



Social Work Professional and Technical Standards

School of Social Work

MASTERS AND BACHELORS DEGREE PROGRAMS

The technical standards outlined below are required for completion of programs from the School of Social Work at The University of Southern Mississippi. These standards, describe the physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioral requirements of social work students. They are designed to provide an overview of non-academic criteria required for students to fully participate in all aspects of coursework and the field practicum.

1. **Observation:** Students must be able to:

- Accurately observe clients to effectively assess their situations.
- Have the sensory and motor abilities to carry out effectively the necessary assessment activities.

2. **Communication:** Students must be able to:

- Communicate effectively with other students, faculty, staff, clients and other professionals, and exemplify a willingness and ability to listen to others.
- Demonstrate effective communication in presentations, written assignments, small group settings, and through electronic means.
- Perceive and interpret nonverbal communication.
- Use spoken and written English to understand the content presented in the program.
- Comprehend reading assignments and search and evaluate the literature.
- Demonstrate competency in writing skills.

3. **Sensory and Motor Functions:** Students must have sufficient sensory and motor abilities to:

- Attend class and complete the required number of hours during their field practicum.
- To attend and perform safely and satisfactorily in the classroom and in social work agency settings.

4. **Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Functions:** Students must have the ability to:

- Think critically, analyze and interpret objective and subjective data, and apply effective problem solving skills. These skills allow students to make proper assessments, use sound judgment, appropriately prioritize therapeutic interventions, and measure and report client outcomes.
- Demonstrate cognitive ability to effectively use and apply program's knowledge/skills.

5. **Self Awareness:** Students must exhibit:

- Knowledge and openness to learning how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships.
- Willingness to examine and change their behavior when appropriate and work effectively with others in subordinate positions as well as with those in authority.

6. **Emotional and Mental Stability:** Students must demonstrate the ability to:

- Deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms effectively by using appropriate self-care and developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others.
- Effectively use help for medical or emotional problems that interfere with academic and clinical performance.

Professional Performance Standards

The School of Social Work recognizes that preparation for professional practice requires more than scholastic achievement. The program expects students to exhibit behaviors that are consistent with professional performance. Such behavior is expected not only in the classroom but throughout the University and the larger community. Some specific examples of professional performance standards are outlined below.

Students must demonstrate:

- A commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession, as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics.
- The essential values of social work including the respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and his/her right to a just share of society's resources (social justice).
- Behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, professional ethical standards, and societal laws in classroom, field, and community.
- Responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements, and accepting supervision and criticism in a positive manner.
- A commitment to serve in an appropriate manner all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious affiliation (or lack of), gender, disability, sexual orientation and/or value system.

I have read, understand and acknowledge receipt of the Social Work Professional and Technical Standards.

Signature of Applicant _____

Date _____

Technical Standards may be met with, or without, accommodations. The University complies with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Requests for accommodations should be directed to the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA) and follow established university policies and procedures. For more information, contact ODA at 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232 or visit www.usm.edu/oda. Individuals with hearing impairments can use Mississippi Relay Service at 800.582.2233 (TTY) to contact campus offices.