



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

# Social Work Program

## Master of Social Work Student Handbook

Welcome to the MSW Program at Texas Tech University. We are excited for you to join our outstanding program and trust that as you complete our curriculum you will develop the knowledge, skills, and social work values that will serve you well in a social work career. The Master of Social Work Program was approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to officially open in August of 2015. Our first cohort of MSW students graduated in May of 2017. Our program received its first full accreditation from CSWE in 2018 and was reaffirmed in October of 2023. This reaffirmation is valid through June of 2031. The MSW online program option began in the summer of 2024.

**Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Social Work**  
**Social Work Program**  
**158 Holden Hall**  
**Box 41012**  
**Lubbock, TX 79409-1012**  
**(806)742-2400**  
**[www.depts.ttu.edu/socialwork](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/socialwork)**

April 2025

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PART I: INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION</b>	3
<b>SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM FACULTY</b>	3
<b>PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF HANDBOOK</b>	4
<b>WHAT SOCIAL WORK IS, AND HOW IT FITS INTO OUR WORLD TODAY</b>	5
<b>WHAT MSW GRADUATES DO</b>	5
<b>SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION: ACCREDITATION</b>	6
<b>HISTORY OF THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM AT TTU</b>	6
<b>MISSION STATEMENT</b>	6
<b>PROGRAM GOALS</b>	6
<b>PROGRAM OPTIONS</b>	7
<b>PART II: MSW PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS</b>	8
<b>STANDARD PROGRAM AND ADVANCED PROGRAM</b>	8
<b>GOOD STANDING</b>	11
<b>PROFESSIONALISM</b>	12
<b>FIELD PLACEMENT</b>	13
<b>ADVISING</b>	14
<b>TRANSFER CREDIT</b>	15
<b>LIFE EXPERIENCE</b>	15
<b>PART III: STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	15
<b>NON-DISCRIMINATION</b>	15
<b>GENERAL APPEAL PROCEDURE WITHIN THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM</b>	15
<b>STUDENT PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW</b>	16
<b>STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNANCE OF THE PROGRAM</b>	19
<b>STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS</b>	19
<b>SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID</b>	19
<b>COMPUTER LAB AND TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS</b>	20

## **PART I: INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION**

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Most of the information in this handbook, as well as additional information and links to faculty websites, can be found at the Social Work Program's website at: [www.depts.ttu.edu/socialwork/](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/socialwork/)

### **SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM FACULTY**

**Andrew Rose**, PhD, LCSW

andrew.rose@ttu.edu

Associate Professor of Social Work and MSW Director  
BSW, Brigham Young University  
MSW, Brigham Young University  
MA, in HDFS/MFT, University of Connecticut  
PhD, in HDFS/MFT, University of Connecticut

**Cayce Watson**, DSW, LAPSW

caycwats@ttu.edu

Associate Professor of Practice in Social Work and  
Online MSW Director  
BS, in SW, Lipscomb University  
MSSW, University of Tennessee  
DSW, in Org. Leadership, University of Alabama

**Cynthia Phelps**, PhD, LCSW

cynthia.phelps@ttu.edu

Assistant Professor of Practice in Social Work and  
Director of MSW Field Education  
BS in Rural Sociology, Louisiana State University  
MSW, University of Southern Mississippi  
PhD in Social Work, Tulane University

**Veronica Molina**, DSW, LCSW

veronimo@ttu.edu

Assistant Professor of Practice in Social Work and  
Director of Online MSW Field Education  
BSW, University of Texas Pan-American  
MSSW, University of Texas Pan-American  
DSW in General Social Work, Capella University

**Richard Alboroto**, PhD, LMSW

richard.alboroto@ttu.edu

Assistant Professor of Social Work  
BSW, Brigham Young University-Hawai'i  
MSW, Brigham Young University  
PhD in Social Welfare, University of Hawai'i

**Seungjong Cho**, PhD, LMSW

Seungjong.Cho@ttu.edu

Assistant Professor of Social Work  
BA in Social Work, Yonsei University  
MSW, Yonsei University  
PhD, Case Western Reserve University

**Debra Lavender-Bratcher, PhD, LCSW**  
Associate Professor of Practice of Social Work  
BA in Psychology/Sociology, Adams State College  
MSW, University of Denver  
PhD in Human Services, Capella University

debra.lavender-bratcher@ttu.edu

**Kimberli Phillips, PhD, LCSW**  
Assistant Professor of Practice of Social Work  
BSSW, West Texas A&M University  
MSSW, University of Texas at Arlington  
PhD in Counseling & Human Behavior,  
Capella University

kimberph@ttu.edu

**Bonnie Anne Rudd, MSSW, LCSW**  
Associate Professor of Practice of Social Work  
BASW, Lubbock Christian University  
MSSW, University of Texas at Arlington

bonnieanne.rudd@ttu.edu

**Sheryl Thompson, SSW**  
Assistant Professor of Practice of Social Work  
SSW, Sheridan College  
HBSW, York University  
MSW, University of Windsor

sherytho@ttu.edu

**Tiffany Wigington, PhD, LMSW**  
Associate Professor of Practice of Social Work  
BFA, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor  
MSW, Saint Ambrose University  
PhD in Child, Youth, and Family Studies,  
University of Nebraska

tiwiging@ttu.edu

The program also invites other social workers to teach on a part time basis as adjunct faculty members. Their input and support is welcomed and they are due the same respect as other program faculty.

## **PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF HANDBOOK**

Part I of this handbook has been designed to acquaint students with the social work profession and to introduce the Social Work Program at Texas Tech University (TTU). Part II provides information on the curriculum structure. Part III sets forth program policies that are intended to help students complete the program and understand the student's role in this educational experience.

Students are responsible for becoming aware of these policies and procedures and for abiding by them. Please ask the faculty about anything not fully understood. An electronic copy of this

handbook is available on the program's website. This handbook is comparable to the agency manuals that outline the policies and procedures of social work practice in social service agencies. Just as agency administrators hold staff responsible for knowing and adhering to those policies and procedures, the faculty expects the same of social work students. This handbook, then, is a tangible representation of the socialization process of becoming a social worker. This handbook does not serve as a substitute for the University Catalog. Students should become familiar with rules that apply to students in this document as well. To view this on-line, refer to [www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/)

## **WHAT SOCIAL WORK IS, AND HOW IT FITS INTO OUR WORLD TODAY**

According to the 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education,

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice; the creation of conditions that facilitate the realization of human rights; the elimination of poverty; and the enhancement of life for all people, locally and globally.

## **WHAT MSW GRADUATES DO**

Keeping this purpose in mind, the faculty of the Texas Tech University Master of Social Work (MSW) Program has created a curriculum that is designed to educate and inspire social work students to be able to fulfill the many roles associated with this profession. The faculty members collectively decided that the concentration of our MSW degree program should be that of the advanced generalist social worker. Based on the work of Lavitt, 2009, and of Dran, 2014, we define this as:

An advanced generalist social work practitioner is one who; will integrate and apply a broad range of knowledge and skills, including scientific inquiry, gleaned from social work and other relevant disciplines to engage, assess, intervene and evaluate at all levels of practice; will remain mindful of competing values and ethical principles, while striving to fulfill the purpose of the social work profession; will appreciate human diversity and work to relieve oppression; and will uphold and build the social work profession throughout his/her career.

Our curriculum will augment the advanced generalist concentration with a focus on health and well-being in the second year advanced classes. We believe it is important to view health and well-being through a strengths-based approach that promotes health persons and families in health communities. Students will be trained to work at all client levels; that is, they will be trained to work with individuals, families, groups, and communities, and also at the policy level.

## **SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION: ACCREDITATION**

Accreditation is important. It assures students and the public that the courses, faculty, and policies of social work programs meet expectations of the profession. Accreditation means that a program offers a recognized social work foundation for graduates. Texas Tech's MSW Program is currently accredited by the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Commission on Accreditation and has been since 2015. Our program had to undergo a typical three-year pre-candidacy process with CSWE from 2015 to 2018. Once full accreditation was granted in 2018 it worked retroactively ensuring that all students who were in our program since its beginning in 2015 also graduated from a CSWE accredited program. Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of a program and the competence of students graduating from that program. To learn more about accreditation standards go to [www.cswe.org/accreditation.aspx/](http://www.cswe.org/accreditation.aspx/).

## **HISTORY OF THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM AT TTU**

The Social Work Program at TTU began during the 1967-68 academic year with 24 students and with three courses. Over the following decade, the program grew in faculty, courses, and students until 1979, when the Council on Social Work Accreditation granted full accreditation status. The undergraduate program has maintained its accreditation since that time. In May, 2014, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved the request from Texas Tech University to begin its first Master of Social Work degree program. Learn more about the history of our program at [www.depts.ttu.edu/socialwork/](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/socialwork/).

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the program is intended to be a clear statement of what the program intends to accomplish:

The Master of Social Work Program at Texas Tech University prepares advanced generalist social workers to contribute to society through professional social work practice and engaged civic participation, providing thoughtful leadership. As critical thinkers and self-directed learners, the MSW graduates are able to simultaneously use self-awareness and sensitivity to the plight of humankind to promote social justice not only in the South Plains Region but also within our interdependent global community. The MSW program integrates the purpose, core principles and methods of social work, and augments these with advanced knowledge and skills to ensure that graduates will continually refine practice through synthesis and discretion, and will protect and promote the values of the profession.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

GOAL 1: The MSW Program will prepare professional social workers who identify with the profession of social work.

GOAL 2: The MSW Program will prepare professional social workers who are sensitive to the evolving context of practice.

GOAL 3: The MSW Program will prepare professional social workers who are able to function effectively in a practice environment.

Our graduates will embrace not only the methods of the profession, but its core principles as well (Goal 1). They will learn to understand their client systems' and their respective communities, and to actively participate in these communities as well. Sensitivity to the evolving context of practice (Goal 2) involves understanding the changing nature of all client and community systems, and the potential for these to impact the practice situation. What happens at city hall can, and does, impact client systems. Our graduates will also demonstrate the ability to function effectively in a practice environment (Goal 3). This involves showing that one can use the knowledge and skills that are taught through our courses. It also includes critical thinking about one's own values in relationship to the professional principle of client self-determination, as well as other principles. These skill sets, i.e. methods and critical thinking, will be understood within a social justice paradigm that seeks to serve humanity in fairness and good faith.

### **PROGRAM OPTIONS**

To increase flexibility and access, the Master of Social Work Program (MSW) at Texas Tech University is offered both in-person at the Lubbock campus and fully online. Students may be admitted to the standard or advanced standing MSW program either in-person or online. Students also have the option to enroll as a part-time or full-time student across both program options. Online students have access to the same support resources through Texas Tech University, the graduate school, and library services.

The Online MSW program option is delivered primarily through asynchronous learning and mirrors the on-campus curriculum. Some required virtual sessions should be expected in the practicum courses. These sessions are designed to support working students. Timely engagement in coursework and participation in virtual learning activities are key expectations in the online program. The field practicum for online MSW students will take place within the student's geographic locale and must be approved by the Online Director of Field Education.

## PART II: MSW PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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### STANDARD PROGRAM AND ADVANCED PROGRAM

The standard and advanced programs can both be completed as either a full-time or part-time student. See course sequence at the following website:

[https://www.depts.ttu.edu/socialwork/Program Pages MSW/MSW Curriculum schedules .php](https://www.depts.ttu.edu/socialwork/Program%20Pages%20MSW/MSW%20Curriculum%20schedules.php)

The Standard MSW program (non-advanced standing) requires 59 hours of coursework, including field placement hours (900 clock hours). Table 1 gives a blocked view of the program's credit hour expectations. Students who take the full program are admitted through the Standard Admission process explained later. These students will take all of the required courses in the general curriculum, plus two electives of their choice. The required courses include four field placements; the first for 150 clock hours, and then three for 250 clock hours each.

**Table 1: Standard MSW Program: Credit & Clock Hour Expectations**

<b>STANDARD 2 YEAR PROGRAM</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Semester Credit Hours</b>	<b>Clock Hours</b>
Required Courses	39	
Prescribed Electives	6	
Free Electives	0	
Field Placements	14	900
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59</b>	

The Advanced Standing MSW Program option is for students who completed an undergraduate social work degree in a CSWE accredited (or approved) institution. It requires 32 hours of coursework, including 500 clock hours of field placement spread over two semesters. Table 2 shows a blocked explanation of the requirements.

**Table 2: Advanced Standing MSW Program: Credit & Clock Hour Expectations**

<b>ADVANCED STANDING PROGRAM</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Semester Credit Hours</b>	<b>Clock Hours</b>
Required Courses	18	
Prescribed Electives	6	
Free Electives	0	
Field Placements	8	500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	



The curriculum is designed to provide all foundational courses during the first two semesters. All of the foundation level courses use 5000 level course numbers. All of the advanced generalist courses begin in the second year of the program. These are listed using 6000 level course numbers. Only those who have successfully completed all 5000 level courses, or who have been admitted with Advanced Standing, will be allowed into the 6000 advanced curriculum. For the foundation year, a listing of graduate course numbers, titles, student credit hours, and brief descriptions, as will be seen in the University Catalog, can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3: MSW Course Descriptions for Foundation Year**

<p>SW 5264. Foundation Field Placement 1 (1)            Pre-requisite: Admission to the M.S.W. degree program and instructor permission. Closely supervised practicum using foundation level social work knowledge/skills/ethics in a program-approved social agency. Professional liability insurance required. Pass-fail.</p>
<p>SW 5310. Social Work Profession and Social Welfare Policy (3)            Foundation course examining social welfare system; emphasizes how policies impact systems of all sizes. Topics include social welfare history, policy development, implementation, evaluation and values of the social work profession.</p>
<p>SW 5311.HBSE: Systems (3)            This foundation graduate course examines theories on and knowledge of interaction between person and environment, emphasizing mezzo and macro level systems, including small groups, organizations, and communities.</p>
<p>SW 5312.HBSE: Lifespan (3)            This foundation graduate course examines theories on and knowledge of interaction between person and environment with emphasis on biological, social, emotional, and cultural systems across the lifespan.</p>
<p>SW 5331.Social Work with Diverse Populations (3).            Foundation course exploring integrated approach to theory, values, and skills of working with culturally diverse populations with emphasis on empowering vulnerable populations to fulfill their potential.</p>
<p>SW 5332.Foundation Practice 1 (3)            Pre-requisite: Admission to the M.S.W. degree program. Foundation course introducing theory and skills of building and maintaining professional relationships with systems of all sizes for generalist social workers.</p>
<p>SW 5333.Foundation Practice 2 (3)            Pre-requisite: Admission to the M.S.W. degree program, SW 5332 Foundation Practice 1. Foundation course building on theory, principles, and introducing skills of problem solving &amp; evidence-based practice with systems of all sizes for generalist social workers.</p>
<p>SW 5339FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH (3)            This foundation graduate course introduces the scientific approach to the generation of social work knowledge, including how to read and interpret research with a critical eye and to perform basic research activities.</p>
<p>SW 5467.Foundation Field Placement 2</p>

Pre-requisite: Admission to the M.S.W. degree program and instructor permission. Closely supervised practicum using foundation level social work knowledge/skills/ethics in a program-approved social agency. Professional liability insurance required. Pass-fail.

Table 4 shows the course descriptions for all of the required advanced year classes, including the field placements.

**Table 4: MSW Course Descriptions for Advanced Year**

SW 6350. Social Work Practice with Individuals (3) Pre-requisite: MSW student with 2 <sup>nd</sup> year status. Advanced course focusing on intervention theories and skills for strengths-based social work practice with individuals.
SW 6351. Social Work Practice with Families (3) Pre-requisite: MSW student with 2 <sup>nd</sup> year status. Advanced course focusing on intervention theories and skills for strengths-based social work practice with families.
SW 6355. Social Work Practice with Groups (3) Pre-requisite: MSW student with 2 <sup>nd</sup> year status. Advanced course focusing on dynamics, intervention theories and skills for strengths-based social work practice with groups.
SW 6356. Social Work Practice with Communities & Organizations (3) Pre-requisite: MSW student with 2 <sup>nd</sup> year status. Advanced course focusing on intervention theories and skills for strengths-based practice with communities and organizations.
SW 6357. Advanced Social Work Research (3) Pre-requisite: MSW student with 2 <sup>nd</sup> year status. Advanced research methods in social work practice with focus on the evaluation with systems of all sizes.
SW 6358. Social Welfare Policy Analysis (3) Pre-requisite: MSW Student with 2 <sup>nd</sup> year status. Advanced course building policy analysis skills, including concepts and tools used for examination of policy related to social problems in society.
SW 6464. Advanced Field Placement 1 (4) Pre-requisite: MSW student and advisor permission. Pass-fail. Liability insurance required. Supervised practicum using knowledge, skills, and ethics in approved social agency.
SW 6467. Advanced Field Placement 2 (4) Pre-requisite: MSW student and advisor permission. Pass-fail. Liability insurance required. Supervised practicum using knowledge, skills, and ethics in approved social agency.

Table 5 provides descriptions of all of the elective choices. The availability of these courses will vary over time.

**Table 5: Elective Course Descriptions for Advanced Year**

SW 6040. Advanced Independent Study in Social Work (v1-6) Pre-requisite: Instructor permission. Independent study in advanced social work theory, research or policy analysis.
SW 6370. Special Topics in Social Work (3) Pre-requisite: Advisor Permission. Topical issues in a focused area of social problem or population. Repeatable for credit.
SW 6371. Assessment & Practice Issues in Mental Health (3) Pre-requisite: MSW student with 2 <sup>nd</sup> year status. Issues for systems of all sizes coping with mental health issues. Includes particular focus on using DSM.
SW 6372. Issues in Social Work Supervision & Administration (3) Pre-requisite: MSW student with 2nd year status. Develops skills in supervision and administration in small and large organizations.
SW 6373. Life Altering Illness & Social Work (3) Pre-requisite: MSW Student with 2nd year status. Exploration of issues for systems of all sizes coping with life altering illness.
SW 6374. Social Work Practice with Veterans & Military Families (3) Pre-requisite: MSW Student with 2nd year status. Introduces students to military culture and explores strengths, resources, stressors, and obstacles to well-being.

## **GOOD STANDING**

To remain in good standing in the MSW Program several expectations must be met. Policies explaining the need to remain in good standing in the MSW program, and exactly what this entails, are further specified later within this handbook. In general, students are to communicate in a respectful and professional manner; this includes oral communication, electronic communication, and written communication. They are expected to attend class and field assignments regularly and maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average for their MSW coursework. If their GPA falls below a 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation and given one semester to remedy the situation. Each course in which the student receives a C or lower must be repeated at the next available opportunity to take the course; he/she must make a B or better in the repeated course or they will not be able to remain in the program. To remain in good standing, students are also expected to demonstrate compatibility with the social work profession. Compatibility is reflected in the student's respect for social work ethical standards and values. This means that the student must learn and adhere to the basic premises of the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers and the Code of Conduct of the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners.

## PROFESSIONALISM

The faculty expects students planning a career in social work to 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. Additionally, professionalism demonstrated during a student's tenure in the social work program can have a significant impact on references that faculty members might later be asked to provide. The following behaviors and skills are used as a means of evaluating students' level of professionalism.

Students should meet basic behavioral expectations, including, but not limited to:

- attending class regularly (either virtually or in-person) and keeping appointments (or making appropriate arrangements);
- checking emails and course announcements regularly;
- being punctual to class and other meetings;
- being dependable in observing deadlines;
- being present in virtual meetings in appropriate attire with camera on;
- showing respect to faculty, staff, and peers;
- being prepared for class or other 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 willingness to listen to others, recognition that one's political, religious, or personal views are not the only way of looking at situations, and 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:

- 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.

## **FIELD PLACEMENT**

The Council on Social Work Education requires that all social work students successfully complete an approved field placement. The field experience allows students to demonstrate their abilities to assess client system situations, apply generalist and advanced generalist skills, and apply the social work code of ethics with populations at risk across micro, mezzo, and macro systems. The field placements are closely supervised, individual experiences using social work knowledge, methods, skills, and ethics in a social agency selected and certified by the program. The field experience is taken pass-fail. Students typically work during normal business hours at most agencies (8am to 5pm), but some agencies allow students to work at other hours. The field placement requires a large commitment of time and effort of participating students.

Students should sign the Field Expectations form (refer to the MSW Field Manual) and submit it to their designated MSW Program Director of Field Education prior to the first day of class in their program. Typically, the placement process begins with submission of (1) a completed Field Application, (2) a signed consent form that allows the program to share information with appropriate TTU or field agency personnel, (3) signed informed consent/assumption of risk documents, (4) agreement to comply with the NASW Code of Ethics and the laws of the state of Texas, and (5) review and complete any other paperwork. Final arrangements for the first field placement (SW 5264) must be made within 30 days of the beginning of the first semester. All other field placements must be arranged no less than 30 days before the end of the prior semester.

Faculty will explore every reasonable opportunity to secure a placement for each student. However, if a student has specific needs or concerns relating to the field placement, s/he needs to arrange a meeting as soon as possible with the MSW Field Director and/or the MSW Director for face-to-face students or the Online MSW Field Director and/or the Online MSW Director for online students. 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 Master of Social Work degree from TTU.

Therefore, while planning for this essential part of the curriculum, students need to consider several common issues related to field placement and ultimately, a social work career. These issues may include required medical procedures, driving records, workplace safety, student liability insurance, and criminal background checks.

Some field sites, especially those in the medical field, may require employees and volunteers (including field students) to be tested for TB, receive the Hepatitis B vaccine, and/or other vaccines. Agencies may do the testing/vaccinations on site or may refer students to the Student Health Center. The procedure/s may be offered at no cost, or the student may be responsible for the fee.

Agencies that allow students to drive agency vehicles (or driving is part of the job) may check students' driving records as a condition of practicum placement. Moving vehicle violations may prevent a field placement with some agencies. Note: Students are not allowed to transport clients under any circumstances, according to University policy.

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 include death, injury, illness, emotional disturbance, theft, loss or damage of personal property, natural disaster, and/or other disturbances. Students should always be aware of their surroundings and take steps to minimize risk.

All TTU students who are participating in a field practicum must carry student liability insurance. For a fee (approximately \$15), students must obtain such insurance through the university before beginning field placement. The MSW Field Director will provide precise instructions on this process; students do not need to seek this coverage independently.

Students who have been convicted of a felony should know that a felony conviction may limit options of being placed in certain human service agencies. *An increasing number of human service organizations and providers that serve as field placements **require** criminal background checks, fingerprinting, child endangerment checks, and/or driving record checks on students.* Many agencies are unwilling to supervise students with legal convictions. All students must comply with and pass agency screening requirements. Additionally, the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners, the board that issues social work licenses in the state, has now made available a Criminal History Evaluation. For a fee (approximately \$50), an applicant to a social work academic program (like ours) can request an evaluation to determine if they are ineligible to hold a license for certain health professions, including social work. The faculty of the program strongly encourages any student who has a criminal history to undergo this evaluation prior to beginning their coursework. Even if an attorney has declared that the student's prior record has been expunged, going through this evaluation will give the student the reassurance that no "surprises" will turn up at the time he/she applies to sit for the licensure exam. Such documentation might also be useful at the time of application for employment. Further information about this procedure is available at: [http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/plc\\_cheval.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/plc_cheval.shtm). If you are an online student who resides outside of the state of Texas, review your state social work licensing procedures and work with your Director of Field Education to ensure your pathway to licensure.

## **ADVISING**

All applicants for the Master of Social Work degree are required to go through academic advising by either the Social Work Program Advisor or the MSW Director. At that time, students will review the process of the degree plan and will also need to decide if they want to be admitted to the program as a full-time student or as a part-time student. Additionally, they should sign all forms necessary for the field placement arrangements.

The Social Work Program faculty are available either during scheduled office hours (in-person or virtual) or by appointment for social work career advising; that is, examining career opportunities and what it is like to be a social worker. For career counseling, it is recommended that students schedule an appointment in advance through e-mail with one or more of the faculty members.

## **TRANSFER CREDIT**

Requests for transfer credit may require a review of course syllabi to ensure course compatibility with the program goals and with the curriculum expected within the MSW degree program at TTU. The program may accept up to six hours of transfer credit for social work courses, but only from similar MSW programs that are accredited by (or in candidacy with) CSWE.

## **LIFE EXPERIENCE**

The Social Work Program does not give credit for work or other life experiences.

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## **PART III: STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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Students should refer to the Code of Student Conduct in the University's Student Handbook ([www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/handbook.php](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/handbook.php)) for an explanation of rights and responsibilities as a TTU student. The University Ombudsperson ([www.depts.ttu.edu/ombudsman/](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/ombudsman/)) is another resource for students to consult on disputed matters. Students (and faculty) are expected to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics ([www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/](http://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/)) throughout the program, but particularly during any fieldwork. Students (and faculty) are likewise expected to adhere to the rules of the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners (<https://bhec.texas.gov/statutes-and-rules/>) or other applicable state laws where students reside and/or do their field placement.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Faculty members of the Social Work Program are expected to avoid discriminating against anyone in accordance with the core values of the National Association of Social Workers, including service, social justice, respect, integrity, value of human relationships, and competence. Additionally, the faculty must abide by the relevant policies of nondiscrimination of Texas Tech University. No person shall be subject to discrimination with regard to admission, employment, or use of the programs, facilities, or services of Texas Tech University (TTU Operating Policy and Procedure OP 40.02: 2024).

## **GENERAL APPEAL PROCEDURE WITHIN THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

If a student is denied acceptance to the program, placed on probation, or has other concerns related to program status, excluding grade appeals (refer to University Catalog on "Grade Appeals"), s/he has the opportunity to appeal the decision. The appeal should be in writing, outline the reasons for appeal, and be submitted to the Social Work program within 30 days into the long semester following student notification of the adverse decision. The MSW Social Work Program committee, composed of all full time MSW faculty members, will consider the appeal and either the student or the faculty may request a personal interview with the committee. Please

note: In cases of alleged student misconduct, the Student Professional Performance Review rules may supersede these general appeal procedures.

## **STUDENT PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

### **Policy and Procedures for the Student Concern and Professional Review Committee**

The Student Concern and Professional Review Committee (SCPRC) was established to support student success and well-being as well as the rights and responsibilities of social work students 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 into the profession. Master of Social Work (MSW) students are expected to demonstrate potential and progress (e.g., social work knowledge, skills, and values) as well as the necessary self-care for successful practice, both current and future. Additionally, the SCPRC acts as the reviewing body for general student concerns regarding program action. Grade appeals are not handled via the SCPRC. Refer to the TTU Student Handbook for information and instructions on making grade appeals

All students in the Program are expected to learn and maintain standards established by the University, the Program, and the Profession of Social Work. In addition to the University's academic and personal standards of behavior, as specified in the Code of Student Conduct in the Texas Tech University Student Handbook, MSW students are required to adhere to both the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners (TSBSWE) Code of Conduct. Adherence to these codes is required of students in all university settings as well as in the community, including in the field practicum. As students become more exposed to social work ethics, they will be held more accountable; in other words, students who are near the end of their program are held to a higher professional standard than those who are beginning their program of study.

As developing professionals, MSW students are expected to attend to and properly resolve their personal problems so that these do not interfere with their professional abilities, judgments, or client interactions. These problems may include the abuse of alcohol or other substances, psychological or psychiatric disorders, family problems, or personal conflicts. While problems can sometimes be avoided, students should be willing to identify their own needs, seek 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 clients. Students may refer themselves or be referred to services of the Student Counseling Center, 201 Student Wellness Center, 1003 Flint, (806) 742 - 3674, for assistance with personal problems. Although the social work faculty members have the skills necessary to provide counseling, doing so is inappropriate as this creates a dual relationship with the student.

### **The Student Concerns and Professional Review (SCPR) Committee**

The SCPRC accepts referrals from students, faculty, and staff; students may refer themselves or a peer about whom they are concerned. 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 include, but are not limited to concerns about a student's academic progress, professional skills, academic misconduct or dishonesty such as cheating or plagiarism, failure to follow policies in field settings, other behaviors that violate professional ethics, personal problems as described in the previous paragraph.

All MSW faculty members are considered members of the SCPR Committee; however, at least three of the faculty members must be present for a meeting to be held. All decisions of the SCPR Committee will be by a majority vote.

### **Student Concerns and Professional Review Procedures**

The following procedures will apply in cases where a student fails to adhere to the requirements of the NASW Code of Ethics, the TSBSWE Code of Conduct, or in cases where the student's behavior is impaired by personal problems. In these cases, the student may be referred to and evaluated by the Social Work Program's Professional Performance Review Committee. Referral to this committee may be made by faculty members, field staff, or other social work students.

Examples of ethical and professional violations which might be brought to the Professional Performance Review Committee include, but are not limited to, the following:

- less than satisfactory written and/or oral communication, social, or other professional skills
- insufficient academic progress or failure to remain in good standing
- physical illness and/or emotional problems that exceed the availability of reasonable accommodations and diminish one's ability to provide effective and quality services to clients in field placement and future clients.
- possible academic misconduct or dishonesty, such as cheating or plagiarism
- failure to follow policies, procedures, and/or rules in field settings
- other behaviors that violate professional ethics including behavior that threatens the welfare of clients, agency personnel, faculty, or other students
- student appeals, such as denied admission into field, program probation, or program dismissal (grade appeals are to be handled in accordance with OP 34.03)

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP34.03.php>

**SCPRC Notification:** MSW students will be notified through their Texas Tech e-mail account and in writing of their referral to the SCPRC and the identified concerns. The written notification will be sent to the student's address on file with the University. In that notice, a meeting date for the SCPRC meeting will be stated, typically within 10 working days if during a long semester. It may be necessary that the student suspend their field practicum attendance while awaiting the SCPRC meeting and recommendations. This may create a hardship regarding fulfillment of the field practicum hour requirement. Every effort will be made to minimize any delays regarding field practice. In some situations, it may be necessary that the student complete their field practicum in a future semester. The referred student has the right to meet privately with the committee, present written or oral material, and with at least 48 - hours advance notification, invite up to two persons to share additional information during the meeting. The student can select a faculty liaison. In this instance, a faculty liaison can be defined as a faculty member who advises, links and brokers information and communication between the student and faculty members serving on the SCPRC. The faculty liaison is considered a supportive resource for the student. In some circumstances, the SCPRC may strongly urge a student to appear at the meeting, but attendance is not required. If the student chooses not to attend, her/his chosen faculty liaison will act on her/his behalf. Discussion of the concerns and any records of the discussion will be kept confidential; however, depending on the nature of the performance issue and the outcome, it may be necessary for the SCPR Committee to share the circumstances and the decision with the field agency, Chair of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work and the Dean of the Graduate School of Texas Tech University.

**SCPR Committee Outcomes:** Possible outcomes range from a finding of "no action to be taken" to "dismissal of the student" from the Social Work Program. Usually, where student limitations are found, the PPR Committee will develop a written contract with the student or faculty liaison. This contract will specify the procedures the student must follow to address the issues and concerns found by the Committee within a given time-frame. At the end of the contractual time the Committee and student will reconvene to determine the student's compliance with the terms of the contract. At this time, the Committee will either dismiss the contract, modify it (including possibly extending the time period), or dismiss the student from the Social Work Program. The Committee may also convene on an ad hoc basis to review the student's performance during the term of the contract. Failure to comply with the contract may result in dismissal from the Social Work Program. It is the belief of the social work faculty that student behavior can be improved and, therefore, the Committee and faculty will remain supportive throughout this process.

**SCPR Committee Appeal Procedures:** Students who disagree with any decision of the Student Concerns and Professional Review Committee may appeal in writing to the Department Chair within five (5) university working days. If the student disagrees with the decision of the Department Chair, the student may appeal in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School of Texas Tech University. The student should follow all procedures as specified in Texas Tech University OP 64.07. The decision of the Provost and Senior Vice President (PSVP) of the university will be considered final.

**No Conflict with Texas Tech University Code of Student Conduct:** 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.

## **STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNANCE OF THE PROGRAM**

While students are invited to share thoughts and concerns with faculty at any time, the MSW Program encourages formal student participation in the governance of the program through a student representative. The student representative is 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 MSW Student Representative may collect this type of feedback through any legitimate means (i.e. e-mail, in writing, SASW meetings). The most important considerations are that: a) all MSW students be made aware of the process for submission of concerns, b) the MSW student representative fairly presents these issues to the faculty in a timely manner, and that c) the MSW student representative report back to the student body about the response of the faculty to each of their concerns.

Typically, there will be four student representatives, two from the first year of the Standard Program (one online and one face-to-face) and two from the Advanced Program (one online and one face-to-face), all elected at the beginning of the fall term. Nominees should be MSW students who are in good standing in the program. A student may nominate him/herself. At the beginning of the fall term, an announcement will be made that names will be accepted for nomination for the MSW Student Representative position until noon on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of class.

After reviewing the status of nominated students, eligible nominees will be contacted to confirm *willingness* to serve. Ballots listing qualified and willing nominees will then be distributed to all social work students. Students have one week to submit ballots anonymously online. The Social Work Faculty will verify and count the ballots. Findings will then be reported to the student body.

## **STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

MSW students are encouraged to create a student organization for themselves or to become members and leaders in the Social Work Student Organization, an organization open to all TTU students interested in the profession. This organization is a good way to meet students in different phases of their social work education.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID**

Information about scholarships and financial aid is located on the University's Financial Aid website at: [www.financialaid.ttu.edu/](http://www.financialaid.ttu.edu/). Information about fellowships, graduate assistantships, and other forms of financial aid is also available on the TTU Graduate School website at: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/gradschool/funding/>

## **COMPUTER LAB AND TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

Holden Hall 153 is intended for use as a computer lab for the on-campus MSW students. Wifi may be accessed in this room, and several computers are available for your use. Students are advised not to leave any personal property unattended in this room, especially laptops, other electronic devices, or flash drives, as there will be no close monitoring of the room. If you want to access the room but it is locked, please see the main office or Ms. Lopez to gain access.

All online students and on-campus students enrolled in any fully online or hybrid course will need access to TTU learning systems including: TTU Email, RaiderCanvas, Microsoft Office (free download from TTU eRaider or Office365.com), a PC or Mac desktop or laptop, webcam and microphone, Microsoft Teams, audio and video playing capabilities to meet course expectations. Online students will need daily access to computers/mobile devices equipped with reliable broadband. MSW students are expected to access links to the internet, stream high-quality video, utilize Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Canva, Google Slides or another presentation software of their choosing, and download documents, including PDF's.

### **Social Media and Communication Guidelines Texas Tech MSW Students:**

The ability to communicate effectively is a primary tool necessary for social work practice. Social Work professionals use a variety of methods for communicating including utilizing the expected technology of phone, emails, texts, and written correspondence. Increasingly, the use of social media has become another commonly used avenue for sharing and responding to information. 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. 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 MSW Program has established the following guidelines designed to protect the confidentiality, privacy and interests of our students, the MSW Program, the university, agency, colleagues, clients, instructors and peers. In addition to these guidelines, MSW Field 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.

### **Social Media:**

- a. Review and comply with all program, university, and agency guidelines and policies regarding the use of social media and other technology.
- b. Review all of your social media and delete inappropriate posts, tweets, blogs, pictures (also, "untag"), videos, etc....
- c. Review all of your "likes" and "unlike" anything inappropriate
- d. 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.

- e. 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 on the internet with or without your knowledge/consent.
- f. Be conscientious on who you “friend, follow”, etc.... You should never “friend, follow, etc... current or former clients.
- g. Be cautious about friending, following, etc... personnel from your agency. Friending/Following personnel from your agency while you are a practicum student is highly discouraged.
- h. Do not “look up” or “follow” any current or former clients, patients, etc... on social media unless there is compelling reason to do so (Consult with your supervisor first).
- i. Do not post/share photos taken at your agency. Never post/share photos of clients. Taking pictures without the consent of others is a breach of privacy and confidentiality.
- j. 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.
- k. Do not reference your agency, supervisors, clients, colleagues, peers, client experiences, professional experiences on social media sites or other online sites.

**Communication Technology such as Computer, phone, tablets, cameras:**

- a. Review and abide by agency policy regarding communication policies.
- b. 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).
- c. Agency/program computer, tablet, or phone should be used for agency/program business only. It should not be used for any personal communication (email, text, internet use, photo-sharing, etc...).
- d. Personal phone, tablet, and/or computer should not be used for professional communication or work when your agency has provided a computer, tablet, phone, etc... for professional use. Review and abide by agency policy.
- e. Professional email accounts should NOT be used for personal communication. All communication using agency provided technology should be of a professional nature. (Remember, at certain agencies, including this university, any and all communication using agency/university technology is considered public information and may be retained indefinitely).
- f. Taking and sharing photos without consent is a breach of privacy and confidentiality. Review agency policy regarding use of personal camera, cell phone camera, computer, tablet, etc....

Please be mindful that your use of the internet, social media, and other forms of communication may have consequences for your social work career and can undermine public trust and confidence in the social work profession.