

Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) Program

Student Handbook

2025-2026



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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, with over 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 seen expansive growth in 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 various 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 profession of social work. 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 and vulnerable populations in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, emphasizing human rights for populations at risk. The program encourages social work career development through affiliation with professional organizations, the 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:

1. To graduate entry-level social workers who are professional, ethical, and competent to work with all client systems with an emphasis on vulnerable populations.
2. To prepare students to pursue and excel in advanced social work education and lifelong learning for professional social work practice
3. To develop students' capacity to apply knowledge and skills from research and policy practice to guide and evaluate generalist, evidence-informed and equity-based social work.
4. To educate students regarding social, racial, economic and environmental justice advocacy for human rights that enhance social functioning and well-being for all.

Governance and Faculty of the 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 on 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 in Social Work degree 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. Students should consult their assigned academic advisor, student services office personnel, or the BSSW Program Director for additional advice and clarification of policies and procedures. Please remember 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 in 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 degree's professional nature and 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' licenses or certifications complement the educational requirement to shape social work's professional standards and identity.

As prescribed by CSWE in its *2022 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 the values, standards, and principles described in the profession's professional code of ethics, a knowledge base of theory and intervention methods, 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 with 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.

There are many Social work practice fields spanning the range of social functioning needs 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 and 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 the profession's 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 must assess their critical thinking abilities and expressive communication skills (i.e., verbal, non-verbal, written, electronic, etc).

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 indicate the 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 to help them hone 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 applying 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 the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners for most current fees.

To maintain licensure, LBSWs must receive supervision from social workers licensed at the LMSW or LICSW level with three hours of CE in Supervision levels. 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 and 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 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 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 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](#)). A directory of accredited MSW programs can also 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. This Handbook notes specific policies governing the application processes for the BSSW Professional Program. 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 lists 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, which is 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 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

UAB is an equal opportunity Employer - EEO/AA/Disability/Veteran Employer. UAB prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. Individuals may report concerns or questions to UAB's Assistant Vice President and Senior Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX notice of nondiscrimination is located on the UAB's Title IX Office website ([link to webpage](#)).

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 that is 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.

Shared Values Statement

Collaboration, integrity, respect, and excellence are core values of our institution and affirm what it means to be a UAB community member. A key foundation of UAB is diversity. At UAB, everybody counts every day. UAB is committed to fostering a respectful, accessible, and open campus environment. We value every member of our campus and the richly different perspectives, characteristics, and life experiences that contribute to UAB's unique environment. UAB values and cultivates access, engagement, and opportunity in our research, learning, clinical, and work environments. Our College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) and Department of Social Work aim to create an open and welcoming environment and to support the success of all UAB community members. For more information about these shared values and diversity programs at UAB, visit the Office of Access & Engagement ([link to website](#)).

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, and the criteria for admission to the BSSW Professional Program and how the admission applications are evaluated are included. 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 in 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 professional behavior (see the section on Professional Performance Criteria in this handbook for more details) through classroom comportment in SW 100, SW 200, SW 207, 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 the BSSW Professional Program are accepted three times during a calendar year, during the Fall semester (September), Spring semester (February), and Summer semester (May). 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 College of Arts & Sciences (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, the CAS Social Work Academic Advisor will provide each applicant with information about how to apply to the professional program and complete the Curriculum for Social Work Majors Checklist with each student.
- 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 with 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 and 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 BSSW

Program 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 CAS 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 the following must be fulfilled: 1) Both overall GPA and social work GPA meet the criteria; 2) All foundation courses (SW 100, SW 200, SW 207, and SW 222/222L) have been completed with a C or better; 3) A positive pattern of professional behavior as demonstrated by classroom comportment; and 4) 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 for Admission to the BSSW Professional Program

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, the end of March for the Spring semester, and

the end of June for the Summer semester. The CAS Social Work Academic Advisor (from the College of Arts & Sciences [CAS] Office of Academic Advising) will also be notified of the students' application status to ensure students' ability to register for courses in the upcoming semesters. In addition, the student 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](#)).

Academic and Professional Performance Standards – Continuation in the BSSW Professional Program

The BSSW Program has identified academic and professional performance standards that students must continue to meet after admission to the BSSW Professional Program in order to matriculate and graduate with an undergraduate degree in social work from UAB. These criteria are used to evaluate all social work students at the mid-point of their time in the Professional Program (i.e., while students take 300-level required courses) through the Mid-Point Professional Program Review. In addition to this scheduled review, the Program Director may initiate an ad hoc review at any time if significant concerns arise regarding a student's academic performance, professional behavior, or adherence to the values and ethics of the social work profession. Ad hoc reviews follow the same procedures as the Mid-Point Review and may result in supportive intervention, development of a remediation plan, or initiation of the program's formal review process, depending on the nature and severity of the concerns.

Mid-Point Professional Program Review

The Mid-Point Professional Program Review is a required evaluation for all BSSW students enrolled in designated 300-level courses. The Mid-Point Professional Program Review serves as a critical checkpoint in the BSSW curriculum, ensuring that students are on track for successful progression in the program. This review verifies that students are meeting the academic standards required for continuation, including GPA and course completion requirements.

The Mid-Point Professional Program Review is conducted at the conclusion of specific 300-level courses in the BSSW curriculum. These include SW 302 Human Behavior in the Social Environment I, SW 315 Social Work Practice I, SW 320 Social Welfare Policy I, SW 321 Social Welfare Policy II, SW 322 Human Behavior in the Social Environment II, and SW 322L Human Behavior in the Social Environment II Lab. Completion of these courses provides faculty and the Program Director with an opportunity to evaluate both academic progress and professional comportment at a key stage in the student's progression toward advanced coursework and field education.

The BSSW Program Director conducts the review using the Program's academic and professional performance criteria.

Students will receive an email to their official UAB email account indicating the status of their continuation in the BSSW program at the end of either the semester that they are completing their 300-level courses. The CAS Social Work Academic Advisor (from the College of Arts & Sciences [CAS] Office of Academic Advising) will also be notified of the students' application status to ensure students' ability to register for courses in the upcoming semesters. Additionally, students have the right to file a grievance regarding the decision of the Mid-Point Review. 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](#)).

Academic Performance Criteria

Expectations regarding academic performance in the UAB BSSW Program are closely related to academic policies and standards established by UAB (and outlined in the UAB Undergraduate Catalog) and include striving to achieve high academic standards in all assignments, projects, and examinations rather than being satisfied with the minimum grade.

In all required Social Work Courses, the grade earned in the courses must be C or higher; in courses where the grade earned is less than C, the course must be repeated until that minimum grade is achieved.

Additionally, 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.

Evaluation of Academic Performance

Assessment of student academic performance is based on input from multiple sources, including academic performance demonstrated by grades reflected in University records such as the Unofficial Transcript and Degree Evaluation available through Self-Service Banner; observations of individual functioning and interaction with others in the classroom; and reports provided by practitioners in community social service agencies during service-learning and/or field instruction experiences. As part of this assessment process, all students enrolled in designated 300-level courses participate in the **Mid-Point Professional Program Review**. This review evaluates both academic progress and professional comportment to ensure readiness for advanced coursework and field education. It includes the completion of Faculty Observation Forms by course instructors and a formal review of academic records by the BSSW Program Director. Additionally, students are required to meet with the CAS Social Work Academic Advisor every semester, who reviews academic standards with the student and refers any concerns regarding academic or professional performance to the BSSW Program Director for follow-up.

The following strategies are used to inform students about expected levels of academic performance:

- Each course syllabus explicitly describes the criteria for evaluation of performance in the specific course, including the components that will be assessed, the overall course grading scale, attendance policy, and accommodation policy; students have electronic access to the syllabus, which is posted in Canvas, UAB's Learning Management System, for each course.
- The BSSW faculty supplement information presented in course syllabi by providing verbal explanations in class and through additional handouts which further assist students in understanding specific criteria by which assignments, activities, papers, service learning experiences, and exams will be assessed and evaluated.
- Academic 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 must 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.
- Individually scheduled appointments between students and the BSSW program faculty provide opportunities for feedback regarding academic and professional performance.
- In regularly scheduled faculty meetings and other times when situations dictate the need for faculty collaboration and consultation, the BSSW program faculty discuss student academic and professional performance; when indicated, the BSSW Program Director will address issues of concern with students.

Academic Performance Grievance

Students maintain the right to appeal such decisions of probation, suspension, and termination for violation of the BSSW Program's academic performance criteria. For student grievances, the BSSW Program follows the Student Complaints procedures listed in the most recent edition of the UAB Undergraduate Catalog - See Conduct and Complaints under Progress toward a Degree ([Link to website](#)).

Procedures for Academic Performance Grievances

For student grievances, the BSSW Program follows the Student Complaints procedures listed in the most recent edition of the UAB Undergraduate Catalog - See Conduct and Complaints under Progress toward a Degree ([Link to website](#)). Here are the procedures:

Judgments on academic matters are most appropriately made by individuals with expertise in the academic discipline involved. For this reason, complaints by students on academic matters are the responsibility of the department and school involved. Normally, such complaints can be resolved quickly through discussion with the faculty directly involved. In rare situations where such resolution does not occur, the student should contact the chair of the appropriate academic department to file a formal grievance. For programs where no department chair is available, the grievance should contact the school's Associate Dean.

The student's grievance should be submitted in writing and accompanied by any appropriate documentation. Grievances should be submitted at the earliest possible time. Consideration will not be given to any grievance submitted later than the end of the term immediately following the term in which the matter in question arose. The department should acknowledge the date the grievance is received and provide notice to the student of when an answer may be expected. It is the responsibility of the department chair to provide an answer to the student within 10 working days. If the matter cannot be settled within the department, the student has 10 working days from the day the department's response is received to appeal to the dean of the school in which the department is located. The dean should acknowledge receipt of the student's appeal and inform the student of the course of action within 10 working days of the date the appeal is received in the dean's office.

At the dean's discretion, an advisory panel may be appointed to study the disagreement and make a recommendation to the dean. However, it is the responsibility and prerogative of the dean alone to make, in a timely manner, a decision on any academic disputes which have not been resolved at lower levels, and the decision of the dean is final.

Professional Performance Criteria

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
- 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 the 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 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 courteously and fairly.
- 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, instructors, academic professionals, and others they encounter in their field placements from 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, academic professionals, 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 policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current

contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- a. make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;
- b. demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- c. use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- d. use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior (CSWE, 2022).

UAB undergraduate social work students shall:

- Attend to professional roles and boundaries.
- Pursue academic excellence with integrity.
- Meet all deadlines set by instructors, field instructors, and department administrators.
- Be punctual in attending 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 expressive communication skills (i.e. verbal, non-verbal, written, electronic, etc) with instructors, field instructors, 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.

Evaluation of Professional Performance

Assessment of student professional performance is based on input from multiple sources including, but not limited to, personal interaction with the student during professional advisement and in other situations; observations of individual functioning and interaction with others in the classroom, other learning activities and extracurricular activities; and reports given by practitioners in community social services agencies during service learning and/or field instruction experiences.

Members of the UAB BSSW Faculty have an obligation to the social work profession to make reasonable efforts to ensure that graduates of its professional programs are prepared for the demands of professional social work practice. This duty is consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics (2021). Thus, when informed of a professional performance problem in writing, the BSSW Program Director will consult with the social work student who exhibits behavior that does not meet guidelines for professional and ethical behaviors of UAB undergraduate social work students as outlined in this Handbook. The BSSW Program Director, in consultation with the Chair of the Department of Social Work Chair and BSSW Faculty, as needed, will (if appropriate) make reasonable efforts to assist the student in resolving behavioral concerns regarding the student's ability to practice effectively and responsibly in the social work profession. The results of the consultation between the BSSW Program Director and the student may include 1) a determination that the alleged behavior does not constitute a violation of professional performance; 2) the development of a written plan of action for improvement of the behavior while the student continues in the BSSW Program; 3) the student's suspension from BSSW Program; or 4) the student's termination for the BSSW Program.

The following strategies are used to inform students about expected levels of professional performance:

- Each course syllabus provides information about professional performance including CSWE's competencies, the NASW Code of Ethics, and UAB's Non-Academic Student Code of Conduct. Students have digital access to the syllabus, which is posted in Canvas, UAB's Learning Management System, for each course.
- The BSSW faculty supplement information presented in course syllabi by providing verbal explanations in class and through additional handouts which further assist students in understanding specific professional performance criteria by which social work students will be assessed and evaluated.
- 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.
- Individually scheduled appointments between students and the BSSW program faculty provide opportunities for feedback regarding academic and professional performance.

- In regularly scheduled faculty meetings and other times when situations dictate the need for faculty collaboration and consultation, the BSSW program faculty discuss student academic and professional performance; when indicated, the BSSW Program Director will address issues of concern with students.

Professional Performance Grievance

Students maintain the right to appeal such decisions of probation, suspension, and termination for violation of the BSSW Program's academic and professional performance criteria. For student grievances, the BSSW Program follows the Student Complaints procedures listed in the most recent edition of the UAB Undergraduate Catalog - See Conduct and Complaints under Progress toward a Degree ([link to website](#)).

Procedures for Professional Performance Grievances

For student grievances, the BSSW Program follows the Student Complaints procedures listed in the most recent edition of the UAB Undergraduate Catalog - See Conduct and Complaints under Progress toward a Degree ([link to website](#)). Here are the procedures for non-academic matters:

When complaints on non-academic matters cannot be settled by the people directly involved, a written complaint should be forwarded to the appropriate office. If the administrative officer is unsuccessful in resolving the complaint, it may then be forwarded in writing to the Provost or a designee for further consideration. For specific information concerning the procedures and processes for non-academic complaints and grievances, contact the Office of Student Accountability or visit the following UAB Community Standards & Student Accountability website ([link to website](#)).

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 probation, suspension, or termination from the BSSW Program for academic and non-academic reasons, including the following:

- A grade of D or lower in any required social work course
- A cumulative undergraduate GPA under 2.25
- An overall social work GPA under 2.5 (cumulative GPA for social work required courses)
- 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 the student will develop a written plan of action to address deficiencies in the student's behaviors related to the 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](#)).

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. UAB uses Alabama Transfers ([Link to website](#)) for all courses transferred from two-year public colleges. Students can see which course credits will be transferred by checking Social Work under Human Services & Consumer Sciences Guide ([link to website](#)) on the Alabama Transfer website. Credits from colleges or universities outside of Alabama depend on the institution's subject matter and accreditation.

Students who want to transfer credits for social work classes must come from a CSWE-accredited program. A directory of accredited programs is available on the CSWE website ([Link to website](#)). 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.

Only select, equivalent social work courses taken at another CSWE-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 Communication for Professional Helping (3 hours)
- SW 207 Racism, Sexism and Other Isms (3 hours)
- SW 222 Skills and Values for Professional Helping (3 hours)
- SW 222L Social Work Service Learning Lab I(1 Hour)
- SW 302 Social Welfare Policy Analysis
- SW 315 Human Behavior and the Social Environment
- SW 320 Social Work Research I
- SW 321 Social Work Research II
- Any social work elective (3 hours)

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 Service Learning Lab II (1 hour)
- SW 422 Social Work Practice II (3 hours)
- SW 422L Social Work Service Learning Lab III (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 retake the comparable UAB courses if they wish to be a social work major.

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 must 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.

The BSSW Program Director bases the evaluation and awarding of transfer course credit for social work courses upon request from the UAB Registrar's Office, which provides 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 Service Learning Lab II (1 hour)
- SW 422 Social Work Practice II (3 hours)
- SW 422L Social Work Service Learning Lab III (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 retake 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. Academic advising is provided by the CAS Social Work Academic Advisor from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Academic Advising Office. Professional advising focuses on social work career development and is provided by the faculty from the UAB Department of Social Work, including BSSW Program faculty members.

Process for Academic Advising

The academic advisor for the BSSW Program is Mr. Kip Hubbard, located in the Office of Academic Advising in the College of Arts & Sciences (CAS). Mr. Hubbard can be reached via phone (205-934-6135) or email (kiph@uab.edu); his office is in Heritage Hall, Room 522. It is required that students meet with Mr. Hubbard every semester to ensure that they are on track with their educational plan, which includes understanding the degree requirements, selecting courses, and planning a schedule. Additionally, if desired, social work students can arrange to meet with any member of the BSSW faculty for consultation and guidance in selecting areas of coursework.

Process for Professional Advising

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 student performance and progress toward graduation;
- discussing career opportunities;
- tailoring service learning and 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;
- informing students about career fairs to learn about local employment opportunities;
- accompanying students to conferences, workshops and other professional events in the community and;
- connecting students with mentoring opportunities.

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 (Communication for Professional Helping), SW 207 (Racism, Sexism, and Other Isms), and SW 222 & SW222L (Skills & Values for Professional Helping and the Social Work Service Learning Lab I) 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).

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 periodically reviews 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 profession of social work.

Competency 1 - Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior: Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers

use rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- a. make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;
- b. demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- c. use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- d. use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Competency 2 - Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice: Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

- a. advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
- b. engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 3 - Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice: Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the

societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression. Social workers:

- a. demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
- b. demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

Competency 4 - Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice: Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources. Social workers:

- a. apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
- b. identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

Competency 5 - Engage in Policy Practice: Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects well-being, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights-based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings. Social workers:

- a. use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
- b. apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, 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 individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

- a. apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- b. use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with 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. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making. Social workers:

- a. apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
- b. demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

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. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings. Social workers:

- a. engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
- b. incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

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 evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- a. select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
- b. critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

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

The knowledge base of generalist social work practice is grounded in the liberal arts tradition and encompasses most of the courses social work majors at UAB take as pre-professional students. Liberal arts include courses in English, philosophy, mathematics, and social and physical sciences.

Undergraduate liberal arts content in human biology, sociology, political science, psychology, English literature and composition, mathematics, the humanities, and history are prerequisites for a major in social work. Concepts from these disciplines provide the foundation for social work courses taken as part of the Social Work Foundation and courses taken after admission to the Social Work Professional Program. Social work majors are required to take the following general education courses as part of the liberal arts foundation (for a total of 19 hours):

- *BY 101/102 Topics in Contemporary Biology with Lab* (4 hours)

- *PY 101 Introduction to Psychology* (3 hours)
- *PSC 101 Foundations of American Government* or *PSC 221 American State and Local Government* (3 hours)
- *SOC 100 Introduction to Sociology* (3 hours)
- *ANTH 101 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* (3 hours)
- *HY 121 The United States Since 1877* (3 hours)

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 students pursuing a minor in social work. Students planning to major in social work are required to take all the introductory classes. When students apply to the professional program, they must have completed all required courses or be currently enrolled in these courses at the time of application. Majors should also be aware that these courses must be completed and passed with a grade of C or better before taking any upper-level courses. Here are the descriptions for the Social Work Foundation Courses:

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 anti-racist, diverse, equitable, and inclusive 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 Communication for Professional Helping (3 hours): This course introduces professional writing techniques for social work and other helping practitioners. The course is designed to enhance professional and academic writing skills. Students will study how to craft narratives for case notes, assessments, advocacy materials and funding proposals focused on creating social change and promoting equity and justice for marginalized communities. Students will also gain proficiency in APA style and develop digital communication skills, learning to navigate technology platforms essential for professional practice, such as word processing, presentation tools, and social media for outreach and client engagement. This is a writing-intensive course.

SW 207 Racism, Sexism and Other Isms (3 hours): The content of this course is intended to help students understand from the perspective of social justice, inclusion, and human rights that 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. Students will examine both the biases in society and their own biases in relating to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups such as minorities, aged, women, LGBTQ+, and disabled persons.

SW 222 Skills & Values for Professional Helping (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 focusing on self-awareness related to values, professionalism, and ethical practice that advances social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. This is one of five social work foundation courses that students must successfully complete before being fully admitted to the professional program. Must be concurrently taken with SW 222L Social Work Service Learning Lab I.

SW 222L Social Work Service Learning Lab I (1 hour): This lab course offers an introduction to the helping profession of social work with service learning experiences and simulation opportunities. The lab integrates volunteering and observation with critical reflection, professionalism, and ethical practice, focusing on raising awareness about social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Must be concurrently taken with SW Skills & Values for Professional Helping.

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

FIRST YEAR			
First Term	Hours	Second Term	Hours
EH 101	3	EH 102	3
MA 108 or 110	3	HY 121	3
PY 101	3	SOC 100	3
Blazer Core: Blazer Beginnings ¹	3	SW 100	3
Blazer Core: Creative Arts ²	3	General Elective	3
	15		15
SECOND YEAR			
First Term	Hours	Second Term	Hours
SW 200	3	SW 207	3
PSC 101 or 221	3	Blazer Core: Scientific Inquiry ⁴	4
BY 101 (class) and BY 102 (lab)	4	ANTH 101	3
Blazer Core: City as a Classroom ³	3	General Elective	3
General Elective	3	General Elective	3

	16		16
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¹ Select one from the list of approved classes listed in GPS under Local Beginnings
² Select one from the list of approved classes listed in GPS under Thinking Broadly: Creative Arts
³ Select one from the list of approved classes listed in GPS under City as a Classroom
⁴ Select one from the list of approved classes listed in GPS under Scientific Inquiry

Service Learning Labs in the 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 on their 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 Service Learning Lab I (20 - 25 hours of service learning required)
- SW322L Social Work Service Learning Lab II (20 - 25 hours of service learning required)
- SW422L Social Work Service Learning Lab III (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:

Course	Service Learning Lab	Additional Degree Requirements
SW 222 Social Work Values	SW222L Social Work Service Learning Lab I	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 Service Learning Lab II	N/A.
SW422 Social Work Practice II	SW422L Social Work Service Learning Lab III	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.

Courses in the Social Work Professional Program

Having completed the foundation courses in the BSSW Curriculum (SW 100, SW 200, SW 207 and SW222/222L), 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 I
- SW 321: Social Work Research II
- SW 322/SW 322L: Social Work Practice I and Social Work Service Learning Lab II
- One Social Work Elective Course

Fourth year-level sequence courses:

- SW 422/SW 422L: Social Work Practice II and Social Work Service Learning Lab III
- SW 490: Practicum in Social Work
- SW 494: Field Practicum Seminar
- One Social Work Elective Course

Here are the descriptions for the Social Work Professional Program Courses:

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 and how it has evolved over time. 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, inclusion, human rights, and anti-oppression context.

SW 315 Human Behavior and the Social Environment (3 hours): This course examines the interrelationships between individuals, families, small groups, organizations, and communities. Special attention is given to diversity, cultural sensitivity, inclusion, oppression, and discrimination of vulnerable populations.

SW 320 Social Work Research I (3 hours): This course introduces students to research theory, methods and tools through the standpoint of social justice, human rights, inclusion, and diversity. 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.

SW 321 Social Work Research II (3 hours): This course advances students to research theory, methods and tools through the standpoint of social justice, human rights, inclusion, and diversity. This course provides the context for understanding the analysis and interpretation of quantitative data as well as the application of findings from research. Specific research methodology concepts will be covered. Students will have an opportunity to develop a project that will apply these concepts and practice. Prerequisites: SW 320 [Min Grade: C]

SW 322 Social Work Practice I (3 hours): This course focuses on generalist social work practice with individuals and families, providing students with the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills, values, and competence needed for intervention and prevention at the beginning professional level. Students will learn how to engage, assess, intervene and evaluate client systems and constituents using anti-racist, equitable, and inclusive generalist practice. This course must be taken at UAB. Transfer credits will not be accepted for this course. Must be concurrently taken with SW 322L Social Work Service Learning Lab II. Prerequisites: (SW 222 [Min Grade: C] and SW 222L [Min Grade: C]) or SW 222 [Min Grade: C]

SW 322L Social Work Service Learning Lab II (1 hour): This lab course introduces students to working with individual and family client systems through service learning experiences and simulation opportunities. The lab integrates volunteering and observation with critical reflection, professionalism, and ethical practice, focusing on raising awareness about social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Must be concurrently taken with SW 322 Social Work Practice I. This course must be taken at UAB. Transfer credits will not be accepted for this course.

SW 422 Social Work Practice II (3 hours): This course focuses on the generalist social work practice with groups, communities and organizations, providing students with the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills, values and competence needed for intervention and prevention at the beginning professional level. Students will learn how to engage, assess, intervene and evaluate client systems and constituents using anti-racist, equitable, and inclusive generalist practice. This course must be taken at UAB. Transfer credits will not be accepted for this course. Must be taken concurrently with SW 422L Social Work Service Learning Lab III. Prerequisites: SW 322 [Min Grade: C] or (SW 322 [Min Grade: C] and SW 322L [Min Grade: C])

SW 422 Social Work Service Learning Lab III (1 hour): This lab course offers an introduction to working with groups, communities and organizations through service learning experiences and/or simulation opportunities. The lab integrates volunteering and observation with critical reflection, professionalism, and ethical practice, focusing on raising awareness about social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Must be concurrently taken with SW 422 Social Work Practice II. This course must be taken at UAB. Transfer credits will not be accepted for this 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

THIRD YEAR			
First Term	Hours	Second Term	Hours
SW 222	3	SW 302	3
SW 222L	1	SW 322	3
Blazer Core: Reasoning ¹	3	SW 322L	1
General Elective	3	SW 320	3
General Elective	3	Social Work (SW) Elective	3
General Elective	3	General Elective	3
	16		16
FOURTH YEAR			
First Term	Hours	Second Term	Hours
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	1		
	14		12
Total credit hours: 120			
¹ Select one from the list of approved courses listed in GPS under Reasoning			

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.

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. Here are the descriptions for the Social Work Field Education Courses:

SW 490 Practicum in Social Work (9 hours): This course will prepare students for generalist social work practice by integrating social work knowledge and values with the application of professional helping skills. Students will complete a 400-hour field practicum placement at an approved social service agency under the supervision of a practicing social worker. Students will have the opportunity to work in agencies that provide services to diverse and vulnerable populations and apply evidence-informed interventions with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. This is taken concurrently with SW 494. This course must be taken at UAB. Transfer credits will not be accepted for this course. Prerequisites: (SW 422 [Min Grade: C]) or (SW 422 [Min Grade: C] and SW 422L [Min Grade: C])

SW 494 Field Practicum Seminar (3 hours): This capstone course is an integrative seminar that must be taken concurrently with SW 490 (Practicum in Social Work). Seminar provides opportunities for students to process their field experiences and reinforce their practice skills and values, connecting the competency-based knowledge gained in the classroom with the application in the field. The seminar also serves as an open forum for students to self-assess, discuss, and reflect on anti-racist, diverse, equitable, and inclusive generalist practice for all client systems. This course must be taken at UAB. Transfer credits will not be accepted for this course.

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 244 Trauma Informed Care
- SW 277 Social Justice in the City
- SW 278 Special Topics in Social Work
- SW 339 Practice in Child Welfare Settings
- SW 340 Practice with Maternal and Child Health Populations
- SW 378 Special Topics in Social Work
- SW 426 Practice in Medical and Health-Based Settings
- SW 427 Mental Health and Patient Advocacy
- SW 453 Practice with Aging Populations
- SW 454 Working with Addiction and Recovery
- SW 478 Special Topics in Social Work
- SW 499 Independent Study

Here are the descriptions for the elective course in social work:

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 244 Trauma Informed Care (3 hours): This course provides an introduction to and overview of working with individuals and communities who have experienced trauma. Throughout this course, students will learn to recognize the presence of trauma symptoms, acknowledge the role trauma may play in an individual's life, and learn how to provide professional trauma-informed care. In addition, students will be introduced to the use of motivational interviewing as a method of supporting and treating trauma survivors.

SW 277 Social Justice in the City (3 hours): This course examines the intersecting factors of oppression, marginalization, and inequality as they manifest in cities, focusing on how these issues impact vulnerable populations, including children, immigrants, the homeless, elders, and racial/ethnic/sexual minority groups. Emphasis is on exploring the complexities of urban life, the structural roots of inequality, and the role of social policies, planning, and community strategies in promoting equity and justice. Students will analyze current and historical data, evaluate the effectiveness of different social justice strategies, and propose innovative solutions to reduce disparities and enhance community well-being. This course emphasizes the practical application of social justice principles in urban settings, preparing students to become effective advocates for change.

SW 278 Special Topics in Social Work (3 Hours): Issues of current interest in social work practice, policy, and research. Irregularly offered course. Varies in content. May be repeated for credit but the topic may not be repeated.

SW 339 Practice in Child Welfare Settings (3 hours): This course addresses perpetuating issues that children face in today's interconnected and complex society and identifies possible intervention strategies. This course will also identify contemporary trends in service delivery and relevant policy issues concerning the health and well-being of diverse and vulnerable children. Students will have the opportunity to examine inequality in the child welfare system.

SW 340 Practice with Maternal and Child Health Populations (3 hours): This course provides students with a working knowledge of the maternal and child health (MCH) population in the United States, emerging health issues, and social determinants that can affect individual and family long-term outcomes. Topics covered include the history of maternal and child health and emerging health issues across women, perinatal/infant health, child health, adolescent health, and children and youth with special health care needs, with special attention given to application in social work practice. Students will learn about the concept of health disparities and social determinants of health, and how health disparities and social determinants of health can affect women and families across the lifespan.

SW 378 Special Topics in Social Work (3 Hours): Issues of current interest in social work practice, policy, and research. Irregularly offered course. Varies in content. May be repeated for credit but topic may not be repeated.

SW 426 Practice in Medical and Health-Based Settings (3 hours): This course provides an introduction to and overview of working with people called "patients" in medical and health-based settings. 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 427 Mental Health and Patient Advocacy (3 hours): This course teaches students the criteria used in assessing mental disorders in children and adults. Students become familiar with selected theories and research regarding the etiology of mental disorders. The impact of these disorders on the client, the client's family, and the community are then discussed, and opportunities for patient advocacy are

covered. Students also learn the potential for bias that can result when one applies assessment tools across cultural, ethnic racial and other groups.

SW 453 Practice with Aging Populations (3 hours): The purpose of this course is to educate the student to work effectively with diverse older adults in a variety of settings. The course will blend lecture and experiential learning to prepare social workers for clinic work and collaboration with older adults. Students will explore biases about aging, how health and behavior health circumstances change of the lifespan, end of life issues, cultural competency, and how to effectively advocate in partnership with or on behalf of older adults. The course will allow students to explore the concerns of older adults from both a micro and macro perspective and will address cultural factors regarding aging. There will be opportunities to explore community resources and improve interview skills. Students will be encouraged to work as a team to explore resources as a way of improving their collaborative skills.

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 from a holistic, anti-oppressive orientation, considering the client in relation to the environment and the structural factors that contribute to the use, misuse and abuse of psychoactive drugs. This course is recommended for students who want to expand their knowledge and sensitivity to understanding 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): Issues of current interest in social work practice, policy, and research. Irregularly offered course. Varies in content. May be repeated for credit but topic may not be repeated.

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 the CAS Social Work 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 instructors, 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 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 Forms for Admission to BSSW Professional & Field Program

Student Name: _____

Course: _____ Final Course Grade/Grade to date: _____

Faculty Member: _____ Date: _____

Directions: This form is submitted by faculty teaching required 200-level BSSW courses at midterm and by faculty teaching required 300-level courses at the end of the semester. It supports the early identification of student strengths and concerns in academic and professional development, informing advising and progression decisions.

Please rate your agreement with each statement based on your observations of the student's academic and professional behavior in your course. Use the scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). For ratings of 1 or 2, comments are required. Before completing this form, adopt an equity-minded perspective and consider cultural, social, and contextual factors that may shape the student's behavior and communication.

Before completing this form, we encourage you to adopt an equity-focused mindset by reflecting on how factors such as cultural background, communication styles, and life experiences may influence your ratings.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Student demonstrates self-management by attending class, meeting deadlines, and completing assignments.	4	3	2	1
2. Student demonstrates empathy, inclusive communication, and awareness of social and cultural diversity.	4	3	2	1
3. Student demonstrates ethical awareness and maintains professional boundaries.	4	3	2	1
4. Student demonstrates accountability, follows through on responsibilities, and seeks clarification when needed.	4	3	2	1
5. Student accepts constructive feedback and applies it appropriately.	4	3	2	1
6. Student communicates effectively in written, verbal, and digital formats.	4	3	2	1
7. Student uses digital tools (e.g., email, Canvas, Zoom) in a professional and ethical manner.	4	3	2	1
8. Student demonstrates academic integrity and adheres to course policies.	4	3	2	1

I have concerns about this student's readiness for upper-level practice courses or field education based on ratings of 1 or 2:

Additional comments regarding the student's professional readiness or areas for growth:

Was the student informed of any concerns noted?

Yes _____

No _____

Appendix B - BSSW Professional Program Essay Rubric

	OUTSTANDING	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	NEEDS HELP/ NOT EVIDENT
CONNECTIONS TO EXPERIENCE CONNECTS RELEVANT EXPERIENCE AND ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE OF SOCIAL WORK	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.
PROFESSIONAL SELF-AWARENESS DEMONSTRATES A DEVELOPING SENSE OF SELF AS A LEARNER IN SOCIAL WORK	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.
WRITING MECHANICS	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

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 10th 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: _____