# HANDBOOK FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS AT UAB

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HANDBOOK FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS AT UAB
INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of the Handbook for Social Work Students at UAB is threefold. First, it will provide prospective baccalaureate social work majors information about the profession of social work and UAB's Baccalaureate Social Work Program (BSW), which offers a Bachelor of Science in Social Work degree (B.S.S.W). Information about the program’s curriculum, policies and procedures, and admission to major criteria will assist potential social work majors in assessing their aptitude for the profession of social work at the baccalaureate level.

Second, students who have been formally accepted as social work majors will find information about the social work curriculum, policies and procedures, activities for social work majors, and the criteria for admission to field placement. The information will also assist social work majors in the timely completion of their course work as well as to prepare for their practicum experience. Third, social work majors who have been accepted for field placement will find pertinent information on policies and procedures regarding the practicum experience.

The Handbook is divided into three sections to correspond with the aforementioned purposes:

I. Choosing social work as my major: Determining a good fit.
II. Curriculum and Opportunities: Acquiring Knowledge, Values, and Skills
III. The Field Practicum Experience: Practicing, Integrating, and Synthesizing

Each section of the Handbook serves a distinct purpose. Section I is designed for students who are considering social work as a major. Students enrolled in Introduction to Social Work (SW 100) are assigned Section I as supplemental reading. Students enrolled in SW 100 also purchase the NASW Code of Ethics (1999). The Code is considered part of the Handbook. Students are advised to keep the Code with the Handbook. Sections II and III are designed for those social work majors who have been formally accepted into the program. Agency field supervisors also receive the Handbook to use as a guide in planning practicum experiences for students.

History of UAB’s Baccalaureate Social Work Program (BSW)

UAB's BSW program has a proud tradition of high standards and quality instruction. In 1974, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the national accrediting body for professional social work education, began accrediting baccalaureate social work programs to designate beginning
level professional training. In 1976, UAB began its BSW program under the direction of Dr. Norman Eggleston. Application for initial accreditation was made immediately; CSWE accredited UAB's social work program at the baccalaureate level in 1977. The program has been continuously accredited at the BSW level since 1977.

In 1996, the social work program merged with the Department of Political Science and Public Administration to create the Department of Government and Public Service.

In 2002, the social work program merged with the Department of Anthropology to create the Department of Anthropology and Social Work. The configuration aligns with the University's mission to serve and enhance its urban community. We enhance our community by graduating competent professional baccalaureate social workers to staff public agencies, by conducting research and influencing policy needed to enhance social functioning and well-being.

**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Bachelor of Social Work program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, an urban research, service, and teaching institution, is to prepare students for generalist practice with diverse populations in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

**Program Goals:**

The primary goals of UAB’s BSW program are to enhance our urban community through:

1. graduating entry-level social workers who will provide quality service to the most vulnerable populations in our community and also influence polices and programs to further the public interest;

2. encouraging and preparing students to purse and excel in further social work education;

3. conducting research and influencing policy needed to enhance social functioning and well-being.
SECTION I: CHOOSING SOCIAL WORK AS MY MAJOR:
DETERMINING A GOOD FIT

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is social work?

Succinct definitions of social work do not necessarily capture its richness and depth but do provide us with an understanding of the purposes common to all fields of social work practice. In 1973, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Board of Directors adopted the one sentence "dictionary definition" (Morales and Sheafor, 1998, p. 35):

Social work is the professional activity of helping individuals, groups, or communities enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and creating societal conditions favorable to that goal (NASW, 1973, pp. 4-5).

More recently, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) described the profession of social work as "committed to the enhancement of human well-being and to the alleviation of poverty and oppression" (1994, p. 97).

Why is a baccalaureate degree in social work considered a professional degree?

Individuals who graduate with a B.S.S.W. are considered prepared to begin their professional
careers as entry-level social workers. This professional designation uniquely qualifies graduates for jobs for which other social sciences degrees holders are not eligible. Some students who desire a career in social work mistakenly believe that a baccalaureate degree in related fields such as psychology or sociology will enable them to compete for most social work positions. That is not the case.

Other students decide to major in another social science simply because completing required course work in social work takes an additional semester. Social Work requires a field practicum in which students are actually working in a social service agency under the direct supervision of an MSW. The field practicum is integral to the professional nature of the degree and, indeed, distinguishes social work form nonprofessional, academic degrees. Although completion of social work requirements usually takes an additional semester (practicum offered Fall and Spring), the advantage for social work majors is that they are readily employed in entry-level professional social work positions upon graduation.

NASW confers professional recognition to baccalaureate social workers (BSW) who graduate from a social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Specific practice experience requirements, professional certifications established by NASW, and statutes in all 50 states (and Washington, D.C., the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico) governing social workers’ license or certification complement the educational requirement to shape social work’s professional standards and identity. More details about licensing can be found in Section II of the Handbook.

Formal education as prescribed by CSWE in its Curriculum Policy Statement provides the foundation for competent social work practice. The baccalaureate social work curriculum is based on values, standards and principles described in the profession's professional code of ethics; a knowledge base of theory and methods of intervention; and skills used to enhance the client's well-being and social functioning.

The NASW Code of Ethics (1997) expresses the professional value base and serves as the guide for ethical social work practice that upholds our professional integrity and enhances our competence. The essential values include respect for the dignity and inherent worth of the individual and the right to self-determination; a recognition of the centrality of human relationships to well-being and the helping process; and a strong commitment to social justice, to service people in need and to the amelioration of social problems.

Social work's knowledge base centers on an ecological/systems framework, or the ecosystems perspective, that views persons and their environments as both interconnected and mutually influencing. This framework encompasses the theoretical bases from psychology, sociology, social-psychology, anthropology, and biology among others. Together, the various disciplines provide social workers with a bio-psycho-social perspective of human study. Thus, the ecosystems perspective
provides a way to comprehend human diversity and the relationships between humans and their environments. The views of human systems as structural, interactional, bio-psychosocial, and cultural entities offer boundless possibilities on which to build understanding and change. Social workers apply this perspective to form empowering relationships, discover resources, and enhance competence in the process of social work process (Miley et al., 1998, p. 46)

To engage in the problem-solving process, social workers involve the “responsible, conscious, disciplined use of self in a relationship with an individual or group” (Lieberman, 1998, p. 5). The strengths-based process is a method that includes

systematic observation and assessment of the individual or group in a situation and the formulation of an appropriate plan of action. Implicit in this is a continuing evaluation regarding the nature of the relationship between worker and client or group, and its effect on both the participant individual or group and the worker [herself or] himself (Lieberman, 1998, p. 5-6).

The techniques and skills of social worker build upon social work values and knowledge bases. Social workers use their repertoire of skills to work with individuals, families, and groups, communities, and institutions to facilitate change and to enhance social functioning and well-being. The various groupings or categories of clients are generally referred to as client systems.

What will the B.S.S.W degree prepare me to do?

In contrast to bachelor degrees in many social sciences (e.g. sociology, psychology, anthropology, and others), the B.S.S.W. qualifies its graduates for professional social work positions in the job market. In fact, only individuals who hold a social work degree may apply for numerous social work positions.

The integrated value-base, knowledge base, methods, and repertoire of techniques and skills prepares the BSW social worker to engage in **generalist practice**. The generalist social worker uses the ecosystems perspective to view the person (client system) and environment as interconnected, and thereby recognizes the need to intervene at various levels of the environment. The various levels are identified as micro (individual, families, and certain small groups), mezzo (groups, neighborhood, community groups, agencies with which the individual client has direct contact), macro (institutions, governmental units, societal –level entities).

Generalist social workers work directly with client systems at all levels, connect clients to available resources, intervene with organizations to enhance the responsiveness of resource systems, advocate just social policies to ensure the equitable distribution of resources and research all aspects of social work practice
The BSW curriculum also prepares social work majors for graduate work, especially the Master of Social Work degree (MSW). Most MSW programs offer "advanced standing" to graduates of fully accredited BSW programs and who meet specific standards. Advanced standing essentially reduces the calendar time needed to complete the MSW degree. UAB social work majors are also highly competitive for admission into graduate schools in related fields.

*What types of positions are available?*

UAB social work graduates have opportunities to practice in a variety settings, thus enhancing the social functioning and well-being of individuals, families, groups, organizations, neighborhoods, communities, and society. BSW social workers are employed in numerous governmental, private non-profit as well as for-profit agency settings that provide social services to client systems. Large and small agencies, schools, hospitals, clinics, residential facilities, and industries to name a few, employ social workers.

Fields of social work practice are many, spanning the range of social functioning needs found within the population. Primary fields of practice include children, youth and families, poverty and income maintenance, mental health, alcohol and substance abuse, developmental disabilities, medical and health care, criminal justice/corrections, gerontology, community organization and development, and policy development.

The list of BSW positions within the various fields exceeds the scope of the *Handbook*. The expanse of job possibilities is illustrated by considering positions with the field of practice known as Children, Youth and Families. In this field, a BSW may work as a perinatal counselor, child protection worker, adoption specialist, infant/toddler stimulation program service provider, family preservation case manager, foster care worker, parenting skills educator, or school social worker. Additionally, a BSW in the field of Children, Youth and Families may serve as a counselor in a group home, residential treatment or community program for youth who may be delinquent, abused, developmentally delayed, or be substance abusers, runaways, or sex offenders. Setting for working with children, youth, and families also include mental health centers, family counseling centers, hospital settings, developmental/educational programs such as HeadStart and after-school programs, community service centers, battered women's shelters, homeless shelters, and a host of private and non-profit clinics that assist families with social functioning issues. This partial list demonstrates that job or career opportunities for BSWs are wide-ranging.

According to Ginsberg (1998), there are approximately 500,000 social workers currently employed in the United States. By the year 2005, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that another 200,000 social work positions will be needed to serve primarily the increasing number of elderly people (p.3). Students who want more information about available social work positions...

**How do I know if social work is a good fit with my strengths?**

Often individuals explore social work as a career option after acknowledging the desire to help others, a desire that stems from concern about social problems such as oppression and inequality. Some students are aware that others seek them out to listen to problems, ask for advice, guidance, and support, trusting that the listener will keep personal information confidential. Others who are interested in pursuing social work as a career have developed empathy for psychologically, socially, or physically challenged people. Further, some students who fit well with social work are drawn to the field because they themselves have experienced victimization, oppression or institutional biases. Finally, many are drawn to social work by their personal values, which align with social work's professional value base, such as respecting individuals’ self-determination and being nonjudgmental about others’ characteristics, plights, or views. Acknowledgment of vocational interest is followed by a process of self-assessment. The process begins with the recognition of strengths and aptitudes, and awareness of one’s own values, beliefs and ideologies. Additionally, potential social work majors need to assess their own abilities in critical thinking and in written and oral communication skills.

Students may begin to self-assess aptitude while completing the university’s core curriculum, which is comprised of fundamental liberal arts and sciences courses. The courses provide students with a general measure of aptitude for college-level work. Although all core curriculum courses are essential for successfully comprehending the social work curriculum, above average grades in English composition courses (EH 101,102) may especially serve as an indicator of ability to achieve the requisite writing skill level for social work majors. Pre-social work foundation courses provided students with multi-disciplinary theory bases that undergird social work’s knowledge base. Exposure to these social science courses often helps students determine their “fit with social work” by assessing their interest in and comprehension of the courses in economics, anthropology, minority studies, psychology, and sociology.

The BSW program offers interested students pre-major classes that facilitate the students’ determining their fit or alignment with social work. These classes introduce students to social work’s mission, goals, values, and ethical standards. In addition, the classes overview the theoretical knowledge and skills requisite for effective practice. Techniques for self-assessment are also incorporated into the content of these pre-major classes, since we believe that the effective and professional use of self in the helping process requires ongoing reflection and self-awareness. All social work faculty are available and willing to consult with students in honing their self-awareness skills.

**PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK ADVISEMENT FOR STUDENTS**
In the BSW program, professional social work advisement includes assisting students in assessing their aptitude for the profession; orienting students to the program’s mission, policies, and the required curriculum sequence; periodically evaluating their performance and progress toward graduation; discussing career opportunities; tailoring field placement selections to ensure educational objectives and enhance career opportunities; and assisting students who choose to apply to graduate programs.

The social work program accomplishes professional social work advisement through a number of processes:

I. Aptitude for the Profession:
   - Undeclared majors and pre-social work students are encouraged to contact any or all members of social work faculty to discuss social work as a major and to assess informally their aptitude for the profession.
   - The Application to Major Process, described at the end of Section I, serves as the program’s formal mechanism for assessing student aptitude for the profession.

II. Career development:
   - Social work majors are encouraged to contact faculty members to discuss areas of career interests and specialties.
   - The Application for Field Placement Process considers and tailors placement opportunities to enhance career opportunities.
   - Social Work majors are encouraged to utilize SW 498-499: Independent Studies as a vehicle for exploring and refining career choices.
   - Students are encouraged to attend UAB’s Career/Majors Day. The day long event will includes information for students who plan to seek employment upon graduation and information for students who are still identifying what direction to take with their educational career.
   - Students who are interest in applying to graduate school are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the program director (and consult with other faculty members). A packet of materials designed to assist in the application process, including tips on composing personal statements, requesting reference letters, organizing application packets, et. Is available from the program director.

III. Curriculum Advisement:
   - The BSW program director is the designated curriculum advisor for social work majors.
   - The program director is available to all social work majors for consultation and guidance.
in selecting areas of course work.

- The Program Director trains the SBS academic advisors about BSW curriculum requirement and works collaboratively and continually with them to ensure that course offerings and scheduling are student-centered.
- SBS Academic advisors then provide course scheduling advisement for all pre-social work majors, social work majors, and social work minors. Students are strongly encouraged to see their designated SBS academic advisor each semester to ensure that they are taking courses in the proper sequence. Social work, unlike other social science major, sequences its required courses. Students who self-advice may inadvertently lose the opportunity to complete the course work in a timely manner.
- The Program Director reviews and approves all check sheets for course-scheduling completed by social work majors and their respective SBS academic advisors.
- The Field Director approves social work majors for graduation after examining students’ Application for Graduation from to determine that all requirements have been met.

A MINOR IN SOCIAL WORK

Students who choose to minor in social work must take SW 100: Introduction to Social Work, plus 15 additional credit hours in social work courses. However, social work minors may not enroll in senior level practice courses (SW 322 and SW 422), nor may they enroll in any courses or credit hours involved in field placement (SW 490 and SW 494). No grade below a “C” counts toward a minor in social work. Students who want to minor in social work are encouraged to make an appointment with the program director to discuss options. Minors seek advisement from the SBS academic advisors for course scheduling (see Appendix A2 for the curriculum sheet for minors.)

COURSES TO INTRODUCE STUDENTS TO THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

Beginning level social work courses provide opportunities tailored to the recommended self-assessment. Additionally, these courses are open to all students, including non-majors and students who minor in social work. Students who major in social work are required to take all of the introductory classes. Majors should also be aware that these courses must be taken before any upper-level courses are taken. Introductory courses include:

**SW 100: Introduction to Social Work:** The overall goal of this course is to introduce students to the value-based profession of social work. More specifically, students will have the opportunity to learn about social work's mission, its professional values, and its theoretical frame--the systems/ecological perspective. Further, students will explore arenas in generalist practice and the varied roles and responsibilities of social work professionals in a range of fields of practice.
Students will be afforded the opportunity to examine their own personal values and how those values influence their views on social welfare problems and issues.

SW 100 is required for social work majors and social work minors, and it is open to others as an elective. Students generally take SW 100 while completing core requirements.

**SW 202: Social Welfare Policy**

The paramount goal of this course is to stimulate students’ commitment and corresponding ability to influence the policy process so as to improve the well-being of individuals, communities, and society. To fulfill this goal, the course works in conjunction with the knowledge base of the policy process (SW 214) by exploring cultural, political, bio-psychosocial, and economic factors that coalesce and interact to shape social welfare policy is analyzed to consider vital roles for BSW practitioners in the policy process.

**SW 222 Value’s Lab:** The primary goal of this course is to help students identify, and practice resolving ethical issues and dilemmas. Students will have opportunities to develop demonstrate and promote the values, ethics and principles of the social work profession. They will be introduced to ethical decision-making models, ethical principle screens and a values classification model to assist them in analyzing ethical dilemmas and obverse the ways in which these dilemmas impact professional practice. Students will also study the structure and skills of conducting an interview and the collaborative problem-solving process as well as recording techniques for client assessment. Accordingly, students will have the opportunity to learn about and practice various interviewing skills and communication methods such as empathetic responding, active listening, reflecting feelings and content, and observing nonverbal communication. Integral to the course goal is a focus on self-awareness and the professional use of self needed to build an interpersonal helping relationship.

Students are placed in social service agencies as a volunteer for a total of 32 hours during the semester. Students are expected to participate in the activities of the agency to the best of their abilities and to the extent allowed by the organization.

The overall goal of the lab is to acquaint students with the helping process utilized in a particular social service setting including services provided, collaboration with other organizations and resources in the community, problem-solving processes and other communication/intervention skills that the workers use in providing services to clients.

**SW 214: Introduction to Public Policy:** The overarching goal of this course is to introduce students to the public policy formulation process, substantive issue areas of U.S. public policy, and to some of the central concepts and issues in the analysis of policy. The course, which enrolls students from a variety of fields of study (e.g. social work, political science, international studies,
sociology, urban affairs, and others), seeks to enhance students' understanding of policy issues through the multi-disciplinary exchange of information and perspectives. The corollary goal, thus is to facilitate students' ability to identify points in the process in which they can influence policy to foster client systems' well-being.

APPLICATION TO SOCIAL WORK MAJOR

Throughout its history, the social work profession has charged social work education programs with the task of screening individuals for aptitude and behaviors necessary for effective social work practice. Screening is informally known as "gatekeeping" denoting its function to regulate entry into the profession. Gatekeeping is academic programs and in the broader profession is designed to protect the public from incompetent, impaired, or unethical service providers.

In compliance with CSWE's accreditation standards, the UAB Social Work Program has a formal process for accepting students as social work majors. Rationale, criteria, policies and procedures are described below.

Pre-Social Work Classification

Students declaring their intention to major in social work are admitted with a pre-social work (PSW) classification. PSW students may formally apply to become social work majors when they have met all of the following conditions and criteria:

1. Substantial completion of Core Curriculum requirements, including mathematics, and required foundation course work with a grade of "C" or better in each course; and

2. Cumulative undergraduate GPA of 2.00 or higher

3. Completion of PY 212, SW 100, SW 202, SW 214, and SW 222 with a cumulative average of 2.5 or better. While enrolled in SW 222 students may apply for SW major status.

4. Transfer students must complete SW 322,422, 490 and 494 at UAB.

5. A favorable recommendation from SW 100, SW 222 faculty.

Open date for applying for major are February and October. These date allow time to notify students of acceptance in time for registration.
The Application Process

To Apply: Applications for social work major are accepted twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Open dates for fall applications are every working day of the first two weeks of October. In the spring, the open dates are every working day of the first two weeks of February.

Students must self-initiate the process. Students who see their SBS academic advisors each semester are in the best position to know when it is time for them to apply for major. Notices regarding the application dates are posted throughout the Ullman Building but are not sent to individual students.

Students who determine that they are eligible to apply need to follow these three steps:

1. Students must make an appointment to meet with their assigned academic advisor (Deborah Wood Littleton or Kip Hubbard) to verify academic eligibility as described above. Students’ academic advisors will update the "Curriculum for Social Work Majors Check sheet" and, if indicated, initial the "Approved to Apply for Major Status" space (see Appendix). Check sheets are subsequently reviewed by the program director to verify students’ eligibility.

2. During open dates, which are every working day during the first two weeks of February and October students should present the approved, signed check –sheet to the secretary of the Department of Anthropology and Social Work (Ullman Building, Room 338). At that time the department secretary will give the students the written part of the application. Students need to furnish their own “bluebook” (which can be purchased at the UAB Bookstore) for recording their answers to the application questions. They should also allot at least an hour, but no more than two-hours, for the in-house written application.

*Please note that procedures governing reasonable accommodations for students who have disabilities follow those prescribed by UAB’s Disability Support Services Office for classroom participation and test taking. Any student who requests a reasonable accommodation needs to notify the program director so that arrangements can be made.

3. Upon completion of the application (or the end of the two-hour allotted time), students should submit their blue books and signed check sheets to the departmental secretary.

Evaluating Applications:

The formal application process is an extension of the self-assessment undertaken during the introductory social work courses. The application process involves the faculty assessing applicants’ writing skills, level of self-awareness, and classroom comportment using the following criteria:
1. Writing Skills: A satisfactory level of writing skills includes the overall ability to use correct grammar, construct complete sentences, spell correctly and demonstrate proficiency with basic technical aspects in writing.

2. Self-Awareness: Self-awareness is a skill that enables the social worker to reflect upon his or her professional “use of self” in the process in the process of helping others. It is a skill which develops over time. At this stage in students’ academic careers, social work faculty members expect that students should be able to demonstrate abilities to reflect on their strengths and limitations, to examine their own feelings, personal values and personal histories and to recognize when these feelings and values may interfere with their effectiveness in the helping process. Please note: Students are not being asked to reveal any information regarding past or present treatment for psychological, emotional, or physical disorders. The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits requests for such information. Instead, students are expected to consider their own personal and medical histories as it relates to their ability to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, adherence to professional values and ethics, and interpersonal skills necessary to form and maintain effective professional helping relationships.

A minimally satisfactory level of self-awareness requires that the student express their thoughtful consideration of aspects involved in examining one's own personal values, feelings, and history to assess personal/professional value conflicts, potential to do harm to self and others, and personal congruence with the NASW Code of Ethics(1997).

3. Classroom Comportment: Social work faculty will complete a checklist for students whom they have taught. The checklist consist of faculty’s observations of the students’ attendance patterns, punctuality, timely completion of assignments, and ability to grasp material. Faculty will also identify any other performance-related concerns as part of the process. Students are expected progressively, steadily, and continually to develop and exhibit behaviors indicative of good work habits and behaviors.

In accordance with the social work profession’s value for social justice and its value for inclusiveness and in concert with UAB’s Academic Equal Opportunity Policy, applicants to social work major are considered

Regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability unrelated to program performance, disabled veteran status, or Vietnam-era status (UAB Catalog: Undergraduate Programs 1998-1999, p. 18).
Additionally, social work major applicants are not discriminated against due to sexual orientation, political orientation, or creed.

Decision-making procedure:

The admissions committee, consisting of at least three social work faculty members who participate in the decision process. Committee members individually consider the materials in
each applicant's packet, without knowing the identity of the individual student (know as a blind review system). They then confer and make a recommendation to the social work program director. If there is a lack of consensus among the committee members regarding disposition, the committee and the program director meet to make a disposition.

There are three options available to committee members in determining application outcomes:

1. **Fully Accepted**: All criteria met successfully and fully. There is no cap on enrollment; therefore no student is denied acceptance if he or she meets all criteria successfully.

2. **Clarification Needed**: Students who are currently enrolled in SW 222 automatically receive this status until course grades are posted. These students may register for SW 300 level courses once final grades for the designated courses have been posted and a grade of "C" or better has been verified.

   Secondly, the status may also indicate the admissions committee's need for clarifying information to make an accurate determination. The student will be contacted and informed that an interview with two social work faculty members is required prior to final status determination. In this situation, the outcome of the interview is expected to result in either "fully accepted" or "deferred" status.

3. **Deferred**: One or more of the specified criteria (as delineated and explicated above) have not been met sufficiently to proceed with 300 level social work courses. The admissions committee and program director have unanimously concurred with the assessment. To move beyond the deferred status, a student must re-apply and be found to satisfactorily meet the standards for "Fully Accepted". A student may apply for major only twice.

An applicant notified of deferred status is strongly encouraged to meet with any two social work faculty members to devise a plan whereby students weaknesses are most likely to be addressed. For instance, a student may need to take additional courses to prepare academically for satisfactory completion of the social work curriculum (e.g. English composition courses may be helpful to improve a student’s writing skills). In another case, a student may need to ameliorate life circumstances or resolve emotional/psychological issues that may interfere with learning and professional use-of-self. In that case, a student may elect to work on personal issues and then reapply for acceptance into major. Another scenario is that a student may have insufficient life experience to assess accurately his or her own aptitude and therefore may benefit from volunteering in a social work setting to make an informed choice about social work as a vocation. In some instances, the faculty-student collaboration may determine that the student can best realize a career goal by choosing a major that more closely aligns with his or her strengths.

*Appealing the committee’s decision:*
The application for major process falls within the purview of student grievances involving academic matters. As a UAB student, any applicant for social work major has the right to file a grievance involving the social work major admissions committee's decision. The policy regarding student grievances can be found in the *UAB Catalog: Undergraduate Programs*. The catalog prescribes the following procedure for appeals:

1. Student discusses complaint with appropriate departmental faculty member(s). In this instance, the student may present the complaint to any social work faculty member who served on the social work major admission's committee or to the program director.

2. If the issue is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student should contact the Chair of the Department of Anthropology and Social Work to continue the appeal process.

3. If the issue cannot be resolved within the department, the student complains to the Dean of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences. The Dean may appoint an advisory panel to study the issue and recommend a disposition. The Dean alone makes the decision and the decision of the Dean is final.

The social work faculty further advises students to submit grievances in writing at each step of the appeal process to document efforts.
References


SECTION II: CURRICULUM AND OPPORTUNITIES:
ACQUERING KNOWLEDGE, VALUES, AND SKILLS

Purpose

The purpose of the second section of *Handbook for Social Work Students at UAB is threefold*: (1) To provides information to newly accepted majors about the required for major social work courses; (2) To describes opportunities for becoming active members of the B.S.S.W. community and for achieving academic excellence (these opportunities are in keeping with the *NASW Code of Ethics*, and we encourage students to participate); (3) To explain the application to field placement process.

Students who have been notified of their formal acceptance as social work majors are expected to
download sections II and III of the *Handbook from the Social Work Website at this time*. Section I and the *NASW Code of Ethics (1997)*, which students received in SW 100: Introduction to Social Work, should be added at this time to complete the *Handbook*. In addition to *relying on information provided in the Handbook*, students will need to consult their academic advisors each *semester* to ensure that they graduate in a timely manner.

*Welcome, social work majors*

The faculty congratulations our majors on their formal acceptance to the social work major. Majors have demonstrated the aptitude, scholarship and ability to demonstrate self-awareness. Majors have completed most or all of both the core curriculum and social work foundation courses that serve as the multi-disciplinary theoretical foundation for social work. Having completed the introductory courses (SW 100, SW 220, and SW 214) majors have exposed to many fundamental elements of social work practice.

The junior (SW 313 and 314, 320, 321, and 322) and senior level (SW 422, 490, 494) sequence of social work courses comprise the specific knowledge bases, theoretical frames, methods, techniques, and skills that BSW social workers use in generalist practice. Social work values underpin the aggregation of courses and emphasize social work's mission. According to NASW (1997),

[T]he 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 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 (p. 30).

**CURRICULUM FOR SOCIAL WORK MAJORS**

**Curriculum Goals**
CSWE prescribes minimum requirements for BSW program curricula in its Curriculum Policy Statement. The official curriculum policy sets forth the premises and purposes of social work education and content that must be included to achieve these purposes. As excerpted from the Handbook of Accreditation Standard and Procedures (2003).

Social work education is grounded in the liberal arts and contains a coherent, integrated professional foundation in social work practice form which an advanced practice curriculum is built at the graduate level. (p 33).

The social work courses coalesce through specific goals and objectives to achieve social work's mission and the corresponding mission of UAB's baccalaureate social work program in concert with CSWE’s Curriculum Policy Statement. Curriculum goals are:

1. to build upon a liberal arts foundation by promoting comprehension and integration of a rich repertoire of social and behavioral theories;

2. to embrace the ecosystems perspective as the frame for the broad content areas (practice, human behavior in the social environment, research, social welfare policy, and field practicum) that comprise the curriculum;

3. to teach theory, methods, and skills of the generalist model to enhancing the well-being of client systems;

4. to emphasize the strengths-based, problem-solving process that can be utilized with individuals, families, groups, communities and society in our increasingly complex world;

5. to teach self-awareness techniques so that students recognize their own strengths and limitations, that affect professional use of self in the helping process;

6. to teach research skills and to increase comprehension of the role of research in understanding human behavior, guiding practice, improving service delivery, influencing social welfare policy, and broadening social work's theoretical base; and

7. to infuse social work values and ethical decision-making and conduct throughout the curriculum by;

   (a) fostering respect and appreciation for human diversity by increasing students' understanding of individuals and population groups from the various races, classes, religions, cultures, and national origins; and

   (b) exposing discrimination because of gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental abilities, age, or other identifying characteristics which deem persons members of a "population at risk";
(c) analyzing historical and theoretical content surrounding the impact of discrimination, social and economic injustice, and oppression on populations-at-risk;

(d) examining social welfare policies, their implications, and the roles social workers play in ameliorating factors detrimental to social functioning and well-being; and by

(e) identifying sound, ethical practices in research studies and policy analysis.

**Required Courses for Junior and Senior level social work majors**

Goal- specific content is inculcated throughout the curriculum areas in courses that facilitate acquisition of social work's body of knowledge, values and skills: human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy and services, social work practice, research, and field practicum. The courses all foster development of self-awareness, critical thinking skills, and oral and written communication skills to further the students purposeful and professional use of self in the helping process. Required courses for social work majors are:

**Note:** Human Behavior and the Social Environment (SW 311 and SW 312) was combined in SW 310 in 2000. However in Fall 2004 the two course sequential block (SW 313 and SW 314) will be offered.

**SW 313 and SW 314: Human Behavior and the Social Environment:**

The primary goal of the sequential 2-semester course work is to afford students the opportunity to comprehend bio-psycho-social human development across the life cycle. To accomplish this goal, students will study primarily an open systems perspective, but also other theoretical explanations of human development and behavior that derive from interactions of biological, psychological and sociological factors. The theories are enhanced with discussion of how factors such as class, sexual orientation, sex roles, physical ability, age, race, ethnicity, and culture influence personality development.

Prerequisites for SW 313 from the core curriculum and foundation courses include biology (BY 101 or BY 106), anthropology (ANTH 101), psychology (PY 101), sociology (100) and attainment of social work major status. Students must pass SW 313 with a grade of "C" or higher to enroll in SW 314.

**SW 320: Social Work Research:**

The fundamental goal of the research course is to introduce students to research theory methods and tools and to extend their appreciation for the quintessential role of research in guiding practice. Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, sampling, data collection, and data
analysis as well as skills in critiquing research studies are taught in the context of ethical standards governing evaluation and research as set forth in the *NASW Code of Ethics* (see section 5.02).

Note: Students usually complete elementary statistics (SOC 110, PY 214) prior to enrolling in SW 320. Students who have not attained social work major status may also enroll in SW 320.

When this preference is not possible, students may substitute CJ 300, PSC 320, SOC 300 or PY 315 for SW 320.

**SW 321: Statistics for Social Work Research:**

This course follows SW 320 because statistics is one only component of research. After having 320, students should be familiar with research components such as sampling, design, and measurement. In other words, SW 320 provides the context for understanding the analysis of data. In SW 321, descriptive and inferential statistics are covered, along with measures of central tendency and dispersion, probability theory, sampling, and one-and two-sample hypothesis tests. Prerequisite: SW 320.

**Practice of Social Work I (SW 322) & Practice of Social Work II (SW 422):**

The sequential two-semester practice classes integrate and operationalize theories, methods, and skills needed for effective beginning-level generalist practice. The primary goal for the sequential practice courses is for students to acquire the ability to utilize social work's interventions at multiple levels to assist client systems in alleviating stress, building capacities, solving problems, and enhancing their well-being and functioning. Embedded in this approach is the recognition of the increasing complexity and interconnectedness of our world and the incorporation of an ecosystems perspective that acknowledges nonlinearity. Strategies that include interventions at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels are considered holistically rather than as separate or isolated interventions. Both practice courses emphasize the importance of understanding and respecting cultural diversity in our work with client systems.

**SW322: Practice of Social Work I**

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to social work’s helping process that facilitates change and improves social functioning. More specifically, students will study the structure and skills of conducting an interview and the collaborative problem-solving process. Accordingly, students will have the opportunity to learn about and to practice various interviewing skills and communication methods such as session contracting, exploring sensitive subjects, and conflict resolution/mediation. Other areas of emphasis are empathetic responding, active listening, reflecting feelings and content, and observing nonverbal communication. This
course will concentrate on assessment skills at the micro-level. Integral to the course goal is a focus on self-awareness and the professional use of self needed to build an interpersonal helping relationship. Therefore, students will examine ways in which their own personal values as well as characteristics (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity) and perceptions (e.g. belief in client autonomy, non-judgmentalism, body language), may influence their communication with others. Emphasis will also be placed on documentation (narratives, comprehensive assessments) and the importance that accurate and timely documentation plays in our work with clients.

**Note:** This course for majors only.

**SW 422: Practice of Social Work II**

This course utilizes the skills learned in 322 and looks at assessment and intervention at the mezzo and macro levels. Students will look at resource/case management, creating alliances, community change, and social activism and advocacy. This course will continue to utilize roleplays to ensure the continued development of basic interviewing skills and rapport building skills. These skills are essential for assessment and intervention at the micro, mezzo and macro levels.

Prerequisite: SW 322

**Note:** SW 322 and SW 422 may not be taken the same semester.

**Effective January 2004,** no student will be allowed to take SW 490 and 494 without having successfully completed every other course that is required for graduation.

However, exceptions will be made for students who have a documented hardship. Students must submit a written request documenting the hardship to the program director. The request will be reviewed and with permission from the field admissions committee, students who are enrolling in SW 422 for the first time and only have this course to complete in order to fulfill graduation requirements may enroll in SW 490 and SW 494 with a documented hardship and approval from the field admissions committee. Students must also meet all other requirements to enter field practicum.

**SW 490: Practicum in Social Work and SW 494: Field Practicum Seminar:**

The practicum experience and its concurrent integrative seminar represent the culmination of the BSW program. The practicum placement provides the context within which students move, under the supervision of advanced social work practitioners, from the academic arena into the "real-world" practice arena. The foremost goal is to provide the opportunity for social work majors to apply knowledge, values and skills bases acquired in the classroom and to hone practice skills to the level so that they are considered ready for beginning-level professional social work upon
Students are placed in approved field placements and complete 450 clock hours of field work over the span of one semester. The integrative seminar (SW 494) meets weekly to provide the forum for each student to reflect on his or her use of self, synthesize course content to comprehend more fully the helping process in action, engage in strategies for problem-solving, and practice collegial collaboration for the benefit of clients.

**Electives in Social Work**

A variety of electives designed to augment students' knowledge in specific social work areas and fields of practice are offered through the social work program. Some of the most frequently offered electives include SW 207: Racism, Sexism, and Other "Isms"; SW 339: Child Welfare; SW 454 Working with Substance Abusers; and SW 304 Family Preservation. A complete listing of electives can be found in the *UAB Catalogue: Undergraduate Programs*.

**SW 498 & 499: Independent Study**, are designated for students who wish to study a subject in social work that is not offered otherwise. Students must receive permission of a faculty member who will direct their independent studies.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL WORK MAJORS:**

**MAKING A COMMITMENT TO CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Social work majors have an array of opportunities for getting involved. Getting involved means building human relationships. Recognizing that building human relationships is essential to healthy social functioning, we believe that human relationships are the cornerstone of the social work perspective. In addition to the wealth of activities available to student in the university community, the UAB Social Work Program offers special opportunities to its students to participate in organizations, activities, community volunteer opportunities and to strive for honors and awards. Demonstrating a commitment to professional development, which is integral to our ethical standard of service others, enhances employability for graduates.

**Student Social Work Organization (SSWO):**

The SSWO's purpose is to stimulate interest in the field of social work within the University and community. The organization holds regular meetings, some of which feature guest speakers whom students request. SSWO also sponsors activities and community projects throughout the year. SSWO organizes student trips (at a reasonable cost!) to attend area social work conferences.
Officers serve as mentors for any pre-social work student or recently accepted major, affording him or her insight into upcoming classes, practicum information and other issues related to the UAB Social Work Program. SSWO publishes a newsletter to inform social work students about upcoming events.

UAB student who wishes to join the SSWO will find membership applications in the Department of Anthropology and Social Work office (Ullman Building, room 339).

**National Association of Social Workers (NASW):**

Our professional association encourages student membership and participation through substantially reduced annual dues, which actually does not even cover the cost of the flagship scholarly journal, *Social Work*. Members, receive the NASW News, a monthly newspaper with the latest practice and policy information as well as an employment section. NASW offers additional services to members too numerous to list here. The student membership rate extends through a graduate's first year of practice. Applications for student membership in NASW are located in the gathering area in the Social Work Program suite (Ullman 339).

**UAB Social Work Program's Continuing Education Series:**

Our program sponsors periodic continuing education opportunities for area social workers who seek continuing education credits to maintain Alabama social work licensure, for students who desire knowledge to augment their education, and for members of the helping professions within our urban community. Opportunities are announced in class and advertised in the SSWO’S newsletter.

**Alabama/Mississippi Conference on Social Work Education:**

All universities and colleges in the states of Alabama and Mississippi that have social work programs (BSW,MSW,PhD) have formed a consortium of educators and students to share new knowledge and skills to improve the quality of social work education in our respective programs. Annually, in the fall, the consortium sponsors an academic conference for students and educators. Student papers and faculty papers are selected for presentation and grouped logically into panels. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the conference to begin developing their commitment to continuing education and professional development. The conference is affordable and within driving distance from Birmingham.

**Alabama Conference on Social Work:**

Students are encouraged to join (for $10.00 annually) this organization comprised of social work
practitioners, educators, and students. Each year, the organization sponsors a conference designed to increase practice-knowledge and to facilitate networking among members of the social work community. Faculty members have information regarding membership. Students who plan to practice in Alabama are encouraged to participate so that they can begin to form professional relationships with professional social workers (networking leads to jobs).

**Phi Alpha:**

UAB's Social Work Program holds the Eta Beta chapter charter for social work's national honor society, Phi Alpha. To qualify for induction, a social work student must have been admitted to field practicum, have a 3.0 overall grade point average, and a 3.6 social work grade point average in required social work courses. Eligible students are tapped while enrolled in SW 422 and are inducted at a reception held in their honor. The distinction recognizes students who have attained excellence in scholarship.

**Dean's Outstanding Social Work Student:**

Each academic year, one social work student who will graduate during the current academic year is named the "Dean's Outstanding Social Work Student." The social work faculty nominates an individual who has achieved an outstanding grade point average and who has also demonstrated scholarship and contributions through participation in academically-related university community activities. The designee is honored in conjunction with May commencement activities.

**The Norman Eggleston Award:**

The social work faculty may nominate one social work student each academic year who exemplifies overcoming significant adversity or obstacles to attain the social work degree with distinction. Despite hardships encountered, the recipient of this honor perseveres toward graduation while maintaining an excellent grade point average and finding time to enrich others' lives. The award emulates the life of its namesake, Dr. Norman Eggleston, the program's founder. Dr. Eggleston overcame adversity associated with growing up in foster care; he persevered to attain his undergraduate degree, an MSW, and subsequently his doctorate from the prestigious University of Chicago.

**Minority Student Scholarships and Minority Student First-year Retention Program:**

Through the Office of Minority Recruitment and Retention, minority students may be eligible for academic scholarships ranging from $1000 to $10,000. In addition, recipients are eligible to participate in the Minority Scholars Retention Program that includes mentoring internships, grade point average monitoring, tutoring, and meetings to discuss issues. Minority students who are freshmen or transfer students are eligible to participate in this multi-service program that assists
students in transitioning to college. For information on available opportunities, contact the Office of Minority Recruitment and Retention, HUC 241; phone (205) 934-8804.

UAB’S BSW PROGRAM GENERAL POLICIES

The social work program ascribes to all UAB policies and procedures governing students and faculty. Additionally, the program incorporates policies that are based on our professional ethics and that reflect CSWE’s standards for accredited baccalaureate programs. Specific policies governing the Application to Major Process and policies related to Field Practicum are stated elsewhere in the Handbook.

Commitment to Diversity

To actualize professional values that uphold the right of individuals to dignity, respect, and self-determination, the social work program strives to build a learning community in which individuals diminish biases, develop tolerance, and learn to appreciate diversity. In keeping with this pledge and commitment, the social work program welcomes students, faculty, and staff who represent the rich human diversity of characteristics, values, and beliefs reflected in the various races, colors, ethnicities, religions, sexes, national origins, ages, sexual orientation, and political orientation. Vietnam-era veterans, disabled veterans, and persons with disabilities unrelated to program performance are welcomed also.

By extension, the social work program proactively promotes appreciation for diversity by seeking to enlist community advisors and field agency supervisors who represent the spectrum of human diversity as well as to recruit host social service field placement agencies that represent commitment to diversity.

The program’s policy for minority student recruitment and retention (and others who add to the human diversity of the learning community) includes:

- Utilizing speakers who serve as role models for minorities;
- Selecting assignments that celebrate diversity;
- Encouraging and scheduling individual conferences with faculty members for all who express and interest in social work as a career;
- Mentoring of those who express an interest in social work by members of the Student Social Work Organization(SSWO);
- Reaching out by SSWO officers and executive board members to all who enroll in social work classes to invite individuals to meetings and social activities and to participate in fund-raising or community service projects;
- Working with the Office of Minority Recruitment and Retention to highlight social work as a
career for those who celebrate diversity and seek to alleviate economic and social oppression;

- Providing one-to-one assistance in developing and improving writing skills for individuals who come from impoverished educational backgrounds.

**Students’ Rights and Responsibilities**

As UAB students, individuals enrolled in social work classes—majors, minors, and those who are seeking other degrees, are afforded rights and privileges that include freedom from discrimination based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, political orientation, or Vietnam veteran status, disabled veteran status or disability unrelated to program performance. Additionally, students have the right to learn in an environment free from sexual harassment, to have entitlement to intellectual property ownership, and to have rights in relation to educational records as promulgated in the General Education Provisions Action. Students have the right to seek redress through established institutional procedures outlined in the UAB Catalog: *Undergraduate Programs* and the student handbook, *Directions*.

Students have the right to receive faculty support in order to maximize academic potential. Accordingly, students have the right to expect social work faculty members to post and keep regular office hours and to be accessible to students at other times as scheduled by appointment. Students have the right to expect to communicate expeditiously with faculty via telephone, e-mail or in writing. Students have the right to request faculty consultation necessary and appropriate for understanding assignments and avenues available for improving skills.

Students have the right to receive in writing notification of classroom policies (i.e. policies stated in course syllabi), decision regarding social work major status outcome, requests for policy waivers, and curriculum requirements.

Students are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner concordant with the ethical principles and standards of UAB’S academic community and with the ethical standards of the social work profession. UAB’S policy regarding academic misconduct includes abetting, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and misrepresentation. Policies regarding non-academic conduct violations include inhibiting the “institution’s pursuit of its educational objectives,” disregarding the “rights of other members of the academic community,” and disregard for “safety to property and others” (*UAB Catalog: Undergraduate Programs 1998-99*, p. 36).

In the social work learning community, students are expected to strive to uphold the ethical standards as stated in the NASW Code of Ethics. Gross violations of the Code that correspond to UAB policies regarding academic and non-academic misconduct are subject to the disciplinary action prescribed in the UAB Catalog: *Undergraduate Programs*.

Students are responsible for self-initiating the Application to Major Process and the Application to Field Placement Process when they are eligible to apply. Students are also responsible for seeking course-scheduling advisement from the SBS Academic Advisors and for initiating
consultations with the program director when advisement is desired. The faculty suggests meeting with advisors each semester. Additionally, students are responsible for registering and/or withdrawing from classes in a timely manner.

**Curriculum**

UAB’S social work program curriculum requirements are stated in the UAB Catalog: *Undergraduate Programs*. Additionally, explanations are highlighted throughout this *Handbook*; and social work faculty and SBS academic advisors are well-versed in curriculum requirements.

Additional policies that are not stated in the *Catalog*, but are mandated by CSWE include:

**No credit for life experience:** Life or work experience may not be substituted for earning academic credit in any social work professional foundation course or in lieu of field placement.

**Proficiency exams:** Proficiency exams for class placement or graduation are not required. However, transfer credits from an accredited college or university or an institution of higher education that has acquired candidate status from a regional accrediting body recognized by the American Council on Education are generally accepted by UAB and, therefore, by the Social Work Program.

**Curriculum Uniformity**

Curriculum committees comprised of all full-time faculty who teach in teach specific curriculum area (practice, hbse, policy, research, field practicum) and a student representative shall meet with part-time and/or adjunct faculty who teach in that area to ensure horizontal consistency in overall goals and objectives across course sections. The faculty will also ensure that the course goals and objectives are reflective of program curriculum goals.

**Appointment to committees**

Student representatives are appointed by faculty to serve on the ad hoc committee for curriculum development and course scheduling and the ad hoc committee for policy and procedure. All students are invited and encouraged to participate in the faculty search process by attending candidate presentations, interviews and completing feedback forms. Students who are interested and willing to serve on committees are encouraged to contact the program director.

**APPLYING FOR FIELD PLACEMENT**

Students apply for the field practicum (SW 490) when they are enrolled in Practice of Social Work II (SW 422). Time is allotted throughout the semester in **SW 422** to guide students through the completion of the application process as well as to provide a beginning orientation to field
practicum. During the first few weeks of SW 422, students identify individual learning interests in accordance with the goals and objectives for the field practicum experience (as described in Section III of the Handbook). Students prepare learning plan drafts that subsequently are used in assessing student-agency placement site match.

The Process

The application process includes: (1) submitting a completed application package; (2) meeting with the Field Director to discuss placement site availability and student preference; (3) participating in a pre-placement interview with the prospective agency field supervisor; and (4) engaging in a follow-up discussion with the Field Director to finalize an agency placement.

1. The Application Package:

The application package consists of: (1) the Field Practicum Planning Guide (see appendix B); (2) the Curriculum Checklist signed by the designated SBS academic advisor; (3) a photocopy of the student's driver's license, automobile insurance card, and medical health insurance card; and (4) a current resume.

The Field Director notifies students in SW 422 about application and interview deadlines. Signs are also posted. After submitting their completed applications, students contact the Field Director to schedule the initial meeting to explore placement options.

2. Student-Field Director initial meeting:

At this meeting each student and the director review all of the various documents to evaluate the student’s learning needs and to discuss both the student’s interest and concerns regarding the placement site selection. Based on this information, the student and the Field Director select collaboratively a prospective placement site.

Questions about the placement site availability often include the following:

*How is the placement site selected?*

The selection of field placement settings is based on consideration of the student's learning interests conjoined with UAB's Social Work Program's curriculum goals and placement site criteria. Placement sites may be governmental institutions or nonprofit social service agencies, which have social service units. There are two primary requirements that an agency or social services unit must meet to qualify as a field placement site:
(1) The agency or unit must provide the student with an immediate supervisor who holds
either an CSWE-accredited baccalaureate or master’s social work degree and is able to provide at least four hours per week of professional guidance to the student; and

(2) The agency or unit must be able to provide the range of opportunities and tasks needed to evaluate the student’s performance.

Other requirements and responsibilities are delineated in the UAB Field Practicum Agreement (see Appendix D). The list of approved agency field placement sites may be found in Appendix (C).

Are placement sites available outside the greater Birmingham area?

In most instances, placement settings are located within the Birmingham-Jefferson County area. Placements outside the usual geographic area are possible, but unusual. Such considerations involve very specific student needs, the availability of appropriate supervision, UAB Social Work Program budgetary and faculty time constraints, and agency's ability to meet the requirements delineated in the Field Practicum Agreement. Any student with extenuating circumstances is advised to discuss the situation with the Field Director the semester before taking SW 422.

Can new placement sites be suggested by students?

On occasion, a student may be familiar with a particular agency and want to complete the field practicum experience at that site. Since the Field Director recruits placement sites continuously, students simply needs to apprise the Field Director of requests. The Field Director will then contacts the director of prospective site to explore the possibility.

Is it feasible for students to work full-time in an outside job during placement?

The field practicum experience is full-time work. The average practicum work week is thirty (32) hours per week (Monday-Thursday). SW 494: Field Practicum Seminar meets on Fridays. The entire practicum experience lasts approximately four (4) months. Students negotiate the scheduled academic semester breaks with their agency supervisors around the needs of clients.

The ability to survive financially while immersed in the field practicum experience depends primarily on advanced planning, accurately anticipating and saving enough funds t cover basic expenses and tuition. Some students increase their financial loans or grants during that semester. Others save regularly knowing that working enough hours at a “second job” while in field placement is impractical. Students who usually work 30 or more hours per week find it extremely taxing. In short, it is unreasonable to attempt to work than 15 hours per week and
successfully pass the field practicum experience. Students are encouraged to engage in the problem-solving process and find creative solutions that will enable them to complete the field practicum experience in the prescribed time allotment (one semester).

The faculty is sensitive to the financial demands associated with this aspect of the curriculum. All faculty members are willing to collaborate with students and to facilitate creative solutions wherever possible. For instance, students who are currently employed in a social service agency may negotiate with employers for a reassignment of tasks that will provide appropriate learning experiences required for field practicum. The Director determines the suitability of tasks.

Additionally, with the Field Director’s approval, students may negotiate with potential employers for a paid employee-trainee ship with the stipulation that upon graduation the student will become a full-time employee of the agency. Under this arrangement, an agency economically trains new employees through their probation period. Students may also research scholarship opportunities, co-op opportunities (often available in federal agencies) or grant opportunities to supplement income during the field practicum.

Are any stipends available?

Presently, UAB's Social Work Program offers a child welfare placement at Jefferson County Department of Human Resources (DHR) under the supervision of an experienced MSW who holds a social work faculty appointment. UAB and DHR collaborated to create a contract between UAB and the Alabama State Department of Human Resources to improve child welfare protective services in Jefferson County by encouraging UAB's social work students to consider public sector employment in child welfare as a career. Essentially, the unique field placement experience potentially provides opportunity for students to become employed in Jefferson County DHR's child welfare area. Stipends are awarded to students to supplement the student's income during the practicum experience. Students who choose to receive the optional stipend are expected to accept employment should positions be available when they graduate.

May field practicum experience be completed on a part-time basis (fewer hours over a longer consecutive span of time)?

Our policy is to NOT grant permission to extend field placement to allow student to work full-time at other jobs. Unfortunately, a few students neglect to inquire about what the field practicum experience and in their desire to work full-time, they mistakenly assume that they can extend the time it takes to complete field practicum. However, all faculty members are willing to engage in the problem-solving process with students to brainstorm and facilitate creative solutions that enable students to complete placement in the prescribed time.
The aforementioned questions represent the most typical concerns students present. However, all concerns and questions need to be addressed during the initial student-Field Director meeting so that fully-informed decisions regarding field placement can be made. The meeting concludes with a consensual agreement upon prospective field placement site.

3. The pre-placement student-agency supervisor interview:

The Field Director contacts the prospective placement agency representative. If the representative agrees to consider hosting a student for field placement, the Field Director notifies the student to arrange an interview with the prospective agency field supervisor. The student should ask for site location, directions and parking arrangements, as needed. The student should regard this interview as comparable to a professional job interview and dress in business attire, demonstrating a professional demeanor. Additionally, in keeping with professional interviews, the student takes a copy of his or her resume to present to the field agency supervisor, a copy of the draft learning plan constructed during SW 422, and a small pad and pen for note taking.

The overall purpose of the interview is to determine if the student and the agency are a good match. In addition to asking questions about social work practice in the agency, the student should utilize the draft learning plan as the basis for further exploration of available opportunities and compatibility. Additionally, the student should be prepared to respond to the prospective supervisor’s inquiries about the student’s experience and preparation for practicum, the student’s goals for the practicum experience, and what the student plans to do following graduation.

The student then needs to notify the Field Director that the interview has been held. At that time a follow-up discussion can be held.

4. The Follow-up Discussion

After the student and agency field supervisor interview has been conducted, the Field Director elicits the prospective agency field supervisor’s appraisal of the student-agency match quality. Next, the Field Director and student hold a follow-up discussion to elicit the student’s appraisal on the placement site. If all parties agree, the placement is set. If either the student or the prospective agency field supervisor is not satisfied that the placement constitutes a good match for the student, another prospective site will be selected and the process will be repeated.

The final determination of placement sites is the ultimate responsibility of the Field Director. The Field Director will attempt to place a student, but cannot guarantee the student’s first or second preference for a field placement agency.
PLANNING AHEAD: LIFE AFTER FIELD PLACEMENT

Retrospectively, students and recent graduates reflect on what they wish they had considered at this stage of their academic career. The most frequently mentioned considerations include licensing, career options including graduate work, and building a network contacts and referral sources.

This portion of the *Handbook* was suggested by the Social Work Class of 1998. It is their legacy and gift to future social work majors.

**Licensing**

Alabama, as is true throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Canada, requires persons who present themselves to the general public as “social workers” to be licensed. The state regulates the practice of social work through four levels of licensure, i.e., the Licensed Bachelor Social Worker (LCSW), and the Private Independent Practitioner (PIP).

Persons with bachelor degrees in social work from a social work education program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (of which UAB is one) are eligible to sit for the LBSW examination. The licensure process involves making application for a license, taking and passing a professionally developed comprehensive written examination, pursuit of continuing professional education, and renewal every two years.

The application is made to the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners. The application fee is $75.00. Once the application is reviewed and approved, the applicant may sit for the qualifying examination at any available Sylvan Learning Center. The examination fee is $110. Students who begin the application process during their field placement and sit for the examination in a timely manner find themselves eligible for more job opportunities than others who are in the job market.

To maintain licensure, LBSWs must receive supervision from social workers who are licensed at the LGSW or LCSW levels for at least the first two years of their social work practice. Additionally, LBSWs are required to conduct their practices within the boundaries prescribed in the licensing law’s Code of Ethics.

During each two-year renewal cycle, social work license holders are required to obtain thirty (30) hours of professional continuing education. There is a fee of $60.00 for each renewal. The Field Director has applications available for students.

More detailed information about Alabama’s licensing law and procedures may be obtained by calling the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners at (334) 242-5860 or writing to:

Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners
Folsom Administrative Building
Career Options

The field of social work is broad, varied, and offers a multitude of career opportunities for social workers who hold a BSW, M.S.W., DSW., or Ph.D. The multi-level nature of the profession and its broad scope can be confusing. Thus pre-social work majors as well as students who have been formally accepted into the major are encouraged to initiate discussions with any or all faculty members regarding career options. Rather than formally assigning students to a particular faculty member for career advisement, students are free to approach any or all of the faculty to discuss career opportunities, including considering graduate studies. Beginning in 2000, in celebration of Social Work Month in March, the program will host a “Career Day” for our students. Sessions regarding employment opportunities for new BSWs as well as sessions involving area MSW programs will be held in the day long event.

Graduate Studies

Graduate Schools of Social Work are competitive, therefore students should focus on attaining the highest grade point average (GPA) possible, demonstrate their commitment to social work through volunteer activities, and strive to attain honors such as induction into Phi Alpha. In the United States, there are one hundred thirty-two (132) CSWE accredited MSW programs, twenty-two (22) of which are in the southeast region (CSWE, 1998, p.3). Students who are considering graduate studies immediately after graduation should begin to identify programs of interest to them during the latter part of their junior year. Materials on graduate schools are located in the gathering area of the social work suite as well as on a bulletin board outside the suite.

Once programs of interest have been identified, students should begin the application process early in their senior year. All of the social work faculty are willing and prepared to discuss any aspect of graduate studies with students. In addition to writing letters of recommendations, faculty members are also happy to critique your application packet. A tip sheet for students who are applying to graduate school is available from the Social Work Program Director.

References

SECTION III: FIELD PLACEMENT:
PRACTICING, INTEGRATING, AND SYNTHESIZING

INTRODUCTION

Purpose
This section of the *Handbook for Social Work Students at UAB* explains the goals and objectives, processes, policies, and procedures relevant to the field practicum component of the curriculum. It prepares students for what to expect regarding field practicum, and it guides agency field supervisors and UAB social work faculty in their collaborative efforts to graduate competent baccalaureate social workers (BSWs). Competent BSWs are those who are prepared to meet the demands of beginning-level generalist practice in an increasingly complex world.

### Goals and Competencies

The field practicum experience and its concurrent integrative seminar represent the culmination of the BSW curriculum. The two primary goals of the field practicum experience are: (1) To provide the opportunity for social work majors to utilize knowledge, values, and skills acquired in the classroom; and (2) to hone practice skills to the level that students are considered ready for beginning-level professional generalist social work practice when they graduate.

Student acquisition of three interrelated competency areas is emphasized and evaluated:

#### I. Self-Awareness and Effective Use of Self

Social workers' most fundamental instrument or tool in the helping process is the disciplined, professional use of self. Use of self involves recognizing and articulating one's own strengths and limitations which can facilitate or impede the helping process. In part, use of self is developed through learning to seek and utilize supervision to explore issues that affect the quality of services to clients. Self-awareness is especially important for recognizing and appreciating differences when working with persons from a variety of backgrounds. Recognition also involves noting one’s perceptions of others’ race, gender, age, ethnic or cultural norms. Similarly, self-awareness underpins one’s ability to separate personal values from professional values and to prevent personal values from hindering client self-determination or the client-worker collaborative relationship.

In the helping process, proficiency in use of self relates to interpersonal skills needed to fulfill the various social work roles and functions. One’s ability to communicate effectively both in writing and in speaking are part of one’s ability to use self effectively.

#### II. Adhering to the Values and Ethics of the Social Work Profession:

The hallmark of the social work profession is its abiding value-based practice. Social Work's mission rests upon six core values-- dignity and worth of the person, service, social justice, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence (NASW, 1997, pgs. 5-6). The knowledge and theory bases, methods, and skills that comprise the helping process are infused with the core values and are used to realize social work's mission. Self-awareness is integral to the ability to hold these values uppermost in practice. Furthermore, transforming these concepts into action involves developing skills and pursuing continuing professional development to
enhance one's expertise.

The *NASW Code of Ethics* serves as the professional guide to ethical practice. The Code's ethical standards include ethical responsibilities to clients, to colleagues, to broader society, and to the social work profession. It also includes responsibilities associated with practice settings and one’s own competency. Those standards are incorporated into our field practicum competency areas and specific learning objectives.

Proficiency presumes the continued demonstration of one's ability to conduct his or her practice in accordance with the core values, standards, and principles stated in the *NASW Code of Ethics*. This general expectation includes:

* comprehending and appreciating human diversity;
* upholding the right of others to express their own values and beliefs;
* recognizing and working through ethical dilemmas with supervision;
* identifying social policies and specific agency policies that interfere with the client's abilities to enhance his or her social functioning and, when appropriate, under supervision, working toward positive changes in agency policy; and
* engaging in opportunities to ameliorate forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination.

Furthermore, the *Code* prescribes professional work habits including organization skills, time management, comportment, initiative, resourcefulness, and autonomy. Ethical behavior also involves keeping abreast of new knowledge and methods as well as participating in professional activities designed to increase one’s level of competence and expertise.

(III) Integrating theoretical concepts and principles into the intervention process and demonstrating requisite skills for intervening at various client system levels:

UAB's baccalaureate social work curriculum centers on the ecosystems perspective as the frame for practice. The perspective holds that the individual and the environment are interconnected; indeed, all systems and subsystems are interdependent resulting in their mutual influence. The perspective leads social workers to consider interactions of multiple factors in assessing a client system's situation (e.g. bio-psycho-social interactions influencing human behavior and systemic behavior). The ecosystems perspective serves as the cornerstone for the generalist model that proposes interventions with client systems at the micro, mezzo, and/or macro levels. The
increasing complexity and interrelatedness of our world implies the need to intervene on multiple levels simultaneously in order to facilitate change.

The heart of intervention is a problem-solving process that can be used with all client systems. The problem-solving process is designed to build upon the client’s strengths and to be implemented through value-based methods, techniques, and skills. Proficiency is related to one's ability to apply the ecosystems perspective when designing interventions with the client system. More specifically, proficiency requires abilities to: (1) Engage the client; (2) form a professional helping relationship with the client; (3) conduct a psychosocial assessment; (4) work collaboratively with the client to identify goals and develop problem-solving strategies; and subsequently, (5) to implement the plan; (6) evaluate efforts continually; and (7) terminate the relationship with the client timely and appropriately.

At the social worker-delivery systems interface, social workers function as case managers, referral agents, advocates for service provision, and interdisciplinary and interagency collaborators or coordinators (Morales and Sheafor, 1998, 190-193). Navigating service delivery systems is integral to the client's optimal social functioning. Proficiency is based upon: (1) The ability to identify resources; (2) make referrals; (3) to communicate orally and in writing; and (4) to collaborate and advocate with other professionals in service delivery systems for the client's interest. Additionally, proficiency includes the ability to employ research methods to analyze and evaluate delivery systems' effectiveness and, when indicated, use self effectively in working toward policy or procedure changes.

Within the three competency areas that serve as broad educational objectives, specific and measurable behaviors and skills are assessed. The assessment items are contained in the UAB Social Work Program Field Practicum Final Evaluation (see Appendix G).

THE FIELD PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE STRUCTURE

Various components and elements shape the structure of the field practicum experience:

Agency/Academic Exchange Seminar

The field practicum experience concludes with a day long seminar that brings together the following combinations: (1) students who are finishing placement and their agency field supervisors; (2) students who will enter field placement and their designated agency field supervisors; and (3) social work faculty members. The overall purpose of the exchange seminar is to bring into focus what has been learned, to share encountered dilemmas and their potential or actualized solutions, and to evaluate the relevance of the curriculum to social work practice in the community.

The seminar facilitates mentoring, networking, collaborating, and professional development.
Graduating students have the opportunity to cross the bridge from student to professional by initiating a collegial relationship with their agency field supervisors and their professors; by reflecting upon and sharing their experiences with incoming students; and by networking with other area professional social workers. Reciprocally, incoming field practicum students benefit from hearing others' experiences, and they begin to form professional relationships with agency field supervisors. Finally, agency field supervisors who are new to UAB, plus seasoned agency field supervisors and faculty members are afforded opportunities to share and exchange information and discuss ways to improve and advance the baccalaureate social work program.

The Learning Contract

In collaboration with his or her agency field supervisor, each student negotiates a learning contract that specifies activities, tasks, experiences and opportunities that will be afforded the to the student during the course of the practicum (see Appendix E). The learning experiences and tasks should provide opportunities to assess the student's performance and proficiency in the three identified competency clusters.

Tripartite Conference

The agency field supervisor, the student, and the Field Director will hold at least three times during each placement period a tripartite conference. The initial conference is to review the negotiated learning contract and to discuss specific concerns of any of the participants. The second conference is held to discuss the mid-term progress report and to set learning priorities for the remainder of the practicum experience (see Appendix F). The third conference is to address the final evaluation of the student's performance in the field (see Appendix G). Conferences and interchanges beyond the required number are encouraged to facilitate open communication and to exchange pertinent information.

Integrative Seminar

The seminar (SW 494), held weekly throughout the duration of field placement, is the primary vehicle for students to integrate classroom knowledge and practice experience. The seminar serves as the bridge between theoretical and practical learning whereby students share experiences with members of their cohort. The sharing facilitates peer consultation and offers mutual support that builds confidence. Moreover, the seminar assists students in focusing on the processes inherent in the collaborative helping relationship (see Appendix I).

FIELD PRACTICUM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I. Comportment:
Students are expected to comply with their respective practicum agency’s personnel policies-and-procedures regarding attendance, punctuality, personal demeanor, appearance, signing in/out, and scheduling, plus policies regarding personal safety, sexual harassment, and discrimination. Additionally, students are expected to conduct themselves within the boundaries of the NASW Code of Ethics (1997) and any other code(s) adopted by the practicum setting.

**Contact hours, leave, compensatory time:**

All students are expected to complete 450 contact hours over the course of one semester to receive academic credit. Agency field supervisors determine student work-schedules and assignments, including client contacts or caseload, attendance at meetings and conferences, and research projects. Uppermost in any consideration of student request regarding their schedules are quality client services. Agency field supervisors should approve any modifications in student schedules or assignments prior to such occurrences.

Students do not earn personal leave or sick leave during their practicum experiences. Any make-up-time from regular practicum schedules must be negotiated with their agency field supervisors. Students may and usually do, however, accumulate more than the prescribed 450 contact hours.

All compensatory hours (“comp time”) must be scheduled and approved by the agency field supervisor. Students may no accumulate compensatory hours to use as a block at the end of their semester placement, in effect finishing placement prior to the end of the semester.

Additionally, to ensure continuity in client service, students may be expected to work a sufficient number of hours during UAB’s academic breaks. Academic break schedules must be negotiated with agency field supervisors.

**Continuing Education Requirement:**

Students are expected to accumulate, as part of their 450 hour requirement, a minimum of ten (10) contact hours of social work continuing education. Agency field supervisors must approve any continuing education students plan to attend. Following the continuing education event, students are to submit to the Field Director continuing education verification documents that display the agency field supervisor’s initials.

**Confidentiality:**

Students need to pay very close attention to the NASW Code of Ethics (1997) guidelines on confidentiality and the field placement agencies policies on confidentiality. They must also sign the “Statement of Confidentiality” form (see Appendix H) that will be provided by the Field Director.
Personal Safety:

The program and agency are concerned about students’ personal safety. Personal safety issues are initially addressed in SW 422: Practice of Social Work II and again in SW 494 Field Practicum Seminar. Additionally, each student is expected to ask his or her agency field supervisor for personal safety guidelines and procedures and policies…preferably in writing.

Liability:

The University requires that students carry liability insurance. Students have the option of purchasing their own policy (NASW offers a policy) or of paying a fee that will cover the cost of the student’s coverage by the University’s student/intern liability insurance plan.

II. Grading:

Students are evaluated by their agency field supervisors twice during the practicum experience. At the end of the first 30 days of the placement, agency field supervisors complete the Mid-Course Field Practicum Evaluation form (see Appendix F), which is then discussed and submitted at the second scheduled tripartite conference. At the end of the semester, agency field supervisors complete the Field Practicum Final Evaluation Form (see Appendix G), and subsequently discuss and submit it at the third scheduled tripartite conference. Based on the agency field supervisor’s rating, the Field Director assigns the student either a PASS or FAIL grade.

III. Reasonable accommodations:

UAB's Social Work Program is committed to providing reasonable accommodations under the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for students who have disabilities. UAB’s Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) stipulates the reasonable accommodations that are needed by a particular student. The Director works with UAB's Office of Disabilities Support Services (DSS) to ensure students are provided a placement site that affords the stipulated reasonable accommodations.

IV. Placement Disruption:

Disruptions in placement usually are limited to either the inability of the agency to continue to provide suitable learning opportunities or a health-related or personal circumstance that prohibits the student from completing requirements of field practicum. Agency-related circumstances result in expedited efforts to secure an alternative placement for the student with the expectation that the student will be able to complete the field practicum component as scheduled within the semester. Short-term health-related or personal circumstance issues must necessarily be addressed on an individual basis with the expectation of facilitating the student's completion of the field practicum component in a timely manner. However, personal circumstances or health-related disruptions
that interfere with the scheduled time frame will almost certainly result in repeating the entire practicum experience.

V. Termination from placement:

A decision to terminate a student from a placement setting is generally based on the student's inadequate performance, unethical conduct, or inappropriate behavior. Termination from placement can be initiated by either the placement agency’s representative or the Field Director. Student performance-related issues necessitate the initiator's specification of concern. The three broad competencies identified earlier in this section (Section III) of the Handbook reflect the values, standards, principles, and responsibilities prescribed in the NASW Code of Ethics and, therefore, encompass student performance issues. Incompetency, ethical misconduct, or impaired behavior as stipulated in the Code all constitute reasons to initiate requests for termination from placement.

Procedure:

Requests for placement termination may be initiated by the agency field supervisor (or by the agency field supervisor at the behest of the agency's executive director) or the Field Director. Prior to formally requesting a student's termination from placement, the agency field supervisor, Field Director, and student discuss the concerns to ensure all perspectives are included and an accurate assessment of the student's performance has been made. The three parties explore options for correcting the concerns. If a solution cannot be found or reached within the existing agency setting, the formal request is initiated. The following steps are followed:

(1) The student will be terminated from the existing placement immediately after clients’ continuation of services is assured; (this may include student terminating with clients, if warranted).

(2) The Field Director will make one of the following determinations.

“It is indicated and warranted for the student:

(a) to reapply for field placement after taking remedial action and successfully eliminating conditions or factors that led to termination of the student's placement prior to reapplying for field placement;

(b) to be counseled out of the program; or

(c) to initiate disciplinary action against the student in accordance with
policies governing student nonacademic misconduct at UAB in accordance with the policies set forth in the *UAB Catalog: Undergraduate Programs* and the student handbook, *Directions*. Violations of this nature, such as the commission of felonies, generally result in dismissal from the university.

(3) The Field Instruction Coordinator meets with the student to deliver the outcome and also delivers the outcome in writing. The written document includes notifying the student of his or her right to appeal and reference to the University's appeal policies and procedures.

References

Appendix A  Social Work Curriculum Checklist

Appendix B  Field Practicum Application Packet

Appendix C  Approved Practicum Agencies

Appendix D  University—Agency Field Practicum Agreement

Appendix E  Learning Contract

Appendix F  Mid-Course Evaluation

Appendix G  Final Evaluation

Appendix H  Statement of Confidentiality
APPENDIX A
Social Work Curriculum Checklist
# SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
## CURRICULUM FOR SOCIAL WORK MAJORS (2003-2005)

**NAME:**

**SSN:**

Students are strongly advised to refer to the 2003-2005 UAB Undergraduate Catalog for additional information on the core curriculum, major, and minor requirements. Direct any questions to the SBS Advising Office located in Bollman 337, 776-2156.

### CORE CURRICULUM (41 hrs.)

**Area I ➤** WRITTEN COMPOSITION (6 hrs.)
- "C" or better required!
  - EH 101
  - EH 102

**Area II ➤** HUMANITIES AND FINE ARTS (12 hrs.)
- A. Literature (3 hrs.)
  - One of 216, 217, 218, 221, 222, 223, 224
- B. Fine Arts (3 hrs.)
  - One of ARH 101, 203, 204, 206, MU 120, THR 100, 105, or 226
- C. Remaining hours (6 hrs.)
  - Literature, philosophy, religious studies, speech, foreign language, art history, music, and theatre (see catalog)***

**Area III ➤** NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS (11 hrs.)
- A. "C" or better in MA 105/110 or above (3 hrs.)
- B. Two natural sciences which include lab experiences (6 hrs.) (see catalog)
  - AST, BY, CH, EH, ENV, PH, PHS***

**Area IV ➤** HISTORY, SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES (12 hrs.)
- A. One of HY 101, 102, 104, 105, 120, or 121
- B. Social & Behavioral Sciences (6 hrs.)
  - Anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, or sociology***

*Students must complete a 6 hr. sequence in literature or history. Only 6 hrs. of HY can be used in Area IV.*

### SOCIAL WORK

**MAJOR REQUIREMENTS: 42 HRS**
- "C" or better required in major courses
  - SW 100: 3
  - SW 214: 3
  - SW 222: 4

**NOTE:** Must apply for SW major status before entering SW MAJOR level course below.
  - SW 202: 3
  - SW 310: 3
  - SW 300: 4
  - SW Elective: 3
  - SW 322: 4
  - SW 422: 3
  - SW 490***: 9
  - SW 494***: 3

**GENERAL ELECTIVES**

*Coursework NOT Applicable:

**FOUNDATION COURSES: 24 HRS**
- Must complete with a "C" or better before applying for major status.
  - Minority Studies: 3
  - EC 110 or 211
  - ANTH 101
  - PSC 101 or 221
  - PY 101
  - PY 212
  - SOC 100
  - PSC 301 or 321

*Approved for MAJOR STATUS by:*

**Requirements for Graduation:**
- 120 applicable semester hours and an overall cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 (C) in all credit hrs. attempted at any institution and at least a 2.0 (C) in all credit hrs. attempted at UAB.

Academic Advisors:
- Office: Bollman 337
- Freshman/Sophomore - 934-5056
- Junior/Senior - 934-7128
- Visit www.uab.edu/absadvising

Evaluated by:

Updated by on
Updated by on
Updated by on
Updated by on
Updated by on
Updated by on
Updated by on
Updated by on

7/003
APPENDIX B
Field Practicum Application Packet
UAB BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION PROGRAM

FIELD PRACTICUM APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Student’s Name: __________________________ Application Date: ________________

Application Package Contents:

______ Checklist
______ Practicum Planning Guide
______ Copy of Driver’s License and Automobile Insurance Card
______ Medical Insurance Verification Form
______ Personal Resume

Academic

Advisor’s Review:

Has this student maintained an overall grade point average of 2.5 or better? _____
Has this student completed the prerequisite coursework for SW490? _____
Has this student developed a plan for completing coursework for graduation? _____

Comments: ________________________________
_________________________ __________________________
_________________________ __________________________

Advisor’s Signature: __________________________ Date: ________________
FIELD PRACTICUM PLANNING GUIDE

Page One of Five

Identifying Information

01. Student’s Name: _________________________

02. Student Number: _________________________

03. Anticipated Field Practicum Start – Academic Quarter: ________________

04. Local Telephone(s): Home:_____________________ Other: _______________________

   Emergency Contact Person – Name: ___________________________________

   Telephone Number: _____________________________

05. Date of Birth: _____________________ Current Age: ___________________

06. Are you currently working in addition to attending school:

   Employment: ____________________________ Phone: __________________

   Address: __________________________________________________________________

   Do you plan to continue working during the period of your field practicum?  Y___ N____
If yes, with this same employer?  Y_____ N_____  

Some other employer?  Y_____ N_____  

If Yes, give name, address, and telephone number of employer (if known at this time)  
____________________________________________________________________________  

07.  Dependent Children  Number  _____  
Ages  ______________  

08.  Other Persons Dependent on You  Number  _____  
Ages  ______________  

2b  

Appendix B  

Field Practicum Planning Guide, Page Two of Five  

Student’s Name: ______________________________  

Experiences Relating to Social Work Practice  

10. Please list and describe any/all volunteer experience(s) you have had or are presently having.  
____________________________________________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________________________________________  
____________________________________________________________________________________  

11. Please list and describe any/all civic or professional organizations in which you are or have been actively involved.
12. Please describe any/all special skills, hobbies, interests, or talents you possess that you feel you could teach to others.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

13. List you agency or client group practicum site preferences.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

14. Discuss areas/issues of Social Work Practice which you want to study further or learn more about during the course of your practicum experience.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Field Practicum Transportation

15. Will you have you own transportation to get you to and from the practicum setting
and to use during the course of practicum activities? Y______ N______

If No, what transportation arrangement options are available?
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

16. Do you have a valid and current Alabama’s Driver License? Y_____ N_____

Do you have another state’s driver’s license? Y___ N____ If Yes, which state______________

Attach a copy of your driver’s license with this application.

17. Do you liability insurance coverage on you vehicle? Y____N_____

Attach a copy of your automobile insurance card with his application.

18. Have you ever been involved in a traffic/automobile accident? Y_____N_____  

Health and Professional Liability Insurance

19. Health Insurance

Do you have health insurance? Y_____N_____
If Yes, attach copy of current coverage/ card.
If No, remember, you must have personal health insurance coverage before you can enter the Field Practicum.

20. Professional Liability Insurance

Are you covered by professional liability insurance? Y_____N_____
If Yes, attach copy of current coverage/card
If No, you will be charged an additional fee when you register for SW 490, the Field Practicum.
The following information is needed to be sure that students in the field practicum are appropriately placed in agency settings. The information also is used to assess students’ needs for additional advising and assistance from social work faculty members. Please check all of following items as they apply to you and be prepared to discuss those items you mark “Yes” with the Field Director. All items check and information given pertaining to those items will be kept in strictest confidence. However, some of the information may be shared with social work faculty members when necessary to finalize practicum plans.

21. Employment Problems

Ever been fired from a job? Y___ N____
Ever been on job probation? Y____ N____
Ever had frequent absences? Y___ N____
Ever had frequent tardiness? Y____ N____

22. Legal Problems

Ever had any misdemeanor convictions? Y___ N____
Ever had any felony convictions? Y____ N____
Ever had any DUI/SWI? Y____ N____
Ever had any Period(s) of Incarceration? Y____ N____

23. Substance Abuse Problems

Ever had problems with alcohol or drug use? Y____ N____

24. Personal Disability

Do you require any adaptive equipment or environmental modifications to facilitate your participation in school or work activities? Y____ N____

25. Are there any other special circumstances affecting you which might influence your placement site
selection or your performance in the fieldwork experience, such as mental or emotional problems or history of relationship difficulties with spouse or children?  Y_____N_____
APPENDIX C

SW 490—THE FIELD PRACTICUM
Practicum Placement Agencies

2. Jefferson County Department of Human Resources—Adult Services
3. St. Clair Department of Human Resources
4. University Hospital Social Services
5. UAB Addiction Recovery Program
6. UAB OB Complication Clinic
7. UAB Center for Psychiatric Medicine
8. UAB Substance Abuse Program
9. UAB Hospice Program
10. UAB School of Public Health
11. UAB Center For Community Health Resource Development
12. Jefferson, Blount, St. Clair Mental Health Authority
13. Jefferson, Blount, St. Clair Mental Health Authority—Children Division
14. Jefferson County Family Court
15. Positive Maturity
16. Cooper Green Community Care Clinic
17. Mobile AIDS Support Services
18. JCCEO Substance Abuse Program
19. 1917 Clinic
20. AIDS Alabama
21. Bessemer Advocacy Center
22. Family and Children Services (Gateway)
23. Glenwood
24. Times Out, Inc.
25. Alabama Psychiatric Services
26. United Way
27. Interfaith Hospitality House
28. Firehouse Shelter
29. Children’s Aid Aging
30. Jefferson County Health Department
31. AIDS Task Force of Alabama
32. Huntsville/Madison Mental Health Center
33. Area Agency on Aging
34. Jefferson County Housing Authority
35. Cullman County Department of Human Resources
36. Shelby County Department of Human Resources
37. V.A. Hospital V.I.S.T.
38. Margaret Jean Jones Center—Cullman
39. First Light Women’s Shelter
40. Bessemer Carraway Medical Center
41. St. Martins in the Pines
42. Children’s Hospital
43. East Alabama Mental Health
44. YMCA of Central Alabama
45. Family Guidance Center of Alabama
46. Alabama Department of Youth Services
1c
APPENDIX D
University-Agency Field Practicum Agreement
This agreement is made and entered into this date ______________ by and between

hereinafter referred to as “the Agency”, and the Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama on behalf of the Baccalaureate Social Work Education Program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, hereinafter referred to as “The University”.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this agreement is to outline the basic responsibilities of the parties involved in the provision of field practicum experiences for the University’s baccalaureate social work students.

The field practicum experience is an integral component in the social work education curriculum. The field practicum engages students in social work practice under the supervision of a Master’s level social worker. The field practicum provides students with a variety of opportunities to apply their academic learning in agency settings where professional social workers actually work with clients, patients, or students.

GENERAL AGREEMENT

It is agreed and understood that the Agency will serve as a social work field practicum site for the University’s baccalaureate social work students, in such number and at such time as the parties herein mutually agree, and that, reciprocally, the University will provide faculty and/or staff for necessary instruction of students and coordination of student field practicum learning activities.
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

1. To develop the curriculum program and policy guidelines for field education;

2. To prepare students academically for entry-level social work practice in agency activities;

3. To maintain documentation substantiating the fact that students in the field practicum carry personal health insurance and professional liability coverage; and, for students who will be driving in the course of their field practicum assignments, maintain documentation of that they possess valid drivers’ licenses and automobile insurance coverage;

4. To provide a Field Instruction Coordinator to facilitate field practicum placements and to relate field practicum experiences to the University’s baccalaureate social work curriculum content;

5. To ensure the availability of the Field Instruction Coordinator to assist the Agency’s Field Supervisor(s) in designing appropriate learning experiences for students and in addressing issues which may arise relating to students’ performance of practicum activities and/or students’ failure to meet the professional standards of the Agency;

6. To provide a weekly Field Practicum Seminar in which students in the field practicum have opportunities to discuss issues and experiences which occur during the course of their field practicum experiences;

7. To provide the Agency with information regarding academic semester schedules, learning objectives for students, and procedures for completing students’ mid-course reviews and final performance evaluations;
8. To conduct timely liaison visits with Agency staff and student(s) in practicum to coordinate, monitor and evaluate field learning assignments and student performance; and

9. To conduct at least annual University and Agency exchange sessions to share ideas for improving the quality of field practicum experiences. Additional training for first time agency field supervisors will coincide with these exchange sessions.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AGENCY

1. To meet and maintain accepted professional standards for the practice of social work;

2. To provide an orientation for students to the practices, policies and procedures of the Agency;

3. To provide qualified MSW supervision for student(s) assigned to the Agency; said supervision being defined as face-to-face contact between the student(s) and a Master’s level social worker for at least four hours per week;

4. To negotiate with the student and the Field Instruction Coordinator those learning experiences deemed appropriate to the educational needs of the students and then make those experiences available to the students;

5. To furnish the space, materials and/or equipment required to execute agency functions (e.g., work space and telephone);
6. To provide periodic reviews of student progress as requested by the University’s baccalaureate social work education program;

7. To notify the University’s Field Instruction Coordinator of any problems regarding students and their responsibilities and to work toward the resolution any such problems;

8. To allow the University’s Field Instruction Coordinator, when warranted, to have access to records of the Agency’s clients/patients/students with whom the University’s students have contact in order to evaluate student performance. No records or record contents will be removed from the agency; and any discussion of patients/clients will preserve confidentiality.

THE AGENCY AND THE UNIVERSITY MUTUALLY AGREE:

1. Social work students are responsible for all service given to clients, patients, or students of the Agency up to their level of expertise.

2. The Agency and the University recognize that, in order for professional liability coverage to be provided for activities pursuant to this Agreement, it is necessary for each to have access to normal investigative
information for specific incidents that may give rise to a claim being filed against either party. Therefore, each party will notify the other of such events and mutually cooperate with the other in the investigation and/or processing of such claims.

3. That regular contact will be maintained between the University’s Field Instruction Coordinator and the Agency’s Field Supervisor(s) to review the progress of the program.

4. There shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex, race or other protected classification in the assignment, acceptance and activities of students in the program established by this agreement.

TERMS

This agreement may be modified by mutual consent at any time. Such consent shall be in writing and evidenced by the signature of the appropriate parties of the original agreement.

This agreement shall become effective on _________________

and shall continue from year to year thereafter unless and until terminated by written notice signed by the authorizing official of the Agency or the authorizing official of the University as the case may be. Adequate notice of intent to terminate the agreement shall be given by both parties so as not to disrupt the education of students or programs of the Agency.
ATTEST:

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

______________________________  ______________________________
Agency Name

______________________________  ______________________________
Authorizing Official’s Name

______________________________
Authorizing Official’s Title

______________________________
Authorizing Official’s Signature

Eli Capilouto, DMD, MPH, ScD
Acting Provost

Chris D. Walker, MSW, LCSW
BSW Field Director

5d
APPENDIX E
Learning Contract
UAB BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION PROGRAM

FIELD PRACTICUM LEARNING CONTRACT GUIDELINES

Although there is no prescribed format for the learning contract must specify tasks and activities which afford the student opportunities to meet the UAB BSW education program’s competencies and objectives. The contract also should be based on consideration of the student’s own learning interests, as well as the field agency supervisor’s agency/setting mission and specific client/ patient needs. The contract format must include designated space for three (3) signatures, i.e., those of the student, the field agency supervisor, and the field instruction coordinator.

The objectives to be addressed are based on the three practicum competency areas:

Self-Awareness and Effective Use of Self;

Adhering to the Values and Ethics of the Social Work Profession;

and Integrating Theoretical concepts and principles into the Intervention Process and Demonstrating requisite Skills for Intervention.

Your Learning Plan must address each of the following objectives:

I. Self-Awareness and Effective Use of Self:

   a. The student recognizes and articulates his/her own strengths/weaknesses in relation to the social work helping process.

   b. The student acknowledges the need to separate personal values from professional values.

   c. The student demonstrates responsible work habits.

   d. The student demonstrates the ability to organize time and other resources to accomplish assignments and tasks.

   e. The student demonstrates an appropriate level of autonomy.

   f. The student displays increasing degrees of initiative, resourcefulness, and diligence in relation to performance of social work tasks.
g. The student seeks opportunities to increase knowledge by participation in professional continuing education opportunities.

h. The student demonstrates abilities to clearly communicate orally and in writing.

II. Adhering to the Values and Ethics of the Social Work Profession:

i. The student is aware of, comprehends, and appreciates the human diversity represented at the practicum agency/setting in terms of client population(s) and agency/setting colleagues.

j. The student acknowledge awareness of the rights of others to express their own values and beliefs.

k. The student demonstrates an awareness of ethical dilemmas as they may occur during the course of the practicum.

l. The student is familiar with agency/setting policies and procedures relation to client services in the context of discussing those policies/procedures which the student perceives may be interfering with the agency/setting’s capacity to effectively serve the clients and the community.

m. The student recognizes situations during the practicum experience which may promote opportunities to address oppression or discrimination of individual clients or at-risk group/populations.

III. Integrating Theoretical Concepts and Principles into the Intervention Process and Demonstrating Intervention Skills

o. The student articulates the basic concepts of the Ecosystems and Strengths-based Perspectives in specific reference to the practicum agency/setting.

p. The student demonstrates abilities to establish a professional relationship with clients.

1. The student knows how to engage clients in beginning the helping process

2. The student establishes report with clients

q. The students demonstrates the ability to conduct an assessment of client social service needs.

r. The student demonstrates abilities to work collaboratively with clients.

s. The student demonstrates abilities to evaluate the process of intervention.

t. The student demonstrates the ability to terminate the professional relationship.

u. The student demonstrates the ability to identify needed client resources and make agency/setting-specific referrals.
v. The student demonstrates the ability to use social work and other professional literature to inform practice decisions.

w. The student demonstrates the ability to use social work and other professional literature to inform practice decisions.

x. The student demonstrates the ability to influence macro-level systems on behalf of client systems.

2e

APPENDIX F

Mid-Course Field Practicum
BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

SW490: MID-COURSE FIELD PRACTICUM EVALUATION

Student’s Name: _______________________________________________

Date of Review: ____________________________________________

Please provide a brief narrative summary on each of the following points.
Use the back of this sheet if you need additional space.

1. Student’s activities thus far in practicum:

________________________________________________________________________

2. Student’s demonstrated knowledge/skill strengths:

________________________________________________________________________

3. Student’s knowledge/skill areas need improvement:

________________________________________________________________________

4. Field Instructor’s Overall impression of Student:

________________________________________________________________________

Signatures:

_____________________________            ______________________________
Student       Field Instructor

______________________________
BSW Field Director
APPENDIX G
Final Evaluation
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK
BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION PROGRAM

SOCIAL WORK 490 - FIELD PRACTICUM / SEMESTER: _________

FINAL EVALUATION

Student’s Name: ______________________________ Date: _________________________

This evaluation form addresses the program’s three competency areas and twenty-four related objectives. The student’s performance is to be assessed by rating each of the items included in each objective as well as specifying an overall rating for each objective. Please rate the student’s performance by placing a number 1 - 5:

1 = low  2 = below average  3 = average   4 = above average  5 = exceptional   NA = Not Apply

Ratings for Competency Area Objectives:

Competency Area #1: Self-Awareness and Effective Use of Self:

Objective A. The student recognizes and articulates his/her own strengths/weaknesses in relation to the social work helping process.
    Rating _____

Objective B. The student demonstrates the ability to separate personal values from professional values.
    Rating _____

Objective C. The student demonstrates responsible work habits.
    Rating _____

Objective D. The student demonstrates the ability to organize time and other resources to accomplish assignments and tasks.
    Rating _____

Objective E. The student demonstrates an appropriate level of autonomy.
    Rating _____

Objective F. The student displays increasing degrees of initiative, resourcefulness, and diligence in relation to performance of social work tasks.
    Rating _____
Scoring Guide:
1 = low  2 = below average  3 = average  4 = above average  5 = exceptional  NA = Not Apply

Competency Area #1, Continued:

Objective G. The student seeks opportunities to increase knowledge by participation in professional continuing education opportunities.
Rating _____

Objective H. The student demonstrates abilities to clearly communicate, both orally and in writing.
Rating _____

Total Score: _____   Overall Rating: _____
(Add points from objectives a - h)

Competency Area #2: Adhering to the Values and Ethics of the Social Work Profession:

Objective I. The student acknowledges and demonstrates appreciation for the human diversity represented at the practicum agency/setting in terms of client population(s) and agency/setting colleagues.
Rating _____

Objective J. The student acknowledges awareness of the rights of others to express their own values and beliefs.
Rating _____

Objective K. The student demonstrates an awareness of ethical dilemmas as they may occur during the course of the practicum.
Rating _____
Objective L. The student demonstrates familiarity with agency/setting policies and procedures relating to client services and identifies those policies/procedures which the student perceives may be interfering with the agency/setting’s capacity to effectively serve the clients and the community.

Rating _____

Objective M. The student addresses situations during the practicum experience which may promote opportunities to address oppression or discrimination of individual clients or members of at-risk groups/populations.

Rating _____

Scoring Guide:

1 = low   2 = below average  3 = average  4 = above average  5 = exceptional  NA = Not Apply

Competency Area #2, continued

Objective N. The student utilizes current research to improve competency in service delivery and decision making.

Rating _____

Total Score: ______   Overall Rating: ______
(Add points from objectives i - n)

Competency Area #3: Integrating Theoretical Concepts and Principles into the Intervention Process and Demonstrating Intervention Skills at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Objective O. The student articulates the basic concepts of the ecosystems framework and strengths-based perspectives in specific reference to the practicum agency/setting.

Rating _____

Objective P. The student demonstrates abilities to establish a professional relationship with client systems.
The student knows how to engage clients in beginning the helping process.
Rating _____

The student established rapport with clients.
Rating _____

Objective Q. The student demonstrates the ability to conduct an assessment of client system social service needs.
Rating _____

Objective R. The student demonstrates abilities to work collaboratively with client systems.
Rating _____

Objective S. The student demonstrates the ability to identify needed client resources and make agency/setting-specific referrals.
Rating _____

Objective T. The student demonstrates abilities to evaluate the process of intervention.
Rating _____

Scoring Guide:
1 = low  2 = below average  3 = average  4 = above average  5 = exceptional  NA = Not Apply

Competency Area #3, continued:

Objective U. The student demonstrates the ability to effectively terminate the professional relationship.
Rating _____

Objective V. The student demonstrates the ability to use social work and other professional literature to inform practice decisions.
Rating _____
Objective W. The student demonstrates the capacity to influence macro-level systems on behalf of client systems.
   Rating _____

   Total Score: _____  Overall Rating: _____
   (Add points from objectives o - w)

   Total Score All Three Competence Areas: _____
   Total Rating: _____

Narrative Comments

1. Comment on the student’s demonstrated strengths.

2. Comment on the student’s needs for improvement in practice.

3. Additional Comments:

Recommendation for SW 490, Field Practicum, Final Grade:
PASS       FAIL
(Circle one)

______________________________   ______________________________
Student’s Signature      Agency Field Instructor’s Signature

______________________________
Field Director’s Signature
APPENDIX H
Statement of Confidentiality
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
FOR STUDENT ACCESS TO
CLIENT/PATIENT SERVICE RECORDS

I understand that, as a student social worker, I am bound by the National Association of Social Workers’ Code of Ethics. Specifically, during and after the course of my field placement with

___________________________________________
Agency Name

I understand that any and all information revealed to me - either directly by clients/patients, or through record reviews, or in discussions with my supervisor and other colleagues who serve clients/patients - must be considered to be confidential in nature. I will not discuss or disclose client/patient service information outside of my field placement agency setting without appropriate written client/patient authorization.

___________________________________________
Student’s Signature

___________________________________________
Field Placement Director’s Signature

___________________________________________
Date

Copy to:
Field Placement Instructor/Supervisor