



**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA**

**SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

**BSW STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2020-2021**

**Department of Sociology, Anthropology, & Social Work**

**by**

**The BSW Committee**



## **SOCIAL WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA**

Welcome to the Student Handbook for the Social Work Program at the University of South Alabama. This Handbook is intended to provide students with information about specific program policies, information, rights and responsibilities. Another rich source of information for USA students is the University's *The Lowdown*, the institution's student handbook. <http://www.usouthal.edu/lowdown/> Students are encouraged to use both of these documents as resources. Of course, you are always welcome to visit with members of the social work faculty for guidance in any student related matter.

Social work is a profession devoted to assisting people in solving problems and affecting social change to improve the quality of their lives. The social worker is guided by a professional code of ethics in assisting people to achieve an effective level of psychosocial functioning and effecting social change to improve the well-being of everyone. Social work is founded on the principles of service; social justice; personal dignity and worth; the importance of human relationships; integrity; and competence.

If you are interested in helping others and making your concern for people a career, social work may be the profession for you. Social workers are involved in addressing some of society's most pressing issues such as poverty; abuse and neglect; mental illness; and juvenile crime – to name just a few. The profession can be very rewarding to those who like to make a difference.

USA offers the Bachelor of Social Work program, which prepares students for the entry level practice of social work. Bachelor's level social workers are usually on the front line in social welfare agencies, dealing with a wide range of social problems. The bachelor's degree in social work prepares students for the entry level practice of social work and for membership in professional organizations such as the National Association of Social Workers, and to sit for the state licensing examination (see <http://abswe.state.al.us/> for information on AL).

The BSW program at USA has been accredited with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since the Fall of 2005. The next review for reaffirmation of accredited status will be in 2021.

### **MISSION OF THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

The program mission for Social Work at the University of South Alabama is to prepare competent, effective entry level social work professionals to address the social welfare needs of the Gulf Coast and South Alabama regions. The program has a strong commitment to provide professional leadership to the region in terms of social work education, service to the community and in scholarly endeavors. In order to be attuned to the community context of social work in this region, the program is committed to promoting well being through the exploration of both urban and rural community practice, the foundations of the social work profession, the person-in-environment perspective, liberal arts preparation, diversity, poverty, social and economic justice, and a strong value base for practice.

## **BSW PROGRAM CURRICULUM**

The Bachelor of Social Work degree (BSW) offered by University of South Alabama is a four-year, 120 credit hour degree. Of these 120 credit hours, 56-58 credit hours are devoted to general/supportive liberal arts courses and 54 credit hours to social work. The remaining required credits are earned through elective courses. Students are free to select elective courses, a certificate, or a minor of their choice. Students may pursue the degree on either a full or part-time basis.

The BSW program curriculum consists of general education courses, courses in the professional foundation (Social Work major), courses for the minor, and electives. The Social Work professional foundation courses include content in the following areas: Human Behavior and the Social Environment, Social Work Policy and Services, Generalist Social Work Practice, Research Methods, and agency based Field Instruction.

### **Credit for Life Experience**

The program does not give academic credit for any course work or field instruction based on students' prior life, volunteer, or work experiences.

### **FOCUS OF CURRICULUM: GENERALIST SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

Undergraduate social workers are generalists in that they are called on to work with multiple systems in order to assist others. Thus, the generalist method of practice is critical to effectively preparing students as professionals for undergraduate practice.

The baccalaureate social work program at the University of South Alabama's definition of generalist practice is consistent with the principles of generalist social work practice found in the literature, the needs of the Greater Mobile and South Alabama Region, and the goals and objectives of the social work program.

The BSW program at USA's definition of generalist practice is:

***Generalist practice in social work is multi-system, involving the promotion of human well-being through work with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. This method is based on a problem solving framework and is multi-theory in that it bases the practice approach on an analysis of problems and situations, thus basing interventions on the problem(s). Generalist practice stems from a strong base of social work, knowledge, values, ethics, and skills. It is based on a person-in environment perspective and is sensitive to diversity, the community, and issues of social and economic justice.***

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE BSW PROGRAM

The Social Work Program objectives are derived from the program's mission. These goals and objectives are as follows:

**Goal 1:** Program graduates will be prepared for competent, entry level generalist professional social work with diverse groups and populations-at-risk in both urban and rural communities, and effectiveness in enhancing human well-being.

**Objectives:**

- 1.1 To prepare entry level social workers, grounded in the liberal arts, who are competent in the application of social work values and ethics in the delivery of generalist practice with systems of all sizes.
- 1.2 To prepare entry level social workers who practice with respect in regard to diverse groups, populations-at-risk and advance social and economic justice to alleviate oppression, and who relate to the strengths and problems of the Gulf Coast and South Alabama regions.
- 1.3 To prepare entry level social workers who can demonstrate effective professional practice skills with clients, colleagues, and communities.

**Goal 2:** Program graduates will be able to employ critical thinking skills and research knowledge in order to ethically evaluate policy and practice, and advocate for change in organizations and communities, and add to social work knowledge.

**Objectives:**

- 2.1 To prepare social work graduates who can demonstrate critical thinking skills and apply research knowledge and skills to relate research findings to practice, evaluate research studies, and evaluate practice.
- 2.2 To prepare social work graduates who can apply the values and ethics of the profession to the analysis, development, and influence of social policy.
- 2.3 To prepare social workers who can identify the history of the profession and the contemporary structures of social welfare institutions.

**Goal 3:** Program graduates will be capable of integrating social work knowledge, values and skills into entry level ethical social work practice with systems of all sizes with an emphasis on the needs of the Gulf Coast and South Alabama.

**Objective:**

- 3.1 To prepare entry level social work practitioners who can design assessments and interventions based on theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence between persons and systems of all sizes.

**Goal 4:** Program graduates will have the demonstrated capacity to identify with the profession and take an active role in professional leadership.

**Objectives:**

- 4.1 To prepare entry level social workers who can effectively demonstrate the ability to function within the structure of organizations, use supervision and consultation appropriately, and pursue organizational change.
- 4.2 To prepare social workers who become members and leaders in appropriate professional organizations and who engage in lifelong learning.

**Goal 5:** The program faculty will be active in service to the broader Mobile and South Alabama community and social work profession and contribute to the knowledge base of the profession, particularly in relation to regional issues.

**Objective:**

5.1 To provide a learning environment in which faculty demonstrate leadership to the profession, service to the community, and contribute to the social work knowledge base, particularly with regard to the issues and problems of the greater Mobile area and South Alabama region.

**EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF THE BSW PROGRAM**

The BSW Program's Educational Outcomes are derived from the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) competencies as articulated in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards document (CSWE, 2015). The BSW Program is evaluated based upon students demonstrating, at the point of graduation, the ability to:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
  - a. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context
  - b. Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations
  - c. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication
  - d. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes
  - e. Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
  - a. Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels
  - b. Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences
  - c. Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
  - a. Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels
  - b. Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice
4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
  - a. Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research
  - b. Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings
  - c. Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery
5. Engage in Policy Practice
  - a. Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services

- b. Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services
  - c. Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice
- 6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
  - a. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies
  - b. Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies
- 7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
  - a. Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
  - b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
  - c. Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
  - d. Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.
- 8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
  - a. Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
  - b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
  - c. Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
  - d. Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
  - e. Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.
- 9. Evaluate with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
  - a. Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
  - b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
  - c. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
  - d. Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

## FIELD INSTRUCTION

The USA Social Work Field Instruction program provides an educationally directed practical experience in a social service agency or program. Students are expected to demonstrate that they can apply classroom concepts, ethics and skills under professional social work supervision and guidance.

Field Instruction (SW 412) is an intensive and demanding experience, consisting of 436 clock hours during the semester. The Field Experience is taken concurrently with the Senior Seminar (SW 414) that assists the students with integration of academic and professional content. Since Field Instruction is a capstone experience, it may not be taken until all prerequisites are met and must be taken with the Senior Seminar.

Students must apply for a Field Instruction placement prior to the semester in which they enroll for the course. Policies and procedures relating to Field Instruction and the application for an agency placement may be found in the USA Field Instruction Manual <http://www.southalabama.edu/syansw/pdf/field-instruction-manual.pdf>. Students are encouraged to visit with the Social Work Field Coordinator and their social work faculty advisors about their interests in field prior to the time they make application to Field Instruction. While students may indicate preferences for specific placements in agencies, the final decision on the approved placement rests with the Social Work program.

Students who do not successfully complete Field Instruction (other than withdrawals) may apply to repeat Field Instruction. Field Instruction may be repeated only once. Relevant policies and procedures are found in the USA Field Instruction Manual.

### Distance Policy for Field Practicum Placement Settings

Out of area or distance placements are defined as placements that are further than 100 miles or 1.5 hours from the main campus of USA. Out of area placements are only considered when the student can demonstrate extenuating circumstances that make a local placement within the 100 miles or 1.5 hours travel time from the main campus radius not favorable.

Interested students must have an academic record and history in the Social Work Program, which reflects strong professional work behavior (consistent attendance, class participation, above average grades), and commitment to the profession of social work.

Out of area placements must be approved a minimum of 1 semester prior to the anticipated date of registration for SW 412 - Field Instruction.

Placement Semester	Fall	Spring
<b><i>Application Due Date</i></b>	December 1 <sup>st</sup> of previous year	May 1 <sup>st</sup> of previous year

***For example:*** If you want to be considered for a practicum placement at NASW in Washington, D.C. starting August 2020, you need to submit your intent for this placement by December 1, 2019.



If approval is granted, students must work closely with the Field Coordinator to secure and successfully complete an appropriate out-of-area placement.

BSW students in out of area placements must participate in SW 414 Senior Seminar class during the semester in person. Student attendance in class is required except under extraordinary circumstances. If student is not able to attend SW 414, arrangements must be approved by the Field Coordinator for virtual attendance and identification of an appropriate professional to serve as proxy for assignments.

### **TRANSFER OF CREDIT FROM COURSES TAKEN OUTSIDE USA**

Students who have completed courses at other collegiate institutions may transfer credits under the policies of the University of South Alabama. Students must complete a minimum of 24 hours of social work including SW 401, SW 402, SW 412, and SW 414 at the University of South Alabama in order to receive the BSW. Transfer students must also meet all of the USA requirements for graduation.

Social Work faculty advisors evaluate any social work courses for transfer credit and equivalency and make a determination which ones may be accepted as equivalent to required social work courses at USA. Only social work courses from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education will be accepted as equivalent for required professional social work courses. Advisors will make the best match between transfer courses and USA curriculum in order to minimize repetition of content.

### **BSW PROGRAM ADVISEMENT**

#### **Student Academic Advising**

The advising program assists students throughout their educational careers as they prepare to become competent social workers. The advisor monitors student progress, provides consultation in planning a course of study, and assists in problem solving with regard to both classroom and field course work. The advisor also acts to facilitate communication between students and their classroom and field instructors. The advisor serves as an "anchor person" with whom students may confer regarding any education-related issues or questions. In keeping with the goal of the program and the spirit of social work, the advising relationship among administrators, faculty, and students is one of collaboration. Upon admission, each student is assigned to an advisor, a faculty member possessing a minimum of a master's degree in social work.

#### **Faculty Advisors**

Full-time members of the social work faculty serve as student advisors and maintain a minimum of six office hours per week to meet with students. Social work advising consists of addressing both professional and academic issues and students are strongly encouraged to contact their advisor at least once per semester prior to registration. Visit with social work advisors will help

to avoid delays in graduation. Social work faculty members maintain regularly scheduled, posted office hours and are available at other times by appointment.

In addition to the assessment of a student's academic work, faculty advisors may discuss student-related problems that interfere with academic performance or other problems for which the student requests help from a faculty advisor. The faculty advisor helps the student assess the problem and suggests possible resources that may be helpful.

## EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

### Evaluating Academic Performance Policy

Final course grades are intended to measure student achievement of course objectives. Each course syllabus provides a listing of course objectives, readings, assignments, and the points that may be earned for each course assignment. The syllabus also lists the grading scale for total points for the course and explains the grading criteria. In evaluating student performance, the following general criteria are used:

100% - 90%	= A
89% - 80%	= B
79% - 70%	= C
69% - 60%	= D
> 60%	= F

Point values are identified on tests and methods of evaluation, such as rubrics, identified on student writing assignments. Students and their assigned faculty advisors periodically review academic status at which time a discussion may take place regarding ways students may enhance their academic performance if necessary.

Social work education requires students to take initiative and assume responsibility for learning the knowledge, values, and skills for professional social work. *It is important for students to attend classes regularly, come to class prepared, and participate in class activities and discussions.* Irregular class attendance or lack of preparation is likely to result in grades that are unsatisfactory. Many social work classes have class attendance policies that may affect a student's overall grade.

**Field Instruction.** The evaluation and grading criteria for field instruction are outlined in the Field Instruction Manual. Field evaluations provide measures of competency in practice situations that are evaluated by the field coordinator and faculty field liaisons. The grading scale of points measures level of performance assigned in the learning contract between the field instruction agency and the Social Work Program. Students' ability to integrate social work knowledge, skills, cognitive/affective processes, and values into practice situations are assessed through the field evaluation.

## **GRADE GRIEVANCE**

Students concerned about a final grade received for a completed course work may pursue a grade grievance under the policies of USA. Specific information on the grade grievance process may be found in the student handbook The Lowdown at:

<http://www.southalabama.edu/lowdown/studentgrievances.pdf>

A final grade grievance is defined as a student complaint regarding an academic action taken by instructional personnel is assigning a final grade for a course, qualifying exam or comprehensive exam. In addition to complaints against a particular instructor, students may also file complaints against a committee concerning academic evaluations that adversely affect them (i.e., the grade given on a comprehensive examination or a thesis or dissertation final oral exam.) Normally, such complaints can be resolved quickly through discussions with the faculty member involved. In some situations the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved at that level. For such cases, a student may file a formal final grade grievance using the procedures specified below. (Note that while a grievance may be filed against a committee, the term “instructor” is used throughout the following description of procedure to refer to the person or entity against whom the grievance is brought.)

### **Criteria**

For a complaint about a final course grade or other academic evaluation to be considered, the complaint must be based on one or more of the following grounds and upon allegation that the ground(s) cited influenced the grade assignment to the student’s detriment:

- Arithmetical or clerical error
- Arbitrary or capricious evaluation on the part of the instructor
- Substantial failure on the part of an instructor to follow the course syllabus or other announced grading policies
- Extraordinary mitigating circumstances beyond the student’s control.

Students may not file a grade grievance until a final grade is received in a course. This procedure may not be used to complain about an instructor’s grading policy, assignments, the difficulty of a course, or other comparable matters. Finally, students may not file a grievance about a final course grade that was assigned as the result of an academic misconduct procedure.

A Final Course Grade Grievance must be filed no later than 20 class days into the succeeding semester to include summer term if the student is enrolled. Note: the term “class day” as used in this document means any weekday (Monday-Friday) during which the official University of South Alabama calendar indicates that classes are in session.

## Procedures

The following summarizes the timeline and procedures for a Final Grade Grievance:

1. A final course grade grievance cannot be filed until a grade has been received in a course. A Final Grade Grievance Form must be filed by the student no later than 20 class days into the succeeding regular semester. A student may file a grievance at any time prior to the deadline.
2. Prior to filing a grade grievance the student must meet with the instructor to attempt resolution. If the instructor is unavailable the student documents attempts to contact the instructor in writing. The student contacts the instructor's department chair in the event a meeting with the instructor cannot be arranged. If there is no resolution, proceed to step 4.
3. The student completes a Final Grade Grievance Form files the form with the department chair within the required time frame.
4. A facilitated grievance conference with both the student and instructor present is conducted by the department chair within 10 class days of receipt of the Final Grade Grievance Form.
5. If a resolution is reached in the grievance conference, resolution will be noted and the process ends.
6. If the student requests review by the College Grade Grievance Committee, the department chair will forward all materials within three days of the request to the dean's office. The dean will convene the appropriate College Grade Grievance Committee (i.e. the Undergraduate Grade Grievance Committee if the student is an undergraduate student or the Graduate Grade Grievance Committee if the student is a graduate student.)
7. The Grade Grievance Committee holds a hearing within ten (10) days of receiving the request from the dean. The student and the instructor will be provided opportunity to present evidence and supporting materials.
8. The Committee's written notification of their decision is made within three (3) class days to the student, instructor, department chair, and dean. The department chair will implement the decision if there is no appeal.
9. The student or instructor may appeal the Committee's decision to the Dean within ten (10) class days. The only grounds for an appeal are violation of due process or the rendering of a decision that conflicts with university policy. The decision of the Dean regarding the appeal is final and the process will end.

## CONTINUATION AS A MAJOR IN THE BSW PROGRAM

Once the student is admitted to the major continued academic and professional performance is expected. The program will initiate a change of major from Pre-Professional Social Work to Social Work for the student. The student will then need to meet with his/her advisor to sign off on a form indicating student understanding of the criteria for continuation as a social work major. The criteria for continuation as a major include:

- Maintain a 2.50 grade point average in social work courses.
- Maintain an overall 2.60 grade point average at USA.
- Demonstrate acceptable professional conduct, personal integrity and emotional stability requisite for effective social work practice.
- Demonstrate identification with the profession of social work
- Demonstrate behavior consistent with Code of Ethics for the National Association of Social Workers.

If any of these criteria are not met, the USA Social Work program will notify the student in writing. If the issue is a GPA below 2.6 the Social Work program will give the student a letter indicating that he/she is on probation for the major. Students who are placed on probation in this matter will have one semester to raise the GPA above 2.6 or they will be removed from the Social Work major. Other issues and behaviors may also result in termination from the major. Students should read the program policy on Termination from the BSW Program for Professional reasons listed below.

### **Policy on Returning Students**

For students who have had to interrupt their education for a number of years, the program will assess the currency and fit of past social work coursework with the current curriculum. If necessary, students will be asked to retake certain courses.

Students who return to the University after an absence of at least three consecutive years who have completed courses in social work must have the previously completed courses revalidated. The BSW program assumes that all social work courses more than five years old, in order to count as meeting BSW requirements, must be revalidated or retaken. When determining whether a previously-completed course meets current curricular expectations, the program, at minimum, will consider the current state of knowledge in the subject matter, changes in subject matter since completion of the course, and current BSW competencies.

## **TERMINATION OF STUDENTS FROM THE BSW PROGRAM**

### **Termination of Students from the BSW Program**

All policies and procedures for terminating a student's enrollment, both for academic reasons and professional performance, in the social work program are provided in the BSW Handbook and reviewed during the orientation for new social work majors at the beginning of the Junior Year.

### **Policies & Procedures for Terminating Students from the Program for GPA**

Once students are admitted to the major, they must maintain the following academic standards: maintain a 2.50 grade point average in social work courses and maintain an overall 2.60 grade point average at USA. Should a student fail to either maintain a 2.50 grade point average in their social work courses or maintain an overall 2.60 grade point average at USA, the Program Director will notify the student via their university email address with an official memo that they are being placed on academic probation within the social work program. The student will have one semester to improve their grade point average. If the student successfully raises their grade point average to the minimum requirement, they are notified through their university email address that they are no longer on academic probation within the social work program. If a student does not raise their grade point average at the end of the semester, the student is notified by the Program Director via their university address that they are being administratively removed from the major and will be referred to Academic Advising to help them select a new major.

### **Policies for Terminating Students for Professional Performance**

Professionally appropriate conduct and behavior in accordance with the principles of social work ethics is essential to maintain the integrity and high standards of the profession and to maintain the public trust. Undergraduate students enrolled in the BSW program are given special status as social workers, are eligible for membership in professional organizations, and are given exemptions from licensing requirements.

Social Work students will conduct themselves as professionals and follow the principles of the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Students must understand that the grades earned are not the only indication of the students' ability to become professional social workers. Since ethical behavior is at the core of social work competency, behavior that appears to violate the Code of Ethics will initiate a review by the social work faculty.

Students may be terminated from the BSW Program for, but not necessarily limited to, any of the following non-academic reasons which are personal or professional:

1. Overtly expressed attitudes, values, and behaviors in opposition to or contrary to those found in the NASW Code of Ethics;
2. Evidence of chemical, alcohol, or drug abuse;

3. Personality, emotional, attitudinal, or personal issues or difficulties which may or actually impair performance, interactions, and relationships with classmates, faculty, agency staff, and/or clients;
4. Dishonesty, including lying, cheating, or plagiarizing in course work and/or Field Placement; and
5. Evidence of certain criminal or unlawful activity.

The information necessary to start a review may come from any source however reports from anonymous sources will not be considered. Self-reporting is permitted. Students who know of ethical issues have an ethical obligation to discuss this with program faculty.

### **Procedures for Terminating Students for Professional Performance**

Behavior that appears to violate the Code of Ethics will initiate a review by the social work faculty. The information necessary to start a review may come from any source; however, reports from anonymous sources are not considered. Self-reporting is permitted. Students who know of ethical issues have an ethical obligation to discuss this with program faculty.

As matters of student behaviors that conflict with professional principles arise, the social work Program Director will convene the program faculty to conduct a review. In this review, persons with relevant knowledge may be interviewed and relevant documents examined. The review should be concluded and written findings submitted to the student and Program Director within ten working days. Should the faculty find violations of the Code of Ethics, recommendations for action may include:

1. A letter of censure;
2. Appropriate corrective action, and/or;
3. Dismissal from the social work major.

Students may appeal the findings of the faculty review within five working days. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Social Work Program Director and be based on errors of fact. The Program Director will inform the student in writing within five working days of the decision on the appeal.

## DISABILITY SERVICES

The University of South Alabama maintains the Office of Disabled Student Services in the Division of Student Affairs. <http://www.southalabama.edu/dss/>  
This office provides students who have a documented disability with assistance to facilitate their learning. According to the Office of Special Students Student Services:

*“Disabled Student Services' philosophy is to provide an education for individuals with disabilities through equal access, empowerment, support, resources, advocacy, collaboration and outreach throughout the University and community. In addition to providing services and accommodations to students with disabilities as mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Disabled Student Services works closely with faculty and staff in an advisory capacity and assists in the development of reasonable accommodations that allow students with disabilities to fully participate in all of the programs offered on campus.”*

This office assists with the provision of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and maintains confidentiality about their condition. The Office of Disabled Student Services offers information, counseling, and referral for students related to appropriate documentation of and qualification for disability accommodations.

The assistive services provided by the Office of Disabled Student Services include offering students' priority registration, with counseling, and advocacy. This office may offer students assistance with technology in the form of:

- 1) Assistive computer technology including an accessible lab, text-to voice software, text scanning equipment, screen readers, and magnifiers
- 2) Enlargements for the visually impaired
- 3) Interpreters for the deaf
- 4) Assistance in obtaining recordings for the blind
- 5) Books on tape
- 6) Tape recording class lectures
- 7) Testing including extra time, Braille or orally administered tests
- 8) Assisting with physical accommodations in and out of the classroom as covered under Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Disabled Student Services delivers training for faculty and staff regarding their services and accommodations. Information regarding disability services is made available in the USA Advising Manual <http://www.southalabama.edu/advisingmanual/disabledss.html>



## **SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE**

Upon graduation from the Social Work program, alumni may be eligible for social work licensure in Alabama and other states. Licensing regulations and categories vary considerably across states and specific rules may have to be consulted. To learn about licensing requirements in other states and jurisdictions, please visit the Association of [Social Work Boards website](#).

In Alabama, graduates may be eligible for a social work license as a LBSW. Licensing requires submission of an application, verification of information such as transcripts, and a passing grade on a licensing examination. For more specific information consult the [Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners](#).

## **CODE OF ETHICS IN SOCIAL WORK**

A code of ethics can help establish standards for behavior and expectations in performance. The Bachelor of Social Work Program has adopted the National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics as its standard of expected behavior and performance. Students admitted to the BSW Program are expected to adhere to the standards described in the Code. The Code can be found at [www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code](http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code).

Social Work practitioners have chosen to develop and adopt ethical codes in addition to the NASW Code of Ethics. Links to other Codes of Ethics are listed below. These are provided for information and exploration. It is important to remember that students in the BSW Program will be held accountable to the standards found in the NASW Code of Ethics.

National Association of Black Social Workers' (NABSW) Code of Ethics can be found at <http://nabsw.org/?page=CodeofEthics>

International Federation of Social Workers' (IFSW) Code of Ethics can be found at <http://ifsw.org/policies/statement-of-ethical-principles/>

American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work's Code of Ethics can be found at <https://abecsw.org/about-abe/code-of-ethics/>

## **ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS**

The Code of Ethics for the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners is the relevant code for the state's social work licensing entity and may be found at:

[http://www.abswe.state.al.us/pdfs/st\\_conduct\\_ethics.pdf](http://www.abswe.state.al.us/pdfs/st_conduct_ethics.pdf)

## **STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK**

The social work program recognizes students are adult learners and have much to offer to the continued development and growth of the BSW program. It is critical to the BSW Program to have student input in these areas: program assessment, faculty evaluation, program committees/task forces, and student field placements.

### **Program Assessment**

The BSW program conducts regular assessments of the BSW educational objectives approved by the faculty. As our accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education has moved to a competency-based educational model (CSWE, 2015), we assess student competency on CSWE-identified behaviors.

### **Faculty Evaluation**

All students enrolled in the BSW program have an opportunity each semester to evaluate their courses. At the end of each course, students are given standardized course/faculty evaluation forms to complete online. These evaluations are confidential with the results being aggregated through a computer-generated program. These evaluations are read by the respective program director and then returned to the faculty to utilize in strengthening content, teaching, and learning methods. Also, the program uses these evaluations to partially assess program and student learning outcomes.

In addition, students may have the opportunity to meet both informally and formally with candidates being considered for faculty positions on their campuses.

### **Program Committees/Task Forces**

BSW students have the rights and responsibility to participate in academic and student affairs within the BSW program. Elected officials (or their designees) from the Social Work Student Organization (SWSO) are invited to participate in faculty and committee meetings. The students who attend are asked to report on the SWSO's activities and to voice concerns raised by students in the program. These students are also asked to report information from the faculty meeting to the students at their monthly meetings. Student officers help with the formulation and modification of policies affecting student affairs and implementing student-related projects/functions within the program.

### **Student Field Practicum**

Students evaluate field placements based on whether the site offers valuable experience and learning opportunities in a variety of areas (e.g., mental health, case management, fundraising, community organizing, etc.) and levels of systems (i.e., individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities). Information is also gathered regarding the field liaison, institutional environment, and non-discrimination policies and practices. Students are asked if they would recommend this field site be an ongoing placement in the future.

## STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

Students are encouraged to be involved with both BSW sponsored university organizations and external professional social work organizations. Some of the organizations are:

### **The Social Work Student Organization**

The Social Work Student Organization (SWSO) is the student organization recognized by student government as representing social work students at USA. The SWSO's statement of purpose is:

*The USA Social Work Student Organization works to support the social work program and students. The SWSO provides a mechanism for student input into the social work program, offers an opportunity to explore common interests in social work, serves as a resource for students, and participates in community service projects. Anyone with an interest in the profession is encouraged to join the organization. SWSO officers are elected by the membership from declared social work majors.*

The organization provides networking and socialization opportunities among social work students. Each year, SWSO members choose service projects and organize attendance at professional meetings that enhance learning and commitment to the values of the social work profession. Students are encouraged to participate in the ongoing process of governance, program evaluation, and policy development for the social work program. SWSO provides the forum for selecting student representatives and communicating with the program.

Based on interests BSW students are encouraged to organize in the SWSO. The BSW Program recognizes the student organization as an integral component of professional education. Although the organization is autonomous, the campus Program Director (or designee) serves as advisor in order to encourage group identification and to help guide student participation in the BSW program. A current social work faculty is selected by the SWSO association and serves as the faculty advisor for this organization.

The SWSO meets monthly during the academic year while officers meet more frequently. The organization is formally recognized by the Office of Student Affairs and receives financial funding from USA, as well as engages in other fund raising efforts to support their work. Students elect officers every year. As noted earlier, students are invited to participate in faculty meetings and committees. Generally, a student representative is elected from the BSW Student Organization and is invited to attend BSW faculty meetings. The student who attends is asked to report on the SWSO's activities and to voice concerns raised by students. This student is also asked to report information from the faculty meeting to the students at their monthly meetings. Student association officers help with the formulation and modification of policies affecting student affairs, writing student grants, and implementing student-related projects/functions

## **Phi Alpha Honor Society**

Students who have completed the first semester of the junior year social work courses with an overall GPA of 3.50 or higher (on a 4.0 scale) and a GPA of 3.50 or higher in required social work classes are invited to join the Phi Alpha Honor Society. All courses from the student's undergraduate career, including courses taken from other higher education institutions, are included in the overall GPA calculation.

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

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has over 150,000 members worldwide. As a member, students receive all of the benefits and privileges of a regular member at a reduced cost. NASW membership helps students:

- Connect with peers and social work professionals
- Access NASW standards and practice information
- Protect themselves professionally, and
- Advocate for their profession and the communities they will serve

NASW is a national professional association serving the diverse needs of social workers and is the largest professional membership organization for social workers in the country. Students are strongly encouraged to join NASW, and students may join at a reduced membership rate. Application forms for NASW membership and information on NASW is available from Social Work faculty members. The National Association of Social Workers Alabama Chapter is located at 600 South Court Street, Montgomery, AL 36106, (334) 356-6841. The email address is [alabama.naswal@socialworkers.org](mailto:alabama.naswal@socialworkers.org). Also, visit their website at [www.naswal.org](http://www.naswal.org).

NASW provides a wide variety of services designed to help students achieve their potential as social workers and to be socialized into the profession. The services provided by NASW include: professional publications, (including the annual subscription to the NASW journal Social Work); offering conferences and educational opportunities, and providing networking opportunities for NASW members. NASW is significant force in promoting social and economic justice through lobbying efforts for clients and social workers at the state and national levels.

## **North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW)**

The North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW) is a nonprofit Christian social work organization. Their mission is to equip members to integrate Christian faith and professional social work practice. The NACSW welcomes Christian social workers of all denominations. For information about NACSW email [info@nacsw.org](mailto:info@nacsw.org) or call (203) 270-8780. Also, visit their website at [www.nacsw.org](http://www.nacsw.org).

## **National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW)**

The National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) was established in May of 1968 in San Francisco, California, to promote the welfare, survival, and liberation of the Black community. Membership is open to any African-American employed in a social work capacity, or others not employed but working in a voluntary capacity in a social work setting or program and who accept and adhere to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Association. The purpose of the organization is to:

- provide a structure and forum through which Black social workers, any workers in related fields of social service, and interested citizens may exchange ideas, offer their services, and develop or refine skills in the interest of the Black community and the community-at-large.
- work in cooperation with, or to support, develop, or sponsor community welfare projects and programs which will serve the interest of the Black community and the community-at-large.
- strengthen human services in all service systems in all aspects pertaining to the Black community, and to ensure that services are available to Black individuals, families, groups, and the community.

For information regarding NABSW email [OfficeDirector@nabsw.org](mailto:OfficeDirector@nabsw.org) or call (202) 678-4570. Also, visit their website at [www.nabsw.org](http://www.nabsw.org).

## **Writing Center**

If you need help with your writing or APA formatting, the USA Writing Center is an instructional facility with the primary goal of improving student writing skills. Consulting sessions are held in the Writing Center's main location in Academic Services Center 1390, as well as the Center's satellite location in Marx Library 240A. Call (251-460-6480) or email ([writingcenter@southalabama.edu](mailto:writingcenter@southalabama.edu)) to schedule an appointment.