrently, and 2) School of Social Work GRAs cannot hold faculty-led GRA positions concurrently.** Additionally, federal law also prohibits employees from volunteering in the same job category in which they are already being paid. For this reason, graduate assistants are ineligible to volunteer for one faculty member's research project as a GRA if they are currently hired as a GRA for the School of Social Work or on another faculty member's project. GRAs are eligible for hire for up to two grant-funded and/or start-up funded faculty-led research positions.

If a student currently holds a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) position—whether funded by a grant, start-up, or the School of Social Work—with one faculty member, and another faculty member identifies a potential assistantship opportunity that may be a good fit for the student, the second faculty member must first obtain approval from the primary faculty member. This primary faculty member is typically the principal investigator (PI) of the research project. In cases where appropriate, approval should also be sought from the MSW Program Director before presenting the opportunity to the student.

### ***GRADUATE INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS ([GIA]; JOB CODE: 9001)***

In accordance with Graduate College (n.d., p. 3-4) policy, the Graduate Instructional Assistants (GIA) job description is as follows:

“Per UPPS 07.07.06, Section 02, “Graduate Instructional Assistants are currently enrolled students employed by an academic department, paid from faculty salaries, but are not reported as the “teacher of record.” Graduate instructional assistants are responsible for a specific group of students (typically undergraduate students) and assign some portion of these same students’ grades. If graduate students are assigned as instructional assistants in graduate courses, they cannot grade other students’ work or have access to their grades. The dean of The Graduate College will allow an exception for doctoral instructional assistants assigned to master’s level classes, provided there is no conflict of interest. Prior to making the appointment, programs should consult with the graduate dean. The academic department may pay graduate instructional assistants’ salaries for those assisting in the operation of a lab or an activity or recitation group from course fees collected for this purpose. Graduate instructional assistants are normally appointed for a semester or the academic year and are paid on a monthly basis.

**Preferences:** The School of Social Work GIA positions prefer individuals who are able to come to campus to be directly involved with the instructional components of the courses, but this does not mean that you have to be enrolled as an on-campus student.

### ***GRADUATE ASSISTANTS ([GA]; JOB CODE: 50025749)***

In accordance with Graduate College (n.d., p. 7) policy, the Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) job description is as follows:

“Per UPPS 07.07.06, Section 02, “Graduate Assistants and Doctoral Assistants are currently enrolled students employed by a department or university office and may receive pay from grant or university funds. Responsibilities may include research (not under the supervision of a faculty member), technical assistance, and institutional support. To avoid conflicts of interests, graduate and doctoral assistants cannot have access to records of graduate students of their degree granting department. Graduate Assistants who have access to records must be FERPA trained and sign a confidentiality agreement.”

The School has a number of Graduate Assistantships available for qualified graduate students. Assistants work 20 hours per week doing a variety of tasks to help professors and the School.

## **GRA/GA/GIA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Each student considering a GRA/GIA/GA position must meet certain eligibility criteria identified in an Eligibility Criteria Checklist, in alignment with the [Graduate College's Graduate Assistantship Eligibility Overview and Checklist](#).

#### **The following situations will require justification for exemption:**

- Employment while enrolling in more than 12 graduate hours during the fall or spring semesters or more than 6 graduate hours during the summer semester (not including GA Orientation/Training Courses)
- Employment while enrolling in fewer than 9 hours during the fall or spring semesters or fewer than 3 graduate hours during the summer semester\*

*\*Enrolling below the minimum graduate level hours in any semester is a one-time exception allowed by The Graduate College and granted only upon request and review. While this exception is typically reserved for the student's final semester of enrollment, it may be used for any semester that both the student and their graduate advisor/department chair deem necessary. Once this exception has been awarded, students seeking any type of graduate assistant employment are required to enroll in a minimum of 9 graduate hours each subsequent fall and spring semester and a minimum of 3 graduate hours each subsequent summer semester to maintain eligibility. Additionally, international students enrolling less than full time must have an approval from the International Office attached to the PCR.*

#### **Automatic exemptions from the requirement:**

Summer enrollment not required as long as student was enrolled in a minimum of 9 graduate level hours during the previous spring and fall semesters

#### **COMMON STUDENT EMPLOYMENT PERCENTAGES** (\*FTE = Full Time Employment)

- 12.5% FTE (5 hours per week)
- 25% FTE (10 hours per week)
- 37.5% FTE (15 hours per week)
- 50% FTE (20 hours per week) – maximum allowed by The Graduate College & Faculty Records

### **DEADLINES**

Deadlines for submitting application materials for any GRA/GIA/GA position is provided by the respective faculty and/or departmental advisors. Please contact them directly for more information.

### **GRA/GIA/GAS AND VACATION TIME**

GRA/GIA/GAS do not receive *vacation time*. As a student worker, GRA/GIA/GAS do not formally enter their time in SAP, the time management system, and are paid on a monthly basis. For this reason, it is up to the graduate assistant's supervisor to determine whether they will allow the student to flex their time to ensure they complete the amount of hours expected. Students are allowed to flex their time to work more on certain days one week or a few extra hours the next week to make up any missing time, at the supervisor's discretion, being sure to prioritize the student's academic success. GRA/GIA/GAS are not expected to work during University breaks, including Spring Break, Fall Break, Winter Break, and University-recognized holidays. During this time, graduate assistants will still receive their salary, unless they otherwise separated from the position.

### **GRA/GIA/GA POSITIONS AND FIELD PLACEMENT**

**Per Field Education Policy**, "Field education is a significant investment of time. Students are highly discouraged from working full time and completing a final field internship concurrently. The School of Social Work does not make accommodations to work around students' work schedules and personal commitments. Students are expected to make themselves available for an internship during normal agency business hours

when clients receive standard services. After-hours agencies with evening and weekend hours only are not available for field education. *It is highly recommended that students who are employed more than 20 hours per week complete field education as a part time placement over two contiguous semesters. Part time field is only available for MSW students.*”

### **Within the School of Social Work**

To align with Field Education and Graduate College policy, MSW students who hold a School of Social Work GRA, GIA, or GA position are unable to continue with their assistantship position(s) upon entering Foundation or Final Field placement.

### **Outside of the School of Social Work**

MSW students who hold a GRA, GIA, GA, or full-time employment position outside of the School of Social Work or within the School of Social Work under faculty advisors are highly discouraged from maintaining their assistantship or full-time employment position upon entering Full-Time Foundation or Full-Time Final Field placement.

Students should note that Field Education requires:

- MSW Foundation part-time students to complete 12-14 hours per week for a minimum of three days per week
- MSW Foundation full-time students to complete 24 hours per week
- MSW Advanced part time students to complete 18-20 hours per week for a minimum of three days per week
- MSW Advanced full time students to complete 38 hours per week.

If a student chooses to maintain their employment position, to ensure the MSW Program is in alignment with Graduate College policy, students are required to meet with the advisor or supervisor of their position and submit a confirmation email to the MSW Program Director documenting that the graduate advisor or supervisor of their position has identified the following:

- Advisor must acknowledge they are aware the student will be entering into an internship position wherein which the student must complete 24-38 hours per week to meet MSW internship requirement
- Advisor or supervisor must confirm that they approve of the student maintaining their position
- Advisor or supervisor will monitor the student to ensure the student is making academic progress towards completion of their graduate degree

Please note that the MSW Program, in alignment with the [Graduate College](#), strives to prioritize the needs of Graduate Assistants by designing policies to protect the Graduate Assistant from bearing unfair employment and course load with the purpose of facilitating the timely completion of the degree.

Additionally, the MSW Program strives to uphold the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) which strives to “socialize practitioners new to the field to social work’s mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards, and encourages all social workers to engage in self-care, ongoing education, and other activities to ensure their commitment to those same core features of the profession.”

### **SEPARATION**

According to Graduate College policy (n.d., p. 1), “students must have a separation PCR processed to end employment, including when they graduate. Specifically, separation must occur as follows:

#### **Graduate Research Assistants (GRA):**

- For international students graduating, the employee is separated effective on the last day of the term.

- For domestic students graduating, the employee is separated at the discretion of department or grant PI but the latest at the end of the term

#### **Instructional Assistants (GIA):**

- For international students graduating, the employee is separated effective on the last day of the term and paid a stipend for the remainder of the contract.
- For domestic students graduating, the employee is separated at conclusion of the term contract date.

#### **Graduate Assistants (GA):**

- For international students graduating, the employee is separated effective on the last day of the term.
- For domestic students graduating, the employee is separated at the discretion of department, but the latest at the end of the term in which they are graduating (i.e., 12/31/XX, 5/15/XX, 7/15/XX, or 8/31/XX).

## **FINANCIAL AID, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND STIPENDS**

### **TITLE IV-E CHILD WELFARE PARTNERSHIP STIPENDS**

The School has two types of stipends currently available. The Title IV-E CWP stipends for child welfare services exist 1) to students, open to either BSW or MSW students, and 2) to current CPS employees in qualified positions who are interested in completing the MSW program while they continue to work at CPS. The Title IV-E CWP stipends are available for the final field semester. These stipends are competitive and require specific course prerequisites. Recipients receive a generous stipend in exchange for a contractual agreement to work in public child welfare after graduation. Those who are interested in the Title IV-E stipends should contact [Title IV-E CWP program](#) or send an email to [CWPartnership@txstate.edu](mailto:CWPartnership@txstate.edu).

The School also has several scholarships available. The School will notify students of appropriate application times and processes. Students who are interested in financial aid should contact the [Financial Aid Office](#) to discuss financial needs and options. The School hires work study students, positions which are open to all students, including Social Work students.

Also available are stipends provided by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) through the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) Project for MSW students interested in working in schools, hospital/clinics, or homeless serving agencies. These stipends are meant to support MSW students during their final field semester.

These stipends are also competitive and require specific standing in the program as well as completion of specific training modules. The BHWET stipends do not include a post-graduation contractual work agreement.

### **OTHER FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION**

While the School is unable to reimburse students for travel money spent on class and field travel, some monies are available for those students who develop professional papers or poster presentations that are presented at scholarly meetings.

Entering students may apply for the Dean's Graduate Student Scholarship.

The School also has 1-2 Research Fellowship positions for highly qualified graduate students who are particularly interested in and competent to work on research projects with selected faculty.

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

As of Fall 2024, Texas State University hosted 724 new international students and 815 continuing international students from 93 countries. Texas State's [International Student and Scholar Services \(ISSS\)](#) provides services

and support to both prospective and current international students including virtual [Pre-Arrival Sessions](#) for students and their families. These sessions include information specifically for international students related to course registration, housing, transportation, and how to prepare to enter the US among other important information. Additionally, understanding the added stress and anxiety that may be associated with maintaining status in the US, the ISSS offers [F-1 Student Advising Services](#) via appointment, email, or phone; providing communication strategies that best suit the needs of each student. Moreover, they offer information related to:

- [Immigration Check-In Procedures](#)
- [F-1 and J-1 International Student Health Insurance](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Housing Options and Information](#)
- [F-1 Regulations and Resources](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [ISSS Contact Information](#)

**Application Process:** Texas State University's [Graduate College](#) also welcomes international students from across the globe. The [Academic Success for International Graduate Students](#) webpage is geared specifically towards international graduate students; including recordings of previous and information about upcoming academic success events.

Some international students may be eligible for an advanced standing program if their BSW degree was conferred by a foreign program internationally recognized through CSWE Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Services. You will need to [contact CSWE directly](#) regarding your individual educational credentials.

GRE is not required for admission. However, to make sure all our international students are prepared to succeed in the program we do require a proof of English Proficiency Exam Score. Applicants are required to submit an approved English proficiency exam score that meets the minimum program requirements below unless they have earned a bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited U.S. institution or the equivalent from a country on [our exempt countries list](#).

- official TOEFL iBT scores required with a 78 overall
- official PTE scores required with a 52 overall
- official IELTS (academic) scores required with a 6.5 overall and
- minimum individual module scores of 6.0
- official Duolingo scores required with a 110 overall
- official TOEFL Essentials scores required with an 8.5 overall

This program does not offer admission if the scores above are not met. Review [important information](#) about official test scores.

**Field Practicum:** Field Practicum (FP) is a mandatory intensive experiential learning opportunity and “the signature pedagogy of social work”. The FP is a type of internship that will last several semesters depending on the type of program you admitted to. You will work with the field practicum office in the School to determine your interests and potential FP agency you will be assigned to. During your practicum time you will be working with clients directly and indirectly under the supervision of an experienced social worker. Please see the Field Practicum section of this handbook for the FP requirements. In addition, you will have an opportunity to connect with your peers to process your field experience during the Field Practicum Seminars.

Please note, the agency might be in the areas that will require you to use public transportation, ride share services or personal vehicles. This may add some costs to your educational experiences. The information on

how to obtain driver license can be found [here](#). If you are new to the U.S. context, some cultural discomfort may be experienced during the initial FP.

**Financial Aid:** International students are also encouraged to apply for academic scholarships at Texas State. Applicants must be currently enrolled or be admitted by the appropriate scholarship deadline to be considered for scholarships. The [International Student Scholarships](#) webpage provides more information about scholarship opportunities for international students.

In addition, consider funding your education through major grantmaking agencies focusing on international graduate students support:

- [Fulbright Foreign Student Program](#)
- [American Association of University Women](#)
- [Humphrey Fellowship](#)
- [Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program](#)
- [The Aga Khan Foundation](#)
- [The Inlaks Foundation](#)
- [The Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans](#)
- [PEO International Peace Scholarship](#)

As an international student, it might be very challenging to secure a loan through traditional financial institutions available to the U.S. citizens and residents. Here is one company that would work with you while you are in international student status:

- [Ascent](#)

## **MSW CURRICULUM**

### **MSW CURRICULUM STRUCTURE**

The MSW Program course offering is semester-based, which is 15/16 weeks for spring and fall and 10 weeks for the summer or—the fall semester begins in August and ends in December, spring semester begins in January and ends in Late April, and the summer semester begins the last week in May and ends in late July.

Our online program is 100% online. Both the on-campus and online cohorts utilize the same textbooks covering the same course content, competencies, and Core assignments. The delivery method is different. While the full-time cohorts complete 9-12 hours a semester (fall, spring, and summer), students in the part time cohorts register for 6-7 academic hours a semester (fall, spring, and summer) until program completion or full-time 9-14 hours a semester. For more information, visit the School of Social Work's webpage about the [MSW Admissions Process](#).

The MSW Program is not available at the Texas State Round Rock Campus.

The MSW Program prepares graduates of the Program to sit for state licensure.

The MSW Program does not offer accelerated eight-week courses.

The MSW Program does not offer a hybrid degree option where a student registers for a combination of online and on-campus courses in the same semester.

## MOVING THROUGH THE CURRICULUM

The MSW Program curriculum is structured to support student success while maintaining rigorous academic and professional standards. To successfully progress through the program, students are responsible for adhering to the following academic policies:

- **Maintaining Academic Standing:** A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required to remain in good standing. Students must earn a grade of “B” or better in practice courses and cannot accumulate more than two grades of “C” during their program. A grade of “D” is a failing grade in the MSW Program per Graduate College Policy.
- **Course Repetition Policies:** Students may repeat a course only once to earn a higher grade and may not repeat more than two different courses while enrolled. Failure to meet these standards may result in dismissal from the program.
- **Probation and Suspension:** Students placed on academic probation must work closely with the MSW Director or Academic Advisor to create an academic plan to address challenges and improve performance. Suspended students wishing to return must follow the reapplication process set by the Graduate College and School of Social Work.
- **Program Participation for Online Students:** Online students must ensure they reside in states authorized for enrollment. If a student moves to a state without authorization for online social work education, they may become ineligible to continue in the program. Additionally, online students must actively and consistently engage with the Canvas platform and meet participation expectations.
- By fulfilling these responsibilities and adhering to program policies, students ensure their growth as competent, ethical, and professional social workers, prepared to address the complex needs of individuals, families, and communities.

## MSW PROGRAM ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL ADVISING

Texas State University School of Social Work is committed to providing students with academic and professional advising that ensures successful educational and career planning. The following academic and professional advising policy is available to students on the MSW Program learning management system (Canvas) and the [MSW Program School of Social Work website](#).

### 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 include the following entities:

- Graduate College;
- MSW Program Director (Graduate Advisor); and
- Program Specialist/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 various interests, abilities, and goals alongside the 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 both 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-level Advisors are the official authorities to make academic-related decisions in association with the Graduate College. The primary responsibilities of the Graduate Advisor and MSW 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 MSW Academic Advisor will advise each new student who attends the MSW Student Orientation;
2. The Graduate Advisor and MSW 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 MSW 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.

### MANAGING YOUR ACADEMIC PATH

**Academic advising plans are individualized** and created to support each student’s unique goals, progress, and circumstances. Because of this, students should not rely on the schedules or advising plans of others when making their own academic decisions. Each student is responsible for following the guidance provided by the Graduate Advisor and/or MSW Academic Advisor and should consult their advisor(s) directly with any questions or concerns.

Due to FERPA restrictions, the Graduate Advisor, MSW Academic Advisor, faculty and staff are prohibited from sharing or otherwise providing access to student records with other students, family members, or friends as it will be considered a violation of student privacy and the obligations of the institution. For more information on FERPA Regulations, please visit: <https://www.registrar.txst.edu/legislative-policies/ferpa/students.html>.

## STATUS CHANGE REQUESTS

Movement between cohorts (i.e., full-time to part-time, online to on-campus) is not possible unless under extenuating circumstances. Students are expected to maintain their degree plan as outlined in the MSW contract that is signed upon enrollment. However, if there is a crisis or emergency then students may request a status change. In these cases, the student must complete the degree status change request form with the details of their circumstances to seek approval from the MSW Director/Graduate Advisor for a one-time exception. Here is the form to seek a [status change request](#).

### **Decisions are made at three times per academic year. Below are the status change request deadlines:**

For changes to become effective upon initial enrollment of August for newly admitted students only – August 1

For changes to become effective at the beginning of Fall – February 15

For changes to become effective at the beginning of Spring – September 15

If a student would like to request a status change, they must complete the degree status change request form with the details of their circumstances by September 15th (for Spring changes) or by February 15th (for Fall changes).

### **Please note the following:**

Emergencies or crises do not guarantee the ability to switch cohorts, but we do consider each situation carefully alongside the existing space and availability.

The MSW program is dependent on keeping cohorts intact. Changes in student status have direct ripple effects on other enrolled students because it changes cohort sizes and class sizes. For example, if enough students move from one cohort to another, then it could prevent our ability to offer a course because it falls below the minimum class size allowed at the University.

Adding to this challenge is that courses are not available each semester. In many instances if a student does not take a course in a given semester, then they are not able to take it again until one calendar year later. In summary, we prioritize emergency and crisis situations on a case-by-case basis, and factor in disruptions to cohorts and class sizes when making decisions.

## DROPPING AND ADDING COURSES

Students often consider dropping courses or withdrawing from the university due to academic challenges, illness, family issues, or other personal circumstances. Texas State has resources that can help you stay enrolled or, if need be, learn about what happens when you drop courses or withdraw. If a student is considering dropping a course or withdrawing from the program, the student must meet with the Graduate Academic Advisor, Program Specialist, or MSW Program Director to discuss options, request a leave of absence as needed, and receive approval before moving forward with next steps as this decision may delay graduation and academic progress as well as impact financial aid for future semesters.

### **Please note the following:**

**Dropping a class** means removing one or more courses from your schedule while you remain enrolled in at least one hour in the current semester. Here is the process for successfully [dropping a course](#) using Texas State Self-Service.

- You can drop only during the dates listed in the [academic calendar](#) for each term.
- If you drop a class before the Census Date, it will not appear on your transcript.

- It is your responsibility to complete the drop by the posted deadline.

**Withdrawing** means submitting a request to bring your credit hours down to zero hours for the specified semester. This will not interfere with additional semesters you may be registered in. If planning to withdraw from the university, you will need to meet with the MSW Program Director before submitting a withdrawal request for each available semester by the deadlines posted on the academic calendar.

For any financial aid concerns, please contact [TXST OneStop](#). For additional information regarding dropping or withdrawing, please review information found with [Enrollment Management](#).

## **TRANSFER CREDIT AND WAIVERS**

Some applicants wish to transfer from another university into the School of Social Work. The MSW Program adheres to the [Graduate College Transfer Credit policy](#). Once a student has been admitted to the MSW Program they may be permitted to utilize some graduate-level courses taken at another institution toward their graduate degree. The Graduate College Transfer Credit policy should be reviewed prior to initiating the request [Course Credit | Texas State University \(txstate.edu\)](#) If after reviewing the Graduate College Transfer Credit policy you would like to have a graduate course evaluated your request must be made in writing to the MSW Program Director/Graduate Advisor, and the request must include the following information.

- Student's Texas State ID number.
- The course name and number.
- Course description.
- Syllabus
- Institution where the course was completed.
- Semester in which course was completed, and grade earned.

**Please note:** Undergraduate coursework cannot be used to satisfy MSW degree requirements and graduate coursework completed where a degree was earned cannot be utilized to satisfy MSW degree requirements.

If a course substitution request is approved, the MSW Director/Graduate Advisor will notify the Program Specialist/Academic Advisor for the MSW Program who will submit a petition to the Graduate College to ask that the course(s) be utilized to satisfy a required degree requirement. If the Dean of the Graduate College approves the substitution course request, the petition will be made and the change(s) reflected on the degree audit report. A petition request can, however, be denied by the Dean of the Graduate College. Transfer applicants should discuss their personal situations with the Graduate College and the MSW Admissions Coordinator. [Graduate Transfer Information](#).

## **GRADUATE ELECTIVES**

A foundation student (non-BSW degree holder) degree plan outlines one three-hour graduate elective, and the advanced standing (BSW degree holder) degree plan requires two graduate electives.

A student may select a graduate-level course (5000 level) outside of SOWK to satisfy the elective(s) requirements. To do so, the course cannot duplicate SOWK course content. Please utilize the enclosed link to view social work course descriptions. If you select an elective outside of social work, send an email to the MSW Program Director and the Program Specialist or Academic Advisor. Your communication is to include the course number, course name, and course description.

In addition, include how the course(s) you have selected will benefit you in your professional development. Without this information, your request will not be processed.

Moreover, please check the prerequisites for the course(s) you have selected. A student must meet all

prerequisites, and if the course requires an override, you must contact that specific department/office for assistance.

Lastly, if the MSW Program Director approves the elective, you have selected and upon successful completion of the course(s), a petition is submitted to the Graduate College to request the course be used to satisfy degree requirements. If the petition is approved by the Dean of the Graduate College, the course(s) would be reflected in the elective component of your degree audit report.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY**

While there is an expectation of enrollment each semester in order to make progress toward the degree, there is no specific continuous enrollment requirement. For that reason, The Graduate College does not require notification if a student decides not to enroll in a given semester. However, students may want to inform their program that they are stopping out for a period of time, and programs may find that information useful in tracking student progress. In those cases, students may complete the [Leave of Absence Form for Master's Degree, Specialist Degree, and Pre-Candidacy Doctoral Students form](#) and provide it to their program. The program should then provide the form to The Graduate College to expedite processing readmit applications.

Leave of Absence is a separate process from withdrawing. Withdrawing is dropping all of one's classes in a semester (going down to 0 hours). Submitting an online withdrawal request will only withdraw a student to zero hours from the specified semester. This will not interfere with additional semesters for which a student may be registered. If planning to withdraw from the university, a student will need to submit a withdrawal request for each available semester by the deadlines posted on the [academic calendar](#). To withdraw from all classes, students must submit the [Online University Withdrawal form](#).

### **PROCESS FOR RETURNING TO THE UNIVERSITY AFTER A LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Upon resuming graduate studies after a semester of non-enrollment, all students must submit reentry paperwork, regardless of whether or not a Leave of Absence form is on file. If the student is returning within the same academic year after an absence, only the Update Enrollment form is required. If the student is returning to studies in a subsequent academic year after an absence, it is necessary to submit new admission application and non-refundable application fee to the program through the admission portal. Other application documents may be required in certain circumstances.

## **ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS & GRADING POLICIES**

### **ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

Students in the MSW Program must comply with the academic expectations outlined in the University, Graduate College, and School of Social Work standards (on their respective websites).

The School of Social Work MSW Program is part of the Graduate College. Students must adhere to the academic expectations of the Graduate College. GPA requirements, remaining in good standing, potential academic probation and suspension, and other academic expectations are formally monitored by the Graduate College in partnership with the MSW Program Director/Graduate Advisor and the MSW Academic Advisor. Students may reach out to each (i.e., Graduate College, MSW Director [Graduate Advisor], or Academic Advisor) at any point to discuss or clarify academic expectations.

Academic expectations included, but are not limited to, the following:

Students must:

- Maintain a 3.0 or above GPA during my time in the program.
- Earn a grade of "B" or better in all practice and core courses (SOWK 5308, 5309, 5310, 5313,

5314, 5316, 5317, 5322, 5323, 5370, 5371, 5372, and 5373).

- Not earn more than two grades of “C” while in the MSW program. If three “Cs” are earned during the time in the program; one course must be repeated to earn a grade of “B” or better. Students cannot earn more than two “C’s” the degree plan to graduate.
- Must contact the MSW Director/Graduate Advisor & MSW Academic Advisor if the student needs to repeat a course for the purposes of developing an academic plan and determining the student’s eligibility to continue in the MSW Program.

Additionally:

- Students can only repeat a course once to earn a grade of “C” or above.
- A grade of “D” is a failing grade in the MSW Program per Graduate College Policy. If students earn more than one “D” during the program, this may be seen as a demonstration of the student’s inability to complete graduate-level work, and the student may be ineligible to continue.
- Students can only repeat two courses while enrolled in the MSW Program. These courses cannot be the same two courses. If a student needs to repeat more than two different courses to earn a “B” or better, then it may result in the student’s removal from the MSW Program.
- If a student is placed on Academic Probation by the Graduate College (for failure to maintain a 3.0 or above GPA), the student must contact the MSW Director [Graduate Advisor] to determine their eligibility to continue in the MSW Program and submit an academic plan to ensure academic success in the future.
- If a student is suspended from the MSW Program and wishes to be considered for reinstatement, then the student must reapply to the Graduate College AND the School of Social Work. The timeline to reapply is based on Graduate College policy.
- Re-admission into the MSW Program is at the discretion of the MSW Program. Acceptance/re-admission into the Graduate College does not automatically indicate acceptance/re-admission into the MSW Program.
- Students are required to complete the MSW Program within six years of the date of initial enrollment, per [Graduate College](#) policy.

### **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

Texas State expects students to attend every scheduled class meeting. General requirements for class attendance are as follows:

1. Faculty are encouraged to establish mandatory attendance requirements in each course.
2. Each faculty member will inform students of the course attendance policy at the initial class meeting.
3. Students are responsible for understanding the attendance policy for each course in which they enroll and for meeting the attendance requirements.
4. Failure to meet the attendance requirements in a course may lower a grade.
5. Students who do not begin attendance will be administratively dropped from the course during the roster certification period.

### **RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS**

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. In accordance with Texas Education Code Section 51.911, if a student notifies the instructor(s) of each class from which they will be absent due to the observance of a religious holy day, the student will be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that absent day within a reasonable time after the absence. The Education Code includes excused absences for travel to and from the religious holy day observance. The student

may make up class assignments or examinations without penalty within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who is excused under this section shall not be penalized for the absence, but the instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to satisfactorily complete the assignment or examination within a reasonable time. Each instructor may establish additional procedures to accommodate the needs of students who are absent from classes to observe a religious holy day. These procedures must not conflict with the state law.

Coordinating Board rules provide for an appeal of a disagreement between the student and a faculty member over an absence related to a religious holy day. If a student and an instructor disagree about the nature of the absence being for the observance of a religious holy day, or if there is a disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the president or the president's designee. The president or the president's designee must consider the legislative intent of Education Code Section 51.911. The student and instructor shall abide by the decision of the president or the president's designee. The academic dean of each college serves as the president's designee to hear requests for decisions on these matters from either the faculty member or the student. Any questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Dean of Students' Office.

### **HOW THE SCHOOL GUIDES AND EVALUATES MSW STUDENTS**

Before the new student enrolls, the Graduate College and the MSW Field Advisor prepare the student's formal degree audit, which serves as the actual curriculum contract between the University and the student. Students are advised to scrupulously follow their curriculum sequence, as outlined on the degree plan. These and many more helpful issues are part of the MSW Orientation.

All courses use a variety of ways to measure whether students achieve the School's competencies and practice behaviors. Each course syllabus carefully explains the measures used in that course. Students are well-advised to carefully read the syllabus, posted on the course CANVAS site, and follow it.

### **COURSE GRADE SYMBOLS**

Texas State grades are assigned as follows "A," excellent; "B," good; "C," passing (not at the doctoral level); "D," passing (not at the graduate level); "F," failure; "I," incomplete; "U," unearned "F" (student was not academically engaged until end of term) or withdrawn failing; "DA" (Dropped administratively due to never attended); and "W," withdrawn passing. A grade of "PR," in most instances may be temporary and non-punitive, but may be assigned in selected courses where the required clock hours needed to complete requirements extend beyond the regular term or summer session. A grade of "CR" is assigned when credit only is given for a course, as, for example, in a thesis course after completion of the thesis. A grade of EP (emergency passing) may be used during significant disruptions to academic operations credited by health pandemics or natural disasters. The EP grades indicates passing credit given and counts toward attempted hours, excess hours and repeat calculations. The EP grade does not count in GPA calculations. For a complete list of grades currently and previously used at Texas State visit the Office of the University Registrar's website at <http://www.registrar.txstate.edu/our-services/grades.html>.

### **INCOMPLETE GRADE**

The "I" grade may be assigned when a student, for non-academic reasons beyond their control, has not completed a portion of the course. If a student needs to repeat a course or a significant portion of a course, a "W", "F", or "U" grade should be assigned according to regulations governing the assignments of such grades. An "I" grade from Texas State will not count as hours completed until another grade is assigned.

One year from the semester in which a Texas State "I" grade is assigned, or a time period specified by the

instructor, whichever is shorter, the I grade will automatically be changed to an “F” if the coursework has not been completed. The grade of "I" may be changed only to another letter grade and may not be extended beyond one year from term in which the original grade was assigned. A grade of "I", once changed to an "F" or another letter grade, may not be changed back to a grade of "I".

Once the grade of "I" has been changed to another letter grade, it will be computed in the student's grade point average (GPA). An “I” grade transferred from another institution remains as “I” on the Texas State record until an updated transcript is received from the other institution.

A graduate student cannot graduate with an "I" grade on their record. If the student wishes to graduate and if the course is not needed for the degree requirement, the "I" grade will have to be converted to an "F" regardless of whether the one-year time period has passed or not. A grade change request may be submitted by no later than the end of the final examination period before the student's graduation. If no grade change request is received, the grade of "I" will convert to an "F" and will be computed in the student's overall GPA.

### **WITHDRAWAL GRADE**

A "W" grade cannot be assigned if the student has not officially dropped the course within the semester deadline. A grade of “W ” is assigned if a student drops a course by the Automatic “W ” Drop/Withdrawal Deadline (see University Calendar in this catalog ). After the Automatic “W ” Drop/Withdrawal Deadline, a “U” or “W ” will be assigned depending on whether the student is passing (“W ”) or failing (“U”) the course at the time the drop/withdrawal action is officially completed. For a complete list of grades currently and previously used at Texas State visit the Office of the University Registrar's website at [www.registrar.txst.edu/our-services/grades.html](http://www.registrar.txst.edu/our-services/grades.html).

### **CHANGE OF GRADE / GRADE APPEAL**

An individual course grade may be changed when the involved faculty member certifies to the Office of the University Registrar that an error was made in computing the original grade. The grade change must be approved by the department chair/school director and the appropriate college dean. Students who wish to protest a grade earned in a course should first discuss the grade with the instructor. If no resolution is reached, the student may appeal the grade to the department chair. If no satisfactory conclusion can be reached at this level, the student may appeal to the college dean in which the course is offered, whose decision is final. In accordance with Texas State’s records retention policies, a student appeal for a change of grade must be filed no later than two years after the grade is issued.

If a student wishes to appeal a final course grade, the process can be found here: [Grade Appeal](#). Should a student face academic or behavior problems, the Graduate Advisor/MSW Coordinator can assist that student to examine options and develop a plan to resolve problems.

### **GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)**

Texas State utilizes the four-point system. The GPA is the total number of grade points earned divided by the number of semester hours attempted. Semester grade symbols have the following values: “A” = 4 points; “B” = 3 points; “C” = 2 points; “D” = 1 point; “F” and “U” = 0 points. Neither hours nor grades are calculated for "I", "CR", "PR", "NC", or "W".

### **STUDENT INDEBTEDNESS**

All University property in a student’s possession must be returned and all debts to Texas State, including past due indebtedness to loan funds, must be satisfactorily adjusted before the student is eligible to receive a statement of good standing, an official transcript of credit, graduation, or re-admission to Texas State. Moreover, continued failure to adjust such debt may result in the student’s losing the privilege of attending class.

## PROBATION AND SUSPENSION

A graduate or post-graduate student as defined in this catalog is required to maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade-point average (GPA) for all Texas State University 5000-, 6000-, and 7000-level courses (excluding required leveling courses) listed on a student's degree audit for a graduate degree. Cumulative GPAs are computed at the end of the fall term, the spring term, and the summer.

If a graduate student's cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 during any term of enrollment at Texas State, the student will be placed on academic probation. In the next term of enrollment, the student must raise his or her cumulative graduate GPA to 3.0 or above or be suspended from further graduate study at Texas State. When the student has achieved a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 at the end of the term of probation, the student will be removed from probation status. In the event a student has enrollment with no punitive grades for the semester, such as W or I grades, the academic standing from the previous semester will remain. When a grade changes, then the academic standing rules apply and updates are made to the student's record.

## READMISSION

A student on suspension may petition the graduate dean for permission to re-enroll in The Graduate College. An appeal form for the graduate dean is available on The Graduate College's website. This written appeal should include additional supporting documentation. The appeal will be reviewed by the graduate advisor and subsequently by the dean of The Graduate College. Each readmission decision is made on an individual basis and the dean of The Graduate College's decision is final. If a reinstatement is approved, the date of the reinstatement depends on the timing of the appeal, program policies, and/or conditions of the reinstatement. If a student is readmitted after being suspended, the student must maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA or be suspended again. Individual graduate programs may also impose additional cumulative GPA or course restrictions for their students.

## BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

The School of Social Work is a professional program preparing students to join the ranks of advanced-level social work practitioners. Therefore, behavioral expectations align with that of social work professionals. These expectations exist in regard to interpersonal interactions in the classroom, but also relate to the ethical standards of the University and the Social Work profession

Behavioral expectations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Students must conduct themselves as a professional always, demonstrating respect in all interactions, communication, and assignments, completing their own work, and abiding by the ethical standards of social workers while enrolled in the BSW and MSW Program.
- Unprofessional behaviors) include adherence to expectations of both the [University Honor Code](#) and the [NASW Code of Ethics](#). Expectations include but are not limited to the following:
  - a) Plagiarism on written assignments, such as not citing resources correctly, cutting and pasting others' work, presenting someone else's work as your own, etc. as well as using AI without disclosure and other inappropriate use of AI is considered academic dishonesty in the TXST Honor Code Policy.
  - b) Cheating on an exam or other assignment with the help of information from an answer key, from an electronic device (including Artificial Intelligence ["AI"] such as ChatGPT), or from any other accessible written notes.
  - c) Cheating on an exam or other assignment by completing an exam with another student and/or with assistance from anyone when the instructor has not provided permission to do so.
  - d) Engaging in bullying behaviors with peers, staff, faculty, and/or program administrators. Please note, advocacy does NOT involve bullying behaviors.

- e) Inappropriate, disrespectful, vulgar, and/or rude verbal or written communication with peers, staff, faculty, and/or program directors. The inappropriateness of the communication will be identified by the recipient and based on whether the communication is deemed inappropriate by other reasonable persons.
- f) Ethical principles and standards, as outlined for clients, are also applicable to classroom peers, school staff, faculty, program directors, and practicum and workplace colleagues.

## **MSW STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The MSW Program is dedicated to supporting students on their journey toward becoming advanced-level social work practitioners. Social work is a professional degree that requires meeting academic performance standards as outlined by the Council on Social Work Education. Students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior that adheres to the standards of the profession as per the NASW Code of Ethics. Students of Texas State University have the right to expect that both the University and the School of Social Work will support their role as learners and ensure that [Student Conduct and Community Standards](#) are honored.

## **ONLINE STUDENTS**

The MSW online program is offered full-time (generally 3 or 4 courses per semester) and part-time (generally 2 courses per semester). Online students must reside in a state in which Texas State University has enrollment authorization and complies with the learning regulations of the state in which the student resides. If, while enrolled in the program, the student moves to a state that does not have a [State Authorization](#) Agreement with Texas State University (e.g., Alabama), and prohibits enrollment of its residents into the MSW program, the student will not be allowed to continue in the MSW program. The MSW online program is meant for students to be proactive and actively and consistently engaged with course content. It is not a correspondence course and thus requires ongoing participation in the online Canvas platform and associated activities and assignments.

## **COURSE EVALUATIONS**

Departmental [Course Evaluations](#) are sent by each department. Instructors using Canvas Academic Courses can have their evaluations delivered via Canvas to their students. When evaluations are delivered via Canvas, students will see a pop-up when they click into a class, and they'll see a widget on the Canvas Dashboard with a list of all available course evaluations sent through Canvas.

## **COMPREHENSIVE EXAM**

The Graduate College requires that all graduate students complete an exit requirement. Students will complete a comprehensive online exam in Canvas. The exam is approximately 140 questions and is drawn from exams courses within the MSW program. Topics include material from all classes including research, policy, direct practice, and program planning. Students will be given three hours to complete the exam, and it must be completed in one sitting.

## **MSW FIELD PRACTICUM**

The Practicum is a major element of our educational design and is described in depth in Chapter Seven on Field Education in this Handbook. In general, students work in agencies under supervision. [Foundation Field](#) (SOWK 5410 and 5411) occurs concurrently with classroom courses and involves a total of 400 clock hours during the first year of the curriculum. [Advanced Practicum I and II](#) is the student's last experience in the program and involves 500 clock hours of agency work. Field students also attend an integrative [seminar](#) that helps students link classroom learning to field experiences.

See the Field Education Chapter (Chapter 6) and the [Field Education Handbook](#) for more information.

## **GRADUATION AND COMMENCEMENT**

In order to graduate with a graduate degree from Texas State University, you must fulfill all of your program-specific degree requirements, successfully complete your comprehensive examination, and apply for graduation.

**Please Note:** Graduate is separate from the optional commencement ceremony, the time-honored tradition of donning the cap and gown.

For more information about degree requirements and applying for graduation, please visit the [Graduate College's Graduation & Commencement](#) website.



## **CHAPTER 6: UNDERSTANDING THE TEXAS STATE FIELD EDUCATION INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

*All content from this chapter derives from the [Field Education Handbook](#). Please refer to the [Field Education Handbook](#) for all policies and procedural information.*

## HOW TEXAS STATE CONCEPTUALIZES AND ORGANIZES FIELD PLACEMENT

The School of Social Work at Texas State University endorses the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) principle that field education is the "signature pedagogy" of social work education. Field education requires all social work students to demonstrate knowledge and skills through training experiences in professionally supervised and educationally based field internship placements. Signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner.

The purpose of field education is to provide the student with the opportunity to develop competence in social work skills and professional values in actual social service settings. The comprehensive curriculum of the School of Social Work encourages the student to integrate theory, knowledge, values, and skills learned in the classroom and demonstrate mastery of social work behaviors and development of professional competencies in field education. Through coursework and field internships, students are prepared to become professional social workers with the knowledge values, and skills needed to serve individuals and families, transform communities, influence social policy, and promote social and economic justice.

The Office of Field Education, which includes the Director, Coordinators, Advisors, and Field Liaisons, are responsible for all matters related to field education. Field team members may serve as field advisors and field liaisons (see Glossary of Terms).

[The Field Education handbook](#) (from where the majority of the content in this chapter derives) guides students in field education and agency field instructors on policies and procedures relevant to the School of Social Work Field Education. Field education is an exciting time for students as they transition into the social work profession.

The School of Social Work Office of Field Education Frequently Asked Questions may be found at <https://www.socialwork.txstate.edu/fieldpracticum.html> for additional information to this handbook.

## CONDITIONS FOR STUDENTS ENROLLING IN FIELD EDUCATION

1. Representatives of the School and the agency to which the student is assigned have agreed that the purpose of field instruction in the agency is to provide the student with the opportunity to meet the learning objectives as outlined in the respective Field Practicum Handbook.
2. The School has agreed to assign students that meet the criteria of the participating agency.
3. The agency field instructor will assign those cases and client contacts that it deems reasonable for a student to handle during field practice.
4. The agency field instructor will from time to time, submit informal and/or formal reports to assist the field liaison in evaluating the student's activities in field practice.
5. The Field Director and Texas State University School of Social Work assume the responsibility for the selection of students to be placed with the agency and share with the agency, prior to placement, information about the student's academic achievement, personal characteristics, and educational needs.
6. The student is expected to follow the agency's normal office hours, stipulations against disclosing confidential information, and other rules and regulations mutually agreed upon by the School of Social Work and the agency.

## OFFICE OF FIELD EDUCATION

The Office of Field Education at Texas State University School of Social Work coordinates all Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) foundation and advanced practice field internships. Students are not expected to secure their own internships and are not encouraged to reach out to partner agencies. The Office of Field Education secures all agency placements for social work students. We place students in many

states and countries where social service agencies are available.

All eligible students are required to apply for their field education internship through an application process. Information sessions are held at the beginning of every semester to provide guidance regarding field education, answer frequently asked questions, and review available field placement options for students.

Students will be 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. 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. Field internships are available to begin in the Fall and Spring semesters. Full-time students complete one block placement approximately over a 15-week semester. Part-time students will complete field internships over two semesters.

The field education courses are as follows:

#### **BSW Field**

- SOWK 4374 - 3 credit hours/ Integrative Seminar
- SOWK 4975 - 9 credit hours/ 420 Contact Hours

#### **MSW Foundation Field**

- SOWK 5410 - 4 credit hours/ Integrative Seminar
- SOWK 5411 - 4 credit hours /360 Contact Hours

#### **MSW Advanced Field**

- SOWK 5378 - 3 credit hours/ Integrative Seminar
- SOWK 5979 - 9 credit hours/ 540 Contact Hours
- SOWK 5379/5679 - 9 credit hours/ 540 Contact Hours (PT ONLY)

Field Education is an exciting time for students and agency partners alike. The path to becoming a social work professional starts in the field placement where students realize their career options. If you have additional questions, please review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and the [Field Education Handbook for Student Interns & Field Instructors](#).

## **FIELD EDUCATION EXPERIENCE**

Field is a part of the social work curriculum across all CSWE accredited social work programs. Field education is highly dependent on social work practice settings for students to meet their educational requirements. As such, social work programs work closely with social service agencies, organizations, and industries to secure field practicum sites offering students exposure to a range of roles and skills, client populations, service delivery models, and community resources. Within each setting, social work field instructors assist students in understanding the breadth of social work practice and support the development of core social work competencies.

To be eligible for field education, students must be in good academic standing according to their program standards. BSW students must have successfully completed Phase I and Phase II of the BSW program AND any minor coursework electives BEFORE entering Phase III – Field Education. MSW foundation year students must have successfully completed foundation year coursework before entering foundation field. MSW advanced year students must have successfully completed all MSW coursework before entering Final

Advanced Field. Prior to applying for field education, students must check their GPA with academic advisors to ensure University eligibility for graduation has been met. The University established GPA standards for undergraduate and graduate students which differs from the School of Social Work.

All students complete the field education process which includes completion of introductory materials, the field practicum application and professional resume. Students eligible for field education are notified the semester before they are scheduled to begin a field internship of the steps and process. Every student is provided a degree plan to follow throughout the social work program and should be aware of the semester and year in which they are eligible for field education.

### **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF FIELD EXPERIENCE**

Field Education is an integral part of students' social work education and preparation for professional practice. The Office of Field Education seeks input from all stakeholders in the field process and will solicit both student and field instructor feedback. At the end of the semester, an online *Perceptions of Field* survey is accessible through an online link. If at any time during the field education process, a student or field instructor would like to offer feedback, emails may be sent to [SWField@txstate.edu](mailto:SWField@txstate.edu).

### **GENERALIST PRACTICE PLACEMENTS – BSW AND MSW FOUNDATION YEAR PLACEMENTS**

Generalist field placements encourage students to develop and demonstrate core generalist social work skills and competencies. Students are expected to have direct contact with service users (individual, family, and/or group) and to have learning opportunities at the organization and community levels. We aim to place students in fields of practice that provide new learning opportunities and exposure to the multiple contexts in which effective practice takes place. **We are not able to guarantee that all student preferences can be accommodated.**

### **ADVANCED PRACTICE PLACEMENTS – MSW ADVANCED YEAR PLACEMENTS**

Advanced practice placements allow for the development of advanced practice skills in a more concentrated area. Advanced practice field placements encourage students to develop expertise with a specific population, field of practice, or service delivery mode while applying social work theory and an equity based social justice lens. **We are not able to guarantee all student preferences can be accommodated.**

## **ROLES IN FIELD EDUCATION**

### **FIELD STUDENT INTERN RESPONSIBILITIES**

With the student's entrance into the profession of social work during internship, the student will be held to professional standards, NASW Code of Ethics, University policies, and agency policies. The student must also comply with the following standards:

- Must meet the academic prerequisites prior to entry into field education
- Engage with field advisor in placement process to secure internship
- Maintains records of the School of Social Work's designated professional insurance provider information
- Completes field orientation
- Completes an Educational Learning Plan with the field instructor
- Submits a weekly timesheet approved and signed by the field instructor to the field liaison
- Adheres to the required hours per week at assigned agency BSW: 28 hours per week for a minimum of three days per week
  - MSW foundation full-time: 24 hours per week for a minimum of three days per week
  - MSW foundation part-time: 12-14 hours per week for a minimum of three days per week
  - MSW advanced full-time: 38 hours per week for a minimum of three days per week

- MSW advanced part-time: 18-24 hours per week for a minimum of three days per week
- Completes field practicum over the course of at least 15 weeks in the long semesters and 10 weeks in the summer semester, if a MSW part-time student
- Attends all field integrative seminars
- Completes all specified School and agency assignments with passing grades (B or better)
- Functions in the capacity of a professional
- Fulfills the condition of program Acknowledgment and Agreement (BSW or MSW)
- Agrees to abide by the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers
- Is prompt and on time for work at the agency and adheres to the schedule mutually agreed to by student and field instructor. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the field instructor if unable to report for field practice. Unavoidable absences can be made up to a reasonable limit, as determined by the field instructor and field liaison.
- Shares experiences and relative information in field seminar discussions and participates in problem solving when appropriate
- Does outside readings assigned by the field instructor pertinent to placement and experiences
- Arranges necessary meetings and conferences with the field instructor and/or field liaison related to field practice
- Discusses concerns or questions regarding potential ethical dilemmas with field instructor and field liaison
- Evaluates the field experience and makes recommendations for future improvements through an end of semester evaluation
- Failure to fulfill any of the student field responsibilities will be grounds for dismissal or termination from field courses with a letter grade of “F” for field seminar courses and “No credit” for practicum courses

## **FIELD STUDENT PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

### **Academic Performance**

#### **Standards**

- Plans and organizes work effectively
- Turns in assignments completed and on time
- Keeps scheduled appointments (advisor, faculty, field interviews, etc.)
- Plans for personal needs to avoid interference with required education (childcare, transportation, housing, etc.)
- Develops increasing levels of knowledge and skills with awareness of integration as demonstrated through class participation, assignment, and field performance

#### **Indicators of Concern**

Appears to demonstrate patterns of:

- Poor organizational skills
- Does not manage time well
- Fails to follow directions
- Demonstrates inability to take initiative toward increasing knowledge and skills relevant to performance demands
- Requests extension for assignments
- Turning in field and/or class assignments late or incomplete
- Unexcused absences from class per class syllabus requirements

- Non-response to program communications
- Multiple absences from field placement
- Discriminatory behavior or harassment towards other on the basis of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, etc.
- Physical action directed at clients, faculty, staff, or fellow students
- Unethical professional behavior (e.g., sexual contact with a client)
- Academic misconduct (see University Policy on Student Conduct)

### **Emotional Self-Control (Self-Understanding)**

#### **Standards**

- Uses self-disclosure appropriately (e.g., student seems to have insight, self-awareness, and has resolved the issue they are sharing)
- Appears to be able to handle discussion of uncomfortable topics
- Deals appropriately in class with issues which arouse emotions and demonstrates healthy emotional regulation
- Demonstrates an awareness of one's own personal limits/bias/blind spots
- Understands the effect of one's behavior on others

#### **Indicators of Concern**

- When engaged in self-disclosure, the student appears to be working through unresolved issues and/or avoiding client issues
- The student appears to overact to or resent feedback (e.g., takes it personally)
- Appears unable/unwilling to control emotional reactions or exhibits dysregulation
- Faculty concern regarding possible alcohol/drug abuse, mental health issues, or other impairments
- Verbal threats directed at clients, faculty, staff, or students
- Demonstrates impaired judgment, decision-making, or problem-solving skills
- Consistent failure to demonstrate ability to form effective client/social worker relationship
- Appears judgmental, abrupt in manner or overly businesslike or unapproachable
- Expects perfection of self and others, critical and unprofessional in communication
- Pushes "own agenda" rather than listening to client
- Consistently "glosses over" or ignores discussion of uncomfortable topics

### **Communication Skills**

#### **Standards (Written)**

- Shows consistency in written communication. Written assignments demonstrate good spelling, appropriate use of punctuation, clear structure, paragraph formation, good organization, and follows logical sequence. Demonstrates ability to use APA style writing and citations.
- Discriminatory behavior or harassment towards other on the basis of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, etc.
- Physical action directed at clients, faculty, staff, or fellow students
- Unethical professional behavior (e.g., sexual contact with a client)
- Academic misconduct (see University Policy on Student Conduct)

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- Expects perfection of self and others, critical and unprofessional in communication
- Pushes "own agenda" rather than listening to client
- Consistently "glosses over" or ignores discussion of uncomfortable topics

## **Communication Skills**

### **Standards (Written)**

- Shows consistency in written communication. Written assignments demonstrate good spelling, appropriate use of punctuation, clear structure, paragraph formation, good organization, and follows logical sequence. Demonstrates ability to use APA style writing and citations.
- Demonstrates ability to write effectively in agency records
- Abides by University Academic Standards
- Demonstrates use of critical thinking skills

### **Indicators of Concern**

- Written work is frequently vague, shows difficulty in expressing ideas clearly and concisely
- Work appears to have been hastily prepared and not proofread
- Student has many errors in the areas of spelling, punctuation, structure, etc., and does not make effort to show improvement
- Appears to have plagiarized the work of others
- Written work is excessive and/or inadequate regarding the purpose of the work (e.g., case notes vs. term paper)

### **Standard (Verbal)**

- Can clearly articulate ideas, thoughts, concepts, etc.
- Has working proficiency of the English language when English is not the student's primary language

### **Indicators of Concern**

- Appears to have difficulty expressing self when speaking
- Difficulty communicating so that others can hear or understand

## **FIELD INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The field instructor represents the heart of the field practicum as they, in their dual role as practitioners and teachers, enable students to integrate theoretical concepts and practice realities. In close relationship with the student, it is the field instructor who leads the student to a personal understanding of the responsibilities and rewards of professional social work practice. Toward this end, field instructors assume primary responsibility for:

- Agree to supervise students in the agency placements. Each field instructor is selected by the agency and Office of Field Education based on detailed criteria
- Orient the student to the agency structure, functions, policies, services, and personnel at the beginning of the field practice and prepares a field educational learning plan with the student
- Are responsible for and in charge of the student in the agency and select and assign appropriate activities and cases for each student
- Maintain close contact with the student and retain overall responsibility for guidance and supervision. Meet with the student one on one, at least one hour per week for supervision
- Plan for the student's work
- Arrange for another person to oversee the students' activities for any days that they will not be available
- Utilize professional judgment when approving learning opportunities for the intern to participate in and with an assigned designee, ensuring they align with the CSWE competencies and the ELP
- Require the intern to report back to field instructor regarding the application of their learning during any events and activities when the field instructor or task supervisor is not present
- Discuss the objectives and expectations related to assignments with the student
- Evaluate the student's progress on a continuous basis with both the student and the field liaison
- Review contact hours and approve student's weekly timesheet prior to submission to the field liaison
- May assign appropriate outside readings
- Submit mid-term and final written student evaluations on forms provided by the Office of Field Education
- Cooperate with representatives of the Office of Field Education to provide an appropriate learning experience for the student
- Review the student's progress, accomplishments, and areas in need of professional development with the student and field liaison and recommend an agency performance grade
- Evaluate the field experience and make recommendations for future improvements through an end of semester evaluation

## **FIELD LIAISON RESPONSIBILITIES**

The role of the field liaison is to ensure a cohesive and progressive learning experience for the student in the practicum. The field liaison's responsibilities include:

- Counsel with the student to determine an appropriate, educational field placement for the student
- Make initial arrangements with agencies for field work placements for students
- Hold necessary pre-placement meetings with students for the purpose of assignment the students to an agency and determining the student's academic and performance readiness for entry into the field
- Work with the field instructor and other relevant agency personnel to structure a meaningful social work field placement for each student
- Review any student questions and concerns regarding change from initial field placement and arrange reassignment when appropriate
- Confer with the student and field instructor regarding

- General progress of the student
- Performance of the student
- Problem areas identified
- Progress towards the completion of the educational learning plan and goals
- Possible modification of the student's program of activities
- Remain available for unscheduled conferences on matters of concern to the student or the field instructor
- Obtaining evaluations from the field instructor and for determining the student's final field grade
- Recommend to the Director of Field Education a change or termination of field practicum before the end of the semester, if it is determined a student is not ready for the experience
- In unusual cases where a field setting is unable to meet the field practice agreement and educational objectives, recommend to the Director of Field Education a reassignment of the student to an agency capable of meeting these expectations and willing to invest the resources
- Provide consultation to the agency regarding educational concepts, professional issues, and practicum requirements and expectations
- Recommend and certify the final grade for the course
- Participate in the placement process of students
- Facilitate the integrative seminar and support student research
- Make every effort to visit with students face to face while in their agency during the semester to confer with the field instructor and student regarding the student's professional development in relation to the education and performance objectives. If face to face is not possible, the coordination of online conferences via Zoom or a phone conference is planned
- Address the problems that are related to the educational and professional development of field instructors in their educational role
- Participate in the field orientation for students and field instructor workshops

## **REQUIRED CONTACT HOURS**

### **BSW Internship Hours**

BSW students complete one block internship of 420 contact hours in one semester.

### **MSW Internship Hours (regular curriculum)**

MSW students enrolled in the regular MSW curriculum complete two internships consisting of foundation field which is 360 contact hours in a field practicum and advanced field which is 540 contact hours in a different field practicum.

### **MSW Internship Hours (advanced standing curriculum)**

MSW students enrolled in the advanced standing MSW curriculum complete one internship, advanced field, consisting of 540 contact hours in a different field practicum than their BSW internship.

### **Difference in Placement Sites**

Students are required to complete internships at different agencies, organizations, and/or placement sites and cannot intern at the same organization as their BSW or MSW foundation year internships.

### **Returning to Placement Sites**

Part-time MSW students who complete internships over two semesters are required to return to their same field placement by the first day of both semesters (per the University Academic Calendar).

### **Part-time MSW Hours**

Part-time MSW advanced year students who complete their internship across the spring and summer semesters are expected to complete a maximum of 24 hours per week in the spring semester and a maximum of 18 hours per week in the summer semester.

### **Required Break Between Academic Semesters**

Part-time MSW students must take a break between semesters while they are not attending seminar courses.

### **Allowable Contact Hours and Educational Learning Plan**

Allowable contact hours include those activities that correspond to work with service users, clients, couples, families, community members, etc., and directly tie to students' Educational Learning Plan learning activities and tasks. All contact hours must be documented on weekly time sheets with the specific social work competency and detailed information included in the "Fieldwork Duties Performed" section.

### **Allowable Contact Hours**

Allowable contact hours also include weekly supervision time; agency related orientations, trainings, workshops, and community meetings assigned by the agency; Educational Learning Plan development meetings; research activities for the macro and capstone research projects; supplemental learning activities assigned by agency and included within Educational Learning Plan

### **Required Break**

Students interning more than six hours in one day must take and document a 30-minute break during their hours. Students may include this time on their time sheets if they engage in a self-care activity and document this activity on their weekly time sheet.

### **Prohibited Contact Hours**

Prohibited contact hours include field seminar class time; travel to and from seminar; travel time to and from internship; supplemental activities not assigned by agency nor included within Educational Learning Plan; field seminar homework; meetings on campus with Office of Field Education representatives; self-care activities (aside from 1.06.02); any activities not documented within the Educational Learning Plan

### **Minimum Day Requirement**

All students must attend their internship a minimum of three days per week for the entire academic semester.

### **Semester Start and End Dates**

The earliest students may conclude their internship hours is the last day of classes and the latest students may conclude their internship hours is the last day of the term, per the Texas State University academic calendar. Students must have the support of their field instructor, must demonstrate successful completion of all required hours, and completion of all field assignments, projects, and documents to complete field education.

### **Internship Schedules**

Students' internship schedules are individually negotiated with their field instructor and must not conflict with their classroom/seminar schedule.

### **Supplemental Evening and Weekend Hours**

Field placement sites may offer students evening or weekend hours; however, the School of Social Work does not allow evening and weekend only internships and will not approve evening and weekend hours if there is not an agency professional on site and available.

### **Evening and Weekend Only Hours**

Students may not exclusively complete their field hours during evening or weekend hours.

### **Student Availability**

Students must be available for practicum placements during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, 7:30 am – 6:00 pm) and during times when professional staff are working and available to supervise the student.

## **TRAINING EXPERIENCE**

Part of the training experience involves participating in the life of the agency, attending regularly scheduled meetings, and other activities involving or sponsored by the agency.

## **APPROVAL OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

Field instructors must utilize professional judgment when allowing and approving learning opportunities for the student to participate in with an assigned designee (task supervisor/agency professional), ensuring the learning opportunity is aligned with the CSWE competencies and ELP.

## **APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION**

Students cannot attend learning opportunities/events alone or without their field instructor/agency representative as this time will not be counted toward the total number of hours required. The student must utilize time during weekly supervision to report back to the field instructor regarding the application of their learning during any events and activities when the field instructor or task supervisor is not present.

## **CREDIT FOR WORK EXPERIENCE**

The policies and standards of the national accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), state: “Academic credit for life experience or previous work experience is not given...” Therefore, students will not receive academic credit for life experience and previous work.

## **FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT AND INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS**

Students are highly discouraged from working full-time and competing a full-time field internship concurrently. The School of Social Work does not make accommodations to work around students’ work schedule and personal commitments. Students are expected to make themselves available for an internship during normal agency business hours when clients receive standard services.

## **STUDENT FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT**

It is highly recommended that students who are employed more than 20 hours per week complete field education a part-time placement over two continuous semesters. Part-time field is only available for MSW students.

## **SICK LEAVE/LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

In the case of illness or medical circumstances necessitating absence from the agency, students must notify the field instructor and take responsibility for canceling or rescheduling appointments and/or meetings. Hours missed must be made up at a time agreed upon by the student and field instructor. Excessive absences from the agency or seminar attendance, may result in a grade of ‘F’. Medical issues are not an automatic excused absence.

## **TRANSPORTATION TO FIELD SETTING**

Students are responsible for securing their own transportation to and from the field setting. All students are required to complete the Acknowledgment Form from the Texas State University Office of General Counsel which acknowledges this responsibility.

## **PROHIBITED CLIENT TRANSPORT**

Students cannot transport agency clients.

## **TRAVEL**

Students are responsible for their own automobile liability insurance coverage for agency-related travel, if such coverage is not provided by the agency. The School of Social Work has no funds with which to reimburse students for civil lawsuits or damage of their automobiles or for other expenses incurred in the conduct of agency business. Reimbursement for agency-related expenses, including travel should be the responsibility of the agency, and should be congruent with the agency reimbursement policies and rates for regular staff. The student assumes all liability for out of area travel that is completed as a requirement of a field placement.

## **PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE**

All students are required to have professional liability insurance through the University prior to engaging in client-facing activities at the agency. The annual policy covers the School of Social Work during academic periods, September 1 through August 31. Students enrolled in field courses are covered throughout their enrollment period and not before nor after. This policy is provided by the School of Social Work. Each student must retain a copy of the insurance policy which is provided by the Office of Field Education.

## **AGENCY REQUIRED CLEARANCES**

Some agencies may require students to complete criminal background checks, drug testing, and/or health or immunization records to be considered for a placement with them.

## **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

A student who wishes to be placed in an agency that requires a background check will need to complete a background check as a condition of being placed. Some agencies prefer that students use the agency's background check procedure (students may be expected to pay for the check) while other agencies expect students to use the School's procedure. Students will be informed if they must have a background check and will receive instructions.

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY OF BACKGROUND CHECKS**

It is the responsibility of the student to complete background check information according to agency policy, procedures, and timelines. Texas State School of Social Work will not be responsible for covering the costs of additional agency requirements.

## **CASTLEBRANCH**

The School of Social Work contracts with CastleBranch for all screenings. To initiate a background check using the School's procedure, the student will visit the [CastBranch.com](http://CastBranch.com) website, enter the School's portal code (TW90), and then select the appropriate "Package Name" from the drop-down menu to purchase the background check. Students are responsible for covering the cost of the background check purchased through [CastleBranch.com](http://CastleBranch.com). **Refer to Appendix A in the [Field Handbook](#) for information on how to place an order with CastleBranch.**

## **STUDENT SAFETY IN THE FIELD**

Students, field instructors, and agencies are expected to collaborate to enhance safety and minimize risk in the placement on a continual and ongoing basis throughout the duration of the internship. Each agency and field instructor are responsible for orienting student interns to the safety and risk management policies and procedures of that setting during the agency orientation and supervision. Conversations regarding safety guidelines for home visits, angry and/or violent service users, unprofessional staff, threats of violence, etc. should be discussed regularly. Students should not be forced to engage in assignments in which they feel their physical safety might be compromised. Students should discuss their safety concerns with their field instructor and field liaison.

## **PERSONAL ITEMS**

All students are expected to have a secure place to keep their belongings while at their placement. It is preferable that the space can be locked. It is best not to leave personal items visible and unattended, even in an office with the door closed. Valuables should not be brought to placement settings. Items of value should not be left in cars and should not be placed out of view just prior to leaving a vehicle.

## **AGENCY-SPECIFIC SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

When working with service users, it is important to remember that the change process often makes people feel vulnerable and may challenge their usual coping mechanisms. With some people, this can contribute to problems with impulse control and can raise safety concerns for the service user, the social worker, and others. There may be times when students work with individuals who have difficulty with reality testing, dealing with overwhelming emotions, and controlling their anger. Some of them may be prone to violence and may possess a weapon. Other service users may be intoxicated, in withdrawal, or may have medical and/or neurological disorders. Students should consult with agency and/or field instructors regarding preparation for and handling specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as medical emergencies, suicide or homicide risks, potential abuse of others, and the presence of weapons.

## **STUDENT SAFETY WHEN MEETING WITH SERVICE USERS**

If a student will be meeting with a service user with whom the student does not feel safe, it is important to discuss the situation fully with the field instructor. When considering location of the meeting, it might be helpful to think about what is in the room, whether there is more than one exit, and where each person might sit. Students must schedule appointments with service users at times when the field instructor or other appropriate professional staff is in the building and readily available if needed. It is also important to discuss the backup plan for assistance in the event the service user becomes agitated or there is another urgent need for support.

## **HOME VISITS**

The School of Social Work requires students to conduct home visits with another agency employee. Interns will not conduct home visits alone at any point during their internship due to inter safety and University liability coverage. Prior to conducting a home visit with an agency employee, there should be a discussion overviewing the importance in having information about the client before the home visit. In addition, if there is a question of safety, a potential plan should be discussed with the field instructor. Prior to the visit it is recommended to discuss the address and neighborhood of the client visit, the use of a cell phone, and communication with the agency when the home visit is completed.