



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

BSW STUDENT HANDBOOK

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

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 w -15.97 (r)2.0.000.15 Tdc512r9.497 0 Td()TTf-0.00s(e)4.8etentlf-0.00lf-0.00 s-1.4 (w

- 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

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

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-

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

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.

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

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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.

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/>

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

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 5 (aluanJ-0.0009a-2.3 (oupAlthoug)h(a)3.)oeam.if

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 or call (202) 678-4570. Also, visit their website at www.nabsw.org.

Writing Center

If you need help with your writing or APA formatting, the USA Writing Center is an
