



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

Student & Academic Affairs | MSW Program

MSW Program Manual

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UT Arlington respectfully acknowledges the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes upon whose historical homelands this University is located. Their ancestors resided here for generations before being forcibly displaced by U.S. settlers and soldiers in the mid-1800s. We recognize the historical presence of the Caddo Nation and other Tribal Nations in the region; the ongoing presence and achievements of many people who moved to the area due to the Indian Relocation program of the 1950s and 1960s; and the vital presence and accomplishments of our Native students, faculty, and staff.



Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Welcome from the Director	3
Welcome from the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs	4
UTASSW Vision	6
<i>UTASSW Mission</i>	6
<i>UTASSW Priorities</i>	6
The MSW Program.....	6
<i>Council on Social Work Education Policy and Accreditation Standards</i>	6
<i>MSW Program Mission</i>	6
Policies Related to Altering your MSW Path	8
Academic Advising and Academic Success	9
<i>Academic Advisors at UTA guide students through exploration, identification, and pursuit of their educational, personal and career goals. Advisors equip students to attain academic success and promote lifelong learning. Ultimately, academic advisors offer essential academic services that help students persist and graduate. To learn more SSW Academic Advising, please click here. Frequently asked MSW Academic Advising questions and answers can be found here.</i>	9
Practicum Education	9
Student Resources	9
School of Social Work Additional Student Policies	10
Professional Standards Policies and Procedures	10
Grade Grievances.....	11
<i>Preferential Treatment</i>	11
<i>AND/OR</i>	11
Graduation	14
MSW Licensure Statement.....	14
Conclusion	14
Appendix A	16

Welcome from the Director

Dear MSW Students,

I am excited to introduce myself as the new Program Director of our Master of Social Work program and join a community of learners, advocates, and future change-makers. As I step into this role, I do so with deep respect for your individual journey and a strong commitment to supporting you—academically, personally, and professionally.

My path to social work education is unique. My practice background is rooted in clinical ethics and moral distress, where I've worked alongside patients, families, and healthcare teams to navigate some of life's most complex decisions—often involving end-of-life care and serious illness. This work affirmed my belief in the power of our profession and in the impact of social work practice. One of the most exciting things about social work is the sheer breadth of possibility it offers. Whether you're drawn to clinical work, policy and advocacy, healthcare, schools, research, community organizing, or mental health—this degree opens doors. The flexibility and range of the social work profession is one of its greatest strengths, and I'm so energized by the paths you will each choose to follow.

For those of you who may be balancing school with outside responsibilities, I am right there with you. I am Canadian and as an international faculty member, I am still trying to navigate new systems in a new country amid bouts of homesickness. I am also a mom of two very young kids, a role that has deepened my understanding of how people learn and grow. Motherhood has reminded me daily that care work and intellectual work are not separate domains. They inform each other in powerful, necessary ways. I carry this perspective into our program with the belief that your lived realities—whether as caregivers, first-generation students, transfer students, international students, working professionals, or all the above—deserve to be honored and centered in the learning environment. Let us listen deeply and learn from one another, and lead with compassion. Together, we will continue to build a learning community where your unique voice strengthens the collective impact of our profession.

This handbook is a resource guide and contains information about our policies, curriculum, and student resources. If your question is not answered here, please use [this protocol](#) to identify the person to assist. I can assure you that there are resources, mentors, and fellow students ready to help when you need it. For example, you can look to our [Graduate Student Leader Program](#) or the [Connections Tutoring Lab](#). If you are a prospective MSW student, we are excited you are interested and ask that you please visit [Social Work Admissions](#) for assistance.

I encourage you to be open and honest about your needs—whether academic, personal, or logistical. UTA has vast resources, including [Counseling and Psychological Services](#), [Career Development](#), [Writing Center](#), [Health Services](#), [Student Access and Resource Center](#), [Emergency Assistance Fund](#), [Office of International Education](#), and [Maverick Pantry](#) stocked with formula, diapers, non-perishable food, and professional clothing. If you ever have UTA wide questions, our [Dean of Students](#) is an excellent point of connection for support at the university level.

Whether you are just beginning your journey or returning with new questions and renewed purpose, know that I am here to walk alongside you. Please don't hesitate to reach out, stop by, or share your ideas—I welcome your insights, your stories, and your vision for our program. I am here to listen and learn. I am deeply invested in your success and well-being.

I wish you all the best on your new adventure,



Sophia Fantus, PhD, MSW, HEC-C
MSW Program Director
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Welcome from the Associate Dean for Academic and Student

Affairs

I am honored to be your Associate Dean of Academic & Student Affairs during your social work journey. Given the needs of our fellow humans, I am grateful on their behalf that you have chosen to answer the call to serve others in this important career of social work. You have chosen to pursue a career path that I have found fulfilling, rewarding, and enjoyable. I wake up every workday excited to go to work and on weekends, must remind myself that a break from this work I love is part of the recipe for being successful in my role. That kind of love for and dedication to your work is what I hope for each of you.

As you move through your journey, I encourage you to keep one of our social work values at heart—the importance of human relationships. As Mother Teresa noted, *"We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty."* Building relationships with the faculty, staff, students, and leadership are all important avenues toward your own success in serving others in need of social work support. We offer many opportunities for you to connect with each other and us and I sincerely hope you will take advantage of those as often as possible.

At times, this journey may seem difficult not only due to the rigor of our programs but also because many of you embark upon it with other responsibilities such as employment, and care for family members. Your sacrifices toward this journey are seen, acknowledged, and appreciated. I often say students are my heroes—you take on so much and I am always in awe of what you accomplish. Please remember to *"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible"* (St. Francis of Assisi). Please also remember that at times, you may become frustrated. As you experience this, please remember the importance of respect as we work together toward your success; in other words: *"When things go wrong, don't go with them"* (Elvis Presley). We are here to help and support you but please don't take your frustrations out on us!

As you move through your journey, you will no doubt have questions pertaining to a wide range of topics and situations. This manual is designed to guide you. However, if your question is not answered here, please use [this protocol](#) to identify the person to assist. When in doubt, don't hesitate to contact me and I will either answer or get you to the person who can. If you are a prospective social work student, we are excited you are interested and ask that you please visit [Social Work Admissions](#) for assistance.

In closing, please call me Regina if you feel comfortable—though I have certain decision-making authority related to your degrees, we are colleagues in partnership. Social Work is an amazingly fulfilling profession that allows us to be supportive forces toward our clients achieving their best lives. Regardless of our chosen practice settings and roles in social work, we are afforded opportunities to strive for change for the betterment of all—what a gift that is for us in our work!

Once again, I welcome you to the UTA School of Social Work with a warm heart!



Regina

Regina T. Praetorius, PhD, LMSW-AP-S | She/Her/Hers

Associate Dean of Academic & Student Affairs

Jillian Michelle Smith Professor in Family Violence Research

Distinguished Teaching Professor

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UTA School of Social Work

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

Office of the Dean

Welcome to the UTA School of Social Work! I realize you had many options when it came to earning your MSW, and I'm so glad you've decided to do it here with us. You're embarking on a journey that begins today but will last a lifetime.

I hope you find this to be a challenging and enriching environment. Your faculty will stretch your understandings, challenge assumptions, and encourage you to think critically about the world and your place in it. You will spend time, inside and outside of the classroom, learning important skills and building competencies for social work practice. You don't magically become a social worker when you get your diploma; but, rather, you will continue to grow and develop professionally while here and beyond.

I hope you spend time listening to the stories of your peers, classmates, and clients. Engage each other in thoughtful conversation. Listen for the narratives that shape their lives and listen too for the narratives that shape your life. Seek deep understanding about similarities and differences. Grow with each other. Dare to dream. Don't be afraid of failure – it is the hallmark of innovative thinking.

This is a community that values authenticity and transparency, dedication and excellence, and integrity and justice. I'm certain you will find that place where your passions and the needs of the world intersect here at the UTA School of Social Work. Our aim is to support you every step along your journey as you discover your voice within the profession. Your success is our success.

We are glad you're here! In service,



Dr. Kirk A. Foster, PhD, MSW, MDiv Dean & Professor

UTASSW Vision

Educating Leaders to create community partnerships for promoting a just society.

UTASSW Mission

The University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work promotes the highest standards of integrity, and excellence in research, teaching and service, and creates collaborative scholarly and educational opportunities for students and the community, with the goal of achieving a just society.

UTASSW Priorities

Five major goals describe our priorities as a School, each of which will be elaborated further in the goals section (below) with their corresponding objectives and the departments/offices responsible for their execution.

Five Goals

1. To enhance our research capacity and impact.
2. Recruit, retain and graduate high quality BSW, MSW and Ph.D. students.
3. Foster a culture of professional development and mutual respect.
4. To enhance the quality of external collaborations and professional service by faculty and staff.
5. To enhance donor participation through external relations and strategic solicitation.

The MSW Program

Council on Social Work Education Policy and Accreditation Standards

The MSW program at the UTASSW is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). As such, our program prepares students to actively promote human and community well-being through their future roles as professional social workers. Guided by a person in environment construct, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, social work's purpose is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons (CSWE, 2015, p. 5). The program is guided by the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of CSWE that includes the competencies students are expected to achieve upon graduation. These competencies are reflected in the learning outcomes for each of the courses offered.

MSW Program Mission

The MSW program provides a generalist Social work foundation upon which to build evidence-informed and social justice-focused advanced practice within a diverse society. An environment of excellence in research and engaged community partners, including practicum educators, creates a professional training atmosphere for developing core competencies and advanced practice skills and behaviors across a range of available specialty programs infused with effective and ethical practice, an understanding of the organizational contexts of social work practice, and inclusive of highly valued social work knowledge.

General Program Requirements and Policies

Total number of credit hours to graduate:

1. Traditional students (students without a BSW or students with a BSW who were not granted advanced standing): 61 hours including two practicum internships and either thesis or integrative seminar.
2. Advanced Standing students (students with a BSW who are granted advanced standing): 38 hours including one practicum internship and either thesis or integrative seminar.
3. Minimum GPA requirement to graduate: 3.0.
4. Time to completion: Traditional students (without a BSW) can complete the program in as little as 2 years if attending full-time; part-time attendance will result in completing the program in as little as 4 years. Students with a BSW who meet criteria for Advanced Standing can complete the program in 1 year if attending full-time or 2 years if attending part-time. Students have six years to complete the program, but may petition for further time, if justified. Courses completed outside of the six-year completion window may be required to be retaken. This decision is at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Programs.

Course Load

- **Maximum Course Load:** The maximum course load for full-time graduate students is 15 semester hours for fall or spring semesters and 12 hours for the summer session.
- **Minimum Course Load:** The minimum semester hours for full-time are 9 hours for fall and spring semesters and 6 hours for summer session.
- **Excess of Maximum Course Load:** Registration in excess of this maximum must be approved by the Director of Graduate Programs at the School of Social Work ([click here for approval request](#)).
- **Minimum Course Load for International Students:** International students must be enrolled for a minimum of nine semester hours to maintain their visa status.
- If students choose a Block practicum *and* need to take integrative seminar (SOCW 5395) in the same semester, special permission from the MSW Director is required. Prior to requesting approval students will need to ensure the practicum site will be able to assign them a client within 2 weeks of the semester starting due to the assignments for the integrative class. Use this link [link](#) to request approval only after assurances from the practicum site have been obtained.

Transfer Policy

Transfer credits for graduate level social work courses may, at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Programs, be accepted by the School of Social Work from comparable coursework taken and passed with a grade of 'C' or better at another CSWE accredited program within the last six years. Students wishing to transfer completed course work to the School of Social Work should submit course syllabi to the Director of Graduate Programs for comparison and evaluation. Transfer credit determination from another CSWE accredited program's coursework will be made by the Director of Graduate Programs in collaboration with the student's academic advisor. At no time may the total transfer credits awarded exceed 75% of the total program credits needed for the degree. At no time will Pre-Thesis, Thesis or Integrative Seminar courses be accepted for transfer credit.

Planning your MSW

New Student Orientation

1. At Acceptance, and before advising, students are asked to complete the **Map for the Journey** course in Canvas by clicking [here](#). This self-paced course provides information about what you can expect in the MSW Program and will provide answers to many of the questions you may have as you prepare to begin your journey in graduate school. **Completion of this course is required prior to the beginning of the term.**
2. After the MSW Program Assistant verifies completion of the Map for the Journey, students will be invited to either a face to face or virtual orientation—Phase 2 of orientation.
3. Phase 2 Orientation will include the GSL program, advising, practicum and the MSW program. The main goal will be to ensure there are no remaining questions **after** the Map for the Journey.
4. There will also be group advising for the following groups; pending staff availability, the groups will be more specific by specialty as well:
 - Foundation
 - By Specialty

Traditional Students' First Year

Students without a BSW or those with a BSW who are not granted advanced standing are considered traditional or Foundation students. Traditional/Foundation students spend the first year of their MSW in the Foundation Curriculum. The MSW Foundation Curriculum consists of 26 Semester Credit Hours (SCH) of coursework, and includes a 480 hour Foundation Practicum Placement in which students gain generalist social work practice experience at a social work organization in their community. [More information about the Foundation Curriculum is available on the first page of this linked document.](#)

Advanced Standing Students and Traditional Students' Second Year (Specialty Year)

Students who have completed the foundation curriculum and students with a BSW who are granted advanced standing complete the MSW Specialty Curriculum. The MSW Specialty Curriculum consists of five options for specialization ([See page 2 of this linked document for more on each specialty](#)):

- Aging (Online Only)

- Children & Families (Online and Face to Face at the Arlington Campus Options),
- Community and Administrative Practice (Online Only),
- Health (Face to Face at the Arlington Campus Only), and
- Mental Health & Substance Misuse (Online and Face to Face at the Arlington Campus Options).

The Specialty Curriculum includes another 500 hour Practicum Placement in which students gain specialty social work practice experience aligning with their chosen specialty at a social work organization in their community different from where the foundation Practicum placement was completed. Additionally, students either complete a capstone course or a thesis.

Capstone Option: In this option, in a 3-hour course (SOCW 5395: Integrative Seminar), students complete an in-depth case study paper focusing on the helping cycle with a client from the student's specialty Practicum placement.

Thesis Option: In this option, students complete a research study over 6 hours of coursework (SOCW 5396 and 5398). Three of the hours replace an elective in the degree and the remaining 3 hours replace the Capstone course. The steps for completing the thesis are found in Appendix A.

Traditional students undertaking the MSW program full-time, can complete the MSW in 2 years; if traditional students undertake the program part-time can complete the program in 4 years. Advanced Standing students with the BSW can complete the MSW in 1 year if completing the program full-time and in 2 years if part-time.

Course descriptions for all courses within the MSW curriculum are available in the University Graduate Catalog. Students may pursue their MSW in a number of ways including online or face to face at the Arlington Campus.

Policies Related to Altering your MSW Path

Adding a Graduate Certificate or Dual Degree

The SSW offers graduate certificate options and dual degree options that can be added to the MSW to further specialize or diversify your degree. These options will likely extend time to graduation and incur additional cost but for many students, these costs are outweighed by the benefits. For more information on certificates offered, please [click here](#).

Students in social work may participate in one of several dual degree programs whereby they can earn a Master of Social Work and a second master's degree in another discipline. By participating in a dual degree program, students can apply some semester hours jointly to meet the requirements of both degrees, thus reducing the total number of hours required to earn both degrees separately. The number of hours that may be jointly applied ranges from 6 to 18 hours, subject to the approval of both programs.

To participate in the dual degree program, an MSW prospective student must first apply to the MSW program and be accepted and then work with your SSW academic advisor to submit the appropriate paperwork to apply to the second master's degree program. Students are encouraged to consult concurrently with the graduate advisors in the appropriate degree programs for further information on course requirements. Students must be eligible to be admitted to the second master's degree program based on that college's requirements. The second degree department must submit a form to the gradteam@uta.edu. Students should also be aware that other departments may have courses offered only once per semester requiring careful planning of each of your semesters. Please also see the statement on Dual Degree Programs in the Graduate Catalog. To view the Graduate Catalog and review the various dual degree plans offered please use this [link](#).

Please note, after a Social Work student completes more than 24 hours of advanced graduate social work coursework, they will not be able to add a dual degree.

If you choose to add a certificate, please work with your academic advisor to do so. To pursue a dual degree, please contact the MSW Program Director.

Change in Degree Plans

Changing one's specialty can have implications that impact the courses required for the degree, additional costs and

potential delays in one's graduation timeline. If a student decides to change degree plans, they must meet with an academic advisor to document the change.

Academic Advising and Academic Success

Academic Advisors at UTA guide students through exploration, identification, and pursuit of their educational, personal and career goals. Advisors equip students to attain academic success and promote lifelong learning. Ultimately, academic advisors offer essential academic services that help students persist and graduate. To learn more SSW Academic Advising, [please click here](#). Frequently asked MSW Academic Advising questions and answers can be found [here](#).

Practicum Education

Practicum Education is the most exciting moment for students pursuing their social work education and future. Through your real-life experience in your foundation (if a traditional student) and specialty years at the School of Social Work you will gain the skills required to be a professional, exceptional, and successful social worker. To learn more about the Practicum education experience including to sign up for Practicum orientation, please [click here](#). You are strongly encouraged to review the guidance on preparing for Practicum found [here](#).

Student Resources

We are here to help you! The Academic Affairs Office welcomes you to the School of Social Work. It is our mission to make your higher education journey as simple, fun, and meaningful as possible. We offer helpful information and events designed to provide you with academic support and resources for your health and well-being—integral to your academic success in completing your degree.

Graduate Student Leaders (GSL)

The GSL program is designed to build community and connections between MSW students and strengthen the bond that students have with the School of Social Work by facilitating the exchange of accurate and timely information. Each MSW student in the program is assigned to a GSL, a fellow student who has received extensive training on leadership, communication, and information on the School and MSW program.

GSLs serve as advocates and communication facilitators for MSW students, fielding questions about all of aspects of the graduate experience, including advising, Practicum, registration, orientation, scholarships, deadlines, program policies, and more. They can track down accurate answers to questions quickly by reaching out directly to program administrators and connecting students to services and resources. Students who reach out to their GSL with a question most often receive resolution to their presenting issue within minutes or hours of posing a question.

Your GSL can be reached anytime via email or on MS Teams. Your GSL will be reaching out to you at least once every two weeks to check in via email or Teams conference. If you are unsure of who your GSL is or have not received a response to your inquiry within 24 hours, please visit the [GSL website](#) for the interns' contact information and ask the interns who your GSL is.

Student Success

The Student Success Coordinator is committed to supporting you in successfully navigating your personal and educational goals by offering services and resources focusing on health, wellness, and support outside the classroom. We can help reduce barriers and assist you with the basic needs of life so you can achieve your goals. We are also available for students who may be in distress or exhibit behavior that raises concerns about the physical or mental well-being of themselves (or others). Please complete the [Care Referral Form](#) for assistance. This form is not for emergency situations. For life-threatening emergencies, including threat of injury to self or others, call Campus Police at 911 on a campus phone or 817-272-3003.

Connections Lab

The Social Work Connections Lab offers tutoring for social work students by social work students who can help with

brainstorming and getting started, research and finding sources, writing and revising major assignments, APA citing and more. You can book time with a tutor [here](#). (If this link is giving you trouble, try opening it in an incognito window.) The Lab offers appointments Mon-Sun virtually on teams. There is also a Social Work Connections Lab Canvas Course in case you prefer to work on your own. To enroll, [click here](#). (If you're brought to the Canvas login, login to Canvas and open the link again.) This course has guidance on APA, tutorials for specific writing assignments like the policy paper or the integrative seminar, and more. Once you enroll, click "Modules" to browse offerings.

Student Organizations

Maximize your Social Work experience through student organizations! We have several student organizations to choose from, so there's something for everyone. Student organizations offer opportunities for connecting with others, engaging in meaningful work around the organization's mission, leadership and career development, and networking. For more information on the student organizations at the SSW, [click here](#).

Career Development

Learn the skills to improve your career and professional outlook upon graduation with resume workshops, featured job opportunities, licensure, and more. Visit the [Career Development Corner](#).

Scholarships

The UTA SSW offers (small) scholarships to help our students financially. Scholarships are described [here](#). Typically, scholarship applications open 2 months before the start of the next semester and are posted [here](#).

School of Social Work Additional Student Policies

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is highly prized at the School of Social Work and aligns with our Profession's Ethical Standards (Integrity) and Principles (NASW Code of Ethics). Plagiarism and the inappropriate use of an author's material are considered serious violations of scholarly and professional ethics. All instances of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct using their procedures. Plagiarism can be defined as the failure to give proper credit to authors for their information, ideas, or words found in published or written materials, such as journals, books, monographs, handbooks, manuals, or other scholarly papers. Citations should conform to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. This applies to both paraphrased and quoted statements. Students must submit original work. It is also a violation of plagiarism to purchase a paper from another source and submit it as your original work. For a guide on avoiding plagiarism, [visit this tutorial](#).

Professional Standards Policies and Procedures

Social work education serves as a critical learning forum during which students are acculturated into the social work profession. [This document](#) establishes Professional Standards that apply to students enrolled at the School of Social Work at The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). Professional Standards include behaviors observed in the classroom, Practicum internship experiences, and in interactions with faculty, staff, fellow students, clients and community members. For students who demonstrate concerning behavior, a student success referral will be filed and the chair of professional standards and the coordinator for student success will decide next steps based on the referral.

Three levels of review can occur at the School of Social Work in reviewing student's Professional Behavior. The level of review depends upon the potential severity of the concern. Three levels of review exist in the School of Social Work:

- Level 1: Issues of concern between a specific instructor (or advisor) and student (Professional Standards Referral form Required).
- Level 2: Unresolved disagreements from Level 1 or claims of unprofessional behavior about a social work student deemed too severe for a Level 1 (Professional Standards Referral form required).
- Level 3: Unresolved situations from Level 2 and/or new situation warranting this level of intervention (Professional Standards Referral form required).

The procedures for each level are listed in the [policies and procedures](#).

Grade Grievances

The UTA School of Social Work follows the policies and procedures of UTA pursuant to grade grievances. Individual course instructors retain primary responsibility for assigning grades. The instructor's judgment is final unless compelling information shows:

Preferential Treatment

Example: Providing exceptions or benefits to one or more students but not to all students in the class.

AND/OR

Procedural Irregularities

Example: Failure to follow a requirement described in a course syllabus, adding a new requirement, or using criteria for grades that are not on the syllabus or in the university catalog.

The procedures for grade grievances are listed [here](#).

Nondiscrimination

No person shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, handicap, disabilities or veteran status, be denied employment or admission, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity which it sponsors or conducts. The University shall not tolerate any behavior or verbal or physical conduct by any administrator, supervisor, and faculty or staff member, which constitutes sexual harassment. If a student believes discrimination has occurred, they should contact [Equal Opportunity Services](#).

Attendance

At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. Instructors will provide, as part of course syllabi, any other absence and lateness policies they establish.

MSW Academic Affairs Student Protocol

Do you have questions about the MSW program, registration/course information, your degree plan, Practicum, graduation, or something else about the MSW program? Are you having issues navigating your class information or have instructor questions? Use [this protocol](#) to reach the right point of contact. When in doubt, the Director of Graduate Programs is always happy to help you navigate the challenge you are experiencing.

Student rights

The following policies, procedures, and guidelines describe student rights and responsibilities while enrolled at the UTA School of Social Work.

1. Students have the right to organize in their own interest.
2. All standing committees (with the exceptions of the Executive Committee, Faculty Development and Review Committee—Tenure Track, Faculty Development and Review Committee—Non-Tenure Track, Faculty Annual and Post-Tenure Review Committee, Committee on Committees, and the Professional Standards Committee) shall have student members. Full and meaningful participation is expected. Elections to these positions are through the SSW Academic Affairs.
3. Students will not be prohibited from exercising their rights to Constitutional and lawful activity. This expressly includes freedom of speech and dissent.

Student files

Student records are stored electronically. Another person may not see a student's record unless the student gives written permission. Faculty and staff members of the University have access to student educational records in

performance of regular duties. The School may confirm that a student (or graduate) is enrolled in school (or has graduated), but requests for additional information will be honored only at the request of the student (or graduate) unless the inquiring agency has provided a stipend, with this stipulation, for the student. Written evaluations by the Practicum instructor are to be shared with the student and the student is to have the option of expressing in writing, as part of the evaluation document, any difference or exception that he/she wishes to take to the evaluation.

University-Level Information

Graduate Enrollment Policy

Graduate students must enroll in at least one credit hour of work related to their degree each long semester (Fall and Spring) in order to remain classified as an enrolled student. Students who will not meet this requirement may request a Leave of Absence.

Adding and Dropping Courses

Students wishing to add or drop courses outside of registration periods may see the University's policies on adding and dropping found [here](#). Students who need to drop courses due to medical or other challenges are encouraged to view the university's policies on [compassionate withdrawal](#). For a compassionate withdrawal you must provide detailed supporting documentation, which will be kept confidential. It is advised withdrawal from a course or from the University may impact financial aid awards, grants, loans, and may require repayment of previously received aid. Withdrawal may affect visa status of international students.

Acceptable documentation should be provided on official letterhead by the entity that can verify the situation and include a timeline of the extraordinary event that occurred on or after the last drop date for the semester in question. If the event occurred prior to the last drop date the student should have made the decision to drop the class at that time. Examples of appropriate documentation include: medical documentation on doctor or hospital letterhead that provides a timeline of serious health-related or emotional difficulties, evidence of the death of a close family member substantiated by a death certificate or an obituary (programs handed out at the funeral are not sufficient) or travel documentation/receipts related to an emergency trip. Examples of poor documentation that will *not* be accepted include: evidence of an event that occurred prior to the last drop date, photocopies of documentation, a doctor's note that does not indicate the timeline of the medical issue, a note from a family member explaining the extraordinary situation, a written summary of a semester's worth of events that led to poor performance in a class, requests to drop only one course for the semesters but other not the other courses, requests to drop a course after the student has completed it, etc. Students who submit altered or forged documentation will be referred to the office for student conduct for appropriate disciplinary action.

Academic Probation and Dismissal

Graduate students failing to maintain an overall 3.0 grade point average (GPA) will be placed on academic probation. Students will be notified via email of their probationary status at the end of the semester. It is imperative that students monitor their grades and pay attention to their GPA as the semester progresses. Students are urged to reach out to faculty or to the academic advisor to gain assistance and seek support before it is too late to act proactively. This is incumbent on students as they are preparing to become professionals and will be held accountable for their performance as employed social workers. Students should note many times it will take more than one course to improve your GPA should you earn a failing grade in a course.

Students on academic probation will have one semester to recover their GPA to a 3.0. Students failing to recover their GPA after one semester will be dismissed from the program. Use this [link](#) to the GPA calculator to determine your recovery plan for increasing your GPA. Students who are dismissed may file a [petition](#) to request to continue the program. Students who are dismissed and away from the program for a semester or longer must apply for readmission. Petitions (active students) and readmission applications (non-active or former students) must be approved by the MSW Program Director. Use this link [link](#) to find the appropriate forms to complete for re-enrollment or petitions. In rare cases, the Director may reach out to students for information on their plan for success upon readmission as part of the decision-making process. Decisions may be appealed to the Associate Dean of Student and Academic Affairs.

Readmission

A student previously enrolled in The University of Texas at Arlington Graduate School wishing to resume graduate work

after an absence of either a fall or spring semester and/or longer period (summer excluded) must submit a readmission application and pay the required application evaluation fee. A note of importance with readmission is that social work courses older than 6 years will not be counted toward continued work—the courses must be retaken. When a student is ready to return, at least a month prior to the start of the semester in which they want to return, they will need to reapply to the university using [this form](#). In rare cases, the Director may reach out to students for information on their plan for success upon readmission as part of the decision-making process. Decisions may be appealed to the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs.

Graduate Grading Policies

Information about graduate grading policies can be found in the [Graduate Catalog](#). Incomplete grades (I) are typically used when a student has satisfactorily completed a substantial part of the coursework, and represents an arrangement for completion between the faculty and the student. The grade of incomplete is given at the sole discretion of the instructor of the course. [Incomplete Forms](#) completed by both the student and instructor must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Programs prior to the grade entry deadline for the semester.

Grade Forgiveness Policy

Graduate Grade Forgiveness is available to graduate students enrolled in a master's degree plan beginning Fall 2023. BS-to-PhD students are eligible provided that the student has not completed 30 hours of graduate course work. Students enrolled in a doctoral program are not eligible for Graduate Grade Forgiveness.

All Master's degree-seeking students who began their program prior to Fall 2023 may be eligible for grade forgiveness provided that the course was attempted only once prior to Fall 2023; courses attempted two or more times prior to Fall 2023 are not eligible.

Students may use the Graduate Grade Forgiveness policy if they receive a grade of C, D, or F in a graduate course at UT Arlington, by electing to repeat the course(s). Students must contact their academic advisor, who files the Grade Forgiveness petition on their behalf. All Grade Forgiveness requests submitted during the term must be submitted by the last day to drop a course to be processed that term. Students must be enrolled on Census Date for their Grade Forgiveness petition in that term to be processed during that term. See the [Academic Calendar](#) for Census Date and Last Drop Date information. A student is limited to a total of two Graduate Grade Forgiveness petitions, regardless of major/degree or any changes to major/degree, under the following conditions:

- Students seeking grade forgiveness must receive counseling from the following as appropriate: Academic Advisor, to determine the effect on completion of degree requirements and probation requirements; Financial Aid Office, if receiving a scholarship or financial aid administered by that office; Athletic Department, if a student athlete; and International Office, if an international student.
- A student may elect to use both Graduate Grade Forgiveness opportunities by repeating the same course up to two times or by repeating two different courses at UT Arlington.
- Grade Forgiveness may be applied to the lesser grade(s) attempted at UT Arlington, and only the better of the eligible grades will be used in the calculation of the student's grade point average.
- The grade(s) for the forgiven course(s) will be removed from the GPA calculation, although the grade(s) received will remain on the student's transcript.
- Only the course(s) and affiliated credit hours retaken in conformity with the Graduate Grade Forgiveness policy will apply to degree requirements. Earlier attempts, including the course credit hours, leading to grades that are forgiven under this policy will not count towards degree requirements.
- Students must file their petition for forgiveness of a grade earned in a course with the aid of their academic advisor. Students must be enrolled at UT Arlington on Census Day of the term that the Grade Forgiveness, if approved, is processed.
- Students MAY apply for Grade Forgiveness for any term (after final grade posting of the previous term but before the Last Drop Day of the current term) before the final semester PRIOR to graduate degree conferral. Students may not apply for Grade Forgiveness AFTER their degree is conferred.
- Courses transferred for credit to UT Arlington from another college or university may not be forgiven under this policy nor be used towards grade forgiveness for grades earned at UT Arlington.
- A current topics course may not be retaken for purposes of grade forgiveness if its content differs from that

presented in the course which was taken previously.

- Grade Forgiveness is not eligible for courses that are no longer offered.
- The policy does not apply to courses taken on a pass/fail basis.
- Students may not apply this policy to grades awarded as a result of disciplinary action.
- Tuition and fee refunds, rebates, or other financial consideration will not be given for courses for which Grade Forgiveness is granted.
- Once Grade Forgiveness is applied to a course, the student may not have the action reversed.
- Students who are dismissed from the University for academic reasons cannot use Grade Forgiveness until they have completed their dismissal period.
- A student may not use credit by exam to receive credit for a course once a student has received a grade for that course, even if it has been forgiven.

Graduation

Degree Conferral and Commencement Ceremonies

Degrees are awarded at the end of the fall semester (December), spring semester (May) and summer session (August). *All graduating students must file an Application for Graduation through their Student Center in MyMav by the published deadlines for the semester of graduation.* Students are encouraged to meet with their academic advisor to ensure that they will meet degree plan requirements in a timely way to allow graduation. Students who fail to apply for graduation by the specified deadlines may apply late by completing the Application for Graduation and paying a late fee. More on applying for graduation can be found [here](#).

Formal commencement ceremonies are held every May and December. More information on commencement ceremonies can be found [here](#).

Diplomas

Diplomas will be issued approximately 6-8 weeks after commencement ceremonies and will be sent to graduates via USPS mail. Graduates with account balances or transcript or any diploma holds must clear these before their diploma can be released for mailing. Diplomas are only kept and available for mailing for one (1) year after graduation. After one year, the graduate will need to order a replacement diploma.

Graduation with Honors

The university does not confer honors on students at the graduate level. However, the SSW honors students graduating with a 4.0 GPA at the SSW's Celebration of Excellence.

Additional Policies including graduating under a different catalog and posthumous degrees can be found [here](#).

MSW Licensure Statement

Graduates from our Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Accredited MSW program are eligible to apply for social work licensure in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Canadian provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, and Manitoba. Our curriculum, through its compliance with CSWE's Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), encompasses the content included in the Association of Social Work Boards' (ASWB) three categories of Master's level licensure exams. These exams are accepted in all 50 U.S. states; Washington, D.C.; the U.S. Virgin Islands; and the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia and Manitoba in Canada. Certain locales may have additional requirements; this information is available from ASWB.

Conclusion

This handbook is a general information publication only. It is not intended to, nor does it contain all regulations that relate to students. The provision of the handbook does not constitute a contract, expressed or implied, between any applicant, student or faculty member and the University of Texas at Arlington, The University of Texas System, or the University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work. The University reserves the right to withdraw courses at any time, change fees, rules, calendars, curriculum, degree programs, degree requirements, graduation procedures and any other requirements affecting students. Changes will become effective whenever the proper authorities so determine and will

apply to both prospective students and those already enrolled.

Students are held individually responsible for complying with all requirements of the rules and regulations of the University and the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System. Failure to read and comply with policies, regulations, and procedures will not exempt students from whatever penalties they may incur.

Appendix A
University of Texas at Arlington
School of Social Work

Master's Thesis Guidelines

Master's Thesis Option: Master of Social Work (MSW) students may wrap up their MSW with either a capstone (SOCW 5395) or a thesis (SOCW 5396 as an elective and SOCW 5398 in lieu of SOCW 5395). Students will need to reach out to their advisor to have them create and enroll them in the course. Thesis does not replace the Practicum education requirements.

Master's Thesis Description: The master's thesis should be a paper that is potentially publishable. It should contain either original research, using data that has been collected or secondary data that has been analyzed (Qualitative Interpretive Metasyntheses [QIMS] and scoping or systematic reviews are also options), or it can be a substantial review of literature that advances a new conceptual frameworks or theoretical contribution.

It will be ideally 25 to 35 pages in length and will include an introduction, a literature review, a methods section, findings, discussion, and conclusion. For information on how to write a journal manuscript, click here. Students are strongly encouraged to select a journal during the proposal process so that they are able to keep the audience and guidelines in mind as they produce the thesis. Here are strategies for selecting a journal:

- Ask your chair and committee;
- Review your reference list for journals that typically publish on your topic;
- Try one of these journal finders:
 - o [Springer](#)
 - o [Taylor and Francis](#)
 - o [Elsevier](#)
 - o [Wiley](#)

The Committee: Students who select the thesis option must also select a committee to guide their thesis process. Comprised of three members, one thesis chairperson (a.k.a. thesis advisor) and 2 thesis committee members. The chair is responsible for helping the student to conceptualize and refine the thesis plan, support them in executing it, and provide feedback and support as they write the final paper; the chair is also the instructor for both SOCW 5396 and 5398. The chair must be a full-time social work faculty member with a doctoral degree. Full-time faculty without a doctoral degree may serve as members. Members may also be faculty from other disciplines and other higher education institutions.

The Process (minimum of 2 semesters though 3 are encouraged if student is able):

1. The student contacts the Graduate Program Director to discuss how completing a thesis will impact their degree plan, potential topic, and potential committee members.
2. The student identifies their committee chair and two committee members; the student or chair should consult with the Graduate Program Director for approval of the committee members.
3. The student informs their academic advisor of their identified committee chair; the advisor arranges SOCW 5396 with the chair as the instructor; the student enrolls in the course.
4. Student sets dates with committee for research proposal defense (4 to 8 weeks before the end of the first semester) and thesis final defense (3 to 4 weeks before the end of the final semester in the MSW program). Final defense must be by date listed here under *additional deadlines for graduate students*.
5. Student meets with chair to conceptualize and refine research plan.
6. Student writes research proposal: Introduction, Literature Review and proposed Methods. If IRB application will be required, this should be drafted simultaneously. It is strongly recommended that the IRB application be submitted for IRB approval ASAP. It can always be modified after the proposal meeting but given IRB approval times, a modification will be approved quicker than a full application.
7. Student works with chair to refine and finalize proposal then sends to committee by 2 weeks before the

proposal defense data.

8. Student defends thesis proposal to committee.

9. Chair submits the Thesis Proposal Defense Form; at end of semester, chair submits a grade of P (Pass), R (Repeat)¹ or F (Fail) for SOCW 5396 in MyMav.

10. The student requests their academic advisor set up SOCW 5398 with the chair as the instructor; the student enrolls in the course.

11. Student collects and/or analyzes data (research articles if doing a lit review/QIMS/systematic or scoping review).

12. Student writes up Final Thesis (proposal with any edits from the proposal meeting plus findings, discussion, and conclusion), and submits to chair for feedback/approval.

13. Once student has refined final thesis to chair's satisfaction, the final thesis is circulated to the committee at least 2 weeks before thesis defense date.

14. Committee meets for student thesis defense during which student presents findings to committee in a professional presentation.

15. After final defense, a. Chair completes and turns in final Master's Exam Report to Director of Graduate Programs;

b. At end of semester, chair submits a grade of P (Pass), R (Repeat)¹ or F (Fail) for SOCW 5396 in MyMav; and

c. Student submits thesis to library (Instructions). Due dates for these items are found [here](#) under *additional deadlines for graduate students*.

16. Student is encouraged to submit the thesis to the agreed upon journal for publication.

d. The examination is "Oral Thesis" (select this on the form);

e. If student passed conditionally, when the student makes the requested changes to the thesis, the chair must let the Director of Graduate Programs know so that this can be noted and the degree can be conferred.

¹ If an R is given, the student must register for the course again in the subsequent semester. Incompletes are not given for thesis courses.