

**UAB COLLEGE OF  
ARTS AND SCIENCES**

Department of Social Work

**Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) Program**

**Student Handbook**

**2022-2023**



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## Introduction

### History of the University, College of Arts & Sciences, and Department of Social Work

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) traces its roots to the 1859 founding of the Medical College of Alabama and the 1936 opening of the Birmingham Extension Center of The University of Alabama. In 1945 the Medical College of Alabama was moved from Tuscaloosa to Birmingham, and the University's Medical Center was founded. Later, in November of 1966, the Extension Center and the Medical Center were merged to form "The University of Alabama in Birmingham," an organizational component of The University of Alabama (in Tuscaloosa). Finally, in 1969, UAB became an independent institution, one of the autonomous universities within the newly created three-campus University of Alabama System (Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Huntsville).

The Department of Social Work is one of the twenty departments that make up the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). The college was formed in 2010 and replaced the separate Schools of Arts and Humanities, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. CAS is the largest academic unit at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, consisting of more than 300 faculty and 40 baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degrees. Beyond a strong liberal arts curriculum, students in the Department can participate in over 250 student organizations housed in CAS. The mission of the College is to ensure that each student leaves UAB with the tools they need to succeed in an expanding and increasingly complex world. CAS is dedicated to helping them develop the following skills and competencies:

- Ethical and Moral Reasoning
- The Scientific Method
- Communication
- Cultural Competence
- Confidence in the Face of Complexity

UAB Department of Social Work and the UAB's BSSW program has a proud tradition of high standards and quality instruction. In 1974, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE; [link to website](#)) began accrediting baccalaureate social work programs to designate beginning-level professional training. In 1976, UAB began its BSSW 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 BSSW program has been continuously accredited since 1977. Throughout the years, the Department has been housed in several different Departments according to the needs of the College. After spending time with the Departments of Government and Public Service, Anthropology and Sociology, the program became an independent department in 2011. Over the years, the Department has continued to see expansive growth in terms of students and faculty. The Social Work Department seeks diversity in the student body and offers students an opportunity to collaborate with faculty from diverse backgrounds bringing unique expertise in teaching, research, and community service.

## **BSSW Program**

The primary goal of the BSSW Program is to prepare students for generalist social work practice. Graduates are prepared to assist people of all ages, from all walks of life, with all kinds of problems in various settings. As generalist practitioners, graduates are prepared with skills to assist individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in achieving goals and solving problems. The BSSW is the first practice degree in the social work profession. Graduates of the program are expected to work in beginning-level positions under the supervision of an experienced MSW practitioner. The BSSW Program also prepares students for graduate study in social work and related fields, and licensure at the bachelor's level.

## **BSSW Program Mission Statement**

The mission of the University of Alabama at Birmingham's (UAB) Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) program is to prepare students for generalist social work practice with diverse populations in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, emphasizing social and economic justice for populations at risk. The program encourages social work career development through affiliation with professional organizations, pursuit of graduate education, and involvement in licensure and continuing education.

## **BSSW Program Goals**

These goals reflect the values, ethics, and knowledge base of generalist social work practice and are linked to the purpose of the social work profession and its values as outlined by CSWE:

- To enhance both the domestic and global community by graduating entry-level social workers who are professional, ethical, and competent to provide generalist practice services to individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations with emphasis on populations at risk.
- To prepare students to pursue and excel in advanced social work education and lifelong learning for professional social work practice.
- To develop students' capacity to apply knowledge skills from research and policy practice to guide and evaluate generalist, evidence-informed social work.
- To advance social and economic justice by educating students to advocate for human rights that enhance social functioning and well-being for all.

## **Governance and Faculty of BSSW Program**

The BSSW Program is one of two educational programs in the UAB Department of Social Work. Students can learn more about the BSSW Program at the Department's website ([link to website](#)). The BSSW Program is governed by the BSSW Program Director and the BSSW Program Committee.

The BSSW Program Committee comprises full-time faculty who primarily teach in the BSSW Program. For a listing of full-time faculty in the Department of Social Work, please visit the Department's Faculty Directory available online ([link to Faculty Directory webpage](#)).

The BSSW Field Education Program is run by the BSSW Field Coordinator, who works in partnership with the BSSW Program Director and is a member of the BSSW Program Committee. The BSSW Program Director, the BSSW Field Coordinator, and the Program Committee report to the Chair of the Department of Social Work. To learn more about the BSSW Program, please see the information on the Department's website ([link to website](#)).

### **Purpose of BSSW Student Handbook**

This handbook has been designed to supplement the *UAB Undergraduate Catalog* ([link to website](#)) with details about the BSSW Program in the College of Arts and Sciences' Department of Social Work. It provides an overview of the BSSW Program policies and the procedures for successful progress toward completing a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Work at UAB. The faculty and staff of the UAB Department of Social Work provide education, leadership, mentoring, and guidance to assist students in obtaining the maximum possible benefit from their education. For additional advice and clarification of policies and procedures, students should consult their assigned academic advisor, student services office personnel, or the BSSW Program Director. Please keep in mind that the responsibility for completing the requirements for an undergraduate degree in social work from UAB rests with the student.

### **Choosing social work as a major**

Individuals who graduate from the UAB BSSW Program receive a Bachelor of Science of Social Work (BSSW) degree from the University and 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 degree holders are not eligible. In addition, social work education requires a field practicum in which students work in a social service agency under the direct supervision of a social worker with a Master of Social Work degree. The field practicum is integral to the professional nature of the degree and, indeed, distinguishes social work from nonprofessional academic degrees. The BSSW field practicum experience is offered in the Fall and Spring semesters and equips social work majors for employment in entry-level professional social work positions upon graduation.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW; [link to website](#)) confers professional recognition to undergraduate social workers who graduate from a social work program accredited by CSWE, the only accrediting body for social work education programs in the United States. 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.

As prescribed by CSWE in its *2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards* ([link to website](#)), formal education provides the foundation for competent social work practice. Therefore, the undergraduate 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 to enhance the client's well-being and social functioning.

The NASW Code of Ethics ([link to website](#)) expresses the professional value base and guides 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, recognizing the centrality of human relationships to well-being and the helping process, and a strong commitment to social justice to alleviate social problems.

Social work's knowledge base centers on an ecological/systems framework, or the ecosystems perspective, that views persons and their environments as interconnected and mutually influencing. This framework encompasses the theoretical bases of psychology, sociology, social-psychology, anthropology, and biology. These various disciplines provide social workers with a bio-psycho-social perspective of human study. The techniques and skills of social workers build upon social work values and knowledge bases. Social workers use their repertoire of skills to work with individuals, families, groups, communities, and institutions to facilitate change and enhance social functioning and well-being. The various groupings or categories of clients are generally referred to as client systems.

### **What will an undergraduate degree in social work prepare you to do?**

In contrast to bachelor's degrees in many social sciences, the BSSW degree qualifies its graduates for professional social work positions in the job market. Therefore, only individuals who hold a social work degree may apply for social work positions and obtain a license as a social worker.

The integrated value-base, knowledge base, methods, and repertoire of techniques and skills prepare the BSSW 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 recognize the need to intervene at various levels of the environment. The various levels are identified as micro (individual or a family unit, mezzo (small groups, neighborhood, community groups, agencies with which the individual client has direct contact), and macro (institutions, governmental units, societal-level entities).

The BSSW curriculum also prepares social work majors for graduate schoolwork, especially the Master of Social Work degree (MSW). Most MSW programs offer advanced standing degrees to graduates of fully accredited BSSW programs 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 of study.

### **What types of positions are available?**

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

Social work practice fields are many, spanning the range of social functioning needs found within the population. Primary practice fields 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 BSSW positions within the various fields exceeds the scope of the BSSW Handbook. Here is just a sample of job possibilities:

- child protection worker
- adoption specialist
- family preservation case manager
- foster care worker
- school social worker
- counselor in a group home, residential treatment, or community
- mental health case manager

This partial list demonstrates that job or career opportunities for BSSWs are wide-ranging. Please refer to the resources for more information about job opportunities in social work:

- National Association of Social Worker's Career Center ([link to website](#))
- *101 Careers in Social Work* by Jessica Ritter, Ann Obermann, and Kristin Danhoff
- *Days in the Lives of Social Workers: 62 Professionals Tell "Real-Life" Stories from Social Work Practice* by Linda Grobman

### **How do you know if social work is a good fit with your strengths?**

Often individuals explore social work as a career option after acknowledging the desire to help others, which stems from concern about social problems such as oppression and inequality. For example, 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 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. Thus, a process of self-assessment follows the acknowledgment of vocational interest. The process begins with recognizing strengths and aptitudes and awareness of one's values, beliefs, and ideologies. Additionally, potential social work majors need to assess their critical thinking abilities and written and oral communication skills.

Students may begin to self-assess aptitude while completing the university's core curriculum, which comprises 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 may serve as indicators of ability to achieve the requisite writing skill level for social work majors. Social work foundation courses provide students with multi-disciplinary theory bases that support social work's knowledge base. Exposure to social science courses often helps students determine their "fit with social work" by assessing their interest in and comprehension of economics, anthropology, minority studies, psychology, and sociology.

The BSSW program offers interested students a foundation curriculum that facilitates 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 give an overview of the theoretical knowledge and skills requisite for effective practice. Techniques for self-assessment are also incorporated into the content of these foundation social work classes since we believe that the effective and professional use of self in the helping process requires ongoing reflection and self-awareness. Social work faculty members are available and willing to consult with students in honing their self-awareness skills.

### **What happens after completing an undergraduate social work degree?**

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

#### ***Social Work Licensing***

As is true throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Canada, Alabama requires persons who present themselves to the public as "social workers" to be licensed. The state regulates the practice of social work through different levels of licensure (e.g., Licensed Bachelor Social Worker [LBSW], Licensed Master Social Worker [LMSW]).

Persons with bachelor's degrees in social work from a social work education program accredited by CSWE Education (of which UAB is one) are eligible to sit for the LBSW examination. The licensure process involves making an application for a license, taking, and passing a professionally developed comprehensive written examination, pursuing continuing professional education, and renewing every two years. Next, the application is made to the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners ([link to website](#)). Once the application is reviewed and approved, the applicant may sit for the qualifying examination by applying to the Association of Social Work Boards ([link to website](#)), the national organization responsible for regulating the profession of social work in the United States. Students who begin the application process during their field placement and sit for the examination promptly find themselves eligible for more job opportunities than others in the job market. Students should consult with the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners for most current fees.

LBSWs must receive supervision from social workers licensed at the LMSW or LICSW with three hours of CE in Supervision levels to maintain licensure. The supervision is for the first two years of their

social work practice. Additionally, LBSWs are required to conduct their practices within the boundaries prescribed in the licensing laws and rules of the State of Alabama.

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 visiting their website ([link to website](#)).

### ***Social Work Career Options***

The field of social work is broad, varied, and offers many career opportunities for social workers who hold a BSSW, MSW, a Doctor of Social Work (DSW), or a Ph.D. in Social Work. The multi-level nature of the profession and its broad scope can be confusing. Thus, pre-social work majors and 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 the entire faculty to discuss career opportunities, including considering graduate studies. In addition, students are encouraged to attend UAB's Career Events sponsored by the UAB Career Center, Alabama Department of Human Resources recruitment activities, and recruitment activities of graduate programs. Additional information can also be found at the NASW's website under Careers ([link to webpage](#)).

### ***Social Work Graduate Studies***

Graduate Schools of Social Work are competitive. Therefore, students should focus on attaining the highest-grade average (GPA) possible, demonstrating their commitment to social work through volunteer activities, and striving to attain honors such as induction into the UAB Eta Beta Chapter of the *Phi Alpha Social Work International Honor Society* ([link to website](#)). Students who are considering graduate studies immediately after graduation should begin to identify programs of interest during the latter part of their junior year.

Once programs of interest have been identified, students should begin the application process early in their senior year. All social work faculty are willing and prepared to discuss any aspect of graduate studies with students. In addition to writing letters of recommendation, faculty members are also happy to critique your application packet.

The UAB Department of Social Work established its MSW in 2017 and was accredited by CSWE in 2020. The UAB MSW Program provides Alabama's only specialized clinical curriculum in health and behavioral health and enrolls approximately 50 students each fall. With a specific focus on Health and Behavioral Health, the MSW Program prepares social workers with evidence-based skills ready to practice immediately upon graduation. You can learn more about UAB's MSW Program by contacting the MSW Program Director in the Department of Social Work and reading about the Program at the Department's website ([link to website](#)). Additionally, a directory of accredited MSW programs can be found on the Council on Social Work Education website under Accredited Programs ([link to webpage](#)).

## **BSSW Program Policies**

The UAB BSSW Program ascribes to all UAB policies and procedures governing students and faculty. These policies are outlined in the most recent version of the UAB Undergraduate Catalog, which is available online at the UAB website ([link to the webpage for the UAB Undergraduate Catalog](#)).

Additionally, the BSSW Program incorporates policies based on professional social work ethics and the CSWE's educational standards for accredited social work programs. Specific policies governing the application processes for the BSSW Professional Program are noted in this Handbook (pp. XX-XX). Finally, it should be noted that the BSSW Program is part of the UAB Department of Social Work.

## **UAB Student Rights and Responsibilities**

The UAB Student Handbook provides a listing of all the rights and responsibilities of UAB students. This section highlights some of these rights and responsibilities. A complete list is available in the UAB Undergraduate Catalog available online on the UAB website ([link to the webpage for the UAB Student Handbook](#)).

### ***Academic Integrity***

The University of Alabama at Birmingham expects all members of its academic community to function according to the highest ethical and professional standards. Students, faculty, and the institution's administration must be involved to ensure this quality of academic conduct. Review the Academic Honor Code, Non-Academic Student Code of Conduct, and the Blazer Way linked below.

- [Academic Integrity Code](#)
- [Non-Academic Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [The Blazer Way – UAB's Creed](#)

### ***Accessible Learning***

UAB is committed to providing an accessible learning experience for all students. If you are a student with a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and you require accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services for information on accommodations, registration, and procedures. Requests for reasonable accommodations involve an interactive process and consist of a collaborative effort among the student, DSS, faculty, and staff. Students can contact Disability Support Services by calling (205) 934-4205, visiting their website ([link to website](#)), or their office in Hill Student Center Suite 409.

### ***Confidentiality***

The University of Alabama at Birmingham complies with all principles of privacy described in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which affords students certain rights concerning their education records. They are:

- The right to inspect and review students' education records within 45 days of the day the University receives an access request.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.
- The right to consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning the alleged failures by State University to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Please visit the UAB Registrar's webpage about FERPA ([link to webpage](#)) for more information.

### ***Equal Education Opportunity***

The University of Alabama at Birmingham prohibits discrimination in admission, educational programs, and other student matters based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, national origin, disability unrelated to program performance, veteran status or genetic or family medical history.

### ***Freedom from Student Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy***

The University of Alabama at Birmingham is committed to providing an environment that is free from sexual misconduct, which includes gender-based assault, harassment, exploitation, dating and domestic violence, stalking, as well as discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. If you have experienced any of the aforementioned conduct, we encourage you to report the incident. UAB provides several avenues for reporting. For more information about Title IX, policy, reporting, protections, resources, and supports, please visit the [UAB Title IX webpage](#) for policies related to Title IX, equal opportunity, anti-harassment, duty to report, and non-retaliation.

### ***Grievance***

Students have the right to file an appeal, complaint, or grievance. The general policy regarding student grievances can be found in the UAB Undergraduate Catalog – See Conduct and Complaints under Progress toward a Degree ([link to website](#)).

### ***Student Support Services***

UAB offers numerous support services to students, from academic success to health and safety. A list of services is available on the UAB website ([link to website](#)). Students are encouraged to access and utilize these services.

### **BSSW Program Student Rights and Responsibilities**

#### ***Faculty Support and Communication***

Students have the right to receive faculty support to maximize their academic potential. Accordingly, students have the right to expect social work faculty members to keep regular office hours and 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.

#### ***Notifications***

Students have the right to receive notification of classroom policies (i.e., policies stated in the course syllabi), due dates, the decisions regarding the outcome of their status in the BSSW Professional Program, Field Education Program, and Honors Program, requests for policy waivers, and curriculum requirements. Notifications will typically occur in the form of an email to their official UAB email account or through the University's Learning Management System, Canvas.

#### ***Responsibility to Self-Initiate***

Students are responsible for self-initiating the following tasks as part of their progress through the BSSW Program:

- Academic and professional advising
- Applying to the BSSW Professional Program
- Applying to BSSW Field Placement
- Registering and withdrawing from classes promptly
- Applying for graduation

#### ***Student Conduct***

In addition to following UAB's ethical and professional standards as described in the section on Academic Integrity (p. 11) in this handbook, students are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner concordant with the ethical standards of the social work profession. Students are expected to uphold the ethical standards in the social work learning community as stated in the National Association of Social Work's (NASW) Code of Ethics ([link to website](#)). Additionally, students are expected to comply with the BSSW Program's Academic and Professional Performance Standards (pp. 21-26) in this handbook.

### ***Commitment to Diversity***

To actualize professional values that uphold the right of individuals to dignity, respect, and self-determination, the UAB BSSW Program strives to build a learning community in which individuals diminish biases, develop tolerance, and learn to appreciate diversity. In keeping with commitment, the UAB BSSW Program welcomes students, faculty, and staff who represent the rich human diversity of characteristics, values, and beliefs reflected in the intersectionality of multiple factors, including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status.

### **Admission to the BSSW Professional Program**

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. In academic programs and the broader profession, gatekeeping is designed to protect the public from incompetent, impaired, or unethical service providers.

In compliance with CSWE's accreditation standards, the UAB Department of Social Work has a formal process for accepting undergraduate students into the BSSW Professional Program. The rationale, criteria, policies, and procedures for this admission process are described below. To apply for admission to the UAB BSSW Program, students must have successfully completed the admission process to the University ([link to more information on applying to UAB](#)) and have a declared major of Social Work.

### ***Criteria for Admission to the Professional Social Work Program***

Students declaring their intention to major in social work must formally apply to the professional program when they have met all the following conditions and criteria:

- Cumulative undergraduate GPA of 2.25 or higher;
- Completing the following social work courses: SW 100, SW 200, SW 207, and SW 222/222L. Students may apply to the professional program while enrolled in the above courses; however, they will not be fully accepted into the program until final grades for the designated courses have been posted and a grade of "C" or better;
- An overall social work GPA of 2.5 has been verified;
- A pattern of demonstrating professionalism through classroom comportment in SW 100, SW 200, SW 207, and/or SW 222/222L; and;
- Acceptable writing skills and level of pre-professional self-awareness as demonstrated by a student's written responses to the essay portion of the application.

### ***Application Process to the Professional Social Work Program***

Applications for BSSW Professional Program are accepted twice during the academic year, during the Fall (September) and Spring semesters (February). Accepting applications during these semesters and months allows time to notify students of acceptance in time for registration for the following semester.

Students must self-initiate the process. Students who see their CAS Social Work Academic Advisor each semester are in the best position to know when it is time for them to apply for the professional program. Notices regarding the application dates will be emailed to all social work students each semester. Late applications are not accepted. Students are encouraged to plan to meet the application steps and deadlines.

Students who would like to apply to the professional program need to complete these steps:

- Students must make an appointment to meet with their assigned academic advisor in the CAS Advising Office to verify academic eligibility as described above. In addition, CAS Academic Advisor will provide each applicant with information about how to apply to the professional program. The CAS Academic Advisor will also complete the Curriculum for Social Work Majors Checklist with each student.
- During February and September, students should submit their applications via the University's learning management system, Canvas. Students enrolled in SW 222/SW22L will be automatically enrolled in the non-academic course that includes the application. Other students may request access by contacting the BSSW Program Director.
- Please note that procedures governing reasonable accommodations for students who have disabilities follow those prescribed by UAB's Disability Support Services ([link to website](#)) for classroom participation and test-taking. Any student who requests reasonable accommodation needs when applying should notify the Program Director when applying to the BSSW Professional Program.

The application includes the following parts:

- Student information form, which collects the applicant's name and contact information;
- A completed copy of the student's Curriculum for Social Work Majors Checklist, which is completed and submitted by the CAS Social Work Academic advisor;
- Classroom comportment evaluations completed and submitted by social work instructors from SW 100, SW 200, SW 207, and SW 222/222L; and
- Four written essay questions to be completed by the applicant. These questions are designed to assess the applicant's writing skills and level of pre-professional self-awareness.

For the written essay questions, students are not being asked to reveal any information regarding not being asked to reveal any past traumatic experience (see UAB Title IX website: [link to website](#)). All faculty members are responsible reporters of incidents related to Title IX. Title IX states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving

Federal financial assistance.” Title IX was created in 1972, focusing on equal funding for men’s and women’s athletics. Broadened in 2011 to include Interpersonal Violence (stalking, dating/domestic violence, etc.) and Sexual Misconduct (sexual assault, unwanted sexual contact, pregnancy discrimination, and sexual harassment).

Additionally, students are not being asked to reveal any information regarding past or present treatment related to any disability or past or present treatment for psychological, emotional, or physical disorders. The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act ([link to website](#)) 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.

Finally, students are encouraged to utilize the UAB Writing Lab, located in Sterne Library and offers in-person and online sessions. The UAB Writing Center helps students with any kind of writing and at any stage of the process. Their services are free for all UAB students. For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit the University Writing Center’s website ([link to website](#)).

### ***Criteria for Evaluating Admission Applications to the Professional Social Work Program***

The process for evaluating applications to the professional social work program involves an assessment of the applicant’s academic achievements as evidenced by their GPA, their progress in completing the course requirements for the major on the Curriculum for Social Work Majors Checklist (reviewed by the CAS Social Work Academic Advisor & BSSW Program Director), classroom comportment as demonstrated by the Faculty Observation Forms (reviewed by social work instructors of SW 100, SW 200, SW 207, and SW 222/222L), and writing skills and level of pre-professional self-awareness as demonstrated by a student’s written essays (reviewed by full-time social work faculty). Here are the descriptions of each criterion for admission to the BSSW Professional Program:

- **Academic Achievement:** The CAS Social Work Academic Advisor and the BSSW Program Director review the student’s academic transcripts and Curriculum for Social Work Majors Checklist to determine the overall GPA, social work GPA, and the completion of courses for each applicant.
- **Classroom Comportment:** Social work faculty who teach foundation courses will complete Faculty Observation Forms. The form consists of the faculty’s observations of the students’ attendance patterns, punctuality, timely completion of assignments, and ability to grasp course material. The faculty will also identify any other performance-related concerns as part of the process. Students are expected to progressively, steadily, and continually develop and exhibit behaviors indicative of good work habits. The goal of these forms is to provide the Department of Social Work with a record of a student’s ability to demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom. A copy of this form (Faculty Observation Form for Admission to BSSW Professional Program) is available in Appendix A of this Handbook.
- **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



fundamental technical aspects in writing. In addition, students complete four written essay questions as part of their application to the BSSW Professional Program. A copy of the rubric used to assess writing skills is available in Appendix B of this Handbook.

- **Self-Awareness:** Self-awareness is a skill that enables the social worker to reflect upon their professional “use of self” in the process of helping others. It is a skill that develops over time. At this stage in students’ academic careers, students should demonstrate abilities to reflect on their strengths and limitations, examine their feelings, personal values, and personal histories and recognize when these feelings and values may interfere with their effectiveness in the helping process. A minimally satisfactory level of self-awareness requires that the student expresses their thoughtful consideration of aspects involved in examining one's own personal values, feelings, and history to assess personal/professional value conflicts, potential to harm self and others, and personal congruence with the NASW Code of Ethics (2022). Students complete four written essay questions as part of their application to the BSSW Professional Program. A copy of the rubric used to assess writing skills is available in Appendix B of this Handbook.

### ***Decision-making for Applications to the Professional Social Work Program***

First, the BSSW Program Director reviews application forms, checklists, and Social Work Academic Advisor’s Review Forms to ensure that the forms complete. Second, faculty members individually review the materials in each applicant’s essays. Two faculty members independently review the same essays. If two reviews are not congruent, the BSSW Program Director will provide the third review, and this disposition of this final review will be accepted. Third, the BSSW Program Director compiles the Faculty Observation Forms and reviews of essays (assessed in writing skills and self-awareness). All application materials (e.g., Faculty Observation Forms, essays, etc.) will be reviewed by the BSSW Program Director, who will make final decisions. Lastly, the BSSW Program Director will notify the students regarding their acceptance status.

Per 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 the professional program are considered for admission to the BSSW Professional Program “regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability unrelated to program performance, disabled veteran status, or Vietnam-era status” (UAB Undergraduate Catalog; [link to website](#)). Additionally, applicants are not discriminated against due to sexual orientation, political orientation, or creed.

There are three options available for admission status:

1. **Fully Accepted:** “Fully accepted” status means that a student met all criteria successfully and thoroughly. There is no cap on enrollment; therefore, no student is denied acceptance if they meet all criteria successfully. To be “fully accepted,” all of the following must be fulfilled:
  - Both overall GPA and social work GPA meet the criteria;

- All foundation courses (SW 100, SW 200, SW 207, and SW 222/222L) have been completed with a C or better;
- A positive pattern of professional behavior as demonstrated by classroom comportment; and
- Reviews on written assessments are unanimous and positive.

2. **Conditionally Accepted:** Students enrolled in the required SW foundation courses (SW 100, SW 200, SW 207, and SW 222/222L) automatically receive this status until course grades are posted. Applicants waiting for grades to be posted may be cleared to register for SW 300 level courses. However, applicants' grades will be checked at the end of the semester, and if they did not pass any of these courses listed above with a C or better, they will be deferred and removed from SW 300 level courses.

This status may also indicate the BSSW Program Director's need for clarifying information to make an accurate determination. The student will be contacted and informed that an interview with the BSSW Program Director is required before final status determination. In this situation, the interview outcome is expected to result in either "fully accepted" or "deferred" status.

3. **Deferred:** Deferred means that the student has not met one or more of the specified criteria (as delineated and explained above) have not been met sufficiently to get accepted to the program. To move beyond the deferred status, the student must re-apply and be found to satisfactorily meet the standards for "Fully Accepted." A student may apply for the social work professional program only twice.

An applicant notified of deferred status is strongly encouraged to meet with the BSSW Program Director and academic advisor to devise a plan to address students' preparedness. 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 ease 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 the professional program. Another scenario is that a student may have insufficient life experience to assess their aptitude for practice accurately and, therefore, may benefit from volunteering in a social work setting to make an informed choice about social work as a vocation. Finally, 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 their strengths. Therefore, a deferred student should also meet with their academic advisor to plan and register for appropriate courses.

### ***Notification Procedure***

The students will receive an email to their official UAB email account indicating the status of their application at the end of October for the Fall semester and at the end of March for the Spring

semester. The CAS Social Work Academic Advisor will also be notified of the students' application status. applicant for social work major has the right to file a grievance involving the BSSW Professional Program Admissions Committee's decision. The general policy regarding student grievances can be found in the UAB Undergraduate Catalog – See Conduct and Complaints under Progress toward a Degree ([link to website](#)).

### ***Appealing the Admission Decision***

The BSSW Professional Program process application 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 BSSW Professional Program Admissions Committee's decision. The general policy regarding student grievances can be found in the UAB Undergraduate Catalog – See Conduct and Complaints under Progress toward a Degree ([link to website](#)).

### **Transfer of Credits from non-UAB Undergraduate Social Work Programs**

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 UAB BSSW Program. All non-social work courses as assessed by the UAB Registrar's Office to determine transfer credit equivalency. For all courses transferred from two-year public colleges, UAB uses the Statewide Transfer and Articulation Reporting System (STARS). Students can see if which course credits will transfer by checking the STARS Web Database ([link to STARS Web Database](#)). The transfer of credits from colleges or universities outside of Alabama depend on subject matter and accreditation of the institution.

The UAB Registrar's Office will base the evaluation and awarding of transfer course credit on a review of official transcripts from the other institution. Students are required to submit official transcripts, sent directly to UAB from all postsecondary institutions attended. Students do not retain the right to choose or eliminate certain courses for transfer. All academic transfer work will be posted to the UAB transcript, including courses with final grades of D, F, and WF and any courses in which a student has been granted academic clemency, bankruptcy, forgiveness, or similar practice.

If students want to transfer credits for social work classes, they must come from CSWE accredited program. A directory of accredited programs is available on the CSWE website ([link to website](#)).

Only select, equivalent social work courses taken at another accredited undergraduate social work program will be subject to transfer for social work courses at UAB. These courses must be equivalent to the following UAB courses:

- SW 100 Introduction to Social Work (3 hours)
- SW 200 Professional Communication in Social Work (3 hours)
- SW 207 Racism, Sexism and Other Isms (3 hours)
- SW 222 Social Work Values (3 hours)

- SW 222L Social Work Values Lab (1 Hour)
- Any social work elective (3 hours)

The BSSW Program Director bases the evaluation and awarding of transfer course credit for social work courses based on a request from the UAB Registrar's Office, who provide information about the course based on a review of official transcripts from the other institution. The BSSW Program Director confirms that the other institution's baccalaureate program was accredited by CSWE at the time the course was taken and reviews that course description from the other institution's course catalog to determine equivalency to one of the abovementioned courses. The BSSW Program Director will consult with the BSSW Program Committee as needed. BSSW Faculty reserve the right to determine if the course content is similar enough to content in a UAB BSSW course to be counted toward the social work major at UAB.

As an accredited CSWE Program, the UAB BSSW Program will not transfer social work courses from non-accredited social work programs, even if designated as social work courses or those taught by social workers. Further, the BSSW Program will not accept a 200-level course for a 300-level course. Transfer students must complete the following courses at UAB:

- SW 322 Social Work Practice I (3 hours)
- SW 322L Social Work Practice I Lab (1 hour)
- SW 422 Social Work Practice II (3 hours)
- SW 422L Social Work Practice II Lab (1 hour)
- SW 490 Practicum in Social Work (9 hours)
- SW 494 Practicum Seminar (3 hours)

Students who are given credit for social work courses from another accredited school are still held accountable for the GPA requirements of the social work major at UAB and will be required to re-take the comparable UAB courses if they wish to be a social work major.

### **No Academic 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 place of field placement.

### **Academic and Professional Advising**

The UAB BSSW Program offers students both academic and professional advising to students. Academic advising focuses on developing an educational plan by understanding the degree requirements, selecting courses, and planning a schedule. Professional advising focuses on social work career development and is provided by the BSSW Program Faculty.

In the BSSW Program, academic advising occurs through several processes:

- **Curriculum Advisement:** The Chair of the Department of Social Work and the BSSW Program Director are the designated curriculum advisors for social work majors. Working

- with the Chair, the BSSW Program Director informs the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Social Work Academic Advisor regarding the BSSW curriculum requirements and works collaboratively to ensure that course offerings and scheduling are student-centered.
- **Course Selection:** The Chair, the Program Director, and the CAS Social Work Academic Advisor are available to all social work majors for consultation and guidance in selecting areas of course work.
  - **Course Scheduling:** CAS Social Work Academic Advisor provides course scheduling advisement for all social work majors and minors. Students are strongly encouraged to see their designated CAS Social Work Academic advisor each semester to ensure they take courses in the proper sequence. Social work, unlike other social science majors, sequences its required courses. Therefore, students who self-advise may inadvertently lose the opportunity to complete the course work on time.
  - **Graduation Applications:** The Chair approves social work majors for graduation after examining students' applications for the degree to determine that all requirements have been met. (For more information about commencement and degree applications, visit the UAB Undergraduate Catalog online ([link to website](#)).

In the BSSW program, professional social work advising 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;
- assisting students who choose to apply to graduate programs;
- encouraging students to network with social workers in all fields of work to add to their knowledge base of social work;
- attending career fairs to learn about local employment opportunities;
- attending conferences and workshops for community and agency resources for employment, and;
- being involved in the mentoring program.

The Social Work Faculty of the BSSW Program accomplishes professional social work advisement through several processes:

- **Aptitude for the Profession:** Declared social work majors or those interested in social work are encouraged to contact any or all social work faculty members to discuss social work as a major and assess their aptitude informally for the profession. The introductory courses, mainly SW 100 (Introduction to Social Work), SW 200 (Professional Communication in Social Work), SW 207 (Racism, Sexism, and Other Isms), and SW 222 & SW222L (Social Work Values and the Social Work Values Lab) contain structured opportunities for self-assessment

of aptitude for the profession. In addition, applying to the BSSW Professional Program serves as the program's formal mechanism for assessing student aptitude for the profession.

- **Career development:** Social work majors are encouraged to contact faculty members to discuss areas of career interests and specialties. Social work majors may tailor placement opportunities to enhance career opportunities by applying for Field Practicum. Social Work majors are encouraged to utilize SW 499 (Independent Studies) as a vehicle for exploration and refining career choices. Students are encouraged to attend UAB's Career Events. These events include information for students who plan to seek employment upon graduation and information for students still identifying what direction to take with their educational careers. More information about UAB's Career Center is on their website ([Link to website](#)). Students interested in applying to graduate school are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the MSW Program Director (and consult with other faculty members).

### **Academic and Professional Performance Standards**

The BSSW Program has identified academic and professional performance standards that students must meet to matriculate through the program and graduate with an undergraduate degree in social work. Students are informed of these standards in the following ways:

- The NASW Code of Ethics and CSWE's Social Work Competencies are included in all course syllabi, and both are frequently discussed in courses throughout the BSSW curriculum.
- Both academic and professional performance standards are incorporated into the application processes for the Social Work Professional Program and the Social Work Field Education Program.
- These standards are discussed with students as part of orientations, in-class review sessions and virtual meetings sponsored by the BSSW Professional Program.
- Students are required to meet with the CAS Social Work Academic Advisor every semester who reviews academic standards with the students and refers students to the BSSW Program Director for concerns about professional performance.

#### ***Academic Performance***

Students in the BSSW professional program must maintain an overall GPA of at least 2.25 and a social work GPA of at least 2.50 each semester. Students whose GPA drops below the minimum will not be able to continue in the program until their GPA improves to the standard.

#### ***Professional Performance***

The UAB BSSW Program promotes and assesses professional behavioral development for all social work students as mandated by CSWE. The Program is committed to training and producing professional generalist social workers who uphold values and ethics and who are competent and skilled. The Program expects that students will use the following to guide their professional performance:

- NASW Code of Ethics (2021)

- CSWE Social Work Competencies as adopted by the BSSW Program (see pp. 28-32 of this handbook).
- UAB Academic Integrity Policy

Every social work student must demonstrate professional behaviors in the on-ground and online classroom, field placement, email and phone communications, and any other interactions in a professional and academic setting. Students should be thoughtful, respectful, courteous, and professional when interacting and communicating in person, on the phone, or virtually (i.e., by email). Students should remember that they represent the UAB Department of Social Work and understand that their behaviors may reflect the social work profession and the department.

The following narrative emphasizes specific values, ethics, and competencies presented in the NASW's Code of Ethics and the CSWE's competencies to serve as a guideline for professional and ethical behaviors of UAB undergraduate social work students:

- **Ethical Principle of Dignity and Worth of the Person:** Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person. Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and address their own needs. Social workers are mindful of their dual responsibility to clients and the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the profession's values, ethical principles, and ethical standards (NASW, [link to website](#)).

UAB undergraduate social work students shall:

- Show respect to all peers, instructors, and professionals in academia and others they encounter in their field placements.
- Treat all peers, instructors, and professionals in academia and others they encounter in their field placements with courtesy and fairness.
- Demonstrate a willingness and active listening to others.
- Give feedback to peers in a constructive, non-judgmental manner and yet critical.
- Be able to accept constructive criticism and feedback without attitudes.
- Approach conflict with peers, your instructors, professionals in academia, and others they encounter in their field placements in a cooperative and strength-based perspective and manner.
- Be sensitive and understanding of cultural differences.
- Agree to disagree and accept different opinions.
- Use positive and nonjudgmental language with peers, instructors, professionals in academia, and others they encounter in their field placements.

- **Ethical Principle of Integrity:** Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner. Social workers are continually aware of the profession’s mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers should take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated (NASW, 2021).

UAB undergraduate social work students shall:

- Understand and abide by the UAB Honor Code ([website link here](#)).
- Understand and abide by the NASW Code of Ethics ([website link here](#)).
- Understand and abide by the UAB Student Handbook ([website link here](#)).

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

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to the context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes, and use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior. (CSWE, 2015).

UAB undergraduate social work students shall:

- Attend to professional roles and boundaries.
- Pursuit academic excellence with integrity.
- Meet all deadlines set by instructors, field supervisors, and department administrators.
- Be punctual in coming to class and participating in an online class and field placements.
- Be proactive in seeking support, supervision, and consultation.



- Be aware of personal issues and barriers that might hinder your academic performance and responsibilities in field placements.
- Complete all required readings, assignments, and tasks.
- Be accountable, responsive, and responsible.
- Demonstrate effective and respectful oral and written communication skills, including body language and active listening, with instructors, field supervisors, and clients.
- Honor confidentiality and strictly protect personal information.
- Remember what is said and shared in the classroom and field placement stays within that place.
- Be conscientious about self-disclosing and always use pseudonyms when discussing cases from field placements.
- Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
- Engage in ethical decision-making guided by the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Refrain from letting personal issues and conditions interfere with professional performance and obligations.
- Not being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs when coming to class or field placement, which can impair the ability to perform and behave professionally.
- Be able to practice self-care to optimize judgment and performance in class or field placement.
- Seek consultation and supervision when their ability to carry out responsibilities and tasks is compromised.
- Understand and recognize students' personal values, norms, expectations, beliefs, and attitudes and manage them so as not to interfere with professional practice.
- Maintain high standards of professional and personal conduct.

### **Probation, Suspension, and Termination Policy**

Admission to the BSSW Professional Social Work Program implies that the student will accept and adopt a standard of academic and nonacademic professionalism consistent with the social work profession. A student may be placed on academic probation, suspension, or termination from the BSSW Program for academic and non-academic reasons, including the following:

- Significantly low GPA (cumulative GPA of less than 2.5 for social work required courses for two or more semesters)
- Lack of adherence to the academic and professional standards specified in the policies and procedures of this handbook
- Violation of course sequencing or academic plan
- Violation of the UAB University Honor Code
- Violation of the NASW Code of Ethics
- Lack of adherence to professional expectations and standards

Behaviors contrary to the BSSW Program’s academic and professional standards will result in a remediation plan in multiple ways. For example, students may receive feedback through classroom assignments, meetings with instructors and/or the BSSW Program Director, and/or written documentation of the event. In some cases, a written plan for improvement may be initiated by the BSSW Program Director.

To initiate a process of probation, suspension, or termination, the BSSW Program Director will be notified in writing by faculty, staff or other constituent about a student’s behaviors identified as contrary to the BSSW Program’s academic and professional standards. The BSSW Program Director will assess the written documentation and consult as needed with the UAB Department of Social Work Chair and/or BSSW Program Committee. If further action is warranted, the BSSW Program Director shall meet with the student to discuss identified behaviors, communicating with the student in writing to initiate the meeting. If needed, the BSSW Program Director and student will develop a written plan of action to address deficiencies in the student’s behaviors related to academic and professional standards of the BSSW Program. This written plan should outline specific areas needing improvement, actions to be taken by the student and BSSW Program, and a target date for these actions to occur. In addition, a follow-up meeting with the student and BSSW Program Director will be set to assess student progress in areas needing improvement. At that time, the plan can be deemed:

- Completed, with no further action needed
- Continued, allowing the student further time to address areas needing improvement
- Not followed

If the student does not follow their written plan of action, the BSSW Program reserves the right to terminate a student's participation in the professional program if the BSSW Program Director determines that the student's behavior has been deemed non-suitable and constituted a significant violation or pattern of violations of the Program’s academic and professional standards and NASW Code of Ethics ([link to website](#)) as well as UAB BSSW Student Handbook. Students who cannot address deficiencies or complete the agreed-upon written plan of action within two academic semesters from the time of the initiation of the plan will be terminated from the program. Notification of the termination will be done in writing to the student. In addition, the social work faculty has the right to terminate a student from the BSSW Program at any time if such action is deemed warranted by the BSSW Program Director and Department Chair after review of supporting documentation.

The students will be notified in writing of their written plan action and any probation, suspension, and termination decision. The CAS Social Work Academic Advisor will also be notified. Students maintain the right to appeal such decisions according to UAB Undergraduate Catalog – See Conduct and Complaints under Progress toward a Degree ([link to website](#)).

### **Social Media Policy**

Students are expected to follow the UAB BSSW Program’s Professional Standards, the NASW Code of Ethics, and the UAB Student Code of Conduct always, including but not limited to classes, field placements, volunteer work, and digital contexts. Digital contexts include but are not limited to social

networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), text messaging, apps, blogging, virtual worlds, and email. For more information about social work standards in digital contexts, students are invited to review the *NASW, ABSSW, CSWE & CSWA Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice* (NASW, 2017), available on the NASW website ([link to website](#)).

### **Academic Field Trips**

The UAB BSSW Program encourages its instructors to engage in active learning that may require students to visit off-campus locations such as community-based agencies, museums, or historic sites. For this policy, field trips do not include internships, study abroad, service-learning assignments for individual students, on-campus excursions, or trips by extra-curricular groups. The BSSW Program recognizes two types of field trips, mandatory and optional:

1. A mandatory field trip is linked to course learning objectives, noted in the syllabus and/or course catalog description, may or may not be scheduled during the scheduled class session, and linked to student performance evaluation for the course, and a student must have special permission regarding the absence. Students are expected to make every effort to participate in mandatory field trips. If a student cannot attend a field trip due to schedule conflicts, including but not limited to other academic commitments, work, or dependent care, the student must give as much advanced notice as possible to the instructor to identify possible accommodations, such as an alternative assignment. Likewise, if a student cannot participate in a field trip due to medical, physical, or psychological needs, the student must give as much advanced notice as possible to the instructor to determine other possible accommodations.
2. Optional field trips may or may not be listed in the syllabus and cannot negatively impact a student's grade if the student chooses not to participate.

UAB Disability Support Services ([link to website](#)) is available to assist the instructor and student with identifying reasonable accommodations for academic field trips. Students must sign a copy of the UAB Department of Social Work's Field Trip Release Form (available in appendix D) prior to attending the field trip.

### **BSSW Curriculum**

The UAB BSSW Program's curriculum requirements are stated in the UAB Undergraduate Catalog ([link to website](#)). This section summarizes the BSSW Program curriculum and highlights additional policies that are not stated in the UAB Undergraduate Catalog but are mandated by CSWE.

### **Curriculum Uniformity**

The BSSW Program Committee will also serve as the curriculum committee, comprised of all full-time faculty who teach in specific curriculum areas (practice, HBSE, policy, research, field practicum). In addition, the committee shall consult with part-time and adjunct faculty who teach in that area to ensure horizontal consistency across course sections' overall goals and objectives. The BSSW Program Committee will periodically review the course curriculum during faculty meetings or retreats. The faculty will also ensure that the course goals and objectives reflect program curriculum goals.

### **CSWE Social Work Competencies (as adopted by the BSSW Program)**

CSWE mandates that each accredited undergraduate social work program address competencies and behavioral outcomes outlined by the CSWE's EPAS (Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards). These competencies and outcomes are available on the CSWE's website ([link here](#)). The competencies and outcomes describe how an undergraduate social work curriculum should help students develop knowledge, skills, and values related to the social work profession.

**Competency 1 - Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior:** Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand ethical decision-making frameworks and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in interprofessional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

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

**Competency 2 - Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice:** Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors, including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation, as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers:

- Apply and communicate the understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels

- Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences
- Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies

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

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

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

**Competency 4 - Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice:** Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

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

**Competency 5 - Engage in Policy Practice:** Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels, and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers:

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal levels that impact well-being, service delivery, and access to social services
- Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services
- Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice

**Competency 6 - Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities:** Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

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

**Competency 7- Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities:** Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

- Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies

- Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies
- Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies

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

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

- Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance the capacities of clients and constituencies
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies
- Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes
- Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies
- Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals

**Competency 9 - Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities:** Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

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

**BSSW Courses**

Since the BSSW is a professional degree, there is a linear and developmental progression through the UAB BSSW Program that emphasizes mastery of a liberal arts education prior to beginning professional, generalist-level social work courses and culminates with a full-time, one-term field practicum that serves as a capstone course integrating academic knowledge with generalist practice experience. Specifically, there are three distinct areas of courses in the formal BSSW curriculum design, providing students with the knowledge, skills, and values needed for generalist social work practice. The three curriculum areas include:

1. Social Work Foundation
2. Social Work Professional Program
3. Social Work Field Education Program

### ***Social Work Foundation Courses***

Beginning-level social work courses (SW 100, SW 200, SW 207, and SW 222/222L) provide opportunities to learn about the social work profession, develop self-assessment skills, and prepare for practice courses. Additionally, these courses are open to all students, including non-majors and minor social work students. Students who are planning to major in social work are required to take all of the introductory classes. When students apply to the professional program, they must have completed all courses or are taking these courses when applying to the program. Majors should also be aware that these courses must be taken and passed with a C or better before any upper-level courses are taken.

### ***Social Work Foundation Course Descriptions***

**SW 100 Introduction to Social Work (3 hours):** This course introduces students to the value-based profession of social work. Students will have the opportunity to learn about social work's history, mission, professional values, and theoretical frameworks (e.g., the systems/ecological perspective). Furthermore, students will explore areas in generalist practice and the varied roles and responsibilities of the social work profession. 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 200 Professional Communication in Social Work (3 hours):** This course introduces the techniques of professional writing for social work practitioners. The course is designed to enhance professional and academic writing skills. Students will study how to craft narratives for funding applications, case records, and advocacy materials. Additionally, students will complete a technology module focusing on information technology skills such as word processing, using presentation software, and communication skills with digital and social media.

**SW 207 Racism, Sexism and Other Isms (3 hours):** This course is intended to provide students with opportunities to examine various aspects of culture and cultural diversity as those aspects impact on the delivery of social services. The course also examines the impact of discrimination and oppression on various social service consumer populations.



**SW 222 Social Work Values (3 hours):** This course offers an introduction to the helping profession of social work with service-learning opportunities in local social service agencies. A didactic classroom and service-learning lab that integrates field observation with self-awareness-related values, professionalism, and ethical practice. At the successful conclusion of this course, students may apply for social work major status. This course must be taken together with SW 222L (1 hour).

**SW 222L Values Lab (1 hour):** This course offers an introduction to the helping profession of social work with service learning and simulation opportunities in local social service agencies. The service-learning lab integrates field observation with self-awareness-related values, professionalism, and ethical practice (SL). This course must be taken together with SW 222 (3 hours).

See Table 1 for an outline of the proposed plan of study for a BSSW major during their first two years at UAB.

**Table 1. Proposed Program of Study for an Undergraduate Major in Social Work – First Two Years as a Pre-Professional Student**

<b>First Year</b>			
<b>First Term</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Second Term</b>	<b>Hours</b>
EH 101	3	EH 102	3
MA 110	3	HY 121	3
HY 120	3	SOC 100	3
PY 101	3	SW 100	3
Core Curriculum Area II: Fine Art <sup>1</sup>	3	Core Curriculum Area II: Humanities	3
	<b>15</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Second Year</b>			
<b>First Term</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Second Term</b>	<b>Hours</b>
SW 200	3	SW 222	3
SW 207	3	SW 222L	1
BY 101 & BY 102	4	ANTH 101	3
EC 210 or 211	3	Core Curriculum Area III: Natural Science with Laboratory	4
Core Curriculum Area II: Literature <sup>2</sup>	3	Core Curriculum Area II: Humanities or Fine Art	3
	<b>16</b>		<b>14</b>

<sup>1</sup> Select One: ARH 101, ARH 203, ARH 204, ARH 206, MU 120, THR 100, THR 105, or THR 200.

<sup>2</sup> Select One: EH 216, EH 217, EH 218, EH 221, EH 222, EH 223, or EH 224.

### ***Courses in the Social Work Professional Program***

Having completed the foundation courses in the BSSW Curriculum (SW 100, SW 200, SW222/222L, and SW 207), students will have learned many fundamental elements of social work practice. The course in the BSSW Professional Program comprises the specific knowledge bases, theoretical frames, methods, techniques, and skills that BSSW social workers use in generalist practice. Social work values underpin the aggregation of courses and emphasize social work's mission. According to the NASW Code of Ethics ([link to website](#)):

“The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. In addition, fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living (para. 2).”

Goal-specific content is woven throughout the courses in the professional program to facilitate the 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. In addition, all courses foster the 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.

Two sequential two-semester practice classes (SW 322/322L & SW 422/422L) integrate and operationalize theories, methods, and skills needed for effective beginning-level generalist practice. The primary goal of the sequential practice courses is for students to acquire the ability to utilize social work 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 recognizing our world's increasing complexity and interconnectedness and incorporating an ecosystems perspective that acknowledges nonlinearity. Strategies that include interventions at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels are considered holistically rather than separate or isolated interventions. Both practice courses emphasize the importance of understanding and respecting cultural diversity in our work with client systems. SW 322 and SW 422 may not be taken in the same semester. SW 322, 322L, 422, and 422L must be completed before proceeding to the Field Practicum in Social Work (SW 490/494).

The courses in the BSSW Professional Program are divided into the following two sequences, one for the third year-level and one for the fourth year-level:

- Third year-level sequence courses:

- SW 302: Social Welfare Policy Analysis
- SW 315: Human Behavior and the Social Environment
- SW 320: Social Work Research
- SW 321: Statistics for Social Work Research
- SW 322/SW 322L: Practice of Social Work I and Service-Learning Lab
- One Social Work Elective Course
- Fourth year-level sequence courses:
  - SW 422/SW 422L: Practice of Social Work II and Service-Learning Lab
  - SW 490: Practicum in Social Work
  - SW 494: Field Practicum Seminar
  - One Social Work Elective Course

Table 2 shows a proposed program of study for an undergraduate major in social work after acceptance to the BSSW Professional Program.

**Table 2 - Proposed Program of Study for an Undergraduate Major in Social Work – Two years as a student in the BSSW Professional Program**

<b>Third Year</b>			
<b>First Term</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Second Term</b>	<b>Hours</b>
PSC 101 or 221	3	SW 302	3
General Electives	12-13	SW 322	3
		SW 322L	1
		SW 320	3
		Social Work Elective	3
	<b>15-16</b>		<b>16</b>
<b>Fourth Year</b>			
<b>First Term</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Second Term</b>	<b>Hours</b>
SW 315	3	SW 490	9
SW 321	3	SW 494	3
SW 422	3		
SW 422L	1		
Social Work (SW) Elective	3		
General Elective	3-4		
	<b>16-17</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Total credit hours: 120</b>			



Along with taking these courses, students must have the minimum GPAs (2.25 overall GPA; 2.5 Social Work GPA) until graduating from the BSSW Program.

For the fourth year-level course sequence, students will not be allowed to take additional courses with SW 490 and 494. Exceptions may be made for students who have a documented hardship. Students must submit an Additional Course Request for Field Placement Form to the BSSW Field Coordinator (available in the BSSW Field Education Student Handbook), who will review the request and notify the student of determination during the Student-Field Faculty Initial meeting. Students are not allowed to take SW 422/422L simultaneously as a field placement. Students must also meet all other requirements to enter field practicum.

***Service-Learning Labs in BSSW Program***

Service Learning is a best practice teaching and learning method in higher education that integrates community service with academic coursework by focusing on critical, reflective thinking. Through participation in service related to current social problems and critical reflection of your experiences, social work students gain a more profound and practical understanding of the course content, and a broader appreciation of how social workers engage with groups, communities, and organizations. Through service-learning, students gain knowledge and skills from the instructor, course readings, the client systems served, and the community agency personnel. The following lab courses require service-learning hours as part of the BSSW Curriculum:

- SW222L Social Work Values Lab (20 - 25 hours of service learning required)
- SW322L Social Work Practice I Lab (20 - 25 hours of service learning required)
- SW422L Social Work Practice II Lab (20 - 25 hours of service learning required)

To successfully move through the BSSW Curriculum, students must take the required service-learning lab in conjunction (i.e., same semester) with the following required practice-based courses:

<b>Course</b>	<b>Service-Learning Lab</b>	<b>Additional Degree Requirements</b>
SW 222 Social Work Values	SW222L Social Work Values Lab	Admission to the BSSW Professional Program requires successful completion of both the course and the lab, with a grade of C or higher in both courses.
SW 322 Social Work Practice I	SW322L Social Work Practice I Lab	N/A.
SW422 Social Work Practice II	SW422L Social Work Practice II Lab	Admission to the BSSW Field Program requires successful completion of both the course and the lab, with a grade of C or higher in both courses.

All service-learning placements in these courses are developed by faculty in the Department of Social Work. All students in the BSSW Program must complete three service-learning placements for 60 - 75 service-learning hours in connection with the courses mentioned earlier. Only service-learning hours completed in connection with the course (i.e., during the semester the student takes the course) will count toward their service-learning hours. Travel time to and from the service-learning agency setting or another project site is not to be included in the service-learning hour count.

Students must complete the required number of service-learning hours for each lab in-person, as arranged by the course instructor in partnership with the service-learning agency. Additionally, students may be required to attend in-person meetings for the course such as an on-campus orientation or meeting with the instructor.

Suppose students have scheduling conflicts due to other classes, jobs, or family responsibilities and cannot commit to completing the required hours of service-learning. In that case, they should not take a course until they can make the required commitment for the laboratory experience. Students who may need course accommodations due to a disability should meet the instructor to discuss their needs. Students with disabilities must be registered with Disability Support Services (DSS) and provide an accommodation request letter before receiving academic adjustments. Appointments or additional information are available at the UAB DSS website ([link here](#)).

The UAB Department of Social Work collaborates with the UAB Office of Service Learning to develop and maintain service-learning as part of its BSSW curriculum. Students are covered with student professional liability insurance through UAB. Additional information is available on the website for the Office of Service-Learning ([website link](#)).

Students living 60 miles or more away (approximately one hour of driving time) from the UAB Campus, defined by the distance between the campus and their permanent address listed in Banner, may request an alternative service-learning placement. To request an alternative placement closer to their home, students must contact the course instructor within the first two weeks of class with their request.

### ***Social Work Professional Program Course Descriptions***

**SW 302 Social Welfare Policy Analysis (3 hours):** This course introduces analytical frameworks with which to evaluate contemporary U.S. social welfare policy. It is designed for students with basic knowledge of the history of social welfare. The course also examines the relationship between current policy and the practice of social work today. Additionally explored is the real-world impact of current policy on the well-being of individuals and communities within a social justice context.

**SW 315 Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3 hours):** This course is designed to prepare students to understand human development across the different levels of social systems. Content also includes discussions of how factors such as social class, sexual orientation, gender, physical ability, age, race, ethnicity, and culture influence human development and behavior. Students acquire knowledge and understanding of human beings as individuals, as members of families and other social groupings, and as members of organizations, communities, and larger societal and cultural collectives.

**SW 320 Social Work Research (3 hours):** This course introduces students to research theory, methods, and tools; and to expand their appreciation of 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, will be taught in the context of ethical standards governing evaluation and research as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics. This course is a part of the

core curriculum of the social work program. Quantitative literacy is a significant component of this course.

**SW 321 Statistics for Social Work Research (3 hours):** This course provides the context for understanding the analysis and interpretation of quantitative data. Descriptive and inferential statistics will be covered, along with hypothesis testing and statistical significance. Students will become more familiarized with research-informed practice and practice-informed research. Quantitative Literacy is a significant component of this course. Prerequisites: SW 320 [Min Grade: C]

**SW 322 Practice of Social Work I (3 hours):** This course provides a generalist model application of social work with a concentration on the micro-level that provides the student with the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills, understanding, and competence needed for interventions at the beginning professional level. This course includes a service-learning lab that allows students to practice a solution-focused relationship with emphasis on self-awareness, cultural awareness, active listening, interviewing, and recording skills at all systems levels. Prerequisites: SW 222 (3) and SW 222L (1) or SW 222 (4) [Min Grade: C]. Corequisite: This course must be taken together with SW 322L (1 hour). Note: SW 322/322L is for students who have been accepted into the professional program only.

**SW 322L Practice I Lab (1 hour):** This service-learning lab focuses on the generalist model application of social work practice at the micro-level. The lab emphasizes systems theory and strengths perspectives to examine individuals and families and gives students the opportunity to discuss and practice necessary skills for practice. This lab allows students to practice working with individuals and/or families in local social service agencies, using ethical and professional standards based on the NASW Code of Ethics (SL). Students will complete service-learning hours and/or simulation experiences. Corequisites: SW 322 (3).

**SW 422 Practice of Social Work II (3 hours):** This course focuses on the generalist model application of social work practice at the mezzo and macro levels. The course emphasizes systems theory and strengths perspectives to examine groups, communities, and organizations and gives students the opportunity to discuss and practice necessary skills for practice. This course includes a service-learning lab that allows students to practice working with groups, communities, and organizations in local social service agencies, using ethical and professional standards based on the NASW Code of Ethics. (SL). Prerequisites: SW 322 (3) and SW 322L (1) or SW 322 (4) [Min Grade: C]. Corequisite: This course must be taken together with SW 422L (1 hour).

**SW 422 Practice II Lab (1 hour):** This service-learning lab focuses on the generalist model application of social work practice at the mezzo and macro levels. The lab emphasizes systems theory and strengths perspectives to examine groups, communities, and organizations and gives students the opportunity to discuss and practice necessary skills for practice. This lab allows students to practice working with groups, communities, and organizations in local social service agencies, using ethical and professional standards based on the NASW Code of Ethics (SL). Students will complete service-learning hours and/or simulation experiences. Corequisites: SW 422.

### ***Courses in the Social Work Field Education Program***

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

Students apply for the field practicum (SW 490) when they have completed or are enrolled in Practice of Social Work II (SW 422) and Practice II Lab (SW 422L). Time is allotted in SW 422/422L to guide students through the completion of the application process and provide a beginning orientation to field practicum. Information about how to apply for field practicum is detailed in the BSSW Field Student Handbook.

### ***Social Work Field Education Program Course Descriptions***

**SW 490 Practicum in Social Work (9 hours):** This course integrates social work knowledge and values with the application of professional helping skills. Students participate in a full-time placement in approved social service agencies under the supervision of professional social workers. Prerequisites: SW 422 (3) and SW 422L (1) or SW 422 (4) [Min Grade: C]. Corequisites: This course must be taken together with SW 494.

**SW 494 Field Practicum Seminar (3 hours):** This capstone course in Social Work is an integrative seminar that must be taken concurrently with SW 490 (Practicum in Social Work). The seminar reviews basic social work tools that will enhance the students' work with client systems by providing opportunities to increase their knowledge of the social work profession, practice collegiate collaboration for the benefit of clients, and engage in strategies for problem-solving. The seminar also provides a forum to review students' practicum experiences, discuss social work practice issues, and reflect on the relationship of these experiences to their overall social work education program. Corequisites: SW 490.

### ***Electives in Social Work***

The social work program offers a variety of electives designed to augment students' knowledge in specific social work areas and fields of practice. Social work students are required to complete two electives. Here is a list of the Program's elective courses:

- SW 208 Disaster Preparedness
- SW 278 Special Topics in Social Work
- SW 279 Special Topic in Social Work – Service Learning
- SW 339 Child Welfare in Social Work
- SW 378 Special Topics in Social Work
- SW 379 Special Topic in Social Work – Service Learning
- SW 428 Medical and Mental Health Social Work
- SW 452 Birmingham Neighborhood Studies



- SW 454 Working with Addiction and Recovery
- SW 478 Special Topics in Social Work
- SW 499 Independent Study

### ***Elective Course Descriptions***

**SW 208 Disaster Preparedness (3 hours):** This course uses a multi-disciplinary perspective on aspects of domestic disaster preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters. This course provides a review of current recommendations on disaster preparedness, local, state, and federal response networks and organizations, and psychosocial aspects of the response, including sheltering, crisis intervention, and psychological first aid. This course does not cover international issues.

**SW 278 Special Topics in Social Work (3 Hours):** In this course, students will learn special topics in social work. Students will discuss the history and the current status of social issues. Students will learn policies and programs available to address the special topics.

**SW 279 Special Topics in Social Work – Service-Learning (3 Hours):** In this course, students will explore special topics in social work. Students will discuss the history and the current status of social issues. Students will learn policies and programs available to address the special topics. Students in this course will complete a service-learning project in consultation with one or more community-based organizations. A combination of research and community engagement will provide students with a totally unique experience in scholarship.

**SW 339 Child Welfare in Social Work (3 hours):** This course addresses issues children face in today's society and identify possible intervention strategies. This course will also identify current trends in service delivery and relevant policy issues concerning the health and well-being of children. Students will have the opportunity to examine the diversity of families in today's society to better understand and appreciate the roles children play in their family systems.

**SW 378 Special Topics in Social Work (3 Hours):** The purpose of this special topics course is to expose students to topics that are contemporary issues in social work. These topics are dynamic and change depending on what is happening in the broader society. They present immediate challenges to practitioners and often involve complex policy considerations that provide space for advocacy work in the macro practice of social work. This course will incorporate advanced scholarship through the in-depth review of recent studies on a variety of contemporary topics.

**SW 379 Special Topics in Social Work – Service-Learning (3 Hours):** The purpose of this special topics course is to expose students to topics that are contemporary issues in social work. These topics are dynamic and change depending on what is happening in the broader society. They present immediate challenges to practitioners and often involve complex policy considerations that provide space for advocacy work in the macro practice of social work. This course will incorporate advanced scholarship through the in-depth review of recent studies on a variety of contemporary topics. Students in this course will complete a service-learning project in consultation with one or more community-

based organizations. A combination of research and community engagement will provide students with a totally unique experience in scholarship.

**SW 428 Medical and Mental Health Social Work (3 hours):** This course provides an introduction to and overview of working with people called “patients” in medical and mental health. Through this course, students will obtain a basic understanding of how to effectively assist individuals, groups, families, and communities impacted by various illnesses. The role of the social worker on the care team in various settings will be examined. The course also examines special population groups, resource allocation, service delivery, and legal and ethical considerations.

**SW 452 Birmingham Neighborhood Studies (3 hours):** This is an interdisciplinary course that explores the visual and material culture, history, and urban development of four Birmingham neighborhoods in transition. It emphasizes community engagement through an active study of Birmingham’s historic neighborhoods. Students will study and learn about the history of select Birmingham neighborhoods from different disciplinary lenses (social work, history, and art history), examine artifacts and documents related to them, and engage and collaborate with community members in order to develop written and creative projects based on their research. Projects will be presented at an exhibition at the end of the semester.

**SW 454 Working in Addiction and Recovery (3 hours):** This course examines the impact of substance use disorder on individuals, families, groups, organizations, institutions, and communities. This course is recommended for students who want to expand their knowledge and sensitivity to understand the special problems that substance use disorder brings to society. Course content includes identification of the various drugs of abuse, major theories of addiction, and examination of the psychological and physiological consequences of substance use disorder.

**SW 478 Special Topics in Social Work (3 hours):** Study of current issues in social work.

**SW 499 Independent Study II (1-3 hours):** This course provides opportunities for a student to pursue their specific interests in social issues and topics. Students will work closely with a faculty member to design readings, assignments, and/or activities to meet their learning goals. The instructor’s permission is required.

### **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 322/322L and SW 422/422L). In addition, social work minors may not enroll in any courses or credit hours involved in field placement (SW 490 and SW 494). Finally, 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 BSSW Program Director to discuss options. Students who seek a minor in social work should make an appointment with CAS Academic Advisor for course scheduling.

## **Getting Involved as a BSSW Student – Rights and Opportunities**

Undergraduate social work majors have various opportunities to get involved with the larger learning environment at UAB and the professional social work community. Being involved can range from participating in the formulation and modification of policies that affect academic and student affairs to organizing around their interests or receiving recognition for their academic achievements.

Getting involved also means building human relationships. Recognizing that building human relationships is essential to healthy social functioning, the BSSW Program and faculty believe that human relationships are the cornerstone of the social work perspective that we strive to support and model for our students. Thus, the BSSW Programs partners with individuals and groups from different academic units and community organizations to encourage and facilitate various opportunities for social work students to participate in organizations, activities, community volunteer experiences and strive for honors and awards. These opportunities also help students demonstrate a commitment to professional development, which is integral to our ethical standard of service to others and enhances employability for graduates.

### **Advisory Committee for the UAB BSSW Program**

The UAB BSSW Program seeks input and engagement from students, community practitioners, practicum field supervisors, university-wide colleagues, and other constituents to improve the Program. It is also an opportunity for constituents to participate in forming and modifying policies that affect the UAB BSSW Program. The Program operates one advisory committee to assist with this process.

The BSSW Advisory Committee aims to assist the BSSW Program in curriculum planning, program development, recruitment, and fund-raising. The BSSW Advisory Committee is comprised of the social work faculty, students with a Social Work Major or a Social Work Minor from different grade-level cohorts, alumni, field instructors, practitioners, and other faculty and staff from across the UAB campus with a vested interest in the BSSW Social Work Program. Members can be nominated by a BSSW Faculty member or self-nominate to the Committee. The Committee meets at least twice a year and will be chaired by a member of the BSSW Program Committee. Members are appointed for two-year terms. Obligations of committee members include attending meetings, reviewing Program documentation as needed, and providing feedback to the Program.

### **Social Work Honors Program**

The Social Work Honors Program provides preparation for graduate study or advanced professional careers in social work. It is designed to enhance students' problem-solving skills, critical and independent thinking, and application of research/evidence-based practice. Benefits include a one-on-one mentoring with experienced social work faculty, the opportunity to participate in professional presentations, and exposure to enhance understanding of the social work field and practice and having "With Honors in Social Work" added to your academic transcript once you complete the program. Students must meet eligibility requirements which are available in the *Social Work Honors Program Student Handbook*, and on the UAB Department of Social Work website ([link to website](#)).

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

The SSWO's purpose is to stimulate interest in social work within the University and community. SSWO holds regular meetings, sponsor activities and community projects throughout the year, and organize student trips to attend area social work conferences. In addition, SSWO officers serve as mentors for current and interested students, providing insight into upcoming classes, practicum information, and other aspects of the Social Work program. Additionally, the SSWO organization serves as the student advisory committee for the BSSW Program. Finally, SSWO publishes a newsletter to inform social work students about upcoming events. BSSW students who wish to join the SSWO will find membership applications in Appendix C of this Handbook. For more information and questions, check SSWO's FaceBook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts. You can also learn more about SSWO by contacting the Faculty Advisor and reading about the Program at the Department's website ([link to website](#)).

### **UAB Social Work Alumni Association**

The UAB Social Work Alumni Association was organized in 2004 under the leadership of Lisa Higginbotham and Margie Gilbert. New graduates of the BSSW Program (within one year of graduation) join for \$15. Students can contact Ms. Grace Dugger at [gracedugger@gmail.com](mailto:gracedugger@gmail.com) for more information.

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

Our professional association encourages student membership and participation through substantially reduced annual dues and gives students access to the organization's scholarly journal, Social Work. In addition, members receive the NASW News, a monthly newspaper with the latest practice and policy information, and an employment section. NASW also offers 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 can be obtained online at their website ([link to website](#)).

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

All universities and colleges in Alabama and Mississippi that have social work programs (BSSW, MSW, Ph.D.) 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, the consortium sponsors an academic conference for students and educators in the fall. Student papers and faculty papers are selected for presentation and grouped logically into panels. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the conference to develop their commitment to continuing education and professional development. The conference is affordable and within driving distance from Birmingham. Please visit the Conference's website ([link to website](#)).

### **Alabama Conference of Social Work**

BSSW students are encouraged to join this organization comprised of social work practitioners, educators, and students. Each year, the organization sponsors a conference designed to increase practice knowledge and facilitate networking among social work community members. Faculty members have membership information. In addition, students who plan to practice in Alabama are encouraged to

participate in forming professional relationships with professional social workers. Please visit the Conference's website ([link to website](#)).

### **Opportunities for Honors, Awards, and Scholarships in the BSSW Program**

Students nominated for each award (i.e., Dean's Award, Outstanding Departmental Student award, Norman Eggleston award) will be notified via email by the Chair of the Department of Social Work's Award Committee. In addition, students may be required to submit additional supporting materials. The Department's Award Committee will review each nominee, making a final recommendation for each award. For other scholarship information, please review the website for UAB's Scholarship System ([link to website](#)).

#### ***Dean's Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Student***

This award is a prestigious award given to students in the College of Arts and Sciences. Students must meet the following criteria to be eligible for nomination:

- GPA 3.0 minimum in work attempted at UAB.
- An accumulation of 90 semester hours of satisfactory work (i.e., senior-level status).
- Completion of 12 hours of advanced work at UAB.
- All persons completing work for the degree since the last regular commencement are considered eligible.

In addition to these criteria, a student must demonstrate the following:

- Employment
- Publications or exhibits or creative performances and activities (e.g., publications or creative activities including books, articles in referenced journals, chapters in books, concerts, plays performed, art shows, etc.)
- Presentations at professional meetings
- Leadership positions: Positions of administrative or managerial responsibility within any UAB approved organization, community service organization, or professional society
- Community activities: Participation by a student in those services which are non-campus related and community-based in origin. Activities for which individuals received a fixed compensation will not be considered.
- Academic awards or recognition (Including membership in honorary societies and professional achievements)
- Non-scholastic awards or special recognition
- Service to department, school, or university
- Extracurricular activities: Participation by a student in an activity approved by UAB, either academic, non-academic, or professional, which is not required for academic credit.

### ***Department of Social Work Outstanding Undergraduate Student Award***

Each academic year, one undergraduate social work student who will graduate during the current academic year is named the "Departmental Outstanding Undergraduate Student." In addition, the social work faculty nominates an individual who has achieved an outstanding grade point average and has also demonstrated scholarship and contributions by participating 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 BSSW 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.

### ***Phi Alpha Social Work International Honor Society***

UAB's Department of Social Work holds the Eta Beta chapter charter for social work's international honor society, Phi Alpha. A BSSW student must have a 3.0 overall grade point average and a 3.6 social work grade point average in required social work courses to qualify for induction. Eligible students are notified by letter and are inducted at a reception held in their honor. The distinction recognizes students who have attained excellence in scholarship. Please visit the Society's website ([link to website](#)) for more information.

**Appendices for the BSSW Student Handbook**

**Appendix A - Faculty Observation Form for Admission to BSSW Professional & Field Programs**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Final Course Grade/Grade to date: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Using the items below, please rate your agreement with the student’s behavior and demonstrated abilities on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). For ratings of 1 or 2, please provide comments below.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Student attends class regularly.	4	3	2	1
2. Student completes assignments on time.	4	3	2	1
3. Student contributes to classroom discussions.	4	3	2	1
4. Student submits quality work following the assignment guidelines.	4	3	2	1
5. Student behaves appropriately during class.	4	3	2	1
6. Student demonstrates an ability to relate to people with warmth and empathy, communicating feelings appropriately.	4	3	2	1
7. Student demonstrates an ability to handle problems in daily living; to appropriately deal with stress and reality.	4	3	2	1
8. Student demonstrates the ability to accept constructive criticism and suggestion in good faith by persons qualified to provide feedback.	4	3	2	1
9. Student demonstrates the ability to express thoughts with clarity in both written and verbal form.	4	3	2	1

Comments (please explain rating of 1 or 2):



**Appendix B - BSSW Professional Program Essay Rubric**

	<b>OUTSTANDING</b>	<b>ABOVE AVERAGE</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>NEEDS HELP/ NOT EVIDENT</b>
<b>CONNECTIONS TO EXPERIENCE CONNECTS RELEVANT EXPERIENCE AND ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE OF SOCIAL WORK</b>	Effectively selects and develops examples of life experiences, drawn from a variety of contexts (e.g., family life, artistic participation, civic involvement, work experience), to illuminate concepts/ theories/ frameworks of social work.	Compares life experiences and social work to infer differences, as well as similarities, and acknowledge perspectives other than own.	Identifies connections between life experiences and social work, and ideas perceived as similar and related to own interests.	No or few connections between life experience and social work, and/or ideas perceived as dissimilar or unrelated to own interests.
<b>PROFESSIONAL SELF-AWARENESS DEMONSTRATES A DEVELOPING SENSE OF SELF AS A LEARNER IN SOCIAL WORK</b>	Evaluates changes in own learning over time, recognizing the complex contextual factors of social work (e.g., works with ambiguity and risk, deals with frustration, considers ethical frameworks).	Articulates strengths and challenges (within specific performances or events) to increase effectiveness in the different contexts of social work (through increased self-awareness).	Describes own performances with general descriptors of success and failure within the context of social work.	Describes own performances only as a success or failure outside of the context of social work.
<b>WRITING MECHANICS</b>	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the essay has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

**Appendix C- Student Social Work Organization (SSWO) Membership Application**

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Name	
Telephone Number	
Best Time to Call	
Email Address	
Expected Graduation Date	

What types of activities would you like to be involved in? Please check all boxes that interest you:

- Fundraising activities
- Planning a faculty/student meet and greet (open house)
- Coordinating guest lecturers and site visits
- Planning an ongoing community service project
- Planning a reception for SW graduates
- Recruiting new members

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The membership fee is \$15.00. Payments can be made by money order, personal check, or cashier's check. Make check payable to UAB Student Social Work Organization (SSWO).

To mail the membership application and the membership fee:

The University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Department of Social Work  
University Hall  
1402 10<sup>th</sup> Ave South  
Birmingham, AL 35294

Attn: SSWO Faculty Advisor

**Appendix D – UAB Department of Social Work Field Trip Release Form**

**UAB Department of Social Work  
FIELD TRIP RELEASE FORM**

I, the undersigned Participant, am applying for permission to participate in the \_\_\_\_\_ (hereinafter referred to as “The Trip”) to be undertaken \_\_\_\_\_ and sponsored by the University of Alabama at Birmingham Department of Social Work. I, the undersigned participant or Parent/Guardian where applicable, on behalf of myself, my successors, heirs, assigns, executors and administrators forever release and discharge the Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the Department of Social Work, and all affiliated, associated or subsidiary entities and their officers, directors, partners, employees, members and agents associated with the sponsorship of The Trip, from and against any and all claims, demands, judgments or causes of action, including costs and attorneys’ fees by any parties for loss, damage, injury (including death), fines or penalties of any kind either to persons or property that arise out of participation in The Trip.

I realize that travel is a potentially dangerous activity involving risks of personal injury and/or property damage and do knowingly assume all responsibility for such risk. I warrant that I am in good health and have no physical, mental or emotional condition that would prevent or limit my participation in The Trip. I further warrant that I have provided \_\_\_\_\_ with emergency contact information and hereby authorize representatives of UAB to authorize emergency medical treatment should the need arise. I understand that I will be responsible for payment for those services

I further agree that my name and any photographs, pictures, slides and/or movies (or reproductions of same) taken or made by the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the Department of Social Work, and all other sponsors in connection with my involvement in the Trip may be used in any manner by the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the Department of Social Work or any other sponsor or associated entity.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian if Participant is under the age of 19 on the date signed

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street, City, State, and Zip)

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_