



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Department of Sociology,
Anthropology & Social Work™

Bachelor of Arts in Social Work Student Handbook

Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Social Work
Social Work Program
Box 41012
Lubbock, TX 79409-1012
O: 806.742-2400

This handbook, as well as additional information about the social work program, can be found at:
www.depts.ttu.edu/socialwork/

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Social Work: What's it all about?

Social Work is a profession dedicated to partnering with people to create change. It is set apart from other human-related disciplines by its person-in-environment focus. That means that social workers have a dual orientation at all times - the individual and the environment.

Social workers are educated in a body of specialized knowledge and skills, while being committed to a core set of values. While different individuals or organizations may express these a little differently, they all share the same basic principles. Here in the TTU Social Work Program, we adhere to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) [Code of Ethics](#). In that document, the organization identifies and defines six core values including service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. Those core values ground our professional practice as social workers. The code then goes on to guide and regulate our practice.

Choosing a career in social work does not mean that you are taking a vow of poverty. While most social workers choose the profession for its intrinsic rewards, financial benefits also exist. According the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the median pay for social workers in 2018 was \$49,470. The BLS also reports an expected job growth of 16% (much faster than average) for social work between 2016-2026. More information on workforce related issues in social work can be found in the following reports: [Results of the Nationwide Survey of 2017 Social Work Graduates: The National Social Work Workforce Study](#) and the NASW [2009 Compensation & Benefits Study: Summary of Key Findings](#).

Professional social workers work in a great variety of different practice settings. Some of these include the broad areas of health, politics, policy, child welfare, school social work, mental health, aging, families, addictions, disabilities, corrections, administration, research, community organization and advocacy, homelessness, and many, many others. Social workers work for both public and private organizations.

Generalist Practice

Bachelor level graduates of social work are prepared for entry-level generalist social work practice. Generalist practice serves as a multifaceted foundation upon which the social worker joins with client systems of various sizes, diverse backgrounds and problem areas to promote their participation in society. The focus of change may be on interactions among individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and/or society. Such practice is predicated on the social worker's:

- commitment and adherence to social work values,
- broad knowledge base of social systems, human behavior and the social environment, human diversity, oppression, theories of practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro system levels, and the impact of policies on people and their environments, and
- skills such as critical thinking, ability to assess person-environment situations including strengths within people and their environments, application of interventions based on assessment and research, ability to form and terminate relationships with

client systems of diverse groupings and sizes, as well as the ability to evaluate interventions and policies.

Past graduates of the Bachelor of Arts in Social Work (BASW) program at Texas Tech University have contributed to the well-being of society at all levels of agency practice working with diverse populations throughout the country in such settings as behavioral health units, adult and juvenile corrections, health care organizations, schools and other public agencies. In addition, many graduates continue their formal social work education by attending graduate school, many in Texas but others have ventured to graduate schools in California, Colorado, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. Some graduates have chosen to attend graduate programs in other professions that enhance the well-being of society such as public administration, nursing, law, and education. Some graduates contribute to the education of new social workers as field placement supervisors, directors of admissions, and social work faculty.

TTU's Social Work Programs

Both the undergraduate and graduate social work degree programs at TTU are housed within the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work (SASW), which falls under the College of Arts and Sciences. Located in the Southeast corner of Holden Hall, we occupy most of the hallway near the SASW main office (room 158).

The undergraduate social work program at Texas Tech University was developed in the 1967/68 academic year, with just 24 students and 3 courses. Today, nine full-time faculty lines and two full-time staff positions at TTU are dedicated to the preparation of about 150 currently enrolled students for baccalaureate and master's level social work practice in the community. The latest information about [faculty and staff](#) can be found on the program website.

Accreditation

Both the baccalaureate and master's social work programs at TTU are accredited with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE oversees all social work education programs at the bachelors and masters' levels in the United States. Accreditation with CSWE provides reasonable assurance of the quality of social work education programs and the competence of graduating students. In order to be licensed as a practicing social worker in any state, a person must have a degree in social work from an institution that is accredited with CSWE. Social Work education at TTU for bachelor level social work has been fully accredited since 1978, while the graduate program received its initial accreditation in 2018. The BASW program's most recent [assessment results](#) are posted on the program website.

Professional Advising

Students should direct their questions about the profession of social work to one of the full-time faculty members. Social Work faculty members are better acquainted with the scope of social work practice, career opportunities, and licensing issues than are other staff members on campus. Students seeking such career counseling are encouraged to schedule an appointment in advance by email. Faculty members' fields of practice, research and teaching interests can be found on the program website, under the 'about us' section.

Students seeking recommendations for scholarships, potential employers, and admission to graduate education programs should request permission from faculty before providing contact information to others. Students are strongly encouraged to make requests for recommendation letters WELL IN ADVANCE of any application deadlines and to provide recommenders with a resume and signed release forms (as appropriate).

Academic Advising

The Academic Advisor for Social Work monitors students' progress through the degree program and keeps abreast of program, university, and state requirements for undergraduate degrees. Social work majors are expected to meet with the academic advisor at least once each long semester and for additional meetings as requested. This requirement applies to all students, regardless of second majors or any other program enrollments. Students should be prepared for advising meetings by being familiar with degree requirements for their majors, minors, and other programs, bringing requested documentation, and a draft of planned coursework for remaining semesters. To stay on track for degree completion, students should follow the academic advisor's recommendations; failure to do so can delay students' progression through the social work degree program. Please note that completion of all degree requirements is ultimately the responsibility of the student. Students should schedule academic advising appointments through [STRIVE](#).

Non-discrimination & Sexual Misconduct Policies

Faculty, staff, and students of the Social Work Program adhere to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) [Code of Ethics](#). In addition, we are expected to follow the policies of non-discrimination and anti-harassment set forth by the university and federal law.

Regulation 07.10 of the Texas Tech University System states:

The University does not tolerate discrimination or harassment based on or related to sex (including pregnancy), race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, protected veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or other protected categories, classes, or characteristics.

Further, the [Office for Student Civil Rights & Sexual Misconduct](#), located in suite 232 of the Student Union Building, goes on to explain

Texas Tech is committed to providing its students, faculty, and staff with an educational and workplace environment free from any form of unlawful discrimination. The Texas

Tech community is dedicated to fostering and supporting a culture of mutual respect and communication... Discriminatory behavior is prohibited regardless of the manner in which it is exhibited, whether verbally, in writing, or electronically displayed or conveyed. Individuals who violate these policies and laws are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion (Title IX Office).

Earning a BA in Social Work at TTU

In order to change degree plans to major in social work at any point following initial enrollment at TTU, students must have completed at least 12 institutional credit hours and have an overall GPA no lower than 2.0.

The BASW degree program requires 33 hours of social work credits, 7 hours of adjunct requirements, 3 hours of elective, an 18-hour minor, the core curriculum requirements of the university and the general degree requirements of the College of Arts and Sciences. Because of the required sequencing of social work courses, 4 long semesters (fall or spring) are needed to complete the major requirements.

PLEASE NOTE
Social work majors are expected to maintain a GPA of 2.5 in major coursework throughout the curriculum.

It should be noted that TTU never awards social work course credit for work, volunteerism, or other life experience.

General Degree Requirements

Students should be aware of the core and [general degree requirements](#) for the completion of the Bachelor of Arts Degree. While every student should consult with the Academic Advisor for Social Work every long semester, completion of all degree requirements is ultimately the responsibility of the student.

In general, a student should keep in mind that:

- Many foreign language introductory classes start in the fall semester. Hint: Do not postpone beginning this sequence.
- Several courses required for a major in social work also meet general education requirements. Students should talk to the Academic Advisor for Social Work about these options to take full advantage of multi-fulfillment of requirements.
- A BA degree at TTU requires 40 hours at the Junior/Senior level (3000 or 4000 numbered courses).
- Most GDR requirements should be fulfilled prior to a student applying for admission to the practice course sequence.

Adjunct Requirements

Students are required to take human biology before or with SW 3312 and statistics before SW 3339. Both requirements are considered as “adjunct” to the major and must be complete before a

student will be accepted into the *practice course sequence* (see below). Options for fulfilling these adjunct program requirements should be discussed with the Academic Advisor for Social Work.

Transfer Credits

As required by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, credit for SOCW 2361 & SOCW 2362, under the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS), will be accepted from any Texas institution. Credit for SOCW 2389 under the TCCNS may be applied to the 3-hour major elective requirement.

The program also accepts the transfer of social work courses from other CSWE-accredited institutions that are equivalent to TTU courses, excepting the following: SW 3332, SW 3333, SW 4340 or SW 4611. Transfer credit for social work classes with no TTU equivalent may be applied to the 3-hour major elective requirement, upon review of the syllabus.

A maximum of 9 hours of total transfer credit for *social work* courses will be accepted. This maximum does not apply to program adjunct requirements or the 3-hour major elective requirement.

Social Work Coursework

SW 2301- Introduction to Social Work. Examination of society's responses to human needs and social problems through voluntary and governmental social policies and services.

SW 2311 - Human Behavior and the Social Environment: Systems. Examination of interaction between person and environment, emphasizing mezzo and macro level systems, including small groups, organizations, and communities.

SW 2362 - Social Welfare Legislation, Programs, and Services. Examines development of U.S. social welfare legislation, including preceding political, economic, environmental, and social conditions as well as resulting policies, services, and societal responses.

SW 3312 - Human Behavior and the Social Environment: Lifespan. Examination of interaction between person and environment with emphasis on biological, social, emotional, and cultural systems across lifespan.

SW 3331 - Social Work with Diverse Populations. Integrated approach to theory, values, and skills of working with culturally diverse populations. Emphasis - empowering vulnerable populations to fulfill their potential. Fulfills multicultural requirement. *{Majors must take this course before or with SW 3332.}*

SW 3332 - Generalist Practice with Micro Systems. Prerequisite: PCS admission. Prerequisite or corequisite: SW 3331. Application of generalist knowledge, ethics and skills for effective partnerships at the micro level of systems. Social work majors only. (CL)

SW 3333 -Generalist Practice with Meso/Macro Levels of Systems. Prerequisite: PCS admission. Prerequisite or corequisite: SW 3331. Application of generalist knowledge, ethics & skills for effective partnerships with meso & macro level systems. Social work majors only. (CL)

SW 3339 – Social Work Research and Evaluation.
Prerequisite: MATH 2300, SOC 3391, or PSY 2400.
Scientific approach to social work knowledge. Emphasis on evaluation of social welfare programs and social work practice.

SW 4340 – Field Placement Integrated Seminar.
Prerequisite: C or better in SW 3332 & SW 3333;
corequisite: SW 4611. Integration of social work knowledge, skills, and values used in the student’s individual practice of social work. Social work majors only. (CL)

SW 4611 – Social Work Field Experience. Co-requisite: SW 4340. Closely supervised 400-hour practicum using social work knowledge/skills/ethics in program-approved social agency. Professional liability insurance required. Social work majors only. Pass-fail.

CAUTION

- ⇒ SW 3339 is offered only once per academic year.
- ⇒ SW 3332, SW 3333, SW 4340 and SW 4611 are considered “practice” courses and are restricted to students who have been admitted based on their PCS application. Details on PCS admission can be found in this manual.
- ⇒ SW 4340 & 4611 may not be taken until SW 3332 & SW 3333 have been completed with a C or better.
- ⇒ SW 4340 & 4611 must be taken simultaneously

Major Elective

3 credit hours should be selected from an approved list of options, available from the Academic Advisor for Social Work. While not required, it is recommended that students choose a junior or senior level course for the elective to assist you in meeting college degree requirements for upper-level coursework.

Practice Course Sequence

Fifteen of the credit hours required for a BA in Social Work degree make up the *practice course sequence* (PCS), including SW 3332, SW 3333, and SW 4340/4611. This sequence is usually completed over three long (fall or spring) semesters, typically the final semesters of a student’s degree program. Before permits will be issued for registration in any of these courses, social work majors must have a complete PCS application on file and continued enrollment requires a positive vote for PCS admission by the faculty committee.

The purpose of the PCS admission process is to evaluate applicants’ readiness for upper-level practice-specific coursework through the demonstration of 1) compatibility with the social work profession, including identification

“Gatekeeping” refers to the process by which social work educational programs limit entrance into the profession to graduates who have demonstrated compatibility with the values of the profession and appear to have good potential for success as ethical and effective social workers. The application to enter practice classes is one component of how the TTU Social Work Program fulfills the expectation of gate-keeping in our profession.

with the its stated purpose and values, as well as commitment to principles of social justice, 2) proficient development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, and 3) competent integration and application of content from foundation level social work classes. This process of *gatekeeping* is one requirement for accreditation¹ with the Council on Social Work Education.

Application for PCS admission. The process of application for PCS admission begins the semester *before* students' enrollment in their first PCS course - about half-way through the major coursework. By this point, students should have a good sense of what social work is all about and how they might fit in the profession.

Deadlines. While calls for applications are made in program announcements, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to be aware of the application requirements and submit their materials on time. The *application cover form*, which serves as notification of a student's intent to submit a completed application later in the semester, is due by October 1 (for spring admissions) or March 1 (for fall admissions). The remaining components of the application are due November 1 (for spring admissions) or April 1 (for fall admissions). All application materials should be submitted to the program's main email box at sasw.socialwork@ttu.edu.

Required coursework: The following courses (or their equivalents) must be completed successfully prior to the semester of enrollment in the student's first practice course:

- General degree requirements: ENGL 1301, ENGL 1302, POLS 1301, POLS 2302 or 2306
- College of Arts & Sciences: any pre-requisites to required sophomore-level foreign language credits
- Program adjuncts: approved course in human biology, approved course in statistics
- Major coursework: SW 2301, SW 2311, SW 2362, SW 3312. (Note: An overall social work course GPA of at least 2.5 is expected for upper-level students. Applications from students with social work GPAs of 2.25-2.44 will be considered for *provisional admission*.)

Application Components. The basic elements of the application include: 1) application cover form, 2) At least 2 letters of reference, 3) professional statement, and 4) copy of unofficial transcripts.

⇒ *Cover Form.* The application cover form can be downloaded from the program website under 'handbooks and forms.' The application cover form serves as notification to the program that the student plans to apply for PCS admission and should be submitted to sasw.socialwork@ttu.edu by October 1 (for spring admissions) or March 1 (for fall admissions). Names and contact information for your references should be listed on the application cover form.

¹ The latest version of the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) from the Council on Social Work Education can be found at www.cswe.org.

- ⇒ *2 letters of reference.* Potential referents should be contacted well in advance and provided with a copy of the “reference request letter” from the BASW Program Director, which gives instructions for completing and sending letters directly to the program by email or post. Letters of reference should be received by the program by November 1 (for spring admissions) or April 1 (for fall admissions). Referents should know the candidate fairly well, but should not be friends, family, or others with potential bias (see below):
- Examples of acceptable referents include: K-12 teachers, employers or work supervisors, counselors or therapists, faith leaders, volunteer coordinators, or college-level teachers (OTHER THAN TTU SOCIAL WORK FACULTY).
 - Examples of NON-acceptable referents include TTU social work faculty and staff, peers, friends, family members, or co-workers of equal stature. Once names have been submitted on the application cover form, requests for information and instructions will be provided to referents.
- ⇒ *Professional statement.* The professional statement is essentially a paper written in Microsoft Word using APA style format (latest edition) demonstrating the applicant’s knowledge gain and integration of foundation-level social work course content, as well as professionalism and attention to detail, including use of writing skills and correct use of APA format throughout (e.g. cover page, margins, page numbers, in-text citations, references, etc.) addressing each of the following content sections:
- 1) Most of the general population aren’t really sure what social work is all about. Using the knowledge that you have gained in the curriculum so far, describe the profession of social work. Your discussion of this topic should be discussed using your own words, rather than simply quoting or paraphrasing statements from professional organizations or texts. However, citations are encouraged. Discussion is limited to 250 words.
 - 2) Poverty is of central concern to the social work profession. Describe what you have learned about the causes, nature, and impacts of poverty on at least two levels of systems (as conceptualized in Ecosystems theory). This section should cite one or more academic texts or journal articles assigned in your social work course(s). Discussion limited to 350 words.
 - 3) Give an example from your own life of *having been* helped and one of *giving help*. As this section is based on personal experience, no citations are needed. Discussion is limited to 200 words.
 - 4) Given what you have learned about social work so far, discuss why you are a good match for the profession. Limit discussion to 100 words. No citations are needed for this section.
- ⇒ *Copy of unofficial transcripts.* Highlight each (and only) the required courses for PCS admission listed previously in this document. Include any courses that are currently in- progress. In addition, if you have taken any other social work courses, they should also be highlighted.

Admission decisions. Prior to the start of the semester of enrollment, each application is reviewed by at least 3 BASW-instructors and recommendations made. In addition to the application materials, the faculty will consider input from program faculty and staff members who are familiar with each student. Most particularly, instructors are asked to share information about

students' class attendance and engagement, as well as professionalism. Final determinations regarding admission will be made *after grades* for all the required courses are available in Banner. Each student will be notified by email of one of the following outcomes:

- ⇒ *Admission Approved*: faculty confirms the student's progress and supports his/her continuing efforts to become a professional.
- ⇒ *Admission with Concern/Warning*: student has made sufficient academic progress but has demonstrated one or more problems such as professionalism, engagement, or writing skills.
- ⇒ *Provisional Admission with Probation*: student appears to be struggling. Students on probation must achieve letter grades of 'B' or higher, have high attendance and have adequate engagement in all social work classes to proceed further in the program. Students with provisional admission must follow any specific requirements made by the review committee. Failure to meet any of these requirements by the end of the next long semester will result in referral to the SCPR committee and/or delay in further progress in the program.
- ⇒ *Deferred or Denied*: either the student has not completed the requirements and should resubmit the application at a later time OR faculty recommends that the student consider a major other than social work, based on significant signs of incompatibility with the profession or serious academic deficits in social work classes or retention of knowledge.

While most social work majors go through this evaluation with no problem at all, students should be aware that the process is taken very seriously by the program. Submitting an Incomplete application, failing to follow the application instructions, or providing a poorly constructed professional statement will result in denial of admission. Students have the option to reapply at the later time if their application is not approved.

Field Placement Policies and Procedures

Field education is the central pedagogy (learning method) in social work and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) mandates that every student earning an accredited bachelor's degree in social work complete a minimum of 400 clock hours in a supervised agency setting before graduation. The field placement exposes students to a structured and supervised direct practice experience, thereby providing a vehicle for: (1) application of theory, integration of knowledge, (2) use of skills which will equip them as beginning generalist social workers, (3) increased self-awareness, and (4) development of professional comportment. In this planned and educationally directed, coordinated, and monitored experience, social work students participate in actual service delivery to the client system via casework, group-work, or community organization. In this hands-on experience, the senior social work student should experience growth as a reflective, self-aware, and knowledgeable individual and social worker.

Once a student becomes eligible for field placement, the Director of Field Education will explore every reasonable opportunity to secure a placement. The program will do everything possible to accommodate field placements for eligible students, but placement in a given semester cannot be guaranteed. Students with specific needs or concerns about the field placement requirement should contact the Director of Field Education as soon as possible to discuss the issues.

As field students typically spend 32 hours per week in the agency during normal business hours (8am to 5pm), the field placement requires a large commitment of time and effort. Students should plan well in advance how to limit their other obligations during the semester.

Students are **STRONGLY DISCOURAGED** from enrolling in other coursework or having significant outside work responsibilities during this capstone semester.

Field students enroll in SW 4611, the 6-credit-hour field placement course, as well as SW 4340, the accompanying 3-hour integrative seminar. Both courses are restricted to social work majors who have fulfilled all the criteria for admission to field placement. To bring their course load up to the 12 credit-hour requirement to receive financial aid, most field students also enroll in one additional 3-credit course that semester, such as SW 3339, the major elective, or another degree requirement offered asynchronous online or to directly follow the integrative seminar (limiting time away from the agency site).

Admission criteria. Majors who are in “good standing” with the program and will have successfully completed SW 3332 & SW 3333, as well as the majority of their other degree requirements by the field semester, are eligible to *apply* for field placement.

Applications for field placement can be found in the *Field Instruction Manual*, available on the program website, and are due early in the long semester *prior to* planned enrollment. While the Director of Field Education generally contacts students likely for placement in the following semester, it is each student’s individual responsibility to ensure that they are aware of the deadline for field placement applications and scheduling initial interviews with the Director.

Placement process. Eligible students apply for admission to the field placement (SW 4611) by means of a written application in the long semester prior to expected placement. In the application, students rank three broad areas of service delivery in which they are most interested.

Students are required to **interview** with prospective placement agencies, as directed. This interview process allows students and field supervisors to assess their potential fit. While the program will do everything possible to secure placements of particular interest to students, specific placement sites cannot be guaranteed.

On the basis of this consideration, as well as information gleaned from discussions with the students, the Director of Field Education draws up a schedule of placement interviews.

Following the interviews, the agency's Field Supervisor provides input to the Director of Field Education regarding his or her assessment of the individual students interviewed and their potential for successful work in that agency. In conference with the Director of Field Education, the students also provide input regarding their reactions to the agencies. Drawing on all this information, the Director of Field Education negotiates the final placement of students with

agencies. Final arrangements for the field placement must be made prior to the end of the long semester before placement is expected.

Field placements outside of Lubbock area: In some instances, a social work major may desire to complete the required 400-hour field placement in an agency outside of Lubbock. Students

should carefully consider the following requirements before making a request for such a placement.

- The TTU Social Work Program has final control over the field placement of all social work students, as well as approval of field sites.
- All placement sites, as well as field supervisors, must meet minimum requirements as stated in the Field Manual for the TTU Social Work Program.
- Requests for out-of-town placements are generally referred to the SCPR committee for review; the SCPR may request to meet in-person with the requesting student.
- The requesting student will be responsible for identifying possible agencies (and field supervisors) in the desired community.
- The requesting student will be required to attend co-requisites (such as SW 4340) or special events as scheduled during the semester of the field placement.
- No later than the end of the 3rd week of the semester *one year* before planned enrollment in SW 4611², the requesting student must submit a letter to the Director of Field Education addressing the following points:
 - 1) Why is the out-of-town placement being requested?
 - 2) What is the student's plan for attendance in co-requisites or other required events during the semester?
 - 3) Does the student have initial ideas about possible agencies?
 - 4) A statement that the student has read and agrees to the stipulations for out-of-town placements as stated in (this) policy.
- Prior to the end of the semester during which the letter was submitted, the student will be notified if the request has been approved or denied.
- If approved (but not before), the requesting student may begin inquiries with agencies about their willingness to accept a social work field placement student for no less than 400 hours during the semester of desired placement.
- Contact information for two potential field supervisors, each with a different social service agency must be provided to the Director of Field Education **no later than** the end of the 3rd week of the *semester before* the planned placement³.

From that point, the requesting student should follow the general instructions provided to all social work majors for completing an Application for Field Placement and participating in timely, formal interviews with the Director of Field Education, as well as potential field supervisors.

Additional considerations. Students need to consider several common issues that could impact their field placement and ultimately, a career in social work.

² If planning to complete a field placement in the fall semester of 2020, the student would submit the letter by the end of the third week of the fall 2019 semester.

³ If planning to complete a field placement in the fall semester of 2020, the student would submit contact information of at least two possible agencies by the end of the third week of the spring 2020 semester.

Medical procedures. Some field sites, especially those in the medical field, may require testing for illness/disease, such as for tuberculosis or hepatitis, and/or vaccinations, such as flu, Hepatitis B or COVID. Agencies may do the testing/vaccinations on site or may refer students to the Student Health Center. These procedures may be offered at no cost, or the student may be responsible for the fee.

Driving records. Field agencies with placements that involve driving may check students' driving records as a condition of placement. Moving vehicle violations may prevent a field placement with some agencies.

Workplace safety. Students should know that there are dangers, risks and hazards inherent in participating in any activity or contact with physical surroundings or other persons. *Dangers, risks and hazards could include death, injury, illness, emotional disturbance, theft, loss or damage of personal property, natural disaster, and/or other disturbances* Students should take steps to ameliorate risk to person and property during field placements.

Student liability insurance. All TTU students who are participating in a field practicum must carry student liability insurance. For a fee (currently about \$15), students must obtain such insurance through the university before beginning field placement.

Criminal background checks. Students who have been convicted of a felony should know that a felony conviction may limit options of being placed in human service agencies or to be licensed as a social worker. The Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council, which oversees social work licensing the state of Texas, will evaluate your background to determine if prior convictions will make you ineligible to be licensed in Texas. The application for this process can be found here: <https://www.bhec.texas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Application-for-Criminal-History-Evaluation-Letter-2021July.pdf>

CAUTION

Should circumstances make it impossible for a student to secure an appropriate field placement, or to complete the field requirement within the prescribed period of time, s/he will be unable to complete the requirements for a Social Work degree from TTU.

Student Representation and Program Input

While students are invited to share thoughts and concerns with faculty at any time, the Social Work Program encourages formal student participation in the governance of the program through elected student representatives. At least two (2) student representatives should be in place in the program at any particular time, and at least one should be elected from among upper-level students with admission to the practice course sequence. The term of service for student representatives is one academic year and may begin in any fall or spring semester. Students may serve more than one term, with re-election.

Responsibilities: Student representatives are primarily tasked with collecting student concerns, comments, or questions about the program and presenting them to the faculty at least once each long semester. These issues may arise directly from students or as a result of a request from the faculty to address particular issues. The Student Representatives may collect this type of feedback through any legitimate means (i.e. e-mail, in writing, SWSO meetings). The most

important considerations are that: a) all social work majors be made aware of the process for submission of concerns, b) student representatives fairly present these issues to the faculty in a timely manner, and that c) the student representatives report back to the student body about the response of the faculty to each of their concerns.

Student representatives may also be requested to participate in special projects or events within the program. Examples of such events include recruitment events, field education training, and CSWE accreditation site visits.

Nomination and Elections: Representative elections should be staggered so that experienced representatives can mentor new representatives for at least one semester of their term. Nominees for student representative positions should be social work majors in good standing. Students may self-nominate or be nominated by a peer or faculty member. After reviewing the status of nominated students, eligible nominees will be contacted to confirm *willingness* to serve and request a student bio for inclusion on election ballots.

Ballots listing qualified and willing nominees will be made available to all social work majors. Students have at least one week to submit their confidential vote. Identifying information may be collected with ballots to ensure the integrity of the election but should not be released to any member of the student body. The BASW Program Director will verify and count the ballots; with a confirmatory count made by a current student representative, if available, or another faculty member. Results of student representative elections should be announced within two weeks.

Student Organizations

Social work students are encouraged to join the *Social Work Student Organization (SWSO)* or “*Social Raiders*.” Participating in this organization is a great way to meet students in other phases of their social work education, get additional volunteer experiences, demonstrate leadership ability, and just have some fun. Inquire with the faculty advisor, [Dr. Debra Lavender-Bratcher](#) for more information.

High-achieving students may also be interested in induction into the *Phi Alpha National Social Work Honor Society*. Social Work Majors with a 3.25+ GPA in at least 9 hours of social work courses & an overall institutional GPA of 3.0+ are eligible to join the Mu Epsilon chapter of Phi Alpha. Interested students should inquire with the faculty advisor, [Cara Speer, LCSW](#) for more information.

There are many other [student organizations](#) with a variety of personal, professional, and social purposes that are open to all TTU students.

Student Concern and Professional Review Committee (SCPRC)

The SCPRC was established to support the success and well-being, as well as the rights and responsibilities of students, including adherence to codes of conduct, within the context of the TTU Social Work Program. To the best of its ability, the Social Work Program has the responsibility to regulate entry to the profession. Social work majors should demonstrate

adequate potential and progress as well as necessary self-care, for successful current and future practice. A referral to the SCPRC is made when concerns are raised about a student's ability to meet the expectations of the program, whether academic, professional, or personal. The SCPRC meets with the student, considers input from interested parties, and then determines how to proceed. Additionally, the SCPRC acts as the reviewing body for student appeals regarding program action⁴, such as assignment of program probation, or denied admittance into the practice course sequence or field instruction.

The SCPRC is composed of no less than three faculty/staff members from the Social Work Program; at least one member should be familiar to the referred student when possible. The SCPRC accepts referrals from students, faculty, and staff; students may refer themselves or a peer of concern. Students are notified, in writing, of their referral to the SCPRC and the identified concerns. A meeting date for the SCPRC meeting will be scheduled, within 30 days if during a long semester. The referred student has the right to meet privately with the committee, present written or oral material, and with 48-hours advance notification, invite up to 2 advocates. In some circumstances, the SCPRC may strongly urge a student to appear at the meeting, but attendance is not required.

As the SCPRC attempts to address and assist in situations which may interfere with a student's progress through the social work curriculum or future practice in the field, examples of reasons for referrals include (but are limited to) concerns about a student's:

- lagging writing, social, communication, or other professional skills
- insufficient provision of basic needs, such as shelter and nutrition
- experiences of trauma and challenge, such as bereavement, abuse, or mental illness
- failure to make sufficient academic progress or remain in good standing
- possible academic misconduct or dishonesty, such as cheating or plagiarism⁵
- failure to follow policies and rules in field settings
- behavior that threatens the welfare of others
- other behaviors that violate professional ethics

Any SCPRC decisions are made by majority vote of the committee members and student receive written notification of the outcome within 30 days of the meeting. Regardless of meeting attendance, the referred student is expected to respond to the SCPRC as requested and follow any decisions, recommendations, and/or requirements stipulated. In most cases, the SCPRC develops a plan of action in collaboration with the student to resolve the concerns. Failure to respond and/or make good faith efforts to follow through with the plan can result in further consequences, up to and including dismissal from the program. For referrals based on serious ethical violations, unprofessional conduct, or behavior that threatens the welfare of others, the committee may determine that *immediate* suspension or termination from the program is warranted⁶.

⁴ Grade appeals are not handled via the SCPRC. Refer to the TTU Student Handbook for information and instructions on making grade appeals.

⁵ The SCPRC in no way supersedes, but may be in addition to, university policy or action regarding the Code of Student Conduct as stated in the current TTU Student Handbook. If a social work major is referred to the TTU Student Conduct Office by a social work faculty member and is determined to have committed a violation of student conduct, a referral to the SCPRC is required.

⁶ In these rare cases, students typically change to a minor in social work with a new major of their choice.

Students may appeal, in writing, any decision made by the SCPR Committee to the Department Chair within 5 university working days. If the student disagrees with the decision of the Department Chair, the student may appeal, in writing, to the Associate Dean in the college within 5 additional university working days.

Expectations for Student Behavior

All students in the program are expected to learn and maintain expectations for professional and personal behavior established by the university, the program, and the profession. As students become more exposed to the professional codes of conduct, they will be held more accountable; in other words, students who are near the end of their program of study are held to a higher professional standard than beginning students. Students are also expected to demonstrate adequate self-care. Throughout their lives, all people encounter obstacles and challenges to well-being, including social work professionals. While the social work curriculum is intended to provide exposure to a minimal level of needed knowledge and skill for social work practice, some students may require additional academic or personal services to achieve success⁷. While problems can sometimes be avoided, students should be willing to identify their own needs as well as seek out and accept help as required to resolve problems and reach goals. As developing professionals, social work students are expected to attend to and properly resolve problems so that these do not interfere with professional abilities, judgments, or client interactions. Admitting needs and accepting assistance can be difficult for professionals; however, we must be willing to do for ourselves what we ask of our clients.

Social work majors are expected to maintain sufficient academic progress, adhere to rules of conduct, including those related to academic integrity, and demonstrate professional behavior during interactions with peers, professors, staff members, and members of the community. These behaviors are monitored by the program and can impact students' status in the program. Specific information on these expectations are delineated in the paragraphs that follow.

Academic Progress

Students are expected to maintain sufficient academic progress to progress through the program in a timely manner, as evidenced by consistently completing major coursework with grades of C or better, maintaining a GPA of 2.5 or greater in major coursework, and generally showing progress in their academic skills over time.

A social work GPA lower than 2.5 is sufficient cause for a social work major to be placed on probation at any time within their social work curriculum. Students on probation are prohibited from acting in student leadership roles in the program and are ineligible for internal scholarships. Students have one long semester to return to good standing; an extension may be granted if the student demonstrates sufficient progress. Students who fail to return to good standing without an approved extension will be referred to the SCPRC.

⁷ Although social work faculty members may have the skills necessary to provide counseling or other assistance, doing so with a student would create an inappropriate dual relationship. Therefore, the SCPRC does not provide any direct services other than referral.

In general, students who are not meeting expectations for academic progress, whether in individual coursework or in the program overall, may be referred to the Student Concern and Professional Review Committee (SCPRC).

Codes of Conduct

“The University has a responsibility to maintain order within the University community and to discipline those who violate its standards, rules, and/or policies. Enrollment requires students to share this responsibility. Students are responsible for knowing the information, policies and procedures outlined in [the TTU Student Code of Conduct]. Students agree to abide by the standards, rules and/or policies set forth in the Student Handbook, the Undergraduate Catalog and other official University publications, as well as the Texas Education Code (TTU [Student Handbook](#), Forward).

Social work students are expected to adhere to the [NASW Code of Ethics](#)⁸ throughout the program, but particularly during any fieldwork. Violation of these professional standards can have serious consequences for students, up to and including dismissal from the program. As stated in the TTU Student Handbook, academic misconduct includes “*any act or attempted act that violates specific Professional Standards or a published Code of Ethics*” to which “*students are held accountable... based on their college or school of enrollment, declared major, degree program, and/or pre-professional program*” (TTU Student Handbook, Section 1, under Academic Misconduct). In addition to any referral to the TTU Student Conduct Office, students found in violation of the NASW Code of Ethics will be referred to the program’s *Student Concern and Professional Review Committee*.

Academic Integrity

Demonstrating academic integrity is an important aspect of following codes of conduct.

According to the Texas Tech University Statement of Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is taking responsibility for one’s own class and/or course work, being individually accountable, and demonstrating intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. Academic integrity is a personal choice to abide by the standards of intellectual honesty and responsibility. Because education is a shared effort to achieve learning through the exchange of ideas, students, faculty, and staff have the collective responsibility to build mutual trust and respect. Ethical behavior and independent thought are essential for the highest level of academic achievement, which then must be measured. Academic achievement includes scholarship, teaching, and learning, all of which are shared endeavors. Grades are a device used to quantify the successful accumulation of knowledge through learning. Adhering to the standards of academic integrity ensures grades are earned honestly. Academic integrity is the foundation upon which students,

⁸ Faculty members are expected to adhere to the same code as well as the [Code of Conduct](#) for licensed social workers in the state of Texas.

faculty, and staff build their educational and professional careers (TTU [Student Handbook](#), Part II, Section B).

Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, violations of published professional ethics/standards, and any act or attempted act designed to give unfair academic advantage to oneself or another student. Additional information about academic misconduct is available in the Texas Tech University Community Policies section [[Student Handbook](#), Part I, Section B.]

The Social Work program takes issues related to academic integrity very seriously. In addition to being a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, academic misconduct is a violation of our professional code of ethics. Students accused of academic misconduct are automatically referred to the Office of Student Conduct as well as the program's *Student Concern and Professional Review Committee (SCPRC)*.

Professional Behavior

Students planning a career in social work should demonstrate a level of professionalism commensurate with their exposure to professional standards. Demonstration of professionalism is one of the criteria for remaining in good standing in the Social Work Program and is therefore always reviewed when students apply to enter the practice sequence or field instruction. Additionally, professionalism demonstrated during a student's tenure in the social work program has a significant impact on the nature of any references that faculty members may provide to students (for graduate school, for example).

The following behaviors and skills are used as a means of evaluating students' professionalism.

Students should demonstrate classroom behavior that is more or less equivalent to expectation in an employment setting, including but not limited to:

- attending class regularly and keeping appointments (or making appropriate arrangements);
- being punctual to class and other meetings;
- being dependable in observing deadlines;
- being prepared for class or other meetings;
- being fully cognitively engaged in class and other academic meetings
- working cooperatively and effectively with others with little or no intervention;
- and appropriate acceptance of and utilization of feedback.

Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate communication skills, including, but not limited to:

- written work that is clear, grammatically correct, uses non-biased language, and conforms with APA style for formatting and source citation;
- oral communication that reflects a general ability to successfully make oneself understood, willingness to listen to others, recognition that one's political, religious, or personal views are not the only way of looking at situations, and that some opinions are

more appropriately expressed in personal settings other than in the classroom, in social service agencies, or other professional contexts;

- and non-verbal communication that reflects respect for others.

Students are expected to demonstrate emotional and cognitive abilities that reflect a level of maturity needed for successful program and professional performance, including, but not limited to the:

- ability to manage life stressors using appropriate coping strategies and resources
- ability to seek and effectively use help for problems that interfere with academic and professional performance, impair professional or academic judgment, or jeopardize the best interests of those to whom the student has a professional responsibility
- self-awareness, including how values, attitudes, emotions and past experiences affect relationships with others, an ability to assess strengths and limitations and a willingness to examine and change behavior when it interferes with professional performance or expectations.

In general, students who are not meeting expectations for professional behavior, whether in individual coursework or in the program overall, are referred to the Student Concern and Professional Review Committee (SCPRC).

Communication Tools & Social Media Use for Social Work Students

The ability to communicate effectively is necessary for social work practice and professionals use phone, video, email, text and written correspondence to do so. While professional guidelines are just beginning to address newer methods, social media is increasingly being used both professionally and personally. In order to uphold our legal and ethical responsibilities as social work professionals, we must be sensitive to issues of informed consent, conflicts of interests, privacy and confidentiality, boundaries, and dual relationships. Paying attention to how these issues relate to the use of social media and other new communication tools is particularly important. It is also important to be aware of our private conduct, as it may impede or enhance our ability to effectively function as professionals.

The TTU social work program has established the following guidelines designed to help protect the confidentiality, privacy and interests of our students, SW Program, university, agency, colleagues, clients, instructors and peers. It is important to remember that all social work faculty and students are expected to adhere to professional standards and conduct including abiding by the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers and the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers.

Additionally, students should be mindful that use of the internet, social media, and other forms of communication may have consequences for social work careers and inappropriate use can undermine public trust and confidence in the social work profession as well as individual practitioners. E-mails to or from many public employees are considered public information, including those from and to TTU faculty and staff. [Please ensure that e-mails to program staff and faculty do not include personal information that you would not want to be public. Face-to-face contact about this type of issue prevents this possibility.] The following are guidelines and

suggestions for students and professionals related to social media; students are responsible for being aware of these.

Use of social media:

- Review and comply with all program, university, and agency guidelines and policies regarding the use of social media and other technology
- Review all of your social media and delete inappropriate posts, tweets, blogs, pictures (also, “untag”), videos, etc.
- Review your “likes” and “unlike” anything inappropriate
- Consider the wisdom of posting any identifying information such as address, phone, email, place of employment, date of birth, etc. as a part of your “profile, “about me”, “biography”, etc. sections.
- Use the highest Privacy settings possible for all social media. Remember, even with these settings in place, it is still possible for content to be shared and retained (forever) on the internet with or without your knowledge/consent.
- Be conscientious on who you “friend, follow”, etc. You should never “friend, follow”, etc. current or former clients.
- Be cautious about friending, following, etc. personnel from your agency. Do not friend or follow personnel during your field placement.
- Do not “look up” or research current or former clients, patients, etc. on social media unless there is compelling reason to do so (Consult with your supervisor first)
- Do not take or share photos of clients at an agency for which you are employed or volunteer without their express and voluntary consent. Be aware that taking and sharing pictures threatens the confidential receipt of services.
- Remember that the sites you “visit,” the comments you post and the videos and images you upload are retained on the internet indefinitely and do not go away.
- Be very careful that any information you share online about your work is for the purpose of improving client services and protects the identity of those involved. Do not share any information online about your work during your field placement at TTU.

Use of computers, phones, tablets, cameras:

- Review and abide by agency policy regarding communication policies.
- Communicating via email or text: Abide by agency guidelines. Do not share client identifying information unless using a secure system AND it is permissible by agency policy. (Remember, at certain agencies, including this university, any and all communication using agency/university technology is considered public information and may be retained indefinitely).
- Agency/program technology (computers, phones should be used for business communication only.
- Review and abide by agency policy about use of personal devices for work purposes.
- Most agencies’ policies state that provided email accounts should NOT be used for personal communication. (Remember, at certain agencies, including this university, any and all communication using agency/university technology is considered public information and may be retained indefinitely).

Helpful Resources for Students

[Scholarships and Financial Aid](#) are available to help TTU students pay for their college education. In addition to the information from the Office of Financial Aid, students should explore funds available within the [College of Arts & Sciences](#). The BASW program also has a few internal competitive scholarships available for upper-level social work majors only. The size and number of these internal funds vary but are typically awarded each long semester based on applicants' need, demonstration of commitment to the profession, and/or progress in the social work program. Descriptions, criteria, and applications are available on the [program website](#). Since financial aid can come from a variety of different sources, students should conduct multiple searches to identify potential options both within and beyond the TTU campus.

[Information Technology](#) service is available to the TTU community, including email, campus-wide software contracts (such as Microsoft Office), training on how to use technology, and other specialized technology services. [IT Help Central](#), 806.742.4357, can assist students with resolving web, software and other technology issues by email, phone, or in person. The [Advanced Technology Learning Center](#) in the main university library includes multiple PC and Mac labs for student use as well as technology instruction. Multiple [computer labs](#) are located across campus, some operated by the ATLC and others by colleges or departments. WEPA™ (Wireless Everywhere Print Anywhere) is available at multiple [kiosks](#) across campus as well. Social work students may find the following locations particularly useful:

- ⇒ WEPA™ near room 079 in the basement of Holden Hall.
- ⇒ WEPA™ near room 104 on the first floor of Holden Hall.
- ⇒ The Social Sciences computer lab in room 105 of Holden Hall.

[The Learning Center](#) is located in Drane Hall, Room 164, and offers academic support and coaching, as well as drop-in and online tutoring for some subjects. Social work students may particularly benefit from tutoring in math and biology, but other subjects may be possible depending on the availability of peer tutors competent in a particular discipline.

[The Writing Center](#) is located in Weeks Hall, 3rd floor, and provides tutoring sessions, in-person or online, for written assignments. Each session is 30 minutes in length. Social work students are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to utilize these services to improve their writing assignments and general skills.

[Student Health Services](#) offers a variety of healthcare services to TTU students, both with and without health insurance, in the Student Wellness Center. Unless intentionally waived, students pay a general medical fee with their tuition that allows them to access either heavily discounted or free services. In addition to seeing a physician or nurse, students can receive immunizations, laboratory services, radiology, and pharmacy. SHS can be contacted at 806.743.2848 and is located at 1003 Flint Avenue on campus.

[Student Counseling Center](#), 806-742-3674, “provides a safe environment for students to explore issues of concern, resolve psychological distress, and maximize their potential.” Located at the Student Wellness Center, the SCS provides a variety of individual and group counseling options, a walk-in clinic M-F from 12:30-3:30pm, a 24-hour crisis helpline, 806-742-5555, as well as self-care services, including [the Mind Spa](#). Full and part-time students are eligible for their no-cost services. If a student needs more assistance, the SCS will connect students with other professionals, either on-campus or in the community.

[Center for Collegiate Recovery Communities](#)

offers “specialized support” for TTU students recovering from excessive substance use, allowing them to “flourish with low relapse rates, high GPA’s, high retention and graduation rates.”

[Risk Intervention & Safety Education \(RISE\)](#) program provides prevention and education services related to substance abuse, gender & sexuality, safety & violence prevention, and student wellness.

[Recreational Sports](#) offers students the opportunity to participate in a variety of exercise, sports, and leisure activities.

[Texas Tech Police Department](#), 806.742.3931, offers 24-hour law enforcement on the TTU campus. To reach law enforcement in an emergency situation, you should call 9-1-1.

Did you know that 1 in 5 people experience a mental health condition during college?

While common, many students still resist seeking services when they are struggling. Even without a diagnosable condition, the demands of balancing studies, employment, and social life can be overwhelming at times. The Social Work Program strongly encourages all social work students to access mental health services during their time at TTU; experiencing mental health services from a client’s perspective makes us better and more empathetic professionals.