



# **MSW PROGRAM MANUAL**

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## Welcome

Welcome to the Master of Social Work (MSW) program at the University of North Texas. Students in the MSW program have an opportunity to take courses from instructors committed to social work education and the advancement of the social work profession.

There has never been a time when our society has faced more acutely issues relevant to the social work profession. The MSW program provides a challenging opportunity for you to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to help oppressed populations, promote social justice, and address contemporary social problems. We encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities available to you at the University of North Texas. As an active participant in your learning process and student life, you will gain significant knowledge and skills as well as professional contacts needed to have a rewarding and successful career as a social work professional.

UNT MSW graduates are employed in diverse areas such as child protective services, substance abuse treatment, hospitals and medical clinics, family and children's services, criminal justice, adoptions and foster care, hospice and long-term care, as well as in a variety of anti-poverty and social justice settings. They are employed not only throughout Texas but also across the United States. In earning the MSW degree at UNT, you will join the ranks of influential professional social workers who have gone on to make a difference in the lives of thousands of people.

Welcome to the Challenge!

## **INTRODUCTION**

The MSW at the University of North Texas, located in Denton, Texas, is an Advanced Generalist MSW program.

### **The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)**

CSWE is the national accrediting body for social work education programs. The MSW degree at UNT is on track to be fully accredited by summer 2024, and is currently in candidacy status. The Bachelor of Social Work degree program at UNT has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education since 1975. This national accrediting body is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the operation and curricula of undergraduate and graduate social work degree programs. To be accredited, these programs must meet standards that are designed to ensure quality social work education and rigorous professional preparation.

The CSWE rewrites accreditation standards every eight years in a document known as EPAS: Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards. EPAS contains all of the accreditation rules and expectations of all accredited programs.

Here is the 2015 EPAS document: <https://www.cswe.org/getmedia/23a35a39-78c7-453f-b805-b67f1dca2ee5/2015-epas-and-glossary.pdf>

Graduates of programs that are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education receive educational experiences consistent with those of social work students across the nation and relevant to the major currents within the profession of social work. CSWE accreditation standards guide all aspects of the MSW program.

### **Advanced Generalist Social Work Education**

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice. Generalist practitioners incorporate diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice. Generalist practice incorporates all the core competencies (EPAS, 2015, pp. 7-9).

The MSW program at UNT is an Advanced Generalist Program. Advanced Generalist social work practitioners are equipped for practice in virtually any setting and may be perceived as having three key areas of strength: “multidimensional problem-setting, self-reflective leadership, and ethical advocacy” (Lavitt, 2009).

MSW programs are required by the accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) to have at least one practice specialty. Advanced Generalist, as an area of specialization for MSW programs was introduced almost 30 years ago and the number of Advanced Generalist programs have grown quickly. With rapidly changing societal problems, evolving social service needs, resources, and funding, a specialization in Advanced Generalist practice meets complex needs. We designate the Advanced Generalist year as the Advanced Year.

## **MISSION AND GOALS**

### **Mission**

The mission statement of the UNT MSW Program is to prepare effective advanced generalist social workers for ethical practice and leadership across settings and to promote human and community well-being in rapidly changing environments. The program is dedicated to preparing graduates to apply evidence-informed knowledge, skills and values as they address complex issues and problems, while promoting social and economic justice with those who are vulnerable and oppressed. With a global perspective of our interdependent world, graduates will practice and promote respect for human diversity and the advancement of human rights to benefit the quality of life for individuals, groups, families, organizations and communities.

### **Program Goals**

1. To prepare professional social workers who competently practice with a solid ethical base founded upon the values and principles of the profession.
2. To prepare professional social workers to apply advanced knowledge and skills in complex practice environments.
3. To prepare professional social workers to effectively incorporate a global perspective and dimensions of diversity in practice
4. To prepare professional social workers to act as agents of positive social change by understanding and analyzing injustice and implementing social and economic justice strategies.

### **Council on Social Work Education Core Competencies**

CSWE is the accrediting body of the UNT MSW program. CSWE requires accredited social work graduate programs to deliver curriculum to students that will assist them in acquiring the following competencies:

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
3. Advance human rights and social and economic and environmental justice.
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice
5. Engage in policy practice.
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Recognizing that generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and includes a strong professional foundation, the MSW degree plan has been developed accordingly.

**DEGREE PLANS/PLAN OF STUDY FOR MSW PROGRAM OPTIONS**

<b>Traditional Degree Plan 60 Credits (Four Semesters)</b>			
<b>Semester</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Hrs</b>
<b>1</b>	SOWK 5200	Practice with Individuals and Groups	3
	SOWK 5210	Practice with Organizations & Communities	3
	SOWK 5240	Human Diversity & Multicultural Practice	3
	SOWK 5300	The Social Work Profession: Ethics and Policy	3
	SOWK 5400	Social Work Research Methods	3
		<b>Semester 1 Total</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2</b>	SOWK 5110	Human Behavior and the Social Environment	3
	SOWK 5870	Foundation Field Seminar	3
	SOWK 5875	Foundation Field Practicum	9
			<b>Semester 2 Total</b>
<b>3</b>	SOWK 5230	Multidimensional Assessment in Social Work	3
	SOWK 5250	Interventions in Social Work	3
	SOWK 5330	Policy Practice and Analysis	3
	SOWK 5410	Program Administration and Evaluation	3
	SOWK 55xx	Social Work Elective	3
		<b>Semester 3 Total</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4</b>	SOWK 55xx	Social Work Elective	3
	SOWK 5880	Advanced Field Seminar	3
	SOWK 5885	Advanced Field Practicum	9
		<b>Semester 4 Total</b>	<b>15</b>
		<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>60</b>

<b>Traditional Extended Degree Plan 60 Credits (Six Semesters)</b>			
<b>Semester</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Hrs</b>
<b>1</b>	SOWK 5300	The Social Work Profession: Ethics and Policy	3
	SOWK 5200	Practice with Individuals and Groups	3
	SOWK 5400	Social Work Research Methods	3
	Semester 1 Total		9
<b>2</b>	SOWK 5210	Practice with Organizations & Communities	3
	SOWK 5110	Human Behavior and the Social Environment	3
	SOWK 5240	Human Diversity & Multicultural Practice	3
	Semester 2 Total		9
<b>3</b>	SOWK 5870	Foundation Field Seminar	3
	SOWK 5875	Foundation Field Practicum	9
	Semester 3 Total		12
<b>4</b>	SOWK 5230	Multidimensional Assessment in Social Work	3
	SOWK 5410	Program Administration and Evaluation	3
	SOWK 55xx	Social Work Elective	3
	Semester 4 Total		9
<b>5</b>	SOWK 5250	Interventions in Social Work	3
	SOWK 5330	Policy Practice and Analysis	3
	SOWK 55xx	Social Work Elective	3
Semester 5 Total		9	
<b>6</b>	SOWK 5880	Advanced Field Seminar	3
	SOWK 5885	Advanced Field Practicum	9
Semester 6 Total		12	
Total Credits		60	

<b>Advanced Standing Degree Plan 30 Credits (Two Semesters)</b>			
<b>Semester</b>			
<b>1</b>	SOWK 5230	Multidimensional Assessment in Social Work	3
	SOWK 5250	Interventions in Social Work	3
	SOWK 5330	Policy Practice and Analysis	3
	SOWK 5410	Program Administration and Evaluation	3
	SOWK 55xx	Social Work Elective	3
		Semester 1 Total	15
<b>2</b>	SOWK 55xx	Social Work Elective	3
	SOWK 5880	Advanced Field Seminar	3
	SOWK 5885	Advanced Field Practicum	9
		Semester 2 Total	15
		Total Credits	30



<b>Advanced Standing Degree Plan Extended Program 30 Credits (Three Semesters)</b>			
<b>Semester</b>			
<b>1</b>	SOWK 5230	Multidimensional Assessment in Social Work	3
	SOWK 5410	Program Administration and Evaluation	3
	SOWK 55xx	Social Work Elective	3
Semester 1 Total			9
<b>2</b>	SOWK 5250	Interventions in Social Work	3
	SOWK 5330	Policy Practice and Analysis	3
	SOWK 55xx	Social Work Elective	3
Semester 2 Total			9
<b>3</b>	SOWK 5880	Advanced Field Seminar	3
	SOWK 5885	Advanced Field Practicum	9
Semester 3 Total			12
Total Credits			30

## **Advising Requirements**

Academic and professional advising are an essential part of the Social Work educational experience. The UNT MSW program assigns a faculty advisor to all Social Work students to ensure that each student understands the academic requirements for earning an MSW degree and progresses through the program in an orderly and timely manner. The faculty advisor will also provide professional and career advising. This one-to-one advising encompasses academic, professional and career advising, and when necessary, addresses special academic needs or problems.

A number of policies surrounding advising are in place and are as follows:

1. Initial academic advising (pre-first semester) for entering students will be completed by the MSW program director or a designee. Students will be assigned a faculty advisor after beginning coursework.
2. All students enrolled in SOWK courses are required to meet with their faculty advisor every semester for professional advising as well as academic advising for the next semester.
3. Students should contact their advisor early in each term for an appointment, be on time for their advising meetings, and contact the advisor in advance if unable to attend. Students who choose not to meet with an advisor may risk delaying their eligible field semester and/or graduation.

Students should register for and complete all recommended courses in the proper sequence. Certain courses and pre-requisites for field seminar and practicum.

## **MSW ADMISSIONS PROCESS**

### **Application Eligibility Requirements**

The MSW program requires students to have a bachelor's degree with a liberal arts foundation from an accredited college or university recognized by a regional accrediting association. In Texas, the state undergraduate core is generally considered adequate for the liberal arts foundation. A GPA of 3.0 in the last 60 hours of undergraduate (and graduate, if applicable) coursework is required. An applicant may be asked to participate in an interview if there is a question or concern regarding clarification of their application or suitability for the program.

See page 13 under **Advanced Standing Program— those with a BSW degree (30 credit program)** for eligibility requirements for the Advanced Standing Program.

### **Transfer credits**

Prospective transfer students must first apply to the UNT MSW program [here](#) and be admitted before a determination will be made on graduate credit hours that may be accepted. We only review transfer credits from other CSWE accredited programs. This means applicants with graduate credit hours outside of social work will not be able to transfer credits into the program. Practice courses, Field Practicum courses, and Field Seminar courses from another institution will not be accepted.

MSW courses taken at another institution will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and subject to approval before they can be transferred into the MSW program. Transfer credits are limited in accordance with graduate school guidelines up to 9 credit hours. Admission to the MSW Program does not guarantee approval of transfer credits.

Prior to admission to the program,

1. Applicants will need to contact the institution they are transferring from to request a letter of recommendation from the MSW Program Director or Chair to be sent to [socialwork@unt.edu](mailto:socialwork@unt.edu).
2. Applicants requesting to transfer into the UNT MSW program must provide this letter prior to the application deadline or they will not be considered for admission.

Once admitted into the program, applicants requesting transfer credit must send an email to [socialwork@unt.edu](mailto:socialwork@unt.edu) with the following attachments:

1. A letter of request to the MSW Program Director that identifies the course(s) for which the transfer credit is requested,
2. A copy of the official catalog of the university where the course was taken,
3. A copy of the course syllabus
4. An official transcript showing the grade earned (Only grade of B or higher will be considered)

The MSW program does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience. Students must complete the full curriculum and all practicum requirements in order to graduate from the program.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

MSW applicants complete our online application at <https://hps.unt.edu/sowk/msw-application-process> by submitting the following: Current personal and education information, answers to three essay questions as part of a personal statement, and contacts for three references.

**Step one** involves submitting your application to ApplyTexas: <https://www.applytexas.org/>.

\*ApplyTexas includes an application fee.

### **Transcripts**

Official transcripts will be required in the **second step** of the application process. Please submit your transcripts directly through the ApplyTexas site.

**Step three** involves completing **the MSW Program Department Application**, which the admissions committee will review. The application is found at <https://hps.unt.edu/sowk/msw-application-process>.

The department application includes completing a personal statement. A strong component of the application is the applicant's personal statement. Applicants address the following essay questions:

1. Please describe your interest and professional goals in pursuing a Master of Social Work degree. Describe any experiences that have influenced your decision.
2. Discuss your views on the importance of cultural and social diversity in social work practice. Elaborate on experiences you have had with diverse populations. Describe the impact these experiences have had on your attitudes and biases.
3. In addition to traditional coursework, as a graduate student in social work, you will participate in 1-2 full-time field practicum placements **requiring approximately 30-35 hours per week** in an agency setting. Each practicum will be in one semester, face to face, and during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 8am – 5pm). Considering this, please describe a specific plan to balance your work, education, and personal life, as well as practice self-care as you engage in graduate study.

In addition to the above, the admissions committee will consider the following in their review of your personal statement:

- Critical thinking skills
- The ability to write at the level of a professional with appropriate grammar, spelling, and structure.
- Thoroughness and organization of responses.
- The applicant's professional readiness and emotional suitability for the field of Social Work.
- The applicant's display of reasonable knowledge about themselves and the goodness of fit with the profession.

### **References**

A list of three references is required for the application from people who know the applicant well in a professional, academic, and/or volunteer setting. The list should include

name, title, contact information email, and phone number), and relationship to three professional references. If you earned your undergraduate degree in the last 5 years, at least one reference should be a faculty member. If you have an undergraduate degree in social work, one of these references should be your field instructor from your practicum site. ***An interview may be required in some circumstances to obtain additional information.***

The application process for the MSW Program is competitive and a completed MSW program application and/or an *ApplyTexas* application does not guarantee acceptance into the program. A final determination of acceptance will be made by the admissions committee after the *ApplyTexas* application is completed. Some applicants may be accepted on a conditional basis due to identified deficit areas. If notified by email of conditional acceptance they must maintain a 3.0 grade point average in their first semester of the program or be dismissed from the program. All applicants will be notified of the admission committee decision by email.

### **TRADITIONAL PROGRAM (60 CREDIT PROGRAM)**

*Two-Year Program (30 credits Foundation year, 30 credits Advanced Year)*

Those with a bachelor's degree other than a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning, or those with a BSW degree from a program that is not accredited by the CSWE, are eligible to apply to the MSW program and, if admitted, will participate in the traditional (60 credit hour) degree program. The first 30 hours of credits are the Foundation curriculum year and consist of coursework typically found in accredited BSW programs. After the Foundation year, students will complete an advanced generalist curriculum or "Advanced Year" for the last 30 hours of the program.

### **ADVANCED STANDING PROGRAM (30 CREDIT PROGRAM)**

Graduates of CSWE accredited BSW programs (or recognized through its International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Services, or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors) who have matriculated in the last 5 years are eligible to apply to the MSW program with Advanced Standing status and enter directly into the Advanced Year.

Advanced Standing students may complete the MSW program in 30 semester credit hours.

## **MSW PROGRAM CLASSROOM RELATED POLICIES**

### **Attendance Policy**

Consistent attendance and professionalism are vital to social work education. While absence penalties are determined within each course separately, it is generally expected that students attend every class and are on time as they are preparing themselves for the social work profession. Regular attendance for the entire class period is expected, as is punctuality. University sanctioned excused absences may be requested with satisfactory evidence provided (i.e. military service, religious holy day, university function) in accordance with UNT attendance policy 15.2.5.

### **Intellectual Property**

All course materials and course content are the intellectual property of the instructor and/or your classmates. As a result, recording audio or video of the class, as well as the duplication of or forwarding of e-mail and Canvas postings is prohibited without written permission. This means, for example, that you may not post materials from the class, audio of lectures, or video of the class to personal web pages, Facebook, YouTube or any other electronic medium without the written consent of the instructor, and if appropriate, all relevant class members. Students may, however, request permission from the instructor to record course lectures for personal academic use. (See UNT Policies-Academic Integrity)

### **Academic Status GPA Requirement**

- MSW students must maintain an overall graduate GPA of 3.0 in order to remain in good standing with the graduate school and to graduate from the master's degree program.
- MSW graduate students are required to achieve a grade of "B" or higher in all courses with a SOWK-prefix.

Should the student receive a grade of less than "B" in any SOWK course, the student will have one additional opportunity to enroll in the course to achieve a grade of "B" or higher. If a student takes a SOWK course twice without achieving a grade of "B" or higher, students will be terminated from the program. Should a student receives less than a "B" in a 2nd course in the program, the student will be terminated from the program (this applies if two grades lower than a "B" occur in the same semester).

## **EVALUATING STUDENT ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE**

The CSWE document, 2015 Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), provides guidance in the evaluation of academic and professional performance. Ultimately, students in the MSW must demonstrate that they are capable of functioning at the level of an Advanced Generalist practitioner in order to graduate. EPAS discusses social work practice competence as consisting of “nine interrelated competencies and component behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes.” Proficiency in each of these nine competency areas must be demonstrated, observed, and measured in two ways.

Field practicum, described by CSWE as the “Signature Pedagogy” in social work education, is the component where observation of competence is most readily available. In the MSW Program, students are evaluated for mastery of the nine competencies using the Final Field Evaluations completed by their field instructors both in the Foundation Year and the Advanced Year.

Academic progress through the program is determined through the use of graded assignments, tests, papers, practice demonstrations, and other means throughout the coursework. Grades are considered a measure of academic progress.

Professional progress, or simply, “professionalism” is expected of all students at all times in the program. The MSW program adheres to all university guidelines, procedures, policies, and regulations. However, there are program specific areas of concern regarding student conduct within the Social Work Program of which students should be aware.

All assignments and written work submitted in the program may be included by MSW faculty as part of a review to determine if sufficient progress is being made by the student to continue in the program.

### **Professional Etiquette**

The University experience is intended to assist in preparing students for professional and career pursuits. That preparation includes learning to use professional etiquette in dealing with people in various positions. The appropriate way to address your instructor depends on their particular education credentials. These are usually indicated on the course syllabus.

If your instructor has a:

- Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.), you should address them as: Dr. Instructor’s last name
- Master’s degree (MA, MS, MSW, MSSW) you should address them as: Professor Instructor’s last name
- Law degree (J.D.) you should address them as: Professor Instructor’s last name

If you are not certain about an instructor’s education credentials, you should address them as “Professor.” It is not appropriate to call the instructor by their first name unless given permission.

Professional etiquette extends to all types of communication with your instructor. Written communication—including email—forms a permanent record and so it is important to use care about how you make requests, ask questions, or express concerns. Slang (e.g., Hey, Yo) and texting abbreviations should be avoided. The use of profanity is not permitted.

Any type of communication—verbal or written—is most likely to achieve the intended result when it is polite or courteous. Please note that communication can be polite even if there is some type of conflict involved. Instructors may choose not to respond to emails or other forms of communication perceived as insulting, disrespectful, or unprofessional.

## **Professional Conduct**

The Department of Social Work puts an extremely high value on its rapport with students, in part because it is our main task to prepare them for careers in human service professions. The goal of the College of Health and Public Services' (HPS) academic programs is to prepare students for ethically and socially responsible leadership roles in public and community service careers within an increasingly diverse and complex world.

All social work faculty and students should be concerned with maintaining the integrity of the social work profession. Social work is a professional degree and as such, is guided by professional standards of conduct and are to follow university policies and regulations as indicated in the UNT Student Handbook as well. Faculty members are charged with the responsibility to maintain the order and fairness in class and sometimes, when necessary to remind students of appropriate behavior in the classroom. This is necessary because problematic behaviors can set the stage for serious problems in obtaining and retaining professional employment after graduation and there is the potential to disrupt and interfere with other students' learning.

Therefore, the following behaviors will not be tolerated in class: Sleeping; Cross-talk, or carrying on private conversations during lectures and discussions; Wandering in and out of classes that are in progress; Taking or making cell phone calls or texts during class; Inappropriate use of laptops in class; expectations that classes will be canceled when professors cannot be present and/or on days adjacent to holiday (this is a policy violation taken seriously by our accreditation boards); and surliness and flippancy in communicating with faculty, staff and other students. Students may be asked to leave class at the discretion of the instructor.

Social work students must conduct themselves in a manner that is congruent with ethical standards of the profession as specified in the National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics and must uphold core social work values. You will receive a copy of the social work program's Expectations of Student Conduct and sign off in agreement to adhere to the code upon admission to the program and while in field placement.

Due to the professional nature and helping role of social work, impairment in some areas may not be conducive to a career in this field (mental illness, substance abuse, previous felony, child abuse record). If you have concerns that your background may cause difficulty for a career in the profession of social work, you are encouraged to meet with the MSW Director about your concerns. However, it is your responsibility to investigate how this may affect your capacity to be licensed or attain work as a professional social worker.

Some violations of conduct compromise the student's integrity and ability to perform as a professional social worker. Once you have been admitted to the program, failure to uphold the NASW Code of Ethics, Texas Code of Conduct, and the UNT Expectations of Student Conduct may result in dismissal from the program.

Any student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any instructional



setting at UNT. This includes traditional face-to-face classes, online or blended classes, labs, discussion groups or boards, field trips, and verbal and/or written (including email) communication with the instructor and/or other students. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to, disrespectful treatment of other students (verbal or written), disrupting lecture, and use of inappropriate or profane language or gestures in class or other instructional settings.

A student engaging in unacceptable behavior may be directed to leave the classroom or other instructional setting and may also be referred to the Dean of Students to consider whether his/her conduct violates UNT's Student Code of Conduct.

## Areas of Misconduct

***Some critical areas of misconduct that require adverse action include, but are not limited to:***

- ***Professional Ethics.*** This involves violations of professional standards (i.e. conflict of interest, sexual activity, sexual harassment, derogatory or unprofessional language, breach of privacy/confidentiality, deceit, misrepresentation, physical/verbal abuse, client endangerment, falsification of records). Disciplinary action will be based on the nature of the violation and the individual's circumstances.
- ***Mental illness/Substance Abuse.*** This may include the possession /consumption of alcohol or substances, as well as impairment as a result of illness/substance abuse. Although impairment is not in itself reason for dismissal, there is concern regarding the effect any impairment may have on the student's ability to perform. The emotional instability of the student may impede competency and effectiveness with the client system. Consideration of disciplinary action is determined by the nature of student impairment and receptivity to appropriate intervention.
- ***Illegal activity.*** Violations of law are considered in regards to the extent of the criminal activity and violation of professional values (i.e. fraud, forgery, telephone misuse, theft, unauthorized use of school property). Activity outside the professional role of social worker are considered and reviewed on an individual basis.
- ***Classroom/Field behavior.*** The disruption of class or field activities is prohibited. Behavior that undermines class progress, other students, field agencies, impedes learning or the assistance of client systems is subject to disciplinary action (e.g. failure to use sound judgment in work with clients and oneself, incapacity to communicate effectively, inadequate interviewing and interpersonal skills, violations of personal integrity, failure to adhere to field agency policies & standards, and any behavior that interferes with student function or jeopardizes the welfare of clients/co-workers). Disciplinary recommendations will depend on the nature and severity of disruptive behavior.
- ***Academic performance.*** Students with grades falling below the recommended performance level of at least a grade of "B" for all social work major courses will face disciplinary action (up to and including termination). Efforts will be made to assist the student in improving performance.

## Complaints of Violations

All students are to act as a gatekeeper for the profession. If you observe others violating professional, ethical conduct, or academic conduct, you are encouraged to file a complaint in writing. The complaint should include the name of the alleged violator and the nature of the

violation. The violating student will be informed of the accusation. The student must respond in 5 days to the report. A committee will be appointed to review the complaint.

## ACADEMICS

### **Academic Standards**

Academic integrity emanates from a culture that embraces the core values of trust and honesty necessary for full learning to occur. As a student-centered public research university, UNT promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic environment and undermines all scholarship. Academic misconduct subject to disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to:

1. **Cheating** - Cheating is a violation of academic integrity and is not tolerated. This refers to copying, unauthorized assistance, dual submission of a paper or project, or any other acts designed to give a student an unfair advantage.
2. **Plagiarism** - Involves knowingly using the materials, thoughts or ideas prepared by another, taking credit for work that is not your own, or use of another's work without full and clear acknowledgement.
3. **Fabrication** - falsifying or inventing any information, data, or research outside of a defined academic exercise.
4. **Forgery** - altering a score, grade, or official academic university record; or forging the signature of an instructor or other student.
5. **Facilitation of Academic Dishonesty** - helping or assisting another in the commission of academic dishonesty.
6. **Sabotage** - acting to prevent others from completing their work or willfully disrupting the academic work of others.

Any suspected occurrence of academic dishonesty will be investigated and handled in accordance with UNT policy and procedures. The following academic penalties may be assessed at the instructor's discretion upon determination that academic dishonesty has occurred. Admonitions and educational assignments are not appealable.

1. Admonition. The student may be issued a verbal or written warning.
2. Assignment of Educational Coursework. The student may be required to perform additional coursework not required of other students in the specific course.
3. Partial or no credit for an assignment or assessment. The instructor may award partial or no credit for the assignment or assessment on which the student engaged in academic dishonesty, to be calculated into the final course grade.
4. Course Failure. The instructor may assign a failing grade for the course.

Should the procedure for appeal of a case of academic dishonesty extend beyond the date when the instructor submits course grades for the semester, the student will be assigned a grade that reflects the penalty, which shall be adjusted, as appropriate, at the conclusion of any appeal process.

You are encouraged to become familiar with the academic rights and responsibilities established for UNT students. Specific details and description of UNT's policies can be obtained on the UNT website.

### **Academic Performance**

Scholarly work is expected and academic requirements are set to help students reach the goal of becoming professional social workers. Scholarship standards for the social work program require that you maintain a B average in all major courses. If you fall below the recommended performance level, you should consult with appropriate faculty members. You may only repeat most social work courses once.

A formal review of academic progress is made upon application to the major and again at the time of application for field. A plan for disciplinary action will occur if the:

1. Student's overall GPA falls below 3.0
2. Student receives a C in any social work class

### **Codes of Ethics**

Students are, at all times, expected to engage in behavior consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics and the Texas Code of Conduct for licensed social workers. The current Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers was adopted by the 1996 National Association of Social Workers Delegate Assembly and was revised in 2021.

The Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners Code of Ethics also governs professional social work practice in the State of Texas. The Codes of Ethics may be found here:

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

Texas Code of Conduct:

[https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac\\_view=5&ti=22&pt=34&ch=781&sch=B&rl=Y](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=22&pt=34&ch=781&sch=B&rl=Y)

### **Impaired Professionals**

The National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics addresses the professional expectations regarding impaired professionals. Substance abuse, personal problems, and/or psychosocial distress which interfere(s) with judgment and performance, or which jeopardize(s) the welfare of those for whom the social worker has a professional responsibility are recognized as a violation of the Code of Ethics.

Students who are accepted into the MSW Program are expected to comply with this requirement throughout their tenure in the program. In order to develop the knowledge, practice skills, and values that promote the professional practice of social work, it is imperative that students be cognitively available to receive social work education. Substance abuse, personal problems, and psychosocial stress that interferes with the student's academic and/or professional performance will first be brought to the student's attention. An inability or unwillingness to implement measures to address the impairment is considered grounds for denial of admission to the program or termination from the program.

## **REMEDATION AND TERMINATION POLICY**

### **Termination from Program**

Termination from the program may occur if a student fails to maintain standards in the classroom or field internship. Students whose academic performance is consistently problematic or marginal, and/or students who are unable or unwilling to function at the level of an advanced social work practitioner may be terminated from the program. Examples of unacceptable performance that could lead to termination include:

- The student's MSW GPA falls below 3.0
- Student earns 2 grades lower than a B in courses while in the program (includes C's, D's, and F's)
- The student demonstrates an inability or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards, and/or has an inability or unwillingness in acquiring professional skills and reaching an acceptable level of competency, and/or has an inability or unwillingness in controlling stress, emotional dysfunction, or behavioral reactions that may impact professional functioning.

In order to continue in the program, students must function at the level of a professional at all times or demonstrate that they are willing to accept feedback and modify their unprofessional behavior.

### **PERIODIC REVIEW**

Students receive a formal review of their progress and fit for the profession at the time of application to the MSW Program and at the time of application for placement in field. In addition, students will undergo formal faculty review when any of the following critical events occur:

- Failure to make satisfactory academic progress in the MSW program
- Chronic absenteeism from class or field placements
- Demonstration of a hostile or resistant attitude toward learning, classmates, faculty, field supervisors, agency staff or clients.
- The student fails to adhere to the UNT Code of Student or violates any university regulations, policies and procedures related to student conduct set forth in university policy including:
  - a. Academic integrity
  - b. Classroom civility
  - c. Drugs and alcohol
  - d. Disorderly/disruptive behavior
  - e. Sexual harassment
  - f. Sexual violence
  - g. Theft or vandalism

Failure to comply with any of the aforementioned may result in termination from field and the MSW program.

- The student fails to adhere to the standards of conduct reflected in the NASW Code of Ethics, the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners Code of Conduct, or the UNT Social Work Program Expectations of Student Conduct.

- New or existing violations of federal, state and local laws (a prior conviction that becomes known during the course of study in the program which demonstrates unsuitability for social work practice may also be considered).
- The student engages in other behavior not specifically discussed in this manual that the social work faculty deem sufficiently problematic to warrant review.

### **FACULTY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

It is the intent of the social work faculty to find a fair and equitable resolution to problem areas, which protects student rights, upholds the standards of professional conduct, and protect the welfare of future clients. The following is the review process regarding misconduct allegations:

1. Social work faculty observes or is made aware of any violation
2. The issue is brought to the attention of the social work in a faculty meeting and a determination is made regarding sufficient evidence supporting the complaint or violation to proceed
3. With sufficient evidence, the faculty will hold a review and discuss the violation/concerns with the student. The student may submit documentation in response to the concerns.
4. The faculty will meet again to consider appropriate action

***Based upon evidence presented and discussed, the faculty may initiate the following action:***

1. None
2. Corrective Action (i.e. probation, suspension, removal/delay or denial of field practicum, withdrawal/failure from course)
3. Denial of Admission/Termination from social work program (the student will be notified in writing)
4. Referral to the student to the Dean of Students' office/UNT police for investigation
5. Any other action deemed appropriate by the social work faculty

Any adverse action (other than denial of admission or termination from the program) will require a written plan of remediation that is jointly developed by you and the social work faculty. The plan will include the following:

1. Specific remedial action
2. Specific time-frames
3. Specific responsibilities

### **GRIEVANCES AND APPEAL PROCEDURES**

Students are encouraged to first address concerns with any faculty/instructor related to grades or other adverse actions (admission, termination etc). If this does not result in a satisfactory resolution, students may appeal the matter to the next levels of decision making as follows:

Students who wish to appeal an adverse decision by the faculty or who wish to file a grievance against the program, or any employee or representative of the program may do so by first submitting a written summary of the grievance or appeal to the Social Work MSW Program

Director within 15 days of the action which prompted the grievance or appeal. The student should outline the grounds for grievance/appeal and provide supporting documentation. The MSW program director must respond to the student in writing within 10 days, indicating the course of action to be pursued, including time frames, opportunities for the formal presentation of the grievance or appeal and the names of those individuals who will participate in the grievance process.

If the appeal is denied, the student may then submit a written summary of the grievance or appeal to the Chair of the Department of Social Work within 10 days following notice of denial by the MSW Program Director. Again, the student should outline grounds for grievance/appeal and provide supporting documentation. The chair must respond to the student in writing within 10 days, indicating the course of action to be pursued as previously mentioned. If the grievance or appeal is not resolved at this level, it becomes subject to the formal, university-wide grievance and appeal procedures.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Student Participation**

Students are not just encouraged, they are strongly supported by the MSW program in organizing student organizations, affinity groups, professional development activities, and other initiatives to further their interests.

- Faculty advisors will be made available for all student organizations.
- The MSW program will coordinate NASW student activities and serve as a liaison with the local branch of NASW
- The MSW program will make space available for students that wish to meet as a group.
- The program encourages individual students, student organizations, or informal groups of students, to make recommendations to improve the program. Such recommendations should be made in writing directly to the MSW program director or designee.
- The program acknowledges and supports the right of students to advocate for themselves and the program with faculty and institutional administration.

### **Community Advisory Board**

A professional advisory board for the BSW and MSW programs meets regularly to promote cooperative planning and programming between the social work practice community and those involved in social work education. Advisory Board members include BSW and MSW student representatives, current social work faculty/staff, field instructors, and community practitioners.

### **The National Association of Social Workers**

The National Association of Social Workers is an off-campus organization that welcomes social work students as members at a special student rate. MSW students are encouraged to join the Texas Chapter of NASW, become active, and receive the many benefits of a professional association. NASW provides membership services such as a monthly newsletter, a job bank program, and directory social workers who are NASW members. In addition, the Texas Chapter of NASW provides ongoing professional development opportunities such as continuing education workshops. The State Conference is held in the fall of each year and features workshops, seminars, and general sessions with outstanding speakers. Student members are eligible for reduced student fees for these professional development activities. Many MSW faculty members participate extensively in NASW at the local and state levels.

## **Texas Social Work Licensure**

Licensure is acquired by successfully completing a CSWE accredited educational program and passing an examination for licensure. Information about applying for the licensure examination can be obtained at the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners website: <https://www.bhec.texas.gov/texas-state-board-of-social-worker-examiners/applying-for-a-license/index.html>

Texas Law requires institutions that provide educational programs leading to an occupational license to notify applicants and enrollees of the program about the implications of having a felony conviction on future licensure. It is important to note that, depending on the severity of the offense and other factors, a criminal history may or may not render a person ineligible for Social Work licensure. The Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners issues all Social Work licenses in Texas. More about the Social Work board may be found here: <https://www.bhec.texas.gov/texas-state-board-of-social-worker-examiners/index.html>

The Texas Department of State Health Services, which governs the Social Work board, will provide a “Criminal History Evaluation” for potential applicants or students in a Social Work program. The evaluation is meant to determine whether or not the criminal history is likely to impact licensure after completing the educational program.

## **MSW Field Practicum**

The field practicum experience is provided in both the Foundation Year and Advanced Year. MSW students gain practice experience in a social service agency, under the supervision and direction of a trained social work instructor (the “field instructor”). Field is a critically important element of any social work education program; CSWE has declared that field is the “Signature Pedagogy” of the profession.

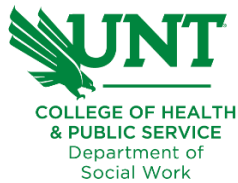
The purpose of the field practicum is to continue and complete the social work education curriculum in a practical setting and to demonstrate social work competencies. The practicum is an experiential course in which students apply theories and concepts learned in the classroom to practical situations in agencies. Students gain experience working with individuals, families, groups, and communities. Students should not contact agencies to arrange their own practicums but instead work directly with the field director.

While in field practicum, the student is expected to meet specific learning objectives related to the effective practice of advanced social work. The objectives laid out for field work match the objectives of the MSW program and are intended to ensure that graduates are capable of functioning as advanced generalist practitioners.

For more information about field practicum and related policies, please refer to the MSW Field Manual on the MSW program website.

# APPENDIX





***Department of Social Work***

**SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

***EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT CONDUCT***

UNT Social Work Programs are mandated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) to foster and evaluate professional and behavioral development for all its students.' As professional education programs, the programs bear a responsibility to the community at large to produce fully trained professional social workers who consciously exhibit the knowledge, values, and skills of the profession of social work. As such, students are required to adhere to the standards, ethics, and values of the profession as identified by the National Association of Social Work (NASW). In addition, students must meet the academic, behavioral or professional mandates of the Accreditation Standards set by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), as well as UNT Social Work Program mandates and other UNT university wide conduct policies.

*Given this context, all students in the UNT social work program will adhere to the following standards.*

**Academics & Accountability:**

***I agree to***

1. Maintain good attendance in classes, arrive in class on time, return from breaks in a timely manner and adhere to the guidelines and criteria established in all social work classes.
2. Take responsibility for the quality of completed tests and assignment and to complete work in a timely fashion and according to the directions provided.
3. Come to class prepared, with readings and other homework completed and to fully participate in group activities and assignments. Further, I will meet all deadlines.
4. Be responsible for my own learning by reading assigned materials.
5. Acknowledge areas where improvement is needed by accepting and responding to constructive feedback in a positive manner.

6. BSW Students Maintain an overall GPA of 2.25, and a grade of “C” or better in social work courses. I understand if my GPA falls below 2.25 in any two semesters or I receive two failing grades (D or F) in a social work course, I will be terminated from the program.

MSW students maintain an overall GPA of 3.0, and a grade of ‘B’ or better in social work courses. I understand if my GPA falls below 3.0 in any two semesters or I receive two failing grades of a “C” in a social work course, I will be terminated from the program.

7. Learn and adhere to the UNT Academic Integrity Policy.

### **Behavior:**

#### ***I understand I am not to expect***

1. Special treatment regarding extra credit make up exams and incompletes (i.e., demanding that class requirements and activities be modified to accommodate non- academic activities such as family trips and work overtime or that class requirement be altered to assure particular students receive the desired grade).
2. Classes to be canceled when professors cannot be present and/or on days adjacent to holiday (this is a policy violation taken seriously by our accreditation boards).
3. The class structure or format to be changed to meet my personal needs (work, appointments, etc.).

### **Honesty & Integrity:**

#### ***I agree that I will***

1. Avoid plagiarism and will commit to learning the rules of citing other's work properly by doing my own work and only taking credit only for my own work.
2. Practice honesty with myself, peers, and instructors.
3. Not falsify class attendance or falsify reasons why a student did not attend a required class.
4. Not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.

### **Respect and Civility:**

#### ***I agree to***

1. Maintain high standards of personal and classroom conduct by treating fellow students, faculty, staff, and supervisors with respect, honest, courtesy, and fairness and shall avoid unwarranted criticism these individuals/
2. Conduct myself in a reasonable, polite and considerate manner; I will avoid surliness and flippancy in communicating with faculty, staff and other students.

3. Deal with conflicts in a civil manner without attacking the character of another student, instructor or staff.
4. Refrain from talking during lectures, texting, using the phone, sleeping, reading other than class material, or studying for another course.
5. Refrain from any cross-talk or carrying on private conversations during lectures and discussions.
6. Refrain from wandering in and out of classes that are in progress, leaving the classroom at will, and disrupting the class.
7. Only use my laptop for taking notes in class – and only with my instructor’s permission.
8. Avoid use of offensive language (swearing) in the learning environment.
9. Practice positive, constructive, and professional communications skills with peers and instructors (body language, empathy, listening).
10. Adhere to the right of instructors to discipline me as appropriate if I am deemed disruptive. I understand this may result in expulsion from class and possibly further disciplinary action including termination from the course or program.

**Competence:**

***I understand***

1. If my personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental difficulties interfere with my ability to meet program requirements, I will be expected to accept remedial action.
2. I must not let my private conduct interfere with my ability to meet the program’s expectations.
3. I am expected to continue to work on areas of professional growth and constantly strive to improve my abilities.
4. I must apply myself to all your academic pursuits with seriousness and conscientiousness.
5. I must seek out appropriate support or resources when having difficulties to ensure success in completing course requirements.
6. I must strive to work toward greater awareness of personal issues that may impede my effectiveness.

**Confidentiality:**

***I agree to***

1. Use judgment in self-disclosing information of a very personal nature in the classroom. (Class time should not be used as therapy or treatment. If students feel the need to talk about issues

they are struggling with, they many consult with their instructor to receive a referral for counseling.)

**Diversity & Social Justice:**

*I agree to*

1. Strive to become more open to people, ideas, and creeds that I am not familiar with, embrace diversity; and deepen my commitment to social justice for all populations at risk.
2. Exhibit a willingness to serve diverse groups of persons.

**Statement of Understanding**

I understand that social work is a profession that adheres to high standards of professional ethics and integrity and that this process begins as a student. I agree to uphold and advance the values, ethics, and mission of the social work profession. I have read the NASW Code of Ethics and have read and understand this statement of Expectations of Student Conduct.

I understand that this document will be reviewed periodically as students' progress through the social work program. I understand the program has the right and responsibility to request reevaluation of my suitability to the social work profession as necessary. If my adherence to these conduct standards are not deemed satisfactory, the social work program has the right to require disciplinary action up to and including termination from a particular course or from the social work program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Adapted from Florida Atlantic University School of Social Work*

Updated January 2021