



MSW PROGRAM MANUAL

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

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PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

The purpose of this manual is to describe the structures, goals, expectations, roles and responsibilities, and policies and procedures that form the basis for and guide the MSW Program. The handbook contains information about the MSW Program, the curriculum, admission to and progression through the program, and students' rights and responsibilities. Please refer to it whenever you have questions about the program.

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HISTORY OF THE GRADUATE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

The School of Social Work at The University of Southern Mississippi has a long history. Social work courses have been included in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology curriculum since 1960. At that time, students were allowed to major in sociology with an emphasis in social work. There were three social work courses at that time: Introduction to Social Work, Methods of Social Work, and Field Work Practicum.

During the late 1960s, there was growing national attention on the importance of social work licensure and education. There was also a growing awareness nationwide that a social work emphasis in a sociology program was inadequate to address the complex problems of individuals, communities, and societies. At this same time, locally, there was a growing movement, spearheaded by the National Association of Social Workers – Mississippi Chapter, to establish an autonomous School of Social Work, separate from the academic disciplines of sociology and anthropology. In 1973, the Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning in the State of Mississippi established the first graduate school of social work in the State of Mississippi at The University of Southern Mississippi.

The School of Social Work received initial accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation, Council on Social Work Education in 1976. In June, 1979, the School's accreditation was reaffirmed after a mandatory review. The graduate social work program at The University of Southern Mississippi has been continuously accredited since that time. The School of Social Work now offers Full-Time, Part-Time, and Advanced Standing graduate programs on the Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast campuses.

VISION & MISSION - COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Vision: The College of Education & Human Sciences educates the public through exemplary teaching, excellence in research, and meaningful service that advances professional knowledge and practice so that individuals are empowered to transform the human condition.

Mission: The College of Education & Human Sciences aspires to improve the educational, physical, psychological, and social well-being of our students and society through high impact practices in teaching, research, and student success.

MISSION OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The USM School of Social Work develops and communicates social work knowledge and skills consistent with the values and ethics of the profession. We are inspired by a vision of social justice and advocacy for the well-being of all people. Our graduates produce dynamic solutions for personal, interpersonal, and systemic challenges with particular attention to the needs of people who are poor, oppressed, and underserved.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

We prepare students for competent, ethical, and culturally informed social work practice.

- We deliver a dynamic, integrated competency-based curriculum.
- We infuse opportunities across the curriculum for students to demonstrate mastery of social work knowledge, skills, and values.
- We promote a professional social work identity.

We advance knowledge relevant to social work practice and social welfare.

- We engage faculty, staff, and students in research and scholarship.
- We pursue and secure external funding to support research and program activities.
- We translate research findings and critical inquiry into scholarly products that inform practice, policy, and social service delivery.

We inspire realization of human potential.

- We promote healthy human growth and development.
- We develop dynamic strategies and actions to address oppressive social conditions.
- We model leadership and advocacy for social change.

ACCREDITATION STATEMENT

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), a national professional social work education standard-setting body, sets guidelines and policies that all accredited MSW programs must follow in order to attain their status as accredited institutions.

The Master of Social Work program has been continuously accredited by/CSWE since 1976.

Students are also encouraged to review the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards for social work degree programs as set forth by the CSWE. The full text of the CSWE Policies is available at <http://www.cswe.org>.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL

The School of Social Work is an autonomous unit within the College of Education and Human Sciences. It is administered by the Director, who was delegated authority for certain educational and administrative tasks to individuals and committees within the school.

The school's administrative team consists of the Director, an Associate Director, an MSW Program Coordinator, a BSW Program Coordinator, the Coordinator of Field Education, and other designated staff members.

The Coordinator of Field Education oversees the operation of field programs by implementing and enforcing field policies. See the field handbook for current field policies and procedures.

STUDENTS RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES

Nondiscrimination Policy.

The University of Southern Mississippi does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, gender identity, genetic information, religion, race, color, national origin, veteran status, or any other status protected under applicable federal, state, or local law, in its admission, treatment, or access to its educational programs and activities or in its employment practices. The University of Southern Mississippi prohibits sexual and gender-based harassment, including sexual assault and misconduct, and other forms of interpersonal violence. See <https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/> for full policy.

The School of Social Work 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 are committed to teaching, encouraging, and promoting 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.

ADA Policy

If a student has a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) for information on appropriate policies and procedures. Disabilities covered by ADA may include learning, psychiatric, physical disabilities, or chronic health disorders. Students can contact SAS if they are not certain whether a medical condition/disability qualifies.

Hattiesburg Address:

The University of Southern Mississippi
Office for Disability Accommodations
118 College Drive #8586
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Gulf Coast Address:

The University of Southern Mississippi on the Gulf Coast
Office for Disability Accommodations
730 East Beach Blvd
Long Beach, MS 39560

Voice Telephone: 601.266.5024 Fax: 601.266.6035

Individuals with hearing impairments can contact ODA using the Mississippi Relay Service at 1.800.582.2233 (TTY) or by email at SAS@usm.edu.

See <https://www.usm.edu/student-accessibility-services/index.php> for more information.

Safeguarding of Records

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, university students have the right to inspect and review all records, files, and data directly related to them. The

University will not ordinarily release a student's record to any outside agency without the consent of the student. See <https://www.usm.edu/registrar/ferpa-compliance.php> for more information.

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

The University of Southern Mississippi does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs and activities. The university, in an effort to foster an environment of respect for the dignity and worth of all members of the university community, is committed to maintaining an educational environment free of sexual harassment. It is the policy of the university that no member of its community shall engage in sexually harassing or sexually violent behavior toward another. Any student or employee who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action which may include expulsion from the university or termination of employment. Sexual harassment, including sexually violent behavior, is illegal under both state and federal law. See <https://usm.policystat.com/policy/13335849/latest/> for more information.

SOCIAL ISSUES AND POLICIES

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

We are committed to fostering, sustaining, and **strategizing toward racial inclusion, diversity, and equity** (S.T.R.I.D.E.). As a school, we will adhere to this commitment by taking strong positions, taking action, providing help, and being clear on expectations from all affiliated with the School of Social Work at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM). This statement is couched within the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. Lastly, this statement is intended to offer our position, plans of action, and expectations for students, staff, faculty, and field partners.

What is Our Position? All students, staff, and faculty are welcome in any School of Social Work setting. We disavow all racism, xenophobia, homophobia, sexism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, classism, ableism, and hate speech or actions that attempt to silence, threaten, and degrade others. We recognize that discrimination can be direct or indirect and take place at both institutional and personal levels. Expressions or actions that disparage a person are contrary to the mission of S.T.R.I.D.E. and the school and will not be tolerated.

How do we Implement Action behind our Position? We are committed to supporting our students and fostering an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. We will work to promote an anti-discriminatory environment where everyone should feel welcome. During class, your instructors will not shy away from the uncomfortable. The faculty urge you to have the courage to be uncomfortable in class discussions. In exchange for your courage, we will work to ensure a classroom environment that supports your taking these intellectual and emotional risks.

What does Providing Help Look Like? If you feel that our courses, programs, or department fall short of this commitment, we encourage you to engage in dialogue with your instructor, staff, or administrator. Your instructors will always be in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said or done that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to an instructor, administrator, or university partner about it. Alternatively, you may

file a Statement of Complaint with the **Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity** in person or online at: <https://forms.usm.edu/human-resources/view.php?id=13153>. You may also contact the **Office of Multicultural Programs and Services (Hattiesburg Campus)** to submit complaints in person or online at: <https://www.usm.edu/studentaffairs/cares.php#report>.

Our Expectations. We expect that learning needs will be addressed both in and out of class. The diversity that students bring to class will be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit.

Courteous

behavior and responses are expected at all times. It is likely you may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in the classroom. We expect you to be able to disagree without becoming disagreeable. Civility and respect for the opinions of others are very important in an academic environment.

Alcohol and Drugs

The University of Southern Mississippi strives to maintain campus communities, activities and worksites free from the illegal use, possession, or distribution of alcohol, illegal drugs, or controlled substances as defined by state law and in Schedules I through V of the Controlled Substances Act, 21 United States Code section 812, as amended and by regulation at 21 Code of Federal Regulations section 1308. The University of Southern Mississippi recognizes that the illegal and/or abusive use of alcohol or drugs by members of the University community can prevent the University from meeting its commitments and accomplishing its missions. Further, such use jeopardizes the safety and welfare of the individual, fellow employees and students, and the University community. The University Alcohol and Drug Policy prescribes standards of conduct expected of academic and staff employees, students, and visitors to maintain alcohol and drug-free campus communities, activities, and worksites and contains provisions to ensure that the University is in compliance with federal and state statutes. See <https://usm.policystat.com/policy/14355763/latest> for more information.

Tobacco-Free and Vape-Free USM

The University of Southern Mississippi strives to enhance the general health and well-being of its faculty, staff, students, and visitors. We desire to support individuals to be tobacco-free, achieve their highest state of health, and launch students into their careers at a high level of health and well-being. To support this commitment, we intend to provide a tobacco-free and vape-free environment. Smoking and tobacco use are prohibited in and on all University-owned, operated, or leased property, including vehicles. Because The University of Southern Mississippi is committed to providing a safe and healthy working and learning environment for the students, faculty, staff, and visitors on its campuses, it hereby adopts the following tobacco-free and vape-free policy. See <https://usm.policystat.com/policy/10752673/latest> for more information.

ADVISING

Advisement is essential to the MSW program at The University of Southern Mississippi. Students receive advisement from the MSW Coordinator upon admission to the program. They are then advised during their courses at the beginning of each semester. Students may request additional advisement by contacting the MSW Coordinator at any time.

The purpose of advisement is to guide and support students in achieving educational and professional goals. Advisement is not meant to replace the student's complete understanding of the requirements of the MSW program and/or Graduate School requirements. Students are expected to know and follow all Graduate School requirements as posted in the Graduate School Bulletin and Student Handbook.

The MSW Coordinator will assist the student in the logical progression of academic work based on a pre-determined academic plan of study. In the MSW program, courses are sequential, and students may not take a course unless a prerequisite or a recommended course is completed prior to enrollment. Students will be asked to withdraw from a course if it is not in sequence or recommended by the MSW Coordinator.

The MSW Coordinator will serve as a guide for each student's development as a professional social worker. The MSW Coordinator is available to meet with students individually, in a small group setting, or at a field placement site as needed or requested. All faculty are available and may assist students with questions or concerns throughout the program. The MSW Coordinator may also assist with students' professional problems that might impact their timely progression through the MSW program by providing appropriate resources.

CURRICULUM DESIGN

In August 2016, the School of Social Work began the process of reviewing the Council of Social Work Education's newly revised (2015) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS); the School's Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives; and the school's curriculum (including both the BSW and the MSW Generalist and Advanced Area of Specialization). The faculty approved the following timeline:

- A. 2017-2018: Recommend changes to curriculum and obtain approvals through Academic and Graduate Councils;
- B. 2018-2019: Begin implementing changes in BSW and MSW Generalist curriculum;
- C. 2019-2020: Begin MSW Area of Specialization and assess (collect data on BSW and MSW Generalist competencies);
- D. 2020-2021: Continue to assess (collect data on BSW and MSW Generalist competencies) and begin to assess MSW Area of Specialization data; and
- E. 2021-2022: Complete Self-Study by 8/1/2021 and prepare for site visit in late fall 2021 or early spring 2022.

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 with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage 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.

The first 26 hours of the MSW curriculum prepares students for generalist practice. The descriptions of the nine Social Work Competencies presented in Appendix A identify the knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors associated with competence at the generalist level of practice. The nine Social Work Competencies include: **Competency 1:** Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior **Competency 2:** Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice **Competency 3:** Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice **Competency 4:** Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice **Competency 5:** Engage in Policy Practice **Competency 6:** Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities **Competency 7:** Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities **Competency 8:** Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities **Competency 9:** Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

The remaining 35 hours of specialized practice in the MSW curriculum build on first 26 hours generalist practice, adapting and extending the nine Social Work Competencies. In the School of Social Work, the Area of Specialization is Resilience-Informed Social Work Practice (RISWP). RISWP augments and extends generalist social work knowledge, values, and skills to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate practice. Specialized practitioners advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies through RISWP. Specialized practitioners synthesize and employ a broad range of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge and skills based on scientific inquiry and best practices and consistent with social work values. Specialized practitioners engage in and conduct research to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery. The specialized knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors that extend and enhance the nine Social Work Competencies and prepare students for RISWP are described in more detail in **Appendix A**.

Further elaboration of RISWP follows below.

MSW Area of Specialization: Resilience-Informed Social Work Practice

RISWP is a forward-thinking collaborative model that honors the strengths of individuals, families, and communities who experience long-term negative outcomes caused by manmade or natural occurrences. The model identifies, addresses, and mitigates risk factors through the use of resilience-based assessments and interventions. The model of RISWP builds on strengths and protective factors however, they are defined while simultaneously addressing the vulnerabilities and socially unjust conditions experienced by and through various ecological systems.

Specialized practice in resilience augments the generalist social work competencies and is grounded in all the values of the profession (Grant, 2014; Greene, 2002), including but not limited to service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry.

The resilience-informed curriculum builds upon the generalist practice through courses and assignments that apply ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels; promotes diversity in practice and advocacy for human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice; engages research-informed practice that is consistent with the social work knowledge, values, and skills and is necessary to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate policy and practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities; and extends and expands knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors associated with the nine social work competencies (Grant, 2014; Greene, 2002).

Located in a diverse region marked by deeply entrenched systemic issues and punctuated by damaging natural or man-made crises, the School of Social Work challenges students to strategically engage members across all socioeconomic levels in the development and enhancement of individual, family, group, organizational, and community resilience. Students build from a person-in-the-environment perspective, inspiring on-going persistence and determination, as they work to identify solutions to overcome the effects of social, economic, and environmental stressors. Our students are challenged through cyclical integrations of experiential, practice-based, and research-based learning platforms allowing for broad-based application of this specialization in a multitude of settings.

Resilience is the process of adapting in the face of adversity such as trauma, tragedy, threats or specific sources of stress such as poverty, disasters, public health crises, racism, abuse, domestic or community violence (American Psychological Association, 2014). Resiliency framework focuses on positive contextual, social, and individual variables that may disrupt high-risk trajectories of individuals and their communities (Zimmerman, 2018). Resilience is a biopsychosocial and spiritual phenomenon that involves a dynamic process of person-environment exchanges (Berkes & Ross, 2013).

The concept of resilience is inherently dynamic and lends well to both proactive and evolutionary/progressive (justice-anchored) perspectives (Johnson, 2020). It applies not only to the full panoply of traditional systems, but further accords well with (a) the familiar and well-researched risk-and-protective factors framework (affirming the strengths perspective and even dipping a toe, perhaps, into the shallows of “positive psychology”) and (b) an inclusive, itself evolving, range of environmental/systemic disruptions to functional stability – from relatively mild and localized challenges to equilibrium (e.g. predictable personal or organizational life transitions), to both sudden disaster events (e.g., community devastation by a tornado), and protracted wide-ranging societal impacts (e.g., economic dislocation, or the advancing known and unknown effects of the climate crisis). Resilience-informed curriculum in the School of Social Work helps students

ground the concept of resilience into specific systems to develop a shared understanding that enables positive action.

Assessing, building, and promoting resilience have implications for practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels, which are emphasized across the MSW curriculum. Resilience frameworks (e.g., personal, urban, climate, community), underpinned by theory and research, are integrated with the ecological and life course perspectives and utilized to understand and promote resilience across individual, family, group, organizational, and community contexts (Grant, 2014; Greene, 2002).

Research on community resilience has roots in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery (Berkes & Ross, 2013; Christopherson et al., 2010; Clark et al., 2010). Resilient communities possess certain strengths, such as social networks and support, engaged governance, people-place connections, community problem-solving, and the ability to cope with divisions (Berkes & Ross, 2013). Others have noted that resilient communities are those where members are mentally and physically well; can access healthcare, healthy foods, and services they need; are self-sufficient and can care for each other during hard times; are engaged in the community and connected (Wolfe, 2010). From a micro perspective, resilience provides a conceptual framework for using a strength-based approach to understand human development and inform interventions for adults, children, and adolescents (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Hart et al., 2007; Zimmerman, 2018). Evidence-based frameworks and strategies that empower groups, families, and organizations to enhance resilience are also emphasized (Christopherson et al., 2010; Clark et al., 2010; Wolfe, 2010)).

Building resilience among social work students comprises another area of emphasis within this specialization. Social work students are given opportunities to build personal resilience to protect their well-being (Grant & Kinman, 2014). Numerous evidence-based strategies are addressed in the curriculum to help social workers build their resilience while doing the same for the people and communities they serve.

Consistency between Mission and Specialization

RISWP involves not only intervening effectively with individuals, families, and small groups but also engaging in macro-level practices that “work collectively to prevent social problems, ameliorate adverse conditions, and effect positive social change in government, organizational, and community settings” (CSWE, 2018, p. xxviii). We view resilience as a dynamic process rather than the outcome that occurs across multiple systems. RISWP is in keeping with university, college, and school mission statements, especially regarding the school’s mission. RISWP is the vehicle through which social workers ensure that social, economic, and environmental justice is served across all systems (Grant, 2014; Greene, 2002).

Context within Mississippi

The history and culture of Mississippi has created and perpetuated a myriad of challenges, including poverty, racism, and intolerance, as well as injustice/inequity/disparity in many areas including, but not limited to, health/mental health, education, criminal justice, and child welfare. In addition, Mississippi, especially South Mississippi, has constantly faced disasters, both natural and human-made. Many individuals in MS are in an ongoing process of crisis/disaster response, recovery and preparedness. The poor, oppressed, and underserved face multiple challenges in this process.

Furthermore, Mississippi has experienced a critical shortage of professional social workers in all the practice *areas*. Nowhere in the United States are client systems more in need of a resilience-informed approach to addressing these inequities.

While Mississippi provides the principal context, the school also prepares students for practice in regional, national, and global contexts. In these contexts, as much as in Mississippi, resilience-informed practice is fully and increasingly relevant to current and emerging societal challenges.

Field Placements

Resilience is addressed in every field placement as students approach every individual, group, and organization systems from a strengths perspective and seek to empower clients by utilizing problem-solving skills and coping mechanisms. Resilience-informed social work practice provides a sound foundation for interdisciplinary education and research, as well as collaborative work with non-academic external systems and agencies (Grant, 2014; Greene, 2002).

Explicit Course Work Addressing the Area of Specialization

USM's School of Social Work encompasses a variety of classes with resilience-informed frameworks and practice areas. These include but are not limited to:

- Advanced Social Work Practice with Children and Families
- Advanced Social Work Practice: Intervention with Adults
- Advanced Social Work Practice: Assessments with Organizations and Communities
- Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work II: Program Evaluation
- Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work III: Research Practicum

RISWP must be addressed in generalist courses and built upon in advanced courses. Resilience-informed curriculum at the advanced level builds on and extends the core competencies at the generalist level.

Field Education

Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline—to think, perform, and act ethically and with integrity. Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. Field education intends to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom, and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the Social Work Competencies.

CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

Curriculum Models

The School offers Full-Time, Saturday Part-Time, Advanced Standing Full-Time, and Advanced Standing Saturday Part-Time curriculum models. The Full-Time and Part-Time models are 60 hours and typically only begin in the fall. The Full-Time model is five continuous semesters and the Part-Time is eight continuous semesters. The Advanced Standing Full-Time model is three continuous semesters, 35 hours, and typically only begins in the summer. The Advanced Standing Part-Time model is four continuous semesters, 35 hours, and only begins in January.

Below are the current course sequences and are subject to change.

Full-Time Five-Semester Curriculum Model

Semester One (Fall):

- SWK 600 - Human Rights & Social Justice in a Diverse Society 3 hrs.
- SWK 607 - Systems and the Human Life Course 3 hrs.
- SWK 614 - Critical Thinking and Ethical Decision Making 3 hrs.
- SWK 631 - Social Work Practice Theory 3 hrs.

Semester Two (Spring): **First Field Internship**

- SWK 611 - Foundations of Social Work Practice 3 hrs.
- SWK 618 - Social Welfare Policy and Context 3 hrs.
- SWK 619 - Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work I: Practice Evaluation 3 hrs.
- SWK 659 - Social Work Full-Time Field Education I 2 hrs.
- SWK 689 - Forensic Social Work 2 hrs.

Semester Three (Summer):

- SWK 628 - Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work II: Program Evaluation 3 hrs.
- SWK 637 - Administrative Research and Entrepreneurship 3 hrs.
- SWK 645 - Management, Supervision, and Leadership in Social Work 3 hrs.

Semester Four (Fall): **Second Field Internship begins**

- SWK 613 - Problem-Solving with Groups 3 hrs.
- SWK 638 - Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work III: Research Practicum 3 hrs.
- SWK 661 - Social Work Full-Time Field Education II 1 hr.
- SWK 667 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Assessment with Adults 3 hrs.
- SWK 677 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Assessment with Children and Families 3 hrs.

Semester Five (Spring): **Second Field Internship continues**

- SWK 629 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Intervention with Children and Families 3 hrs.
- SWK 644 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Intervention with Adults 3 hrs.
- SWK 646 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Assessment with Organizations & Communities 3 hrs.
- SWK 657 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Intervention with Addictions 3 hrs.
- SWK 662 - Social Work Full-Time Field Education III 1 hr.

Part-Time Saturday Eight Semester Curriculum Model

Semester One (Fall):

- SWK 600 - Human Rights & Social Justice in a Diverse Society 3 hrs.
- SWK 614 - Critical Thinking and Ethical Decision Making 3 hrs.

Semester Two (Spring):

- SWK 607 - Systems and the Human Life Course 3 hrs.
- SWK 631 - Social Work Practice Theory 3 hrs.

Semester Three (Summer):

- SWK 618 - Social Welfare Policy and Context 3 hrs.
- SWK 619 - SWK 619 - Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work I: Practice Evaluation 3 hrs.

Semester Four (Fall): **First Field Internship begins**

- SWK 611 - Foundations of Social Work Practice 3 hrs.
- SWK 626 - Social Work Part-Time Field Education I 1 hr.
- SWK 689 – Forensic Social Work 2 hrs.

Semester Five (Spring): **First Field Internship continues**

- SWK 627 - Social Work Part-Time Field Education II 1 hr.
- SWK 637 - Administrative Research and Entrepreneurship 3 hrs.
- SWK 628 - Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work II: Program Evaluation 3 hrs.
- SWK 645 - Management, Supervision, and Leadership in Social Work 3 hrs.

Semester Six (Summer):

- SWK 638 - Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work III: Research Practicum 3 hrs.
- SWK 613 - Problem-Solving with Groups 3 hrs.

Semester Seven (Fall): **Second Field Internship begins**

- SWK 641 - Social Work Part-Time Field Education III 1 hr.
- SWK 646 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Assessment with Organizations and Communities 3 hrs.
- SWK 667 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Assessment with Adults 3 hrs.
- SWK 677 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Assessment with Children and Families 3 hrs.

Semester Eight (Spring): **Second Field Internship continues**

- SWK 629 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Intervention with Children and Families 3 hrs.
- SWK 642 - Social Work Part-Time Field Education IV 1 hr.
- SWK 644 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Intervention with Adults 3 hrs.
- SWK 657 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Intervention with Addictions 3 hrs.

Advanced Standing Full-Time Three-Semester Curriculum Model

Semester One (Summer):

- SWK 628 - Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work II: Program Evaluation 3 hrs.
- SWK 637 - Administrative Research and Entrepreneurship 3 hrs.
- SWK 645 - Management, Supervision, and Leadership in Social Work 3 hrs.

Semester Two (Fall): **Field Internship begins**

- SWK 613 - Problem-Solving with Groups 3 hrs.
- SWK 638 - Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work III: Research Practicum 3 hrs.
- SWK 661 - Social Work Full-Time Field Education II 1 hr.
- SWK 667 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Assessment with Adults 3 hrs.
- SWK 677 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Assessment with Children and Families 3 hrs.

Semester Three (Spring): **Field Internship continues**

- SWK 629 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Intervention with Children and Families 3 hrs.
- SWK 644 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Intervention with Adults 3 hrs.
- SWK 646 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Assessment with Organizations and Communities 3 hrs.
- SWK 657 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Intervention with Addictions 3 hrs.
- SWK 662 - Social Work Full-Time Field Education III 1hr.

Advanced Standing Part-Time Four-Semester Curriculum Model

Semester One (Spring):

- SWK 627 - Social Work Part-Time Field Education II 1 hr.
- SWK 637 - Administrative Research and Entrepreneurship 3 hrs.
- SWK 628 - Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work II: Program Evaluation 3 hrs.
- SWK 645 - Management, Supervision, and Leadership in Social Work 3 hrs.

Semester Two (Summer):

- SWK 638 - Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work III: Research Practicum 3 hrs.
- SWK 613 - Problem-Solving with Groups 3 hrs.

Semester Three (Fall): **Second Field Internship begins**

- SWK 641 - Social Work Part-Time Field Education III 1 hr.
- SWK 646 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Assessment with Organizations and Communities 3 hrs.
- SWK 667 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Assessment with Adults 3 hrs.
- SWK 677 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Assessment with Children and Families 3 hrs.

Semester Four (Spring): **Second Field Internship continues**

- SWK 629 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Intervention with Children and Families 3 hrs.
- SWK 642 - Social Work Part-Time Field Education IV 1hr.
- SWK 644 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Intervention with Adults 3 hrs.
- SWK 657 - Advanced Social Work Practice: Intervention with Addictions 3 hrs

ADMISSIONS

To apply for the MSW program, visit <https://www.usm.edu/graduate-admissions/index.php>.

Admission to the MSW program is highly competitive, and every year, the school has more applicants than available space. Applicants are encouraged to ensure all of the required materials are submitted. The Admissions Committee reviews only complete applications.

Admission Standards

Applicants to the School of Social Work are evaluated and admitted without discrimination on the basis of age, gender, religion, color, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, political, or sexual orientation.

All applicants to the MSW program are evaluated and admitted on the basis of the following criteria:

1. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university
2. The grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on the last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework required by the Graduate School
3. A written personal statement
4. Three letters of recommendation from persons qualified to assess the applicant's readiness for graduate study
5. International applicants must submit official TOEFL or IELTS scores

Applications to the Advanced Standing program are evaluated based on the additional criteria below:

Application Process for Advanced Standing. At The University of Southern Mississippi, BSW graduates entering the MSW program do not repeat what has been mastered in their BSW programs. The School of Social Work's MSW Program Manual provides explicit and unambiguous policies and procedures to determine whether a student meets the qualifications for Advanced Standing to be allowed to enroll in the final 35 hours of the 60-hour MSW program. There is no duplication of content in the final 35 hours (Advanced Standing).

Advanced Standing Admissions Process. A potential student must submit all required application materials as specified in the Graduate School Admissions Portal. These materials include:

1. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university
2. The grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on the last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework required by the Graduate School
3. A written personal statement
4. Three letters of recommendation from persons qualified to assess the applicant's readiness for graduate study
5. International applicants must submit official TOEFL or IELTS scores

Advanced Standing Application Review Process. Once an application is complete, the Graduate School sends it to the MSW Admissions Committee. The MSW Admissions Committee consists of full-time faculty. The committee reviews all of the materials and provides one of three recommendations to the MSW Coordinator (Admission, Conditional Admission, or Denial). If the recommendation is for conditional admission, then requirements specified in the MSW Program Manual (see section on Conditional Admission below) must be followed, and the student would not be eligible for Advanced Standing.

If the recommendation from the Admissions Committee is for admission into the MSW program, then the MSW Coordinator will again review the transcripts to determine if the student meets all of the following qualifications for the Advanced Standing program:

1. Have an earned Bachelor's degree in social work from a CSWE accredited university within the last five years;
2. Have a minimum 3.0 GPA on last 60 hours of course work; and
3. Have a minimum 3.5 GPA in their social work courses; with no "C"s

If the student meets all the requirements, the coordinator will work with the student to schedule the School's Qualifying Exam. The student must pass the Qualifying Exam. If the student does not pass the Qualifying Exam, the student cannot be admitted into the Advanced Standing program. In such cases, the student would be given the option to enroll in either of the 60-hour programs (Full-Time or Part-Time).

The Qualifying Exam is a comprehensive multiple-choice exam covering all nine required competencies (see section below). This is the same exam all MSW students must pass to progress to the final 35 hours of study (see section on Progression Policies below). There is no re-take option for the Advanced Standing applicant.

Application Deadlines

The School of Social Work admission deadlines are consistent with those set by the Graduate School. Applicants are encouraged to apply as early as possible to ensure availability. Please see the graduate school website for University admission deadlines (<https://www.usm.edu/graduate-admissions/graduate-program-contacts-and-application-deadlines.php>).

Conditional Admission

The School of Social Work at The University of Southern Mississippi may admit MSW students with less than a 3.0 undergraduate GPA on a "conditional" basis upon the recommendation of the admissions committee and approval of the MSW Coordinator, School Director, and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School. Students are only admitted to this option if spaces are available in the MSW program. A master's student admitted conditionally must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in all coursework taken while admitted as a conditional admit student.

Students admitted on a "conditional" basis are not guaranteed to remain in the MSW program or be allowed to enroll in the subsequent semester. Students should check with USM Financial Aid before selecting this option, as financial aid may not be available to a "conditional" student admit. Students who do not maintain a GPA of 3.0 (B) while conditionally admitted will be

required to sit out the following semester and, in the subsequent semester(s), retake any courses in which the student received a (C) or lower.

Conditional status will be reviewed and may be removed upon completion of twelve (12) hours of graduate coursework with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. For more information, refer to the Graduate Student Bulletin on “conditional admissions”. (<https://catalog.usm.edu/>)

Qualifying Exam

After completing the foundation courses (first 25 hours), the student must pass a written qualifying exam administered by the School of Social Work to proceed to the advanced courses. Students not passing the examination on the first attempt may retake it once. The Student Performance Committee (SPC) will determine a remedial plan for any student failing the exam a second time. The SPC may recommend the students’ dismissal from the program.

Non-Degree Seeking Graduate Students

Students must apply for non-degree status by submitting the application form, proof of bachelor’s degree, and their application fee to Graduate Admissions. Permission to take courses as a non-degree graduate student may be granted for any of the following reasons:

- A. The student did not meet the requirements for conditional or regular admission before the deadline. These admission requirements and non-degree status must be met, and the non-degree status must be changed to conditional or regular by the end of the first full semester after the student enrolls in graduate courses to continue coursework. Permission from the department offering the course, the dean, and the dean of the Graduate School must be secured to register for the course.
- B. The student may or may not be able to meet admission requirements but does not desire to work toward a graduate degree. For example, an individual may wish to take courses for licensure.
- C. The student wishes to earn a Graduate certificate.
- D. The student is enrolled in another university and desires to obtain credit from The University of Southern Mississippi to be transferred to the university in which he or she is seeking a degree.
- E. Students who have been denied admission to a program but wish to take graduate courses may request permission to take courses as a non-degree seeking graduate student. They must have the permission of the chair of the department offering the course, the dean, and dean of the Graduate School to register for any graduate course.

Even though a non-degree graduate student can take courses at the university, he or she has not been admitted to any department or degree program. They are admitted to the Graduate School. Moreover, no credit earned beyond the master’s degree while classified as a non-degree student may be applied toward the doctoral degree. Non-degree graduate students must have permission from the chair of the department offering the course, the dean, and the dean of the Graduate School to register for any graduate course. Students should come to The Graduate School for processing.

A non-degree graduate student must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution. Non-degree graduate students are not eligible for financial aid. To be allowed to continue as a

non-degree graduate student, the student must consult with the department chair or academic adviser of the department in which he or she is taking courses during the first semester enrolled at the university, regardless of whether or not the student plans to seek a degree.

No more than twelve semester hours earned while classified as a non-degree graduate student will be accepted toward a master's degree at The University of Southern Mississippi. A student must, therefore, gain conditional or regular admission before completing more than nine semester hours of study.

Transfer of Credits

Up to 25% of the 60 semester hours (15) of graduate credit from other accredited institutions may be transferred to the student's program with the approval of the appropriate department chair and dean of the Graduate School, provided the course work transferred falls within the five-year period allowed for the degree. Such coursework must carry a letter or numeric grade of "B" or better and not count toward another graduate degree; it cannot be a pass/fail course. The transfer grade is not calculated in the USM GPA. A total sum of no more than twenty-one (21) semester hours of transfer work and non-degree work may be applied toward a master's degree.

1. the student requesting credit for coursework completed at another accredited institution must first be admitted to the MSW program (however, admission to the MSW program does not guarantee approval of any transfer credits);
2. the student requesting credit must submit a letter of request to the MSW Program Coordinator, which identifies the course(s) for which the transfer credit is requested, a copy of the course syllabus, and an official transcript showing the grade(s) earned;
3. the MSW Program Coordinator, with the assistance of the MSW admissions committee, will review the request for transfer credit based on a review of all submitted materials (each course for which transfer credit is requested will be reviewed independently), make recommendations to the Director of the School of Social Work and, upon approval by the Director, inform the student in writing of the decision;
4. The student may appeal the MSW Program Coordinator's decision to the Director of the School of Social Work.

Electives

No electives are available in the MSW program.

No Credit for Life Experience

Academic credit for life experience and previous work experience is not given in lieu of the field placement or any other required social work course.

Tevera

The School of Social Work utilizes education management software to track internship requirements and evaluations. This helps track and enhance our students' growth and makes our assessment and accountability tasks more manageable.

Students are required to purchase access to the software prior to their first internship. Please see the field manual for more information. (<https://www.usm.edu/social-work/field-education.php>)

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

Progression Policies

The following **progression policies** apply for all students accepted into the MSW program:

- Adhere to the standards of conduct specified in the Social Work Code of Ethics and the USM Social Work Professional and Technical Standards document
- Pay all field fees during the first semester of study
- Complete Responsible Conduct of Research (CITI) within the first semester of study
- Any grade of “C-” or less will require the student to retake the class
- Maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 (The minimum GPA is required for acceptance into the field practicum)
- After completing the first 25 hours of the curriculum, complete and pass the Qualifying Exam (also referred to as the Qualifying Exam)
- Enroll continuously until the degree is completed – including summer semesters
- Complete field practicum (900 clock hours) in agency settings designated by the school’s field coordinator
- File Application for Degree in the semester prior to when scheduled to graduate
- Complete the Comprehensive Assessment in the final semester of study
- Complete the degree within five calendar years from the date of initial enrollment. For more information, refer to the Graduate Bulletin.

Course Withdrawal

Withdrawal from courses or the social work program must comply with procedures established by the University. A student intending to withdraw from all courses must comply with procedures established by the University (see <https://www.usm.edu/registrar/withdrawal-policy.php>)) and should provide written notice of their intent to the MSW Coordinator. A student who withdraws from all courses and wishes to re-enroll in the program must obtain written permission from the MSW Coordinator and the Graduate School. A student who withdraws from a social work practice course that is a co-requisite with a field course must also withdraw from the field course.

Incomplete Grades

Under University regulations, a student may request an "incomplete" grade for a course when illness or other extenuating circumstances have occurred beyond the student's control. The professor may decide to grant or deny the request based on the evidence presented by the student. If an incomplete is awarded, the time limit for removing the grade is the end of the following semester. If, at the end of the next semester, the “I” grade is not removed, it will automatically become an “F.”

Non-duplication of Content Mastered in BSW programs

The MSW program in the School of Social Work follows explicit and unambiguous procedures and policies for preventing the repeat of content previously mastered by BSW students. The School's Curriculum Committee must review all proposals for adding new or modifying existing MSW courses. The review includes but is not limited to the course title, course syllabus, required textbooks, content/modules, readings, learning activities, and assignments. Faculty who teach BSW courses and the BSW Coordinator assess the proposals for possible areas of duplication and advise on changes to the proposals before approval by the faculty. Recommendations by the Curriculum Committee are presented and voted on at the next regularly scheduled faculty meeting.

All such proposals must also undergo review and approval by the College Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Council before the course can be offered in a subsequent semester. The BSW Coordinator and the MSW Coordinator serve on the College Curriculum Committee. If a possibility of duplication with a BSW course exists, the Coordinators must demonstrate how the MSW proposal differs from BSW courses. The MSW Coordinator serves on the Graduate Council. Once again, if a possibility of duplication with a BSW course exists, the MSW Coordinator must demonstrate how the MSW proposal differs from the BSW course. The Graduate School requires related undergraduate syllabi, if they exist, to accompany the MSW proposals (<http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/graduate-council>).

If approved by the Graduate Council, the new or revised course becomes official, and the Registrar's Office records changes. The School of Social Work can then offer the new or revised course in the subsequent semester (fall or spring). The processes and paperwork at both College and Graduate School levels must follow the Graduate School policy (<http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/graduate-council>).

Tape/Digital Recording

Audio, video, or other taping/digital class session recordings are prohibited. A student may request special permission from 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.

The above policy does not apply to students who have a documented disability and the Student Accessibility Services at The University of Southern Mississippi has so requested such accommodations for the student. (<https://www.usm.edu/student-accessibility-services/index.php>)

Auditing a Course

A student may audit a social work course if class space is available and with the instructor's permission. Fees and special requirements consistent with university policy may apply. Auditing a course does not generate a grade. Students who audit a course must retake it for an earned grade if they wish to have a grade for the audited course.

Independent study

MSW students may take an Independent Study course as an elective within the School of Social Work. Generally, independent study courses are designated with the prefix SWK and number

692. SWK 692 Independent Study. Course content may not be redundant of other coursework. An Independent Study course must enrich the basic course of study and allow the student to pursue in-depth a specialization within the profession of social work. Work expectations regarding both quantity and quality must be comparable to other graduate-level social work courses. Independent study courses require ongoing and scheduled meetings with the instructor and must result in some research producing one or more substantive products, such as a paper, poster presentation, etc. No student will be allowed to register for an independent study course using the SOAR system.

All independent study requests must be made in writing to the MSW Coordinator and approved by the School of Social Work Director. The request must include an in-depth plan of study for the independent study course. The plan of study must consist of a proposal for independent study, the intended outcome of the independent study, the steps to achieve the outcome, and a timeline for when the intended outcome will be completed. The plan of study must document the agreement of the faculty member who will be undertaking the independent study with the student. The plan of study will be retained in the student's academic file maintained in the School of Social Work. Only permanent faculty members may serve as an independent study faculty member of record.

Grade Appeal

Students may appeal grades they believe were awarded in an arbitrary or capricious manner.

1. A student considering a grade appeal should immediately discuss the matter with the instructor awarding the grade.
2. If a resolution is not reached, the student should promptly submit their appeal in writing to the MSW Coordinator. Details explaining reasons for the appeal that includes copies of supportive documentation must be included in the written request. (submit this [form](#) with supporting documentation).
3. This request will be reviewed by the administrative team, and once a decision is made, the student will be informed in writing.
4. If the student disagrees with the decision, they can appeal the decision to the Director of the School of Social Work.
5. After the Director of the School of Social Work – students have the right to appeal the decision to the Dean, College of Education and Human Sciences. At this point, the university has specific appeal guidelines to follow. For complete instructions, refer to the University's Grade Appeal Process (<https://usm.policystat.com/policy/14493901/latest>). The MSW Coordinator (or designee) will assist the student with understanding the process and requirements.

Academic Integrity

All students at the University of Southern Mississippi are expected to demonstrate the highest levels of academic integrity in all that they do. Forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

1. Cheating (including copying from others' work)
2. Plagiarism (representing another person's words or ideas as your own; failure to properly cite the source of your information, argument, or concepts)
3. Falsification of documents
4. Disclosure of test or other assignment content to another student
5. Submission of the same paper or other assignment to more than one class without the explicit approval of all faculty members involved
6. Unauthorized academic collaboration with others
7. Conspiracy to engage in academic misconduct

Engaging in any of these behaviors or supporting others who do so will result in academic penalties and/or other sanctions. If a faculty member determines that a student has violated our Academic Integrity Policy, sanctions ranging from resubmission of work to course failure may occur, including the possibility of receiving a grade of "XF" for the course, which will be on the student's transcript with the notation "Failure due to academic misconduct." For more details, please see the University's Academic Integrity Policy (<https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-acaf-pro-012>). Note that repeated acts of academic misconduct will lead to expulsion from the University.

Electronic Devices

Neither computers nor other electronic devices are to be used in the classroom for non-academic reasons. This includes emailing, texting, social networking, and use of the internet. The use of cell phones is prohibited and should be set on silent before class begins. Failure to meet these expectations may result in a loss of participation points or the student may be asked to leave the class.

Children in the Classroom

Children at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) are defined as persons under the age of 16 years. The University has an obligation to conduct its operation and maintain its facilities in a manner consistent with its primary mission as an institution of higher learning. Because USM wants to ensure the safety and security of children the following regulations will apply to children of faculty, staff, and students who come to a university facility.

1. Children may remain on campus only if accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult (over 18 years of age).
2. Babysitting is not allowed on campus.
3. Children cannot be left in lobby areas of building while parents or guardians are in classes.
4. Children may not be taken to classrooms or field because class lectures and participation will often touch on controversial topics that are integral to the learning process.

Guests in the Classroom

If you want to bring guests to the classroom, you must speak with your instructor in advance to obtain permission.

Criminal Background Check

Conviction of past criminal activity or conduct may not be used as a criterion for denial of admission into the Social Work Program. However, students are advised that past or future criminal activity or conduct may limit or inhibit the student from completing the BSW program requirements (e. g. field practicum). In addition, it is important that the student understand that serious past criminal convictions can impact the likelihood of obtaining a license to practice social work in Mississippi. For more information related to this issue, see the field handbook and the state licensure board website (www.swmft.ms.gov).

Confidentiality and Mandated Reporting

As social workers and educators, your instructors are bound by law to uphold your rights to confidentiality under FERPA law. In certain circumstances we are also ethically, if not legally, obligated to report suspected abuse and threats of harm to self or others.

Free and confidential counseling is available to all students on both campuses at the Counseling Center (601-266-4829 and 601-606-5390 after hours), the Shafer Center for Crisis Intervention (601-264-7777), and the Student Health Center (601-266-5390).

Class Attendance Policy (Full time Fall/Spring)

Students are expected to attend all classes. In order to be counted as present, the student is responsible for signing the roll sheet or confirming with the faculty that his/her attendance was recorded. Absences are strongly discouraged.

Absences from a class, excluding university closing or School of Social Work approved events, will result in the following academic penalty:

Missing one or two classes	Receives grade earned
Missing three classes	Receives grade no higher than a 'B'
Missing four classes	Receives grade no higher than a 'C'
Missing five or more classes	Student cannot pass the course

Class Attendance Policy (Part-time and Summer courses)

Students are expected to attend all classes. In order to be counted as present, the student is responsible for signing the roll sheet or confirming with the faculty that his/her attendance was recorded. Absences are strongly discouraged.

Absences from a class, excluding university closing or School of Social Work approved events, will result in the following academic penalty:

Missing one	Receives grade earned
Missing two or three classes	Receives grade no higher than a 'B'
Missing four classes	Receives grade no higher than a 'C'
Missing five or more classes	Student cannot pass the course

If a student's grade was negatively affected by absences, he/she may appeal the awarded course

grade to the Director of the School through the BSW or MSW Coordinator at the end of the semester after grades have been posted. Students should maintain their own documents related to their absences and submit them regarding the course grade being appealed. Appeal forms are found at the following website address: <http://www.usm.edu/social-work/forms>

Because tardiness is disruptive and disrespectful to a class meeting, 3 tardies (as defined by the instructor) will equal 1 absence. Likewise, leaving early is unacceptable and may result in an absence for the class. Students who leave the classroom and return beyond a scheduled break may be counted as tardy at the discretion of the instructor.

For policies and procedures on absences related to **pregnancy** or **military service**, please see Appendices E and F.

Because tardiness is disruptive and disrespectful to a class meeting, 3 tardies (as defined by the instructor) will equal 1 absence. Likewise, leaving early is unacceptable and may result in an absence for the class. Students who leave the classroom and return beyond a scheduled break may be counted as tardy at the discretion of the instructor.

Policy Exemption Requests

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). A BSW or MSW student requesting an exception should provide a written request, including rationale to the BSW/MSW Coordinators respectively. The BSW/MSW Coordinator will present the request with input from the faculty to the administrative team for discussion, vote and inform the student of the decision.

Ethical and Professional Behavior

Upon acceptance to the BSW/MSW programs, students are required to read and sign indicating that they reviewed the Social Work Professional and Technical Standards document (refer to Appendix B). 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 experiences. Any behavior that may be considered unethical or is violation of these Social Work Professional and Technical Standards document may be cause for dismissal from the program.

Both in the classroom and in their field placements, students are expected to demonstrate the highest levels of academic integrity in all that they do. Forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

1. Cheating (including copying from others' work)
2. Plagiarism (representing another person's words or ideas as your own; failure to properly cite the source of your information, argument, or concepts)
3. Falsification of documents
4. Disclosure of test or other assignment content to another student

5. Submission of the same paper or other assignments to more than one class without the explicit approval of all faculty members involved
6. Unauthorized academic collaboration with others
7. Conspiracy to engage in academic misconduct

Engaging in any of these behaviors or supporting others who do so will result in academic penalties and/or other sanctions. If a faculty member determines that a student has violated our Academic Integrity Policy, sanctions ranging from resubmission of work to course failure may occur, including the possibility of receiving a grade of “XF” for the course, which will be on the student’s transcript with the notation “Failure due to academic misconduct.” For more details, please see the University’s Academic Integrity Policy (<https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-acaf-pro-012>). Note that repeated acts of academic misconduct will lead to expulsion from the University.

Ethical and otherwise appropriate professional conduct is required of all BSW/MSW students, as is of all professional social workers (refer to Appendix C). The School also requires adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics (refer to Appendix D).

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”.

For additional and specific information regarding university policies regarding professional and ethical behavior, see the university student survival guide.

Faculty Concerns

If a faculty member has a concern about a student’s behavior or academic performance which is not resolved through one-on-one interaction,

- the faculty member will communicate with the MSW Coordinator describing the concern;
- the Coordinator will then contact the student and discuss the concerns of the faculty member;
- if deemed necessary, the Coordinator will call a meeting with the student and the faculty member;
- the Coordinator will create a plan of action; this plan will be produced in writing, then reviewed (and possibly revised, with the faculty member and student, and then signed by the student and placed in the student’s file; and,

- if the student does not adhere to the plan, the student will be referred to the Student Performance Committee (SPC) for further intervention

Student Performance Committee (SPC)

The SPC is charged with responding to non-routine student problems and, when necessary, making binding decisions about individual students' curricular progression plans. The purpose of the SPC is to review the status of any student who demonstrates behavioral difficulties within the classrooms or field agencies, related to personal conduct, or who is suspected of engaging in ethical violations as spelled out in the NASW Code of Ethics and/or the Social Work Professional Technical Standards' document.

The SPC is an ad-hoc committee chaired by the Director of the School. Committee members are invited to participate by the Director. These members vary according to the situation but usually include the BSW or MSW Coordinators (depending on the student's academic program), involved faculty, and others deemed appropriate. When a faculty or staff member notifies the Coordinator and/or Director of a student's academic or behavioral concerns, the Director may call a meeting of the SPC and the student in question. The student may be accompanied by their faculty advisor or other advocate at any and all meetings.

When a SPC meeting is called, the following procedures are followed:

- The student is notified of the meeting and the concerns expressed by faculty and/or staff.
- The student may submit any written material prior to the meeting that may help to clarify the situation.
- The student will be present at the meeting to respond to the concerns of the faculty but will not be present during deliberations and decision-making.
- At the meeting, the issues of concern will be fully addressed with the student, and the student will have the opportunity to present his/her perspective on the matter.
- The student will be allowed to introduce relevant materials and evidence (including the testimony of others) and will be allowed to speak on his/her behalf.
- Once the meeting has been held, all relevant information, materials and evidence will be discussed and the SPC will determine a course of action.

The SPC's decision will be provided to the student, The SPC has the authority to make decisions relative to any student's continuation or termination in the program. Thus, the SPC may recommend any of the following:

- Continuation without conditions.
- Continuation with conditions which could include a Student Performance/Academic Improvement Plan to address needed personal and/or professional change (e.g., regular meetings with an advisor, mandated counseling, remediation, etc.), which the MSW Coordinator will monitor, and/or the Director; or
- immediate termination from the program

The Student Performance/Academic Improvement Plan may not be appealed. A student who refuses to follow the plan will be dismissed from the program. If the problematic behavior continues or the student does not progress satisfactorily, the SPC may reconvene to reassess the situation.

If the SPC determines that, in its academic and professional judgment, the student is not meeting the standards of the program and/or the profession at the level expected of an undergraduate/graduate student and determines that the problematic issue is unlikely to be resolved quickly and satisfactorily with a problem resolution plan, the student may be terminated from the program.

A student may appeal the SPC's decision with a written statement within 5 days. The letter should be addressed to the Director. The statement must specify reasons for disagreement with the committee's decision and rationale for considering a different resolution. The SPC will then convene within 10 days of receipt of the statement to review the appeal. The student initiating the appeal will be invited to address the SPC. The SPC will render, in writing, a follow-up decision or continuation of the original decision. If the student believes the SPC's appeal decision was made in error, a written statement of appeal may be submitted to the Dean of the College.

Termination Policy

The School of Social Work hopes to graduate each student admitted to its degree programs. However, a student may be terminated for reasons of behavioral and/or academic performance.

Policy for Terminating Enrollment in the Social Work Program

The Council on Social Work Education requires accredited social work programs to have "policies and procedures for terminating a student's enrollment in the social work program for reasons of academic and professional performance" (CSWE, 2004, 16). The School of Social Work faculty at Southern Miss is charged with integrating the profession's standards throughout the program. Thus, the SPC intervenes with students who 1) demonstrate an inability to meet the Professional and Technical Standards and/or 2) are unable to integrate their personal/professional values with the knowledge, skills, and social work values and ethics of the social work profession and the NASW Code of Ethics.

Academic Performance Which May Constitute Termination in the MSW Program

Social work students must maintain a 3.0 USM GPA. A student whose GPA falls below a 3.0 will be required to meet with the MSW Coordinator to determine actions to be taken. This may include a contract, which will set forth problems to be solved, actions to be taken, a time period for completion of designated actions, and a reevaluation meeting. The student may also be required to meet with the SPC. If a student's GPA does not rise to 3.0 or higher in the time period agreed upon, the student will be subject to the university policy related to probation, probation continued, and suspension.

For additional and specific information regarding university policies regarding academic probation, continued academic probation, and suspension, see the university graduate bulletin.

COMMUNICATION

Faculty and staff of the School of Social Work take pride in their accessibility to students. Telephone, Video conferencing, and electronic mail are the easiest ways to contact faculty when a face-to-face meeting is not feasible. .

Email

Please activate your USM EMAIL account as soon as possible. For privacy and security reasons, faculty and staff can only correspond with you via email using your USM email address, not your personal email address.

Texting

The school may ask for your cell phone number to keep you informed about the school's events and activities. However, this is an optional form of communication and should not be used for academic communication.

Video Screens/Bulletin Boards

Please pay attention to video announcements, posted flyers, and information in the classroom or in academic buildings. These flyers may contain announcements that interest you.

Facebook/Social Media

For current information about the school and to keep up with the social work clubs' activities, follow the School through the various social media sites:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/usmschoolofsocialwork/> (main school group; have to ask to join and then an admin approves)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/140094644862/> (GC-BSW Club; have to ask to join and then an admin approves)

<https://www.facebook.com/USMBSWCLUBHATTIESBURG/> (HB BSW Club; have to ask to join and then an admin approves)

X: <https://twitter.com/SouthernMissSWK> (can follow us)

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi_ziJVf8xEuRTS8l79uBPA (can subscribe and get alerts when new videos posted)

Internet Access

Personal Access

Internet Service accounts are automatically created for all USM students. Hattiesburg and Gulf Park students may access them at the iTech Help Desk. Student ID cards are required to obtain account information.

Organizational Access

USM organizations can request E-mail accounts for their groups. These accounts would indicate the group's name rather than an individual's.

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*. The HELP Desk is available to answer informational, procedural, or technical questions and take requests for service calls or consultation.

Change of Address/Phone Numbers

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.

Awards

The School of Social Work honors students once a year at the USM Awards Day Ceremony. The recipients of the three awards presented to undergraduate social work students at the USM Awards Ceremony are selected by the social work faculty. Students are recognized for their outstanding leadership and service skills, academic excellence, and significant contributions to the School of Social Work. Award recipients are notified in March and honored in April at the University Awards Day Ceremony and at a reception hosted by the College of Education and Human Sciences.

End of Year Celebration

The School of Social Work honors students via an annual social work end of year celebration. This event is usually held in April and recognizes students' achievements.

Honors

In addition to the recognition MSW students can receive through the various School of Social Work Awards, the University of Southern Mississippi also recognizes students for their academic accomplishments. The University recognizes exceptional academic accomplishments - Honors. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.usm.edu/honors>

GRADUATION

When to Apply for Graduation

Master's Degree Candidates: Apply the semester preceding your expected graduation date. For more information see <http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/deadlines>. For information on commencement activities see <http://www.usm.edu/commencement>.

Hooding Ceremony

A graduation reception is held to honor our graduating students in the Fall and Spring semesters before the commencement ceremony. This is an opportunity to recognize our students and celebrate their success with their family and friends. The program includes a Hooding ceremony whereby students are called up to the podium and hooded by a faculty member of their choosing.

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE

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 licensure process is explained and initiated during the final semester of study. Information about the national licensure exam can be found at www.aswb.org. Information about the state licensure process can be obtained from:

Mississippi Board of Examiners for
Social Workers and Marriage & Family Therapists
PO Box 12948
Jackson, MS 39236-2948
Phone (601)987-6806
www.swmft.ms.gov

SPECIALIZED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The following opportunities are available to social work students. They span on-campus opportunities as well as some that are available at the local, state, and international level. We believe that students who take advantage of these opportunities and become engaged as social workers will enrich their educational experience. The following opportunities are available to students:

STUDENT PARTICIPATION ON SCHOOL COMMITTEES

Students are encouraged to provide input for program development and School operations through membership in the Student Association of Social Workers (SASW), participation on School committees (a list of school committees and their members are listed below), and through regularly scheduled meetings with the director. Student representatives are elected or appointed by the SASW and serve as voting members on most committees. However, they cannot be present when student records or personnel matters are being considered.

Composition of School Committees

Curriculum

Faculty
Undergraduate Student
Graduate Student

Awards

Faculty
Staff
Undergraduate Student
Graduate Student

Professional Continuing Ed

Faculty
Undergraduate Student
Graduate Student

Graduate Admissions

Faculty
Staff
Undergraduate Student
Graduate Student

Policy & Handbook

Faculty
Undergraduate Student
Graduate Student

Recruitment & Public Relations

Faculty
Staff
Undergraduate Student
Graduate Student

Undergraduate Admissions

Faculty
Undergraduate Student
Graduate Student

College of Health Committees

Student Advisory
Awards

STRIDE

Faculty
Undergraduate Students
Graduate Students

Evaluation

Faculty

Undergraduate Student

Graduate Student

Faculty Search

Faculty

Undergraduate Student

Graduate Student

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION**National Association of Social Workers (NASW)**

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. For information see www.socialworkers.org

The Mississippi Chapter of NASW holds an annual conference in March of each year. Students are encouraged to attend this state conference. Likewise, students are also encouraged to attend and participate in the NASW MS Chapter Pine Belt Program Unit in Hattiesburg, the Gulf Coast Program Unit or the closest local unit in proximity to where the student resides.

Students are encouraged to organize in their interests primarily through the **Student Association of Social Workers (SASW)**, or in various other student organizations across campus with positions and/or special interests.

Phi Alpha Honor Society

Phi Alpha Honor Society, the National Honor Society for Social Work Students, is an organization for master's level social work students who have demonstrated academic excellence. 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 (<https://phialpha.org/>). The USM Chapter of Phi Alpha, *Zeta Iota*, was chartered Spring 1997. MSW students who have completed at least 9 semester hours of required social work courses with a GPA of 3.5 and have an overall GPA of 3.0 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.

UNIVERSITY SERVICES AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMS

The following are a list of student services, for more detailed information visit <https://www.usm.edu/trio-student-support-services/trio-student-support-services-program.php>

- Student Support Services
- The Writing/Speaking Center
- Office of Disability Accommodations
- Student Health Services
- CARES (Campus Action Referral and Evaluation System)
- Counseling Center

- Career and Student Employment Services
- Libraries
- Bookstore

Mental Well-Being

USM recognizes that students sometimes experience challenges that make learning difficult. If you find that life stressors such as anxiety, depression, relationship problems, difficulty concentrating, alcohol/drug problems, or other stressful experiences are interfering with your academic or personal success, consider contacting Student Counseling Services on campus at 601-266-4829. More information is also available at <https://www.usm.edu/student-counseling-services/index.php>. All students are eligible for free, confidential individual or group counseling services. *In the event of emergency, please call 911 or contact the counselor on call at 601-606-HELP (4357).*

FINANCIAL AID/SCHOLARSHIPS

For questions regarding financial aid and scholarships please contact the financial aid office at 601-266-4774 (Hattiesburg) and 228-865-4513 (Gulf Coast) or visit <https://www.usm.edu/financial-aid/financial-aid-overview.php>

The School of Social Work has a few named scholarships for MSW students which carry cash awards. MSW students are eligible for the awards based upon recommendation of the faculty.

Click here to access The USM Foundation Scholarship Application System:

<https://www.usmfoundation.com/s/1149/foundation/index.aspx?sid=1149&gid=1&pgid=924>

Once the applications are submitted, the faculty of the School choose students for the awards based on academic performance, service, attributes that exemplify the knowledge, skills, and values of the professional social worker and the criteria set forth by the donor. The recipients chosen are recognized at our annual social work celebration. The applications are usually available in the Spring semester. Once the applications are submitted, the faculty of the School choose students for the awards based on academic performance, service, attributes that exemplify the knowledge, skills, and values of the professional social worker and the criteria set forth by the donor. The recipients chosen are recognized at our annual social work banquet.

Appendix A:

Generalist and Resilience-Informed Social Work Practice Competencies

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Generalist – Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior

Specialization – Resilience-informed social workers respect the worth, dignity and integrity of all individuals and the communities in which they live. Practitioners who specialize in resilience-informed social work recognize ethical dilemmas in their practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels, seeking resolutions favoring the expansion of individuals' and communities' adaptive capacities, are able to distinguish between and apply frameworks for decision making that support the needs and rights of clients and constituencies. Resilience-informed social workers apply ethical decision making in understanding and using technology to promote strength and resilience. They understand how the policy environment impacts progress toward (or retreat from) a social work vision of a just society, and specifically the ability of systems to respond adaptively to adversity across all levels of practice. Resilience-informed social workers understand the importance of supervision, consultation, self-reflection, self-regulation, and lifelong learning in identifying and addressing how their attitudes, biases and affective reactions influence their personal and professional thinking, behaviors and values about the rights and capacities of vulnerable populations and different cultures. Resilience-informed social workers understand the profession's essential roles and responsibilities and how to work collaboratively to advocate for conditions that will strengthen resilience and promote socially just relationships at the micro-, mezzo-, and macro-levels. Resilience-informed social workers:

- make ethical decisions, and work to resolve ethical conflicts, by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context – processing all through filters of resilience-informed theory and practice;
- use reflection and self-regulation to understand how the experiences of clients impact their strengths and adaptive capacities;
- use resilience-informed supervision and consultation to critique their own practice and to refine practice models that promote resilience and progress toward social justice at the individual, family, group, community, organization, and larger society levels.

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Generalist – Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers:

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

Specialization – Resilience-informed social workers recognize and demonstrate understanding of both the contributions and constraints of diversity in cultivating and strengthening resilience in all areas of practice and within all systems. This includes advocating for inclusivity and human solidarity across differences at the micro-, mezzo-, and macro- levels. Resilience-informed social workers understand that diversity and difference encompass but are not limited to the dimensions of age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Of signal importance to resilience practitioners is grasping the uniqueness of individual identity and agency and realizing that the quality of interpersonal and collective interactions within and across cultures help to shape the strength and scope of resilience within and across systems and is a cornerstone of the quest for a fully just society. Resilience-informed social workers also recognize that oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation, as well as privilege, power, and social acclaim, if left unchallenged and unchecked, function as detrimental structural determinants of a person’s life

experiences. Consequently, resilience-informed social workers appreciate the vital importance of social justice advocacy, research, and community engagement with and on behalf of at risk or vulnerable populations. By dispelling negative stereotypes, and recognizing forms of oppression and discrimination, resilience-informed social workers erode inequitable barriers and promote resilience across systems of practice. Resilience-informed social workers:

- Assert that diversity and difference, integrated within a framework of recognized universal human needs and rights, are essential elements of resilience in every practice context.
- Recognize and intervene to prevent forms of “difference” celebration –
- e.g. racism, classism, jingoism, sexism, transphobia, etc. – detrimental to adaptive capacity and to the pursuit of just social relationships.
- Critically assess and evaluate research outcomes related to aspects of diversity, including but not limited to, advocacy and social justice efforts, discrimination and other forms of oppression, and poverty and privilege, in order to create the most appropriate interventions at the micro-, mezzo-, and macro- levels of practice.

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Generalist – Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Resilience-informed social workers:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice

Specialization – Resilience-informed social workers recognize that injustice is antithetical to resilience. They strive, therefore, to engage systems at the micro-, mezzo-, and macro-levels to assess, develop, and implement interventions that eliminate structural barriers to the flowering of individual development and the construction of sustainable systems of human solidarity. Viewing challenges through strength-based and protective factors lens, resilience-informed social workers advocate for human rights, including individual liberty, equity, justice, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Learning from their experiences of oppression and injustice as well as past advocacy efforts, resilience-informed social workers partner with oppressed groups and assist in building coalitions and provide guidance in navigating systems to support to those who have been traumatized by oppression. They effectively collaborate with practitioners from multiple disciplines to advance human rights, social, economic, and environmental justice, and the peaceful resolution of conflict at all system levels and within all practice arenas. Resilience-informed social workers understand the

global interconnections of oppression, exploitation, and environmental degradation, and apply theories of resilience promotion to overcome social, economic and environmental stressors. Resilience-informed social workers:

- Use resilience frameworks to understand and develop strategic advocacy efforts to promote social, economic, and environmental justice, and the peaceful resolution of conflict, across all system levels.
- Understand social work practice as a dynamic platform from which to execute evidence-based interventions explicitly linking resilience with social, economic, and environmental justice.
- Conceptualize resilience-relevant theory and research as dynamic enterprises sharing the common purpose of advancing both the understanding and practice of promoting justice and human solidarity.

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

Generalist – Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

- use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

Specialization – Resilience-informed social workers engage in evidence-based practice at all systems levels and specialize in the application of resilience-based assessments and interventions. They critically appraise the quality of both quantitative and qualitative research and synthesize robust research findings to inform and improve practice, service delivery, and policies in ways that enhance adaptive capacities and reduce/remove factors detrimental to systems resilience. Resilience-informed social workers rely upon a wide range of research methods and the steady application of critical thinking skills to identify social, economic, and environmental challenges at the local, regional, national, and global levels. To develop effective responses to these challenges, resilience-informed social workers focus research efforts especially on strengths and protective factors that build and promote resilience at the individual, family, group, community, organization, and macro structural levels. Resilience-informed social workers also recognize underrepresented and marginalized populations in research and identify gaps in the body of knowledge related to the populations. Resilience-informed social workers therefore engage in multidisciplinary, collaborative, and community-based participatory research that integrates the voices of underrepresented and marginalized populations. Resilience-informed social workers:

- critically appraise the quality of both quantitative and qualitative research and synthesize robust research findings to inform and improve practice, service delivery, and policies that enhance resilience at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
- utilize primary and/or secondary data and research literature, design their own research to identify social, economic, and environmental challenges their clients, organizations, communities, and service systems face, as well as protective factors that build and promote resilience.
- integrate underrepresented and marginalized populations as agents into the research process, itself building resilience and challenging structural impediments to resilience development.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Generalist – Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers:

- identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

Specialization – Resilience-informed social workers understand and practice policy analysis, formulation, implementation and evaluation through a resilience framework that explicitly and self-consciously promotes strengths among individuals and their communities and targets for change policy and other structural/macro factors that undermine individual and collective resilience and progress toward just social relations and human solidarity. They strategically engage members across all socioeconomic levels in the development of evidence-based policies to enhance individual, family, group, organizational, community, and macro systems. Resilience-informed social workers engage in policy practice, underpinned by resilience theory and research, to advance innovative policy solutions at the global, national, state, local, and organizational levels. Resilience-informed social workers understand historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that propel policy, as well as the dynamic and evolving nature of policy responses to both natural and man-made disasters, and long-standing systemic crises and structural contradictions characterizing oppressive and unjust social conditions. . Resilience-informed social workers:

- Apply critical thinking skills to integrate resilience theory and research into analyzing, formulating, and evaluating policies that advance human rights, as well as social, economic and environmental justice.
- Understand and develop social policy at the local, state, federal, and organizational level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services, in the persistent effort to strengthen resilience and expand adaptive capacities across all systems levels.
- Pay particular attention to all phases of disaster intervention, including mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, with a consistent intent of resilience protection and promotion.
- Apply a resilience lens to the policy-making process as it pertains to structural social, economic, and political injustices, and to progress toward a just social order.

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

Generalist – Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

Specialization – Resilience-informed social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers that specialize in resilience-informed practice prize the importance of human relationships and recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resilience of all individuals and systems. Resilience-informed social workers critically appropriate theories of human behavior and the social environment, applying this knowledge to facilitate resilience-enhancing engagement with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Resilience-informed social workers understand how their own personal experiences, affective reactions, and adaptive capacities may impact their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Resilience-informed social workers value and extol principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate capacity-enhancing engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Resilience-informed social workers:

- integrate and apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, resilience frameworks and other multidisciplinary theoretical constructs to engage with clients and constituencies;
- apply strategies to engage members across all socioeconomic levels in the development and enhancement of individual, family, group, organizational, and community resilience and adaptive capacities; and
- employ empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage diverse clients and constituencies and promote resilience among individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

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

Generalist – Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

Specialization – Resilience-informed social workers recognize that the ability to overcome adversity is integral to determining experiences and outcomes of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Resilience-informed social workers understand the complexity of personal, interpersonal, and environmental factors affecting the capacity of clients and constituencies to respond effectively to challenge and change, and apply this understanding to the entire assessment process. Paying special attention to personal bias and affective reactions, resilience-informed social workers build upon resilience-informed assessments to develop evidence-based strategies for diverse clients and constituencies. Resilience-informed social workers:

- critically evaluate client data to determine the impact of life events and environments on resilience-related outcomes of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
- develop resilience-informed goals and objectives based on the needs identified by the client and constituencies; and
- select appropriate interventions designed to enhance the ability of clients and constituencies to adapt effectively to adversity and disruptive change.

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

Generalist - Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of interprofessional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, interprofessional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Social workers:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

Specialization: Resilience-informed social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers that specialize in resilience-informed practice are knowledgeable about evidence-based interventions that promote resilience and help to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies. Resilience-informed social workers integrate theories of human behavior and the social environment with resilience frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to intervene effectively to enhance the adaptive capacities of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions that empower and enhance resilience and help to achieve client and constituency goals. Resilience-informed social workers value the importance of interprofessional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, interprofessional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Resilience-informed social workers:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance resilience of clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, resilience frameworks and other multidisciplinary theoretical constructs to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- apply methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions that empower and enhance resilience and help to achieve client and constituency goals.

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

Generalist- Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Specialization: Resilience-informed social workers engage in ongoing, systematic, and interactive efforts to evaluate the processes and outcomes of their practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and still-larger macro systems and structures affecting them. Conceptually grounded in resilience frameworks, they integrate various sources of knowledge and skills – including biopsychosocial and diagnostic assessment, critical thinking, person-in-environment perspective, intervention theories and practice skills, quantitative and qualitative research methods, stakeholder inputs, group dynamics, and policies of organization and the larger system – into the evaluation process. Resilience-informed social workers use evaluation findings to inform practice decisions and quality assurance to strengthen resilience-oriented practice at all systems levels. Resilience-informed social workers:

- integrate various sources of knowledge and skills – including biopsychosocial and diagnostic assessment, critical thinking, person-in-environment perspective, intervention theories and practice skills, quantitative and qualitative research methods, stakeholder inputs, group dynamics, and policies of organization and the larger system – into the resilience-informed evaluation process.
- use evaluation findings to inform practice decisions and quality assurance to strengthen resilience-focused practice at all systems levels.



Social Work Professional and Technical Standards MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAM

The professional and 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.

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.

Professional Standards

Performance

Standard:

- Plans and organizes work effectively.
- Turns in assignments complete and on time.
- Keeps scheduled appointments (advisement, fieldwork interviews, etc.).
- Makes arrangements for his/her special needs.

- Develops increasing levels of knowledge and skills with awareness of integration as demonstrated through class participation, assignment and field performance.

Indications of Concern:

Appears to demonstrate a pattern of:

- Poor organizational skills.
- Demonstrates inability to take initiative toward increasing knowledge and skills relevant to performance demands.
- Requests for extension on assignments and exams.
- Turning in field and/or class assignments late or incomplete.
- Excessive absences from class per class syllabus.
- Non-response to program communications.
- Multiple absences from field placement.

Conduct/Behavior

Standard:

- Demonstrates ability to work cooperatively with others.
- Actively participates in class discussion groups/role plays.
- Is open to feedback from peers/faculty.
- Is able to accept constructive criticism.
- Actively participates in fieldwork supervision sessions,
- Conducts him/herself according to the NASW Code of Ethics.

Indicators of Concern:

- Appears to create conflict in class, which impedes learning and /or building effective relationships.
- Uncooperative/unwilling to participate in class activities.
- Consistently late for class, or leaves class early.
- Consistently late for field placement.
- Sleeps during class periods.
- Disrupts class process by talking to others.
- Difficulty in listening, (e.g. overly sensitive, externalizes blame, distorts communications).
- Appears unwilling/unable to accept feedback.
- Responds in a defensive manner.
- Consistently argumentative
- Monopolizes class discussions.
- Consistently complains about class workload to the point of impeding class process.
- Unwilling/unable to develop an understanding of people different from oneself.
- Inability to separate his/her personal values from professional values and responsibilities.

- Inability to recognize the impact of personal values and behaviors of others.
- Inadequate maturity, readiness, and/or ability for generalist practice; for example, evidence of excessive anxiety, grandiosity, passivity, etc.
- Physical action directed at clients, faculty, staff, or fellow students.
- Unethical professional behavior (e.g., sexual contact with a client).
- Inappropriate dress or adornment.
- Academic misconduct (see Statement on Academic Integrity).
- Takes little initiative in exploring areas of learning growth.

Emotional Self-Control (Self-Understanding)

Standard:

- Uses self-disclosure appropriately (e.g., students seems to have an insight, and self-awareness, and has resolved the issue he/she is sharing).
- Deals appropriately in class with issues which arouse emotions.
- Demonstrates an awareness of one's own personal limits.
- Understands the effect of one's behavior on others.

Indicators of Concern:

- When engaged in self-disclosure, the student appears to be working through unresolved issues and/or avoiding client issues.
- The student appears to overreact to, or resent feedback (e.g., takes it personally).
- Appears unable/unwilling to control emotional reactions.
- Possible alcohol/drug abuse, mental health issues.
- Verbal threats directed at clients, faculty, staff, or students.
- Demonstrates impaired judgment, decision-making, or problem-solving skills.
- Consistent failure to demonstrate ability to form effective client/social worker relationship.
- Appears judgmental, abrupt in manner or unapproachable.
- Expects perfection of self and others.
- Pushes "own agenda" rather than listening to client.
- Crosses boundaries; doesn't recognize them

Communication Skills

Standard (Written):

- Shows consistency in written communication. Written assignments demonstrate: good spelling, appropriate use of punctuation, clear structure, paragraphing, good organization, follows logical sequence. Demonstrates the ability to use citations (A.P.A style).
- Demonstrates ability to write effectively in records.
- Demonstrates ability to summarize, identify major points and document succinctly
- Shows command of the English language.
- Abides by College Academic Standards.

- Demonstrates use of critical thinking skills.

Indicators of Concern:

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

Standard (Verbal):

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

Indicators of Concern:

- Difficulty communicating so that others can hear or understand.
- Lacks working proficiency of the English language when communicating.

School of Social Work Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

We are committed to fostering, sustaining, and **strategizing toward racial inclusion, diversity, and equity** (S.T.R.I.D.E.). As a school, we will adhere to this commitment by taking strong positions, taking action, providing help, and being clear on expectations from all affiliated with the School of Social Work at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM). This statement is couched within the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. Lastly, this statement is intended to offer our position, plans of action, and expectations for students, staff, faculty, and field partners.

What is Our Position?

All students, staff, and faculty are welcome in any School of Social Work setting. We disavow all racism, xenophobia, homophobia, sexism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, classism, ableism, and hate speech or actions that attempt to silence, threaten, and degrade others. We recognize that discrimination can be direct or indirect and take place at both institutional and personal levels. Expressions or actions that disparage a person are contrary to the mission of S.T.R.I.D.E. and the school and will not be tolerated.

How do we Implement Action behind our Position?

We are committed to supporting our students and fostering an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. We will work to promote an anti-discriminatory environment where everyone should feel welcome. During class, your instructors will not shy away from the uncomfortable. The faculty urge you to have the courage to be uncomfortable in class discussions. In exchange for your courage, we will work to ensure a classroom environment that supports your taking these intellectual and emotional risks.

What does Providing Help Look Like?

If you feel that our courses, programs, or department fall short of this commitment, we encourage you to engage in dialogue with your instructor, staff, or administrator. Your instructors will always be in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said or done that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to an instructor, administrator, or university partner about it. If you experience or witness harassment or discrimination, you may file a Statement of Complaint with the **Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity** in person or online at: <https://forms.usm.edu/human-resources/view.php?id=13153>. You may also contact the **Office of Multicultural Programs and Services (Hattiesburg Campus)** to submit complaints in person or online at: <https://www.usm.edu/student-affairs/cares.php#report>.

Our Expectations

We expect that learning needs will be addressed both in and out of class. The diversity that students bring to class will be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. Courteous behavior and responses are expected at all times. It is likely you may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in the classroom. We expect you to be able to disagree without becoming disagreeable. Civility and respect for the opinions of others are very important in an academic environment.

Standard:

- Shows respect for others' opinions.
- Demonstrates a willingness to understand diversity of people regarding race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, political orientation, sexual orientation, and populations at risk.
- Appears to be able to handle discussion of uncomfortable topics.

Indicators of Concern:

- Uses derogatory language or demeaning remarks.
- Discriminatory behavior or harassment towards others on the basis of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, etc.
- Consistently “glosses over” or ignores discussion of uncomfortable topics.

Social Media Statement

The Southern Miss School of Social Work recognizes that social media can be used for various purposes related to student learning and interaction. This includes communication regarding university and student organization events, community forums, and building connections and relationships. Inappropriate use of social media and other information sharing platforms that is harmful, negative or violates the Academic Integrity Policy, whether in or out of the classroom, should be avoided. This includes any social media posts and other collaborative tools that hinder the mission of the School of Social Work or go against the NASW Code of Ethics. If a student witnesses acts that violate the Schools Professional and Technical Standards, USM Student Code of Conduct or Academic Integrity Policy, they should notify the Program Coordinator or another School of Social Work instructor immediately. These reports are taken seriously, and the School grants the reporter confidentiality.

Standards:

- Students must correspond with instructors using USM email only. Use of personal email and social media for communication is not secure and should be avoided.
- Students must consider the impact of social media posts on their fellow classmates, their professional identity, and the school. It is important to recognize that all material posted to social media is open to the public and could impact other students, faculty, or future opportunities.

Indications of Concern:

- Posting negative comments about other students, faculty, classes, or events on any social media platform. In addition to the potential to cause harm to the School of Social Work faculty and students this action goes against our NASW ethical responsibilities towards colleagues (Ethical Standard, 2.0).
- Failure to remove harmful or negative posts after an official request by the Director could result in warnings, meetings with Administrative Faculty, or further consequences related to progression in the Program.
- Social media and chat programs used to distribute or collect solutions to course assignments or exams from sources not approved by the instructor. (USM Student Academic Integrity Policy)
- Use of social media or group messaging platforms to distribute unauthorized materials or seek inappropriate assistance to complete course assignments or tests. (USM Student Academic Integrity Policy)
- Taking or posting images or videos to social media or through messaging platforms in the classroom without permission from other students or faculty.

*The above information has been modified from policies taken from the USM School of Dance, USM Student Academic Integrity Policy, and USM Student Code of Conduct.

Technical Standards

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 Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow established university policies and procedures. For more information, contact SAS at:

Hattiesburg Address:

The University of Southern Mississippi Student Accessibility Services
118 College Drive # 8586 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Gulf Coast Address:

The University of Southern Mississippi on the Gulf Coast
Student Accessibility Services
730 East Beach Blvd
Long Beach, MS 39560

Voice Telephone: 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232 Fax: 601.266.6035

Individuals with hearing impairments can contact SAS using the Mississippi Relay Service at 1.800.582.2233 (TTY) or email SAS at sas@usm.edu

Technical Standards

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.

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.

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.
- Transportation to field placements if none is available on campus.

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.

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.

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.



**Social Work Professional and Technical Standards
MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAM**

Statement of Understanding

I understand that although I am admitted to the social work program at The University of Southern Mississippi, if my professional development is not deemed satisfactory by the social work faculty Student Performance Committee, the program has the right and responsibility to request re-evaluation of my suitability for the social work program and make a decision regarding my progression in the program.

I hereby agree to abide by the standards outlined in this document including the Social Media Policy and Plagiarism Guidelines. I have read, understand and acknowledge receipt of the Social Work Professional and Technical Standards.

Student's Name

Date

Student's Signature

Appendix C:

NASW Code of Ethics

The NASW Code of Ethics is a set of standards that guide the professional conduct of social workers. The 2021 update includes language that addresses the importance of professional self-care. Moreover, revisions to Cultural Competence standard provide more explicit guidance to social workers. All social workers should review the new text and affirm their commitment to abide by the Code of Ethics. Also available in Spanish.

- The first Section, "Preamble," summarizes the social work profession's mission and core values.
- The second section, "Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics," provides an overview of the Code's main functions and a brief guide for dealing with ethical issues or dilemmas in social work practice.
- The third section, "Ethical Principles," presents broad ethical principles, based on social work's core values, that inform social work practice.
- The final section, "Ethical Standards," includes specific ethical standards to guide social workers' conduct and to provide a basis for adjudication.

Preamble:

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's dual focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

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

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

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

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

Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The NASW Code of Ethics sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct. The Code is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

The NASW Code of Ethics serves six purposes:

1. The Code identifies core values on which social work's mission is based.
2. The Code summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide social work practice.
3. The Code is designed to help social workers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
4. The Code provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.
5. The Code socializes practitioners new to the field to social work's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards, and encourages all social workers to engage in self-care, ongoing education, and other activities to ensure their commitment to those same core features of the profession.
6. The Code articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct. NASW has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members.* In subscribing to this Code, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in NASW adjudication proceedings, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

The Code offers a set of values, principles, and standards to guide decision making and conduct when ethical issues arise. It does not provide a set of rules that prescribe how social workers should act in all situations. Specific applications of the Code must take into account the context in which it is being considered and the possibility of conflicts among the Code's values, principles, and standards. Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional.

*For information on the NASW Professional Review Process, see NASW Procedures for Professional Review.

Furthermore, the NASW Code of Ethics does not specify which values, principles, and standards are most important and ought to outweigh others in instances when they conflict. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist among social workers with respect to the ways in which values, ethical principles, and ethical standards should be rank ordered when they conflict. Ethical decision making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual

social worker and should also consider how the issues would be judged in a peer review process where the ethical standards of the profession would be applied.

Ethical decision making is a process. In situations when conflicting obligations arise, social workers may be faced with complex ethical dilemmas that have no simple answers. Social workers should take into consideration all the values, principles, and standards in this Code that are relevant to any situation in which ethical judgment is warranted. Social workers' decisions and actions should be consistent with the spirit as well as the letter of this Code.

In addition to this Code, there are many other sources of information about ethical thinking that may be useful. Social workers should consider ethical theory and principles generally, social work theory and research, laws, regulations, agency policies, and other relevant codes of ethics, recognizing that among codes of ethics social workers should consider the NASW Code of Ethics as their primary source. Social workers also should be aware of the impact on ethical decision making of their clients' and their own personal values and cultural and religious beliefs and practices. They should be aware of any conflicts between personal and professional values and deal with them responsibly. For additional guidance social workers should consult the relevant literature on professional ethics and ethical decision making and seek appropriate consultation when faced with ethical dilemmas. This may involve consultation with an agency-based or social work organization's ethics committee, a regulatory body, knowledgeable colleagues, supervisors, or legal counsel.

Instances may arise when social workers' ethical obligations conflict with agency policies or relevant laws or regulations. When such conflicts occur, social workers must make a responsible effort to resolve the conflict in a manner that is consistent with the values, principles, and standards expressed in this Code. If a reasonable resolution of the conflict does not appear possible, social workers should seek proper consultation before making a decision.

The NASW Code of Ethics is to be used by NASW and by individuals, agencies, organizations, and bodies (such as licensing and regulatory boards, professional liability insurance providers, courts of law, agency boards of directors, government agencies, and other professional groups) that choose to adopt it or use it as a frame of reference. Violation of standards in this Code does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law.

Such determination can only be made in the context of legal and judicial proceedings. Alleged violations of the Code would be subject to a peer review process. Such processes are generally separate from legal or administrative procedures and insulated from legal review or proceedings to allow the profession to counsel and discipline its own members.

A code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a code of ethics cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes or capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community. Rather, a code of ethics sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which professionals aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Social workers' ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical practice. The NASW Code of Ethics reflects the commitment of all social workers to uphold the profession's values and to act ethically. Principles and standards must be applied by

individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments.

With growth in the use of communication technology in various aspects of social work practice, social workers need to be aware of the unique challenges that may arise in relation to the maintenance of confidentiality, informed consent, professional boundaries, professional competence, record keeping, and other ethical considerations. In general, all ethical standards in this Code of Ethics are applicable to interactions, relationships, or communications, whether they occur in person or with the use of technology. For the purposes of this Code, “technology-assisted social work services” include any social work services that involve the use of computers, mobile or landline telephones, tablets, video technology, or other electronic or digital technologies; this includes the use of various electronic or digital platforms, such as the Internet, online social media, chat rooms, text messaging, e-mail and emerging digital applications. Technology-assisted social work services encompass all aspects of social work practice, including psychotherapy; individual, family, or group counseling; community organization; administration; advocacy; mediation; education; supervision; research; evaluation; and other social work services. Social workers should keep apprised of emerging technological developments that may be used in social work practice and how various ethical standards apply to them.

Professional self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Professional demands, challenging workplace climates, and exposure to trauma warrant that social workers maintain personal and professional health, safety, and integrity. Social work organizations, agencies, and educational institutions are encouraged to promote organizational policies, practices, and materials to support social workers’ self-care.

Ethical Principles

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work’s core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

Value: Service

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

Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

Value: Social Justice

Ethical Principle: *Social workers challenge social injustice*

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers’ social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Value: *Dignity and Worth of the Person*

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

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

Value: *Importance of Human Relationships*

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

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Value: *Integrity*

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

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers should take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Value: *Competence*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.*

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

Ethical Standards

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all social workers. These standards concern (1) social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients, (2) social workers' ethical responsibilities to colleagues, (3) social workers' ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) social workers' ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the social work profession, and (6) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

Some of the standards that follow are enforceable guidelines for professional conduct, and some are aspirational. The extent to which each standard is enforceable is a matter of professional judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical standards.

1. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Clients

1.01 Commitment to Clients

Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients. In general, clients' interests are primary. However, social workers' responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised. (Examples include when a social worker is required by law to report that a client has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

1.02 Self-Determination

Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Social workers may limit clients' right to self-determination when, in the social workers' professional judgment, clients' actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others.

1.03 Informed Consent

- a) Social workers should provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship based, when appropriate, on valid informed consent. Social workers should use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purpose of the services, risks related to the services, limits to services because of the requirements of a third-party payer, relevant costs, reasonable alternatives, clients' right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent. Social workers should provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions.
- b) In instances when clients are not literate or have difficulty understanding the primary language used in the practice setting, social workers should take steps to ensure clients' comprehension. This may include providing clients with a detailed verbal explanation or arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator whenever possible.
- c) In instances when clients lack the capacity to provide informed consent, social workers should protect clients' interests by seeking permission from an appropriate third party, informing clients consistent with the clients' level of understanding. In such instances social workers should seek to ensure that the third party acts in a manner consistent with clients' wishes and interests. Social workers should take reasonable steps to enhance such clients' ability to give informed consent.
- d) In instances when clients are receiving services involuntarily, social workers should provide information about the nature and extent of services and about the extent of clients' right to refuse service.
- e) Social workers should discuss with clients the social workers' policies concerning the use of technology in the provision of professional services.
- f) Social workers who use technology to provide social work services should obtain informed consent from the individuals using these services during the initial screening or interview and prior to initiating services. Social workers should assess clients' capacity to provide informed consent and, when using technology to communicate, verify the identity and location of clients.
- g) Social workers who use technology to provide social work services should assess the clients' suitability and capacity for electronic and remote services. Social workers should consider the clients' intellectual, emotional, and physical ability to use technology to receive services and the clients' ability to understand the potential benefits, risks, and limitations of such services. If clients do not wish to use services provided through technology, social workers should help them identify alternate methods of service.

- h) Social workers should obtain clients' informed consent before making audio or video recordings of clients or permitting observation of service provision by a third party.
- i) Social workers should obtain client consent before conducting an electronic search on the client. Exceptions may arise when the search is for purposes of protecting the client or other people from serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm, or for other compelling professional reasons.

1.04 Competence

- a) Social workers should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, license, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience.
- b) Social workers should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques.
- c) When generally recognized standards do not exist with respect to an emerging area of practice, social workers should exercise careful judgment and take responsible steps (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision) to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients from harm.
- d) Social workers who use technology in the provision of social work services should ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide such services in a competent manner. This includes an understanding of the special communication challenges when using technology and the ability to implement strategies to address these challenges.
- e) Social workers who use technology in providing social work services should comply with the laws governing technology and social work practice in the jurisdiction in which they are regulated and located and, as applicable, in the jurisdiction in which the client is located.

1.05 Cultural Competence

- a) Social workers should demonstrate understanding of culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.
- b) Social workers should demonstrate knowledge that guides practice with clients of various cultures and be able to demonstrate skills in the provision of culturally informed services that empower marginalized individuals and groups. Social workers must take action against oppression, racism, discrimination, and inequities, and acknowledge personal privilege.
- c) Social workers should demonstrate awareness and cultural humility by engaging in critical self-reflection (understanding their own bias and engaging in self-correction), recognizing clients as experts of their own culture, committing to lifelong learning, and holding institutions accountable for advancing cultural humility.
- d) Social workers should obtain education about and demonstrate understanding of the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.
- e) Social workers who provide electronic social work services should be aware of cultural and socioeconomic differences among clients' use of and access to electronic technology

and seek to prevent such potential barriers. Social workers should assess cultural, environmental, economic, mental or physical ability, linguistic, and other issues that may affect the delivery or use of these services.

1.06 Conflicts of Interest

- a) Social workers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. Social workers should inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients' interests primary and protects clients' interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting clients' interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client.
- b) Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.
- c) Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, social workers should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (Dual or multiple relationships occur when social workers relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.)
- d) When social workers provide services to two or more people who have a relationship with each other (for example, couples, family members), social workers should clarify with all parties which individuals will be considered clients and the nature of social workers' professional obligations to the various individuals who are receiving services. Social workers who anticipate a conflict of interest among the individuals receiving services or who anticipate having to perform in potentially conflicting roles (for example, when a social worker is asked to testify in a child custody dispute or divorce proceedings involving clients) should clarify their role with the parties involved and take appropriate action to minimize any conflict of interest.
- e) Social workers should avoid communication with clients using technology (such as social networking sites, online chat, e-mail, text messages, telephone, and video) for personal or non-work-related purposes.
- f) Social workers should be aware that posting personal information on professional Web sites or other media might cause boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.
- g) Social workers should be aware that personal affiliations may increase the likelihood that clients may discover the social worker's presence on Web sites, social media, and other forms of technology. Social workers should be aware that involvement in electronic communication with groups based on race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, mental or physical ability, religion, immigration status, and other personal affiliations may affect their ability to work effectively with particular clients.
- h) Social workers should avoid accepting requests from or engaging in personal relationships with clients on social networking sites or other electronic media to prevent boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.

1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

- a) Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from or about clients except for compelling professional reasons. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply.
- b) Social workers may disclose confidential information when appropriate with valid consent from a client or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a client.
- c) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that social workers will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or others. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.
- d) Social workers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the disclosure is made. This applies whether social workers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.
- e) Social workers should discuss with clients and other interested parties the nature of confidentiality and limitations of clients' right to confidentiality. Social workers should review with clients circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. This discussion should occur as soon as possible in the social worker-client relationship and as needed throughout the course of the relationship.
- f) When social workers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, social workers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual's right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. This agreement should include consideration of whether confidential information may be exchanged in person or electronically, among clients or with others outside of formal counseling sessions. Social workers should inform participants in family, couples, or group counseling that social workers cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.
- g) Social workers should inform clients involved in family, couples, marital, or group counseling of the social worker's, employer's, and agency's policy concerning the social worker's disclosure of confidential information among the parties involved in the counseling.
- h) Social workers should not disclose confidential information to third-party payers unless clients have authorized such disclosure.
- i) Social workers should not discuss confidential information, electronically or in person, in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semi-public areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.
- j) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders social workers to disclose confidential or privileged information without a client's consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the client, social workers should request that the court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.

- k) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members of the media.
- l) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients' written and electronic records and other sensitive information. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients' records are stored in a secure location and that clients' records are not available to others who are not authorized to have access.
- m) Social workers should take reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of electronic communications, including information provided to clients or third parties. Social workers should use applicable safeguards (such as encryption, firewalls, and passwords) when using electronic communications such as e-mail, online posts, online chat sessions, mobile communication, and text messages.
- n) Social workers should develop and disclose policies and procedures for notifying clients of any breach of confidential information in a timely manner.
- o) In the event of unauthorized access to client records or information, including any unauthorized access to the social worker's electronic communication or storage systems, social workers should inform clients of such disclosures, consistent with applicable laws and professional standards.
- p) Social workers should develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of electronic technology, including Internet-based search engines, to gather information about clients.
- q) Social workers should avoid searching or gathering client information electronically unless there are compelling professional reasons, and when appropriate, with the client's informed consent.
- r) Social workers should avoid posting any identifying or confidential information about clients on professional websites or other forms of social media.
- s) Social workers should transfer or dispose of clients' records in a manner that protects clients' confidentiality and is consistent with applicable laws governing records and social work licensure.
- t) Social workers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.
- u) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients for teaching or training purposes unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information.
- v) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients with consultants unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information or there is a compelling need for such disclosure.
- w) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of deceased clients consistent with the preceding standards.

1.08 Access to Records

- a) Social workers should provide clients with reasonable access to records concerning the clients. Social workers who are concerned that clients' access to their records could cause serious misunderstanding or harm to the client should provide assistance in interpreting the records and consultation with the client regarding the records. Social workers should limit clients' access to their records, or portions of their records, only in exceptional circumstances when there is compelling evidence that such access would cause serious

harm to the client. Both clients' requests and the rationale for withholding some or all of the record should be documented in clients' files.

- b) Social workers should develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of technology to provide clients with access to their records.
- c) When providing clients with access to their records, social workers should take steps to protect the confidentiality of other individuals identified or discussed in such records.

1.09 Sexual Relationships

- a) Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities, inappropriate sexual communications through the use of technology or in person, or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.
- b) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Sexual activity or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a personal relationship has the potential to be harmful to the client and may make it difficult for the social worker and client to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Social workers--not their clients, their clients' relatives, or other individuals with whom the client maintains a personal relationship--assume the full burden for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.
- c) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients because of the potential for harm to the client. If social workers engage in conduct contrary to this prohibition or claim that an exception to this prohibition is warranted because of extraordinary circumstances, it is social workers--not their clients--who assume the full burden of demonstrating that the former client has not been exploited, coerced, or manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally.
- d) Social workers should not provide clinical services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship. Providing clinical services to a former sexual partner has the potential to be harmful to the individual and is likely to make it difficult for the social worker and individual to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

1.10 Physical Contact

Social workers should not engage in physical contact with clients when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client as a result of the contact (such as cradling or caressing clients). Social workers who engage in appropriate physical contact with clients are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern such physical contact.

1.11 Sexual Harassment

Social workers should not sexually harass clients. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances; sexual solicitation; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal, written, electronic, or physical contact of a sexual nature.

1.12 Derogatory Language

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written, verbal, or electronic communications to or about clients. Social workers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about clients.

1.13 Payment for Services

- a) When setting fees, social workers should ensure that the fees are fair, reasonable, and commensurate with the services performed. Consideration should be given to clients' ability to pay.
- b) Social workers should avoid accepting goods or services from clients as payment for professional services. Bartering arrangements, particularly involving services, create the potential for conflicts of interest, exploitation, and inappropriate boundaries in social workers' relationships with clients. Social workers should explore and may participate in bartering only in very limited circumstances when it can be demonstrated that such arrangements are an accepted practice among professionals in the local community, considered to be essential for the provision of services, negotiated without coercion, and entered into at the client's initiative and with the client's informed consent. Social workers who accept goods or services from clients as payment for professional services assume the full burden of demonstrating that this arrangement will not be detrimental to the client or the professional relationship.
- c) Social workers should not solicit a private fee or other remuneration for providing services to clients who are entitled to such available services through the social workers' employer or agency.

1.14 Clients Who Lack Decision-Making Capacity

When social workers act on behalf of clients who lack the capacity to make informed decisions, social workers should take reasonable steps to safeguard the interests and rights of those clients.

1.15 Interruption of Services

Social workers should make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of services in the event that services are interrupted by factors such as unavailability, disruptions in electronic communication, relocation, illness, mental or physical ability, or death.

1.16 Referral for Services

- a) Social workers should refer clients to other professionals when the other professionals' specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve clients fully or when social workers believe that they are not being effective or making reasonable progress with clients and that other services are required.
- b) Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should take appropriate steps to facilitate an orderly transfer of responsibility. Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should disclose, with clients' consent, all pertinent information to the new service providers.
- c) Social workers are prohibited from giving or receiving payment for a referral when no professional service is provided by the referring social worker.

1.17 Termination of Services

- a) Social workers should terminate services to clients and professional relationships with them when such services and relationships are no longer required or no longer serve the clients' needs or interests.
- b) Social workers should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in need of services. Social workers should withdraw services precipitously only under

unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects. Social workers should assist in making appropriate arrangements for continuation of services when necessary.

- c) Social workers in fee-for-service settings may terminate services to clients who are not paying an overdue balance if the financial contractual arrangements have been made clear to the client, if the client does not pose an imminent danger to self or others, and if the clinical and other consequences of the current nonpayment have been addressed and discussed with the client.
- d) Social workers should not terminate services to pursue a social, financial, or sexual relationship with a client.
- e) Social workers who anticipate the termination or interruption of services to clients should notify clients promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of services in relation to the clients' needs and preferences.
- f) Social workers who are leaving an employment setting should inform clients of appropriate options for the continuation of services and of the benefits and risks of the options.

2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues

2.01 Respect

- a) Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.
- b) Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in verbal, written, and electronic communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.
- c) Social workers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the well-being of clients.

2.02 Confidentiality

Social workers should respect confidential information shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and transactions. Social workers should ensure that such colleagues understand social workers' obligation to respect confidentiality and any exceptions related to it.

2.03 Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- a) Social workers who are members of an interdisciplinary team should participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the well-being of clients by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of the social work profession. Professional and ethical obligations of the interdisciplinary team as a whole and of its individual members should be clearly established.
- b) Social workers for whom a team decision raises ethical concerns should attempt to resolve the disagreement through appropriate channels. If the disagreement cannot be

resolved, social workers should pursue other avenues to address their concerns consistent with client well-being.

2.04 Disputes Involving Colleagues

- a) Social workers should not take advantage of a dispute between a colleague and an employer to obtain a position or otherwise advance the social workers' own interests.
- b) Social workers should not exploit clients in disputes with colleagues or engage clients in any inappropriate discussion of conflicts between social workers and their colleagues.

2.05 Consultation

- a) Social workers should seek the advice and counsel of colleagues whenever such consultation is in the best interests of clients.
- b) Social workers should keep themselves informed about colleagues' areas of expertise and competencies. Social workers should seek consultation only from colleagues who have demonstrated knowledge, expertise, and competence related to the subject of the consultation.
- c) When consulting with colleagues about clients, social workers should disclose the least amount of information necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation.

2.06 Sexual Relationships

- a) Social workers who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual activities or contact (including verbal, written, electronic, or physical contact) with supervisees, students, trainees, or other colleagues over whom they exercise professional authority.
- b) Social workers should avoid engaging in sexual relationships with colleagues when there is potential for a conflict of interest. Social workers who become involved in, or anticipate becoming involved in, a sexual relationship with a colleague have a duty to transfer professional responsibilities, when necessary, to avoid a conflict of interest.

2.07 Sexual Harassment

Social workers should not sexually harass supervisees, students, trainees, or colleagues. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances; sexual solicitation; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal, written, electronic, or physical contact of a sexual nature.

2.08 Impairment of Colleagues

- a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's impairment that is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties and that interferes with practice effectiveness should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.
- b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague's impairment interferes with practice effectiveness and that the colleague has not taken adequate steps to address the impairment should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

2.09 Incompetence of Colleagues

- a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's incompetence should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.
- b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague is incompetent and has not taken adequate steps to address the incompetence should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

2.10 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues

- a) Social workers should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues, including unethical conduct using technology.
- b) Social workers should be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about colleagues' unethical behavior. Social workers should be familiar with national, state, and local procedures for handling ethics complaints. These include policies and procedures created by NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, employers, agencies, and other professional organizations.
- c) Social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should seek resolution by discussing their concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive.
- d) When necessary, social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should take action through appropriate formal channels (such as contacting a state licensing board or regulatory body, the NASW National Ethics Committee, or other professional ethics committees).
- e) Social workers should defend and assist colleagues who are unjustly charged with unethical conduct.

3.0 Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities in Practice Settings

3.01 Supervision and Consultation

- a) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation (whether in-person or remotely) should have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.
- b) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.
- c) Social workers should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with supervisees in which there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisee, including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media.
- d) Social workers who provide supervision should evaluate supervisees' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

3.02 Education and Training

- a) Social workers who function as educators, field instructors for students, or trainers should provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and competence and

should provide instruction based on the most current information and knowledge available in the profession.

- b) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.
- c) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.
- d) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student, including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

3.03 Performance Evaluation

Social workers who have responsibility for evaluating the performance of others should fulfill such responsibility in a fair and considerate manner and on the basis of clearly stated criteria.

3.04 Client Records

- a) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation in electronic and paper records is accurate and reflects the services provided.
- b) Social workers should include sufficient and timely documentation in records to facilitate the delivery of services and to ensure continuity of services provided to clients in the future.
- c) Social workers' documentation should protect clients' privacy to the extent that is possible and appropriate and should include only information that is directly relevant to the delivery of services.
- d) Social workers should store records following the termination of services to ensure reasonable future access. Records should be maintained for the number of years required by relevant laws, agency policies, and contracts.

3.05 Billing

Social workers should establish and maintain billing practices that accurately reflect the nature and extent of services provided and that identify who provided the service in the practice setting.

3.06 Client Transfer

- a) When an individual who is receiving services from another agency or colleague contacts a social worker for services, the social worker should carefully consider the client's needs before agreeing to provide services. To minimize possible confusion and conflict, social workers should discuss with potential clients the nature of the clients' current relationship with other service providers and the implications, including possible benefits or risks, of entering into a relationship with a new service provider.
- b) If a new client has been served by another agency or colleague, social workers should discuss with the client whether consultation with the previous service provider is in the client's best interest.

3.07 Administration

- a) Social work administrators should advocate within and outside their agencies for adequate resources to meet clients' needs.
- b) Social workers should advocate for resource allocation procedures that are open and fair. When not all clients' needs can be met, an allocation procedure should be developed that is nondiscriminatory and based on appropriate and consistently applied principles.
- c) Social workers who are administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate agency or organizational resources are available to provide appropriate staff supervision.
- d) Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment for which they are responsible is consistent with and encourages compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics. Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in their organizations that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with the Code.

3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development

Social work administrators and supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development for all staff for whom they are responsible. Continuing education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social work practice and ethics.

3.09 Commitments to Employers

- a) Social workers generally should adhere to commitments made to employers and employing organizations.
- b) Social workers should work to improve employing agencies' policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their services.
- c) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that employers are aware of social workers' ethical obligations as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics and of the implications of those obligations for social work practice.
- d) Social workers should not allow an employing organization's policies, procedures, regulations, or administrative orders to interfere with their ethical practice of social work. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that their employing organizations' practices are consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.
- e) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the employing organization's work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.
- f) Social workers should accept employment or arrange student field placements only in organizations that exercise fair personnel practices.
- g) Social workers should be diligent stewards of the resources of their employing organizations, wisely conserving funds where appropriate and never misappropriating funds or using them for unintended purposes.

3.10 Labor-Management Disputes

- a) Social workers may engage in organized action, including the formation of and participation in labor unions, to improve services to clients and working conditions.

- b) The actions of social workers who are involved in labor-management disputes, job actions, or labor strikes should be guided by the profession's values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. Reasonable differences of opinion exist among social workers concerning their primary obligation as professionals during an actual or threatened labor strike or job action. Social workers should carefully examine relevant issues and their possible impact on clients before deciding on a course of action.

4.0 Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities as Professionals

4.01 Competence

- a) Social workers should accept responsibility or employment only on the basis of existing competence or the intention to acquire the necessary competence.
- b) Social workers should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions. Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work. Social workers should routinely review the professional literature and participate in continuing education relevant to social work practice and social work ethics.
- c) Social workers should base practice on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics.

4.02 Discrimination

Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability.

4.03 Private Conduct

Social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

4.04 Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception

Social workers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.

4.05 Impairment

- a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.
- b) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

4.06 Misrepresentation

- a) Social workers should make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of the social work profession, a professional social work organization, or the social worker's employing agency.
- b) Social workers who speak on behalf of professional social work organizations should accurately represent the official and authorized positions of the organizations.
- c) Social workers should ensure that their representations to clients, agencies, and the public of professional qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided, or results to be achieved are accurate. Social workers should claim only those relevant professional credentials they actually possess and take steps to correct any inaccuracies or misrepresentations of their credentials by others.

4.07 Solicitations

- a) Social workers should not engage in uninvited solicitation of potential clients who, because of their circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence, manipulation, or coercion.
- b) Social workers should not engage in solicitation of testimonial endorsements (including solicitation of consent to use a client's prior statement as a testimonial endorsement) from current clients or from other people who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.

4.08 Acknowledging Credit

- a) Social workers should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed.
- b) Social workers should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others.

5.0 Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Social Work Profession

5.01 Integrity of the Profession

- a) Social workers should work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.
- b) Social workers should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession. Social workers should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the profession through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of the profession.
- c) Social workers should contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, and competence of the social work profession. These activities may include teaching, research, consultation, service, legislative testimony, presentations in the community, and participation in their professional organizations.
- d) Social workers should contribute to the knowledge base of social work and share with colleagues their knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics. Social workers should seek to contribute to the profession's literature and to share their knowledge at professional meetings and conferences.
- e) Social workers should act to prevent the unauthorized and unqualified practice of social work.

5.02 Evaluation and Research

- a) Social workers should monitor and evaluate policies, the implementation of programs, and practice interventions.
- b) Social workers should promote and facilitate evaluation and research to contribute to the development of knowledge.
- c) Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work and fully use evaluation and research evidence in their professional practice.
- d) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should carefully consider possible consequences and should follow guidelines developed for the protection of evaluation and research participants. Appropriate institutional review boards should be consulted.
- e) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should obtain voluntary and written informed consent from participants, when appropriate, without any implied or actual deprivation or penalty for refusal to participate; without undue inducement to participate; and with due regard for participants' well-being, privacy, and dignity. Informed consent should include information about the nature, extent, and duration of the participation requested and disclosure of the risks and benefits of participation in the research.
- f) When using electronic technology to facilitate evaluation or research, social workers should ensure that participants provide informed consent for the use of such technology. Social workers should assess whether participants are able to use the technology and, when appropriate, offer reasonable alternatives to participate in the evaluation or research.
- g) When evaluation or research participants are incapable of giving informed consent, social workers should provide an appropriate explanation to the participants, obtain the participants' assent to the extent they are able, and obtain written consent from an appropriate proxy.
- h) Social workers should never design or conduct evaluation or research that does not use consent procedures, such as certain forms of naturalistic observation and archival research, unless rigorous and responsible review of the research has found it to be justified because of its prospective scientific, educational, or applied value and unless equally effective alternative procedures that do not involve waiver of consent are not feasible.
- i) Social workers should inform participants of their right to withdraw from evaluation and research at any time without penalty.
- j) Social workers should take appropriate steps to ensure that participants in evaluation and research have access to appropriate supportive services.
- k) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.
- l) Social workers engaged in the evaluation of services should discuss collected information only for professional purposes and only with people professionally concerned with this information.
- m) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should ensure the anonymity or confidentiality of participants and of the data obtained from them. Social workers should inform participants of any limits of confidentiality, the measures that will be taken to ensure confidentiality, and when any records containing research data will be destroyed.

- n) Social workers who report evaluation and research results should protect participants' confidentiality by omitting identifying information unless proper consent has been obtained authorizing disclosure.
- o) Social workers should report evaluation and research findings accurately. They should not fabricate or falsify results and should take steps to correct any errors later found in published data using standard publication methods.
- p) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest and dual relationships with participants, should inform participants when a real or potential conflict of interest arises, and should take steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes participants' interests primary.
- q) Social workers should educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices.

6.0 Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society

6.01 Social Welfare

Social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments. Social workers should advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and should promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice.

6.02 Public Participation

Social workers should facilitate informed participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.

6.03 Public Emergencies

Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.

6.04 Social and Political Action

- a) Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.
- b) Social workers should act to expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups.
- c) Social workers should promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within the United States and globally. Social workers should promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference, support the expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, advocate for programs and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence, and promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people.

- d) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability.

**Taken from <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics>, June 2021*