

Dear Students:

As Director of the School of Social Work, I want to extend a warm greeting to users of this handbook. It is designed to provide students with information of a procedural and general nature and as a supplement to faculty advisement.

Much of the handbook content was suggested by students. It was written from the student perspective, based on what students want to know. Staff and faculty contributed additional material. Topics addressed relate to those questions most frequently asked by students. If you think that additional information would be helpful, please feel free to make suggestions.

I hope that this handbook will eliminate some of the confusion that students often experience concerning the “mechanics” of the School and the University. It should answer many questions allowing students and faculty advisors to spend their time on more individual concerns.

When you have questions, usually the most appropriate person to approach is an advisor -- either the program’s academic advisor or your assigned professional development advisor. All faculty care about students and are eager to create an environment that will enable you to fully maximize your educational experience. However, those assigned to the helping role most directly responsible for assisting you are your advisors. They will help you plan your schedule, may recommend certain exceptions to policy when such exceptions are necessary, and will try to help you with academic or other problems that you may have as you move through the program.

While your first contact should be with an advisor, it is suggested that you call me if you have questions or concerns that do not seem appropriate to that relationship. Please stop by, and hopefully, I can tell you where to start or who to see, or at least I can commiserate with you if I don't have a solution. I enjoy talking with students and look forward to helping you "problem-solve" your way through the program. I will try to create an environment where you can fully maximize your educational experience.

I want to call to your attention the Student Association of Social Workers (SASW) and urge each of you to join this student organization and become involved in its activities. It is through SASW and its designated representatives that you have the opportunity for input into decisions that affect the MSW program.

Please keep this handbook for the duration of your participation in the program and use it as a resource to be consulted when needed. Welcome to the School of Social Work.

Michael Forster, Ph.D.
Director

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INTRODUCTION

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The initial motivation for a School of Social Work in Mississippi came from the work of the Mississippi Chapter of NASW. The establishment of the School of Social Work at the University of Southern Mississippi, at that time the only graduate School of Social Work in the State, was authorized by the Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning in 1973. The School was first accredited by the Commission on Accreditation, Council on Social Work Education, in 1976. In June, 1979, its accreditation was reaffirmed after mandatory review. It has been continuously accredited since that date.

The MSW program is a sixty credit-hour program. The program includes 30 credit-hours of foundation courses and 30 credit-hours of advanced generalist courses. . Through electives and field placements, students who are interested in particular populations or fields of practice can secure a measure of specialized knowledge and skills to add to their advanced generalist base.

(1) Most students at the Hattiesburg campus complete the regular program which requires five semesters of continuous enrollment.

(2) In addition to the regular program, the School of Social Work offers an advanced standing program on the Hattiesburg campus for those students who qualify. To qualify a student must have a BSW degree from an accredited university acquired in the last five years, have maintained a GPA of 3.0 for the last 60 hours of baccalaureate education, and obtain acceptable GRE scores. The student must also take and pass a qualifying exam administered by the School. Having achieved these prerequisites, the student then joins the MSW program on the advanced generalist level, and completes the necessary course work and field placements to acquire a MSW degree in three semesters (fall, winter, and summer).

(3) The School also offers an extended 8-semester program designed primarily to meet the needs of employed persons who are seeking professional education in social work. Students enrolled in the extended program complete field requirements over eight semesters.

In addition to the extended program on the Hattiesburg campus, the School now provides extended programs through the USM Gulf Park Campus in Long Beach, MS and Tupelo, MS. The programs are designed to serve social service providers, employees and residents throughout Mississippi, coastal Louisiana, Alabama and northwest Florida. The School utilizes Interactive Video Network (INV) Technology to provide on line classroom instruction between the main campus and other campuses.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL

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The School of Social Work is an autonomous unit within the College of Health (Other units within the College of Health include Nursing, Human Performance and Recreation, Community Health Services, Speech and Hearing Services, Nutritional and Food Science, and Medical Technology). The School of Social Work is administered by the Director who has delegated authority for certain educational and administrative tasks to individuals and committees within the School. The administrative team of the School consists of the Director, the Assistant Director, the Coordinator of Field Instruction, a Program Coordinator for the Tupelo satellite program and five administrative assistants (four in Hattiesburg and one at Gulf Park).

The Assistant Director/BSW Program Coordinator is appointed by the Director and shares in the overall management of the School, with emphasis on the BSW program.

The Program Coordinator at Tupelo is appointed by the Director and is responsible for the coordination of the graduate social work program at the satellite campus. The coordinator works closely with the Director and the program Advisory Board regarding program development and implementation.

The Coordinator of Field Instruction is appointed by the Director and oversees the operation of field programs by implementing and enforcing field policies approved by the faculty. Current field policies and procedures are outlined in the Field Instruction Manual.

VISION & MISSION OF THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH

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Vision: Advancing health and well-being through excellence and innovation in teaching, research, and service.

Mission: The mission of the College of Health at The University of Southern Mississippi is to create, apply, and transmit expert knowledge, within and across the domains of its constituent disciplines, for the well-being and betterment of individuals, community, state, nation and world.

MISSION OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The mission of the School of Social Work is to prepare students for competent professional generalist social work practice at the baccalaureate and master levels, consistent with the values of the profession and with the missions and goals of The University of Southern Mississippi and the College of Health. In addition, the School seeks to advance the social work profession, provide support to the human service

community, and generate and transmit knowledge relevant to professional practice – with special attention to local, state, and regional social welfare needs and circumstances, and awareness of broader national and global contexts.

The School seeks to form a confident professional identity. It challenges its students to apply critical thinking, assimilate the theoretical and practical foundations of the field, embrace human diversity and promote optimal human development across the life span, provide effective service, confront injustice and oppression, and internalize the values and ethics of the profession. The School strives to produce graduates who are creative in applying the generalist perspectives, who build capacity in all spheres of functioning, and who promote progressive change to enrich the general welfare.

GOALS OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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The goals of the School of Social Work are to:

1. Promote social welfare in specific and meaningful ways in the context of the mission and goals of The University of Southern Mississippi and the College of Health.
2. Advance the social work profession and social work education in Mississippi and regionally
3. Produce graduates who comprehend, creatively apply and advance the knowledge, habits of mind, skills, values and ethics of the social work profession.
4. Produce graduates who are self-aware and who demonstrate a firm professional social work identity and commitment to the future of the profession.
5. Produce graduates who pursue progressive change with awareness of emerging global realities and sensitivity to the particulars of time, place, culture and development of individuals and systems.
6. Produce graduates who practice effectively at their level of preparation in all systems and settings.
7. Produce graduates who improve practice and organizational performance through continued learning, supervision, application of research, and critical self-awareness.

OVERALL PROGRAM OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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In addition to pursuing the student-centered objectives of the generalist and advanced generalist programs, the faculty and administration of the School as a whole work to:

1. Sustain a vibrant, diverse, non-discriminatory and collegial learning environment at once challenging and responsive to student needs and

- concerns.
2. Provide opportunities for students and faculty to engage in mutual learning and service with diverse communities inside and outside the university system.
 3. Present professional development (continuing education) and public information programs to the School's alumni, the social work community as a whole, and other professional communities and the public at large.
 4. Strengthen the image and the institutional base of the social work profession and social work education, locally and regionally.
 5. Respond to the personnel needs of social service agencies within the region.
 6. Improve systems of human services delivery, and otherwise cultivate "social capital", notably in regard to child and family welfare, aging issues, and community asset building.
 7. Alter the local policy and ideological environments of social work practice in the interest of greater social and economic justice, and recognition/appreciation of diversity.
 8. Extend and enrich the social work knowledge base.
 9. Improve curricula and other program elements continuously, based on empirical evidence and the thoughtful reflection of faculty and engaged constituents.

Generalist Program Objectives of the School

Students completing the generalist curriculum (BSW and first 30 credit hours of the MSW program) demonstrate the ability to:

1. Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.
2. Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practice accordingly.
3. Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to client's age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.
4. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice.
5. Understand and interpret the history of the social work profession and its contemporary structure and issues.
6. Apply the knowledge and skills of a generalist social work perspective to practice with systems of all sizes.
7. Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Analyze, formulate, and influence social policies.

9. Evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions.
10. Use communication skills differentially across client populations, colleagues, and communities.
11. Use supervision and consultation appropriate to social work practice.
12. Function within the structures of organizations and service delivery systems and seek necessary organizational change.

Advanced Generalist Objectives of the School

Students completing the advanced generalist curriculum (final 30 credit hours of the MSW program) demonstrate the ability to:

1. Apply critical thinking informed by the integration of theory, evidence-based findings, and awareness of one's own strengths, limitations and direction(s) of growth.
2. Apply professional values and ethics with sensitivity to cultural and ideological differences, recognize value/ethical conflicts, and demonstrate commitment to change consistent with the profession's value and ethics base.
3. Practice with selection from an inclusive array of methods and techniques that are theoretically and empirically grounded and sensitive to client-specific issues of age, class, color, culture, disability, etc.
4. Integrate an understanding of oppression and discrimination with advocacy and change strategies differentially selected and applied to systems and situations, and a justice-sensitive professional identity.
5. Connect professional identity to the profession's history, contribute to building the profession, and actively help to resolve the profession's current issues.
6. Selectively apply knowledge and skills to the understanding and solution of complex problems within and across systems of all types, sizes, and levels.
7. Synthesize a dynamic body of knowledge relevant to human development and behavior across the life span, and refine theoretical and empirical knowledge for the specific understanding of complex person-in-environment interactions within and across systems.
8. Recognize the interplay of policy, practice and client well-being within and across systems, and integrate policy practice into intervention and the development of the professional self.
9. Attend to advancing research literature and the evaluation of personal practice, for the continuous enrichment of theoretical knowledge, pragmatic practice skill, and professional self-understanding.
10. Integrate differentially applied communication with a comprehensive range of social work skills, recognizing the pivotal contribution of communication to the presentation of professional self, to practice effectiveness, and to building relationships of reciprocity with clients, colleagues and communities.
11. Understand the place of indirect social work practice within an inclusive social work knowledge base, and differentially provide organizational

leadership, supervision, and consultation as appropriate to the specific employment and practice situation.

12. Contribute to the continuous improvement of organizations (including one's private practice, should it exist) and service systems, drawing selectively and with attention to resource, personal, ethical and other constraints, upon the full range of evolving social work knowledge and experience, providing leadership for organizational maintenance and change as specific circumstances warrant.

CURRICULUM

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Advanced Generalist Social Work Practice

All accredited master of social work curricula consist of “foundation” and “concentration “(advanced) levels. The advanced generalist model of practice is the concentration of the social work curriculum.

In deciding on this orientation, faculty acted upon the need for professionals who can make an accurate comprehensive assessment of problems and who are able to develop effective service plans. This need is especially critical in poor, rural environments common to Mississippi. The ability to evaluate situations, accurately and holistically, as well as the capacity to make timely referrals to scarce, specialized services when they are available are characteristics of the advanced generalist practitioner. More important, however, is the advanced generalist practitioner's special ability to develop a service plan and intervention in any one and all systems and to initiate or improvise services when formal networks for their provision are unavailable in the practice environment. The advanced generalist is encouraged to forego traditional specialization (as in a field of practice) in favor of enhancement of broad-based problem identification and problem resolution skills. Further, the advanced generalist is educated within a systems framework to make informed choices about intervention in multiple systems. The Curriculum aims to provide breadth of knowledge about a variety of intervention modalities and creative approaches to intervening in one-of-a-kind situations.

The faculty believes that an advanced generalist practitioner focuses on a system-in-trouble or a problem-to-be-solved rather than on a specific target population or traditional social work method. The point of intervention(s) is determined by the locus of the problem, be it within an individual, family, larger social organization, or interactional system. The advanced generalist practitioner is expected to pinpoint the problem(s) in any one or more of five systems (individual, family, group, community, organization); to devise collaboratively a plan to resolve the problems, or, if resolution is beyond the scope of the practitioner's knowledge and skill, to enlist and mobilize appropriate resources; and to implement plans and evaluate results.

CURRICULUM MODELS

Regular (5-Semester) Program Model

Offered at the Hattiesburg campus only, beginning each Fall semester.

Semester I Fall

SWK 601 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I	3
SWK 605 Social Welfare Policy	3
SWK 608 Social Work Generalist Practice I	3
SWK 610 Theoretical Bases	3
SWK 617 Social Work Research	<u>3</u>
	15 hrs

Semester II Spring

SWK 602 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	3
SWK 609 Social Work Generalist Practice II	3
SWK 634 Social Practice in a Diverse Society	3
SWK 641 Field Education and Seminar I	<u>3</u>
	12 hrs

Semester III Summer

SWK 642 Field Education and Seminar II	3
SWK 666 Community Development and Social Planning	3
SWK Elective	<u>3</u>
	9 hrs

Semester IV Fall

SWK 635 Social Service Management and Administration	3
SWK 653 Mental Health Assessment	3
SWK 674 Social Work Practice with Families	3
SWK 696 Social Work Practice with Groups	<u>3</u>
	12 hrs

Semester V Spring

SWK 658 Advanced Interventive Methods	3
SWK 673 Field Education and Seminar III	<u>6</u>
	9 hrs

Minimum Total Credit Hours 60 hrs

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM: After the completion of foundation courses, the student must pass a written comprehensive exam administered by the School in order to proceed to advanced courses. A comprehensive exam of some type is a University requirement of all degree seeking graduate students. Students not passing the examination the first time may retake. A student failing the exam a second time will be counseled by the Student Performance Committee and will likely be required to successfully complete a foundation review course before proceeding to advanced required courses.

Advanced Standing (3-Semester) Program Model

Offered on the Hattiesburg campus each year, with the option of "folding into" Advanced Standing courses on the Gulf Park and Tupelo campuses whenever advanced courses commence. Students must hold a BSW from an accredited university/college and pass a qualifying exam to be admitted to the Advanced Standing program. Students typically begin the program in the Fall semester, but are allowed to begin course work in the summer, given that they pass the qualifying exam prior to enrolling.

Semester I Fall

SWK 635 Social Service Management and Administration	3
SWK 653 Mental Health Assessment	3
SWK 666 Community Development and Social Planning	3
SWK 674 Social Work Practice with Families	3
SWK 696 Social Work Practice with Groups	<u>3</u>
	15 hrs

Semester II Spring

SWK 658 Advanced Interventive Methods	3
SWK 673 Field Education and Seminar III	<u>6</u>
	9 hrs

Semester III Summer

SWK Elective	3
SWK Elective	<u>3</u>
	6 hrs

Minimum Total Credit Hours	30 hrs
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Extended (8-Semester) Program Model

Hattiesburg Campus – begins every Fall semester

Tupelo Campus – begins every 3 years (Fall 2004, Fall 2007, Fall 2010)

Gulf Park Campus – begins every other year (Fall 2004, Fall 2006, Fall 2008, Fall 2010)

Semester I Fall

SWK 601 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I	3
SWK 605 Social Welfare Policy	3
SWK 608 Social Work Generalist Practice I	<u>3</u>
	9 hrs

Semester II Spring

SWK 602 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	3
SWK 609 Social Work Generalist Practice II	3
SWK 634 Social Work Practice in a Diverse Society	<u>3</u>
	9 hrs

Semester III Summer

SWK 617 Social Work Research	3
SWK 641 Field Education and Seminar I	<u>3</u>
	6 hrs

Semester IV Fall

SWK 610 Theoretical Bases	3
SWK 642 Field Education and Seminar II	<u>3</u>
	6 hrs

Semester V Spring

SWK 635 Social Service Management and Administration	3
SWK 674 Social Work Practice with Families	3
SWK 696 Social Work Practice with Groups	<u>3</u>
	9 hrs

Semester VI Summer

SWK 666 Community Development and Social Planning	3
SWK Elective	<u>3</u>
	6 hrs

Semester VII Fall

SWK 653 Mental Health Assessment	3
SWK 673 Field Education and Seminar III	3
SWK Elective	<u>3</u>
	9 hrs

Semester VIII Spring

SWK 658 Advanced Interventive Methods	3
SWK 673 Field Education and Seminar III	<u>3</u>
	6 hrs

Minimum Total Credit Hours 60 hrs

Elective courses may not be taken outside the School of Social Work. The program will make every effort to provide students with desirable elective options. However, elective courses must be selected from those available at the time coursework is required by the

student's program model. Often, a maximum of two elective courses will be offered in any given semester.

NOTE: The Council on Social Work Education **requires** that the part-time program be completed in no more than four years.

ADVISEMENT

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Advisement is an essential component of the MSW Program. At the time of admission to the program, each student is assigned an “academic” staff advisor and a “professional development advisor “. The purpose of advisement is to provide counsel, guidance and support to the student in his or her efforts to achieve educational and professional goals. The academic assists students in planning the program of study toward the MSW Degree, approves their class schedule each semester, and assists with the preparation of the Application for Degree. The professional development advisor, usually meeting with students in small groups, emphasizes how the academic experience is “coming together” for students, the development of the student’s professional identity, and discusses opportunities for professional development such as conference attendance. On occasion, the professional development advisor may help students resolve personal problems that affect the attainment of their educational and professional goals.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

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Hours Required for Financial Aid Eligibility

Under University policy, nine (9) credit hours per semester is considered a “full-time” academic course load for graduate students during the fall and spring semesters, making the student eligible for financial aid..

Time Limit for Degree Completion

According to University policy, all work on graduate degrees must be completed within six years of admission to the graduate program. In accord with Council on Social Work Education accreditation standards, however, the School of Social Work requires that all course requirements are completed within four years.

Course Sequencing Requirements

Prerequisite requirements apply to certain courses. They are indicated in the University Graduate Bulletin.

- Foundation Field Placement (SWK641 & SWK642) must be taken either concurrently with or following foundation practice (SWK608 and SWK609), and Human Behavior (SWK601 & SWK602) courses.
- Advanced level courses, excluding electives, may not be taken prior to successful completion of all foundation level courses and the comprehensive exam.
- SWK 658 (Advanced Interventive Methods) must be taken concurrently with an

advanced field placement (SWK673)

No Credit for Life or Work Experience

Academic credit for life and previous work experience will not be granted in lieu of the field practicum or any other Social Work course.

GPA Requirement

A minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.0 is required in the MSW program. A student who does not maintain a 3.0 semester GPA will be placed on academic probation by the Office of Graduate Studies. The student must attain a cumulative 3.0 GPA by the end of the following (probationary) semester including summer if the student is enrolled summer term .A student who fails to achieve a 3.0 at the end of the probationary semester can be reclassified as a discontinued student. A new application is required for consideration to reenter the program.

Students may request an appeal of reclassification by writing to the dean of their college and requesting an appeals hearing.

The complete text of the University's regulations concerning "GPA Requirements" for regular or extended students is stated in the University Graduate Bulletin under "Probation."

Conditional Admission

The School of Social Work may admit graduate students with less than a 3.0 undergraduate GPA on a "conditional" basis provided the student has a GPA of at least 2.50. Conditional admission requires a recommendation from the department chair and the college dean. A master's student admitted conditionally must maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0 on the first nine (9) hours of coursework at or above the 500 level. All courses taken to remove conditional status must be taken on a campus of the University of Southern Mississippi.

The department chair may impose additional requirements

A student not maintaining the required grade point average or otherwise failing to satisfy any additional requirements will be discontinued

The complete text of the University's regulations concerning "conditional admissions" for regular or extended students is stated in the University Graduate Bulletin under "Admission Requirements and Procedures."

Removal of Conditional Admission Status

Conditional status will be removed upon completion of fifteen hours of graduate course work with a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Grade Appeal Process

The first step in the process is to discuss the grade disagreement with the course instructor. If no resolution is reached, the student should next bring the matter to the school director. Students should be aware that University policy sets firm time limits in the initiation of a formal grade appeals process.

Students desiring to initiate a formal appeal, must initiate the appeal procedure within 30 school days (excluding Saturday, Sunday and official student holidays) of the beginning of the semester subsequent to the one in which the grade was awarded or 120 calendar days after the issuance of Spring semester grades, should the student not be enrolled during the summer term.

For policies and procedures governing grade review, students should contact the Office of the Provost.

The complete text of the University's regulations concerning "the grade appeal process" for regular or extended students are stated in the University Graduate Bulletin under "Grade Review Policy."

Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend classes and to participate actively in class. Any student missing the equivalent of more than two regular semester class sessions may not make better than a "B" in the course. Any student missing the equivalent of more than three regular semester class sessions may not make better than a "C." A student who misses the equivalent of more than four class sessions may not pass the course. Exceptions to this policy may be granted only by the collective faculty, following appeal to the Director of the School (See "Policy Exemptions" below)

Tape/Digital Recording

Audio, video, or other forms of taping of class sessions generally are not allowed. Due to extenuating factors*, a student may be given special permission by the instructor to record class sessions. If permission is granted, care must be taken to safeguard confidential information. Videotaping requires the written consent of all participants.

* (Factors related to a student disability must be assessed by the University Office for Disability Accommodations).

Incomplete Grades

Under University regulations, a student may request a grade of "incomplete" ("I") for a course when illness or other extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the student occur. The instructor may grant or deny the request based on the evidence presented by the student. If an incomplete is awarded, it must be removed by the

following semester. If after an additional semester, the incomplete is not removed, it is treated as an “F” for computation of the student's grade point average.

Course Withdrawal

Withdrawal from courses or from the program must comply with procedures established by the University.

A student intending to withdraw from all courses should provide written notice of his or her intentions to the School. A student who withdraws from all courses who subsequently wishes to re-enroll in the program must obtain written permission to do so from the Director and must file “reconsideration” with the Office of Graduate Studies.

A student who withdraws from social work practice courses must also withdraw from any field course (SWK 641, 642, or 673) in which he/she is concurrently enrolled.

Change of Program

A student wishing to change his or her “Regular” or “Extended” status, or wishing to take courses out of the established sequence, must receive permission from the Director. Academic and professional development advisors may recommend changes of program, but may not approve such.

Auditing a Course

A student may audit a social work course if class space is available and with permission of the instructor. Fees and special requirements consistent with University policy may apply.

Independent Study

MSW students may one the two required elective courses as an Independent Study (SWK 692). Course content may not be redundant of other course work. An Independent Study course must enrich the basic course of study and allow the student to pursue in-depth a specialized area of study. Work expectations regarding both quality and quantity, must be comparable to other graduate level courses.. Independent Study courses require regular meetings with the professor, and independent research producing one or more substantive products. No student will be allowed to register for Independent Study until he or she has submitted a study plan and has received written approval from the faculty member who agrees to provide instruction and the Director of the School. A copy of the study plan should be retained in the student folder maintained by the School.

Academic Dishonesty

See the University Student Handbook. All forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating on tests, plagiarism, the submission of work other than one’s own and the submission of “recycled” work as original, are considered with the utmost seriousness, and may constitute grounds for a student’s failure in a course, and possibly suspension or expulsion from the program.

FIELD EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

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Complete information regarding SWK 641, 642 and 673 are outlined in the School's Graduate Field Manual.

Liability Insurance Requirement

Students registering for Field Education (SWK 641, SWK 642, SWK 673) will be required to obtain and present evidence of malpractice liability insurance. Liability insurance is available through the School at a rate of \$10.00 per semester. This fee will automatically be charged to the student's university account. A student may be excused from this requirement if he or she provides evidence of appropriate alternate malpractice liability insurance coverage.

SPECIALIZED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

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Family Network Partnership

The Family Network Partnership (FNP) is a community family service agency founded in 1994 and co-directed by Drs. Michael Forster and Timothy Rehner. The Partnership is located at various sites on the east side of Hattiesburg. FNP's mission is to prevent juvenile delinquency, strengthen family functioning and build local community among low-income residents of the community.

The Partnership affords unique learning opportunities to BSW and MSW students. Students completing field placements with the Partnership under the supervision of licensed social work staff are able to apply knowledge and skills from across the social work curriculum. Placement activities typically span direct practice, community, policy and research applications. Students may complete field practicums in the fall, spring and summer semesters. A limited number of stipends are available. For more information, contact Laurie Risher at 601-582-8443.

Institute for Disability Studies¹

The Institute for Disabilities Studies (IDS) is Mississippi's University Affiliated Program. The mission of University Affiliated Programs is to positively affect the lives of persons with developmental disabilities so that they may be more independent, more productive and more included in their communities.

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Institute for Disabilities Studies. Institute for Disabilities Studies. University of Southern Mississippi.

Housed at USM, the IDS strives to meet its federal mission to enhance the quality of life for citizens with developmental disabilities and their families across the lifespan. The IDS supports efforts to increase the availability of an array of individual and family supports/services that are community based and culturally sensitive.

The IDS interfaces with over 15 academic units on campus as well as other state universities to provide interdisciplinary pre-service training to undergraduate and graduate students. This training is accomplished through teaching interdisciplinary courses, specific professional courses and providing student internships.

Courses with specific social work content (SWK 688 and SWK 698) are offered to provide students an opportunity to explore social work with this special population. A limited number of field placement opportunities are available with the IDS. Social workers who have been employed in this area of practice for a number of years serve as field instructors. For more information, contact Jane Siders at 601-266-5163 or 1-888-671-0051.

Caribbean Studies Program²

The School of Social Work participates in the Caribbean Studies Program sponsored by the University's College of International and Continuing Education. The program currently directed by Dr. Tim Rehner, is designed to give students with various academic interests first-hand experience in an area of growing economic, cultural and strategic importance to the United States. Located 500 miles south of Miami, Jamaica, the largest English speaking island in the Caribbean, provides a unique setting for study.

Social work students may receive three semester credit hours in Social Work (SWK 692) as they study social development and social welfare in Jamaica. The course provides students with a cross cultural experience in which they learn about Jamaican culture, social development and social welfare. Students explore issues related to social justice, social welfare, and the service delivery approaches that are used to address the social needs of Jamaicans. Students visit social service agencies in many of the traditional "fields of practice" (Family and Children, Health, Mental Health, Education, Gerontology, Disabilities and Adult and Juvenile Corrections) in which social workers practice. The development of the Social Work profession and the contributions of social workers in Jamaica is also explored through a visit to the University of West Indies. For more information, contact Tim Rehner at 601-266-4170.

Title IV-E

Title IV-E is a grant-funded program that has created a unique partnership between Mississippi Schools of Social Work and the Mississippi Department of Human Services.

²*Caribbean Studies Program in Jamaica*. College of International and Continuing Education.

University of Southern Mississippi.

In exchange for substantial stipends, students take certain courses, complete field placements in the DHS Division of Family and Children Services, and commit to working for DHS for a period of time following graduation.

For more information, contact Lori Woodruff at 601-266-5956.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION

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National Association of Social Workers (NASW) (<http://www.naswdc.org>)

Students are encouraged to join the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). NASW is the national organization through which social workers stay connected to ideas, information, resources and people who help them reach their full potential as professional social workers. As members of NASW and the social work profession, social work students are expected to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics (<http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/default.asp>)

Students may join NASW at one-quarter of the regular dues and after graduation are offered a transitional membership rate for two years. Student membership packets are included in the MSW Orientation Packet and are also available in the School of Social Work.

The Mississippi Chapter of NASW holds an annual state conference in March of each year in Jackson, Mississippi. In addition, local & regional meetings and conferences are sponsored by NASW from time to time. Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these learning and networking opportunities whenever possible.

At the annual March Conference, the MS Chapter presents a Social Work Student of the Year Award to an outstanding graduate student who is a member of NASW. Outstanding students are nominated by the School faculty for this award with NASW Board members making the final selection.

Student Association of Social Workers (SASW)

All students are and encouraged to join the Student Association of Social Workers (SASW). The goals of the SASW are to promote interest in social work and social work issues ; to provide the opportunity for student participation in school governance; to provide supplemental educational experiences ; to advocate for students in academic and administrative matters and to promote social work values through community services and other activities of the member's choosing. (SASW Bylaws are available on the School's website.) SASW leaders are invited to meet regularly with the Director to provide feedback to the Director on the student experience and to address any matters of concern.

SASW officers are elected annually by the membership. A faculty advisor for the Student Association is selected by the organization's members.

Phi Alpha Honor Society - National Honor Society for Social Work Students

“Through Knowledge - the Challenge to Serve.”

Phi Alpha Honor Society is a national honor society for social work students. The purposes of Phi Alpha are to provide a closer bond among students of social work and promote humanitarian goals and ideas. Phi Alpha fosters high standards of education for social workers and invites into membership those who have attained excellence in scholarship and achievement in social work.³

The USM Chapter of Phi Alpha, *Zeta Iota*, was chartered Spring 1997. Graduate students who have earned a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5 for the first fifteen (15) social work credit hours are eligible for membership.

Zeta Iota officers are elected each year by the chapter membership. The chapter sponsors several projects each year within the School as well as the community.

Student Participation on School Committees

Students are encouraged to provide input to School operations through membership in the Student Association, participation on School committees, attendance at faculty meetings, and meetings with the Director.

Student representatives (elected or appointed by the Student Association) serve as active members on most committees. However, they cannot be present or have a vote when student records, individual student performance or personnel matters are under consideration.

Writing Laboratory

The University offers a writing laboratory to assist students in writing term papers and other written assignments. Services are available on a drop-in or appointment basis. A referral is not required and there is no fee for this service.

COMMUNICATION

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Faculty and staff of the School of Social Work take pride in their accessibility to students. Telephone and electronic mail are the easiest ways to contact faculty when a

³*Phi Alpha Honor Society: A National Honor Society for Social Work Students.*

face-to-face meeting is not feasible. Students at Gulf Park and Tupelo who have difficulty contacting faculty are encouraged to work through the on-site program coordinator or administrative assistant. Mail to faculty members may be sent through secretarial and coordinating staff as well.

In addition, students attending the Hattiesburg campus are provided student mailboxes (folders in a filing cabinet) located inside the entrance to Fritzsche-Gibbs Hall, outside room # . Students may use the “mail boxes” to communicate with each other as well. Faculty will often place returned assignments or other messages to students in these folders. Similar arrangements at Gulf Park and Tupelo vary by student cohort; students should check with site coordinator or administrative assistants for current arrangements.

Bulletin Boards

There are several bulletin boards in Fritzsche-Gibbs Hall on the Hattiesburg campus. One board lists social work jobs and other boards belong to the Student Association (SASW) and Phi Alpha Honor Society. A bulletin board for Gulf Park students is in the Cooke Building on the Long Beach campus.

Internet Access

Personal Access

Internet Service accounts are automatically created for all USM students. They may be picked up by Hattiesburg and Gulf Park students at the iTech Help Desk. Tupelo students may establish accounts with the assistance of Hattiesburg administrative staff. Student ID cards are required to obtain account information.

Organizational Access

USM organizations can request E-mail accounts for their group. This E-mail account would indicate the name of the group rather than the name of an individual.

iTech

Questions regarding access to the Internet should be directed to the HELP Desk @ 601- 266-HELP (4357). The HELP Desk is the primary point of contact with iTech. It operates from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday. The HELP Desk is available to answer informational, procedural, or technical questions and take requests for service calls or consultation.

Letters of Reference

A student may request that the School provide a letter of reference to one or more potential employers. The letter will usually be written by the School Director or the student’s advisor for professional development. Letters will be written directly to prospective employers upon receipt of a written or verbal request from them. No copy of any letter of reference will be released unless the student has a written Release of Information Form on file with the School.

Current Address

To facilitate smooth and effective communication, students are strongly encouraged to make sure the School of Social Work has an up-to-date address, e-mail address, and phone number on file with the Records and Advisement Coordinator.

FINANCIAL AID & AWARDS

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Limited financial aid is available to full-time graduate students within both the University and the School. An applicant may apply to either or both sources. Financial need and academic qualifications are considered in the awarding of funds. Financial Aid Applications are available around January 1 for the next academic year.

Graduate Assistantships

A limited number of Graduate Assistantships, which may include a small stipend and a tuition waiver, are available through the School of Social Work. Students receiving graduate assistantships are required to work in the School of Social Work for 20 hours per week. The Director of the School is responsible for the awarding of assistantships and the assignment of graduate assistantship responsibilities.

When receiving a graduate assistantship during the fall or spring semester, a student must be enrolled for a minimum of 12 credit hours.⁴ If the student elects to enroll during the summer semester with a tuition waiver (no stipend is available during the summer) the requirement is 9 credit hours.

Graduate assistantships are awarded for one academic year at a time and are not automatically renewed. Renewal is contingent on availability of funds and evaluation of performance in the first year. Moreover, in the second year, a stipend and tuition waiver is available in the fall semester only, since students complete a block field placement in the Spring and are unavailable to work. A tuition waiver for the Spring Semester is possible, but not guaranteed.

It should be noted that tuition waivers associated with financial aid are for 13 credit hours. The student will be responsible for the payment of fees for the additional two credit hours.

Endowed Scholarships

Eight endowed scholarships in the School of Social Work carry small cash awards.

Advanced graduate students are eligible for the following awards upon recommendation of the faculty:

Katherine L. Guice Award

Lynn B. McMahan, Sr. Gerontology Award

**Nancy Baker Award
Beulah Compton Award**

Day/McHearg Award

Barbara Pease Award

Gerry Parish/Sara Caldwell Award

Betty Spencer Award

Other Cash Awards

National Association of Social Workers, Mississippi Chapter, Graduate Student of the Year Award

Mississippi Conference on Social Welfare, Graduate Student Scholarship

The faculty of the School nominate and/or support second year graduate students for these awards based on academic performance, service, and attributes that exemplify the knowledge, skills, and values of the professional social worker. These awards are normally presented in the spring semester.

Non-cash Recognition Awards

Students are eligible for consideration for three non-cash recognition awards within the School :

STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award is presented to the student judged by the faculty to have demonstrated Exemplary performance throughout the academic career, often in the face of adversity.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN SOCIAL WORK

This award is presented to graduate students in the School of Social Work with the highest GPAs at the time of selection.

OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

This award is presented to a social work student for outstanding service to the School, University and/or Community.

Awards Day

The University, the College of Health and the School of Social Work honor students receiving awards and scholarships during the spring semester on Awards Day which usually occurs in late April. Students are recognized for their academic and service achievements at a college-wide Ceremony.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

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- Every aspect of the program's organization and implementation is conducted without discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, disabilities, political beliefs or sexual orientation.
- The program faculty is committed to teach, encourage, and promote an appreciation for and understanding of diversity in the School, College, University, community and profession.
- The School seeks diversity among its faculty, staff and students.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES

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Americans with Disabilities Act / Disability Accommodation Statement

Students who have a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disability Act and requires accommodations, should contact the Office For Disability Accommodations for information on appropriate policies ,procedures, and services. The Office can be contacted by mail at Box 8586 and by phone @ 601-266-5024 or fax @ 266-6331.

Social Issues and Policies

Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the University that no member of its community shall sexually harass another. Any employee or student who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action including termination. Sexual harassment is illegal under both state

and federal law.

For further information go to :
http://www.usm.edu/pubs/studenthandbook/p001_111.pdf
or refer to the University Student Handbook

Substance Abuse

The University prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees on University property or as a part of any of its activities.

The University will impose disciplinary sanctions consistent with local, state, and federal laws on students and employees who violate this policy.

For further information go to :
<http://www.usm.edu/pubs/safetycompliance/index.htm> or refer to the University Student Handbook

Smoking

All University buildings are smoke-free.

Safeguarding of Records

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, university students have the right to inspect and review any and all records, files, and data directly related to them. The University will not ordinarily release a student's record to any outside agency without consent of the student.

See University Student Handbook, University Records Access Policy, for complete policy statement, departments where specific records are located, and procedures for accessing student records.

DEALING WITH PROBLEMS

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Students are advised to deal with concerns and problems before they become critical. When a student has a concern, the student is advised to follow these steps when the concern is relevant to

Classroom instruction :

1. The student should first talk with the instructor and attempt to resolve the issue. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached,
2. An appointment should be made to meet with the Director of the

School.

Field Education :

1. The student should first talk with the Field Instructor and attempt to resolve the issue. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached,
2. The student should meet with his/her Field Liaison (seminar instructor). If resolution is not reached through the collaborative help of the Field Liaison and Field Instructor,
3. A meeting involving the concerned parties should be arranged with the Field Coordinator. If a resolution is not reached during this meeting,
4. An appointment to meet individually or as a group with the Director of the School should be made.

Grade Appeal

Students may appeal grades they believe were awarded in an arbitrary or capricious manner. A student considering a grade challenge should immediately discuss the matter with the instructor awarding the grade. If a resolution is not reached, the student should promptly contact the Director.

Students should be mindful that strict timelines apply to the formal grade appeal Process.

For full and complete instructions, refer to University's Grade Appeal Process as outlined in the University Student Handbook.

If the concern is not directly related to Field Education or Class Instruction:

1. The student should first speak with his/her advisor for professional development. If a resolution is not reached,
2. An appointment should be made to meet with the Director of the School.

University Grievance Policy

Instructions regarding the formal University grievance procedure are available to students at the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Associated Student Body and published in the University Student Handbook.

TERMINATION POLICY

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The School of Social Work hopes to graduate each student admitted to its degree programs. A student may be terminated, however, for reasons of conduct or academic performance.

Ethical and Professional Behavior

Both in the classroom and in their field placements, students are expected to demonstrate ethical and otherwise appropriate conduct required of professional social workers. The School requires adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics.. A significant violation of the Code of Ethics may be cause for dismissal from the program. Behavior that may be considered unethical is handled by the Student Performance Committee.

In their course work, students are expected to comply with stringent standards of academic honesty. Students are not to plagiarize, present another student's work as their own or share information about the content of examinations with other students.

In the field, students are representatives of agencies and are expected to behave in a way that reflects their accountability to the agency, the community and their clients. All students must observe the principle of confidentiality. No case or situation should be discussed with anyone except the field instructor or with other persons who have a professional responsibility for the case or situation. Permission of the agency should be obtained before agency material is used for class purposes. If case material is discussed in class, names and other identifying material must be disguised. Due to the central importance of confidentiality to ethical social work practice, students are required to sign a "Student Confidentiality Agreement" at the start of their course of study.

Criteria for Termination for Academic Performance

Students in the MSW Program must maintain a 3.0 Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). A student whose CGPA falls below a 3.0 will be first placed on academic probation as per University policy. Failure to achieve a 3.0 CGPA by the end of the following semester may result in suspension and eventual termination from the program.

In addition, a graduate student unable to pass the qualifying/comprehensive examination on repeated attempts may be terminated from the program.

A student dismissed due to academic performance may not apply for readmission for one calendar year. In no case will a student be terminated without a review of the Student Performance Committee, including an opportunity for the student to address the Committee in person.

Student Performance Committee

The Student Performance Committee is a standing committee in the School of Social Work charged with assisting non-routine student problems and when necessary making binding decisions about student's programs. The Director serves as chair of the Committee and appoints two graduate faculty as Committee members. The professional development advisor of any student being reviewed, if not an active member of the committee, serves as an *ex officio* member of the Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to review the status of students who are having learning difficulties , exhibiting conduct problems or suspected of committing legal or ethical violations, and to make decisions regarding their continuation in the program.

Committee meetings are called when a review is necessary. The student will be present for the review of all relevant materials and evidence. The student will be allowed to introduce relevant materials and evidence (including testimony of others) and will be allowed to speak on his/her behalf.

The Committee has the authority to make decisions relative to any student's continuation or termination in the program. Should the Committee decide that a student continue in the program, the Committee also has the right to stipulate the conditions of continued enrollment.

POLICY EXEMPTION REQUESTS

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On occasion, extraordinary circumstances may warrant a student's exemption from a policy of the School of Social Work (for example, the policy on class attendance and grading). Exemption to policy may be granted by the full faculty only. A student requesting an exception should provide the Director with a written request, including rationale. The Director will present the request to the full faculty for discussion and vote, and will inform the student of the faculty's decision.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

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Requisites for the MSW Degree

A minimum of sixty (60) credit hours is required to earn the MSW Degree. All required courses must be successfully completed. Students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and a grade of "Pass" in the Field Practicum courses. In compliance with University graduation requirements, students are required to pass a written comprehensive examination – which in the School of Social Work is administered on completion of foundation course work.

Application for the MSW Degree

Deadline: Deadlines for submission of degree applications will be posted in the School of Social Work and are listed in the [USM Class Schedule Guide](#).

The following procedure is to be followed in applying for a degree:

1. Degree application forms are available in the main office (Room 201 in Hattiesburg; the Cooke Building at Gulf Park, and through the program coordinator in Tupelo) of the School of Social Work. **Each application consists of four copies, all of which must be completed. Copies are acceptable; however, all copies require original signatures.** Applications may be typewritten or printed. All sections are to be completed.
2. The advisor and the student are responsible for the content of the application form. The advisor should check the form carefully; and after it meets approval, sign each copy.
3. The student leaves all copies of the application in the office of the School of Social Work (or with the program coordinator in Tupelo), where it will be recorded and processed. After the student is approved for graduation, both the student and the School of Social Work will receive an approved copy of the application form. The School's copy will be placed in the student's permanent file.

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE

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MSW graduates are eligible for professional licensure. A state licensure exam must be passed in order to obtain a permanent license. Graduates who are leaving the state should inquire about licensure in the state where they will be practicing.

The School's Records and Advisement Coordinator will assist students with completing the necessary forms for verification of education. An applicant must have a degree in social work in order to take the licensure exam and obtain a social work license. Applications for the license and additional information can be obtained at the following address:

Mississippi Board of Examiners for
Social Workers and Marriage & Family Therapists
PO Box 4508
Jackson, MS 39236-4508
Phone: (601) 987-6806

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES⁵

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According to the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2004-05 Edition, employment of social workers is expected to increase faster than the average for all occupations through 2012. While a bachelor's degree is the minimum requirement, a master's degree in social work has become the standard for many positions. Competition for social work jobs is stronger in cities where demand for services often is the highest. Opportunities should be good in rural areas which often find it difficult to attract and retain qualified staff. By specialty, job prospects may be the best for those social workers with a background in gerontology and substance abuse treatment. Graduates will find positions in a wide variety of private or public agencies. Employment opportunities are available in child welfare services, youth courts, health departments, hospitals, the military, mental health centers, community development agencies, nursing homes, residential and day treatment settings, family support agencies and domestic abuse centers among other settings.

Work conditions for social workers may vary depending on the type of agencies by which they are employed. Full-time social workers usually work a standard 40-hour work week; however, some occasionally work evenings and weekends to meet client needs and handle emergencies. According to the U.S. Department of Labor social workers generally earned between \$26,310 and \$42,940 in 2002. There are many advancement opportunities for social workers such as supervisors, program managers, consultants, planners, assistant directors and executive directors of agencies. Such growth, however, requires experience beyond the MSW.

⁵ *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics.

School of Social Work Faculty & Staff 2005

(Titles designate administrative functions)

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Wesley Belton, D.S.W.

Angela Benvenuti, B.B.A., *Administrative Assistant, Gulf Park*

Joyous Bethel, Ph.D.

Hannah Boatright, M.S.W., *Tupelo Program Coordinator*

Joseph Bohanon, M.S.W., *Coordinator of Field Education*

Alan Bougere, D.S.W.

Melissa Coker, *Administrative Assistant for Finance*

Patricia Davis, Ph.D.

Devonne Fesi, M.S.W.

Debra Ford, M.S.W., *Operations Coordinator*

Michael Forster, Ph.D., *Director*

Sherry Gilkey, B.S., *Records & Advisement Coordinator*

Barry Haywood, M.S.W., *Recruitment & Alumni Relations Coordinator*

Jenine Housewright, *Administrative Assistant for Programs*

Susan Hrostowski, M.S.W.

Jerome Kolbo, Ph.D.

Joohee Lee, Ph.D.

Bonnye Pardo, M.S.W.

Tim Rehner, Ph.D., *Assistant Director*

Laurie Risher, M.S.W., *Director, Family Network Partnership*

Missy Rowley, D.S.W.

Raymond Scurfield, D.S.W.

Delories Williams, M.S.W.

Lori Woodruff, M.S.W., *Director, Title IV-E Training Project*