



UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA

College of Behavioral & Community Sciences

School of Social Work

Master of Social Work Program Student Handbook

13301 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MHC1400, Tampa, FL 33612

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The Master of Social Work Student Handbook provides information about School of Social Work and MSW Program policies and requirements. Graduate students are ultimately responsible for their MSW education, meeting graduation requirements, and assuring that they are in compliance with University, Graduate School, College of Behavioral and Community Sciences and School of Social Work regulations, policies, and procedures. Please refer to the USF Graduate Catalog for additional information about academic policies and graduation requirements.

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your admission to the USF School of Social Work MSW program. The MSW Student Handbook contains information about the graduate social work program, school and program policies and procedures, student rights and responsibilities, as well as pertinent information about our MSW program.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the University of South Florida, School of Social Work is to prepare graduates to achieve excellence as professionals and leaders in social work practice, research, and education. Our focus is to develop generalist social workers at the bachelor's level, clinical social workers at the master's level and social work scholars at the doctoral level and to encourage students to embrace social work knowledge, ethics, skills, and values. Beginning in our own diverse region, and extending nationally and globally, we are committed to graduating students who reflect the School's commitment to promoting social and economic justice, human rights, human dignity, scientific inquiry, and sustainable human and community well-being for all.

I. MSW PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The MSW program is a specialized course of study designed to prepare graduates for clinical practice with individuals, families and groups in agency or organization-based community practice settings. The program is designed to produce graduates who exhibit professional standards, values, and ethics in the practice of social work; who demonstrate a respect for human beings and a commitment to the capacity for growth and change in people; and who demonstrate the application of professional social work principles through professional discipline and self-awareness in the service of all clients. Graduates will be able to engage in a range of practice methodologies appropriate for treatment of individual and family problems and in work with groups.

Program Description

The graduate program in social work is a course of study designed to respond to an identified need in the region for skilled clinical social work practitioners. It is built upon a core of information basic to social work practice, followed by advanced scholarly study in preparation for clinical work with individuals, families, and small groups. An intense field practicum affords the student the opportunity to apply theory gained in the classroom to the problems of agency clients. The MSW program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

Curriculum

The MSW Social Work curriculum is organized so that courses are provided in sequence. Any exceptions to taking courses in sequence must be approved by the MSW Chair/Committee. Failure to take courses as prescribed may jeopardize student progress and continuation in the program. The program does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience.

Students are admitted to the MSW Program in cohorts. Class sections are designated for particular cohorts; students are not permitted to take course sections out of sequence or class sections intended for other cohorts. (For instance, students in the full-time program cannot take courses that are for part-time students). Any exceptions require approval of the MSW Chair/Committee.

Curriculum Requirements:

https://catalog.usf.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=12&poid=3948&returnto=1384

Download your degree planner here:

https://catalog.usf.edu/preview_degree_planner.php?catoid=12&poid=3948&hl=%22This+program+is+offered+fully+online.%22&returnto=search&print

Field Instruction

Field Instruction enables students to learn contemporary practice skills related to their academic learning, the effectiveness of various modalities of intervention, and the opportunity for applied research. The MSW program requires a minimum of 900 hours of field placement (600 for Advanced Standing students). Full-time students (both on campus and online) are in the field 20 hours per week for 3 semesters (Advanced Standing only 2 semesters). Part-time students (both on campus and online) are in the field 10 hours per week for 5 semesters (Advanced Standing only 4 semesters). Online Traditional students are in the field 12 hours per week for 2 semesters and then increase to 15 hours per week for their final 3 semesters. The MSW program utilizes a single field placement model which means that the student is placed in one agency for the entire 900 hours (or 600 hours for Advanced Standing) of field placement. Non-Advanced Standing Students will have a field seminar course in their semesters prior to entering field placement. Students are also enrolled in a field seminar course concurrently with the placement to assist with integrating the full learning experience. For more information regarding the Field program, consult the Field Manual (available on the USF School of Social Work website).

Electives

Advanced Standing students are required to take 2 clinical electives for 6 credits. Non-Advanced Standing students are required to take 3 clinical electives for 9 credits. All clinical electives must be taken in the School of Social Work. Students may take electives during any semester including summer sessions. However, students should consider the program course schedule for the recommended semesters for electives.

Capstone Project

The Capstone project is a one-credit course which serves as a cumulative learning measure for the MSW program. Students will complete an independent project which requires the synthesis of content from their theoretical, research, practice, field, and policy courses and the application of this content to a current field practicum case.

MSW/MPH Concurrent Program

The USF MSW/MPH Concurrent program offers social work students expanded study in public health and encourages a well-balanced macro-micro orientation to clinical practice. Such expansion can provide the social work student with specific skills that result in comprehensive and effective client interventions in health care settings. The fundamental methodological tools of public health, such as biostatistics, epidemiology, and health management and evaluation, further assist the social worker in targeting the needs of individuals and communities.

Students admitted into the MSW program who simultaneously also wish to pursue an MPH must apply for and be admitted into the MPH program separately and fulfill the requirements of the MPH program. The School of Social Work may allow up to 9 credits from the MPH program to count towards elective credit hours for the MSW program when:

1. The MPH course is reviewed and approved by the MSW Chair, and
2. The student graduates with an MPH.

Approval for coursework and credits completed at the College of Public Health will be revoked if the student withdraws from or otherwise does not complete the MPH program at or prior to the completion of the MSW program.

Because of the rigorous nature of completing both the MSW and MPH programs simultaneously, students are advised that 3 years of full-time course work will be required, and it is recommended that the first year be dedicated towards MPH coursework.

If you are interested in completing both the MSW and MPH degrees simultaneously at USF, please contact the school for further guidance. Please see website for additional information <https://www.usf.edu/cbcs/social-work/programs/dualdegree.aspx>

Admissions Information

Students may either apply to the School of Social Work or Public Health. After admission to a program they will submit the Concurrent Degree application, which is located on the Graduate Schools website. The application should be turned into the Program Specialist of their current program for processing.

School of Social Work MSW Committee

The MSW Committee, composed of School faculty, is responsible for all policy and procedural matters related to the MSW Program including curriculum research and student affairs. These responsibilities include monitoring MSW student performance and progress in meeting program requirements, review of the program to assure program quality and outcomes, and action on all matters of policy and procedure regarding the MSW Program. All student cohorts are represented on the Committee.

II. ACADEMIC RESOURCES

USF Net ID, Canvas, Email Communication, School of Social Work ListServe, Writing Center, and Library. All students must obtain a USF NetID that allows access to MyUSF, Canvas (USF Academic Portal), your USF Email account and USF Computer labs. The MSW listserv serves as a primary source of communication regarding program business and provides students with up-to-date information regarding school matters. The Writing Studio provides free tutoring services to USF students who wish to strengthen their writing skills. The Library offers programs, events, research tools and more.

Canvas: <https://webauth.usf.edu/login?service=https%3A%2F%2Fusflearn.instructure.com%2Flogin%2Fcas>

Writing Studio: <http://www.usf.edu/writing>

USF Library: <http://www.lib.usf.edu/>

Campus Life: <http://www.usf.edu/Campus-Life/index.asp>

Counseling Center: <http://usfweb2.usf.edu/counsel/>

Student Disabilities Services: <http://www.sds.usf.edu>

Career Center: <http://www.career.usf.edu/>

Scholarships and Fellowships: <https://www.usf.edu/admissions/graduate/admission-information/cost-of-attendance/scholarships.aspx>

Student Disabilities Services

The School of Social Work is committed to work toward the elimination of any potential barrier to the education of a student accepted and enrolled in academic course work provided by this School. As a way of demonstrating this commitment, the faculty of the School will make every effort to follow the policies and procedures outlined by the University and articulated by the University's Office of Student Disability Services.

Student Disability Services (SDS) makes the final determination as to the type of need and the type of assistance that can be rendered for students with disabilities. The process of applying for services is described in detail in the SDS website www.sds.usf.edu.

Student Advising

MSW students are assigned an advisor who provides assistance with academic, curriculum, and professional matters. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the advising program.

The role of the advisor includes the following:

To have contact with a student advisee as needed during the course of the MSW Program. The contact may be initiated by the student or the advisor. Examples of times that there may need to be advisor contact include:

There are issues with credits needed for graduation; questions about electives to take, and other academic questions; the student needs a “sounding board” to prepare to communicate directly with another student, instructor, or staff member regarding a concern.

May be involved in meetings, which can include serving on a Student Affairs Committee, when there are student concerns regarding an advisee and when an advisee initiates a grievance process.

Students in the MSW/MPH program are assigned two advisors: (1) faculty member in the School of Social Work knowledgeable about the dual degree, and (2) faculty member in the College of Public Health who helps coordinate the student’s course of study there.

III. STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

BRIDGE Healthcare Clinic

The mission of the BRIDGE Healthcare Clinic is to establish a long-term health care facility in the University of South Florida vicinity that helps students learn to address the multi-disciplinary healthcare needs of uninsured members of the University Area Community by providing professional, compassionate care. Work collaboratively with USF Health students to gain real life experience in culturally competent healthcare for the underserved.

Educate patients about their current disease states, available resources, and primary prevention in order to improve their long-term health.

For additional information and to apply, students contact Dr. Christopher Simmons at Csimmons4@usf.edu or Ms. Melissa Thompson at mathomp4@usf.edu.

Class Representative

The position of Class Representative is an elected position. This representative serves as a liaison between one's classmates and the MSW Program Committee. The position is intended to provide a means to enhance communication between both parties. Students are elected to yearly appointments via in class-voting, coordinated by the MSW Chair. A student may elect to run for consecutive terms. Each cohort may have up to two representatives for the year. However, on committee matters that involve a vote, each cohort will have one vote.

MSW Class Representative

Each class or cohort (first year, second year and part-time) has representation on the MSW Committee. The Class Representative is elected by students to a yearly (fall-spring) appointment. Each cohort may have up to two representatives for the year. However, "on committee" matters that involve a vote, each cohort will have one vote.

MSW: Class Representative Position Guidelines

Responsibilities include:

Acts as the spokesperson and represents classmates in all MSW program related matters. Attends all MSW Program Committee meetings (in person or, when necessary and if feasible, remotely, i.e., by telephone, Skype, etc.). In the event that at least one Class Representative cannot attend, the class representative is responsible to arrange for alternate representation. The Class Representative is knowledgeable about the grievance procedure and chain of command in the School of Social Work. The Class Representative will be listed on the agenda of every MSW Program.

MSW Committee Meeting

The Class Representative is responsible for obtaining the dates and times of the MSW Committee meetings from the MSW Program Chair and sharing this information with their classmates. The Class Representative solicits input from classmates and represents them at

meetings by asking for information and presenting issues that are current and relevant to their cohort. The Class Representative ensures that all issues brought to the attention of the MSW Program Committee are appropriate. Appropriate issues to bring to the MSW Program Committee meeting include (but are not limited to) macro-related issues regarding program guidelines and/or suggestions for improving current program guidelines.

The Class Representative ensures that personal issues involving individual classes and/or professors are addressed directly with the specific parties involved.

- The Class Representative ensures that questions are addressed to specific faculty member(s) if necessary, in an attempt to seek counsel prior to addressing a specific issue in the MSW Program Committee meetings.
- The Class Representative reports the proceedings of the MSW Program Committee in written form (such as by email) to classmates in a timely and appropriate manner. Class time is not to be used for this purpose.
- The Class Representative actively promotes and adheres to the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. Professionalism is expected at all times while on campus and while performing class representative duties. Respect, openness, a non-judgmental attitude, and non-critical interactions are essential.

IV. Student Organizations

Social Work Society

The Social Work Society (SWS), housed within the USF School of Social Work, is a student organization open to all undergraduate and graduate students at the university. The primary aims of the society are twofold: First, to promote positive socialization among students interested in issues of social justice and positive social change; and, second, to raise funds and engage in service activities that address human needs and social justice concerns both on campus and within communities locally, regionally, and nationally.

Students interested in joining the Social Work Society can sign up using OASIS. Students may also visit the USF Center for Student Involvement website (www.involvement.usf.edu) and click on the link to search student organizations. For additional information about the SWS, visit the USF School of Social Work website.

Phi Alpha-Delta Sigma Chapter

Phi Alpha honors social work students who have attained excellence of scholarship and distinction of achievement as students of social work. The mission of Phi Alpha is to recognize and promote scholastic achievement among social work students and faculty at USF, to promote fellowship among students of social work, and to further the goals and values of the social work profession in our community and nationally. Eligibility: GPA point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale (determined at the beginning of student's last semester). Students who have an "I" grade on their transcripts are not eligible.

Eligible students receive a letter of invitation to join the chapter. Invitations are sent out in email to qualified students each November and March. (Any students who believe they meet eligibility requirements, but do not receive an invitation to join the chapter should check with the School of Social Work's Academic Program Specialist).

Membership Dues: A one-time life membership fee of \$30 includes a certificate of membership from the national office. An additional fee is charged if you wish to purchase the honors sash from the USF Bookstore.

USF School of Social Work Alumni Society

The USF School of Social Work Alumni Society is one of many USF Alumni Association sponsored groups that work to fulfill the mission of the Alumni Association; connect alumni, support students and strengthen the University. In addition to furthering this mission the Social Work Alumni Society exists to support the mission and vision of the School of Social Work. This support comes in many forms including interaction with current students, attending/sponsoring college events and fundraising. Society members are a core group of engaged volunteers who serve in a variety of ways. They are a communications network that grows and gives back through events like the annual Celebration of Social Work. Maintaining the School's bonds with BSW and MSW

students, the Social Work Alumni Society provides a strong connection to the social work community as well as promoting lifelong learning.

For more information about the USF Alumni Association, including how to become a member of the Social Work Society, visit <https://www.usfalumni.org/s/861/02-alumni/start.aspx>. Students are provided a significant discount to join during school or right after graduation.

V. ACADEMIC POLICIES

Evaluation of Student Progress

To assure that students are successfully progressing in the program, course instructors and students are encouraged to discuss any potential academic or professional behavior difficulties as they occur. In addition to these individual discussions and grades for courses, students are evaluated using the following methods:

Every semester at midpoint, the MSW Chair sends Instructor Reports to all instructors of MSW students. All instructors are asked to report students experiencing academic or professional behavior problems to the MSW Chair. The MSW Chair or student's advisor meets with any student reported to be experiencing difficulties and creates an action plan for improvement. The action plan is placed in the student's file; progress is checked regularly.

At the end of Year 1, the MSW Chair again sends Instructor Reports to all instructors of first year MSW students to assess students' mid-point progress. The MSW Chair or student's advisor meets with any student reported to be experiencing difficulties and creates an action plan for improvement. The action plan is placed in the student's file; progress is checked regularly.

During the last semester of the MSW program, all MSW students complete a comprehensive paper covering learning from the entire MSW program. This paper is completed in SOW 8977, Capstone Project. Students must receive a passing grade (B- or above) on this paper in order to graduate.

Minimum Overall GPA and Course Grades

Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in all social work courses, with no grade below "B-" counting toward graduation. Failure to maintain the specific GPA may result in suspension or dismissal from the program. Courses with grades below "B-" (79 or below) must be repeated before progressing to the next sequence.

Academic Probation – Graduate School Policy

For information on the Academic Probation Process go to: <https://www.usf.edu/graduate-studies/documents/usf-graduate-studies-academic-probation-procedures.pdf>

Individual Course Withdrawal

Since the curriculum is heavily sequenced with required courses, students are cautioned that withdrawal from any one course is tantamount to withdrawal from the MSW program. In this event, a student must re-apply for admission to the program at the time the program is offered again.

Withdrawal from a class effectively results in a withdrawal from the program unless special provisions have been made with the Chair of the MSW Program. Because of the consequences associated with withdrawal from a course, students should consult with their Faculty Advisor or Chair of the MSW Program before taking such action.

Request for Incomplete ("I") Grade

The University policy for "I" grades is found in the USF Graduate Catalog: <https://catalog.usf.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=1375&hl=%22incomplete+grade%22&returnto=search#academic-policy-and-regulation-information>. These policies are followed by the School of Social Work.

Program Withdrawal

Students are expected to make any necessary arrangements for responsible withdrawal from classes and field practicum. It is the student's responsibility to contact the School and/or agency to determine the specific steps necessary to address the needs of all parties (i.e. termination of client/worker relationships, paperwork, etc.). The following procedure is to be utilized:

1. Notify class instructors and agency field instructors in a timely manner
2. Notify MSW Committee Chair in writing
3. Notify the Director of Field Education in writing
4. Withdraw from classes
5. Submit withdrawal form to the department <https://www.usf.edu/graduate-studies/documents/usf-graduate-studies-graduate-voluntary-withdrawal-form-fillable.pdf>

Program Dismissal

Entrance into the MSW Program does not guarantee graduation from the program. Students admitted must maintain the minimum GPA and exhibit responsible professional behavior. Failure to do so as determined by the School may result in suspension or dismissal from the program. The following situations may result in dismissal:

1. Behavior that is inconsistent with the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers; <https://www.socialworkers.org/about/ethics/code-of-ethics/code-of-ethics-english>
2. Behavior or performance, or lack thereof, which raises questions from the faculty or field instructor about the student's suitability for professional social work (See- Problem Resolution for Faculty; Faculty Based Concerns; pages 16-17).
3. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty or disruption;
4. Failure of student to maintain a 3.0 GPA beyond one semester of academic probation; (University policy)
5. Failure of student to achieve a grade of "B-" or better in all courses required for graduation;

6. Failure of student to follow course sequencing as scheduled, unless other arrangements have been made and approved by the appropriate faculty and program chair

MISSING CLASS DUE TO EMERGENCY

If an emergency arises and a student cannot attend class or internship, s/he should call and/or email all instructors, field supervisors, and MSW Chair. The MSW Chair will help coordinate a plan with the student and all others involved. Among the possible options to be considered for the student are for him/her to: miss one or two classes, apply for an incomplete grade(s), withdraw from a course, or withdraw from the MSW Program. (Pregnancy is not considered a medical emergency by USF or the MSW Program.)

OTHER EMERGENCIES

USF's Public Safety website is: <http://www.usf.edu/administrative-services/emergency-management/programs/public-safety-apps.aspx>

VI. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

MSW students are expected to exhibit professional behavior in both academic and field placement settings and to conduct themselves with responsibility, honesty and integrity. Professional behavior includes agreeing to abide by University, Graduate, and School of Social Work polices regarding Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty, Problem Resolution and Grievance Procedures, the Student Code of Conduct and NASW Code of Ethics. Students sign the MSW Student Accountability Form prior to beginning program coursework. By signing, students agree to abide by the above described policies.

VII. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT CONDUCT

The School of Social Work strongly supports the University's policy on Academic Honesty and Integrity. "Members of the University Community support high standards of individual conduct and human relations. Responsibility for one's own conduct and respect for the rights of others are essential conditions for academic and personal freedom within the University. USF reserves the right to deny admission or refuse enrollment to students whose actions are contrary to the purposes of the University or impair the welfare or freedom of other members of the University community. Disciplinary procedures are followed when a student fails to exercise responsibility in an acceptable manner or commits an offense as outlined in the Student Conduct Code USF6.0021. <https://usf.app.box.com/v/usfregulation60021>

"Academic integrity is the foundation of the University of South Florida's (University/USF) commitment to the academic honesty and personal integrity of its University Community. Academic integrity is grounded in fundamental values, which include honesty, respect and fairness. Broadly defined, academic honesty is the completion of all academic endeavors and claims of scholarly knowledge as representative of one's own efforts. Knowledge and maintenance of the academic standards of honesty and integrity as set forth by the University are the responsibility of the entire academic community, including the instructional faculty, staff and students." USF Regulation 3.027: <https://www.usf.edu/graduate-studies/students/academic-integrity-of-students/>

Problem and Conflict Resolution and Academic Grievance

The faculty of the School of Social Work is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is conducive to learning. In order to sustain this creative environment, faculty, students, and staff are encouraged to conduct themselves in a professional manner when resolving general problems or conflicts that may occur in the course of classroom learning, field education, and professional interchange. The School of Social Work is committed to resolving issues at the earliest possible point. In order to achieve a fair and equitable resolution of general student or faculty concerns, complaints or disagreements about issues which affect any area of student academic performance or the classroom/field setting, the student, faculty member and/or field

instructor shall make reasonable effort to resolve his or her grievance with the concern or problem. For academic grievances that are not resolved and include a reference to a violation of a specific USF Policy, or an academic decision that was applied differently to the grievant than other students, students are to follow with the Academic Grievance Procedure provided in USF Policy 10-002: <https://usf.app.box.com/v/usfpolicy10-002>

General Guidelines:

- It is important to note that if an instructor or supervisor deems that a student's behavior or academic performance creates a safety or disruption risk, the instructor or supervisor may take immediate action and remove the student from a classroom or field placement.
- Unless directed otherwise by an instructor or supervisor, students with concerns must continue to meet the directives and participation requirements of a class or field placement and must complete all assignments in a timely fashion. Failure to fully participate and complete assignments may result in a failure or dismissal.

Student Code of Conduct <http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/regulations/pdfs/regulation-usf6.0021.pdf>

Office of Students Rights & Responsibilities (Honor Code)
<http://www.sa.usf.edu/srr/page.asp?id=84>

Approved by Faculty August 19, 2016

The same policies and procedures apply to students in the Sarasota part-time program and to students in the MSW/MPH program.

An MSW student who is terminated from the MSW program is notified by the Director of the School of the decision in writing by certified letter. The student is provided with information on the rationale for the program dismissal as well as their right to grieve the decision. In addition, the student is provided with information on the process of initiating an academic grievance. The same policies and procedures to terminate students apply to students in the Sarasota part-time program and to students in the MSW/MPH program.