



**Master of Social Work Student Handbook
2026-2027**

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Texas A&M University
College of Nursing, Health and Human Services
MSW Program

Acknowledgement of Receipt of MSW Student Handbook

I hereby acknowledge that I have been informed that the MSW Program Student Handbook is available online and that it is my responsibility to obtain a copy of the handbook and review the policies and procedures contained therein.

I agree to comply with all the policies and procedures mandated by the MSW Program, the College of Nursing, Health and Human Services, and Texas A&M University-Texarkana.

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of Advisor

Date

Introduction

“When a flower doesn’t bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.”

-Alexander Den Heijer

Dear MSW Students:

Welcome to the MSW program at Texas A&M University-Texarkana! We are excited that you have decided to join our social work program. You have made an important and profound decision in choosing to pursue your master’s in social work. Social work is a professional degree that can offer you opportunities to work with individuals, families, communities, and organizations, and to drive social change across all aspects of human life. As a profession, we work to champion social issues of the most vulnerable and underserved in our society.

In the TAMUT Social Work program, we seek to train our students to address social challenges and empower individuals, families, communities, and organizations through a quality education based in professional ethics and focused on trauma-informed practices and the development of specialized skills to work with rural families and communities. While this program has been designed to challenge and grow you as a social work professional, our selection of you to be a part of the MSW program, says that we believe that you have what it takes to be successful in our program. While engaging in your program of study, you will engage in case-based applied learning, group work, and have scholarship opportunities all designed to develop you as a field-ready MSW practitioner. Our coursework offerings at TAMUT prepare our MSW graduates for careers in mental health settings, hospitals, women’s shelters, child welfare agencies, addiction treatment programs, and a host of other specialized services for people in need. As your new faculty and staff, we are excited that you have chosen to pursue a master’s degree in social work and are committed to your successful program completion.

We are pleased to be a part of your academic journey and that you have chosen to be a part of our social work family at TAMUT!!!

Well wishes,

DeAnna Robinson Ph.D., MSW, LCSW-S

Assistant Professor and MSW Program Director

Program Mission Statement and Goals

Mission Statement

The mission of the Texas A&M University-Texarkana Master of Social Work program is to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to address regional problems such as poverty, inequality, and trauma, and to promote community health and well-being at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. The program is designed to accomplish this through high-quality and engaged teaching and by creating and maintaining a strong link between the university and the community through field partnerships, service, and scholarship. Students will graduate as competent, job-ready social workers prepared to meet the challenges they will face as they help strengthen their community and expand opportunities for all citizens.

Program Goals

The TAMUT MSW program has developed the following program goals:

1. Prepare students to become social work professionals who can engage, assess, and intervene with various client systems.
2. Prepare students to promote social justice through micro, mezzo, and macro contexts.
3. Enhance students' classroom learning through experiential and service learning to prepare them to make an impact in their field work and beyond.
4. Engage with the community and work in partnership to address local and regional concerns with evidence-based interventions.
5. Educate students in the importance of the person-in-environment and ecological frameworks and how they give context to providing trauma-informed care.

Clinical Goals

After the second year of coursework, graduates from our clinical specialization will demonstrate an ability to:

6. Assess, diagnose, and intervene with client systems across various system levels.
7. Analyze how social policy impacts clinical practice.
8. Conduct empirical evaluations of their own practice interventions using evidence-based practice as a guiding practice model.
9. Critically evaluate, synthesize, and articulate empirical and conceptual literature related to work with a clinical population.

Program Eligibility

TAMUT's MSW program is a competitive admission program. Due to current university and accreditation standards, no more than 30 students will be admitted at the start of each academic year (Fall). Students must submit their applications no later than June 15th for priority review.

Requirements for admission to the MSW Program-Traditional Track include:

1. Hold an earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university.
2. Have achieved a grade point average of 2.8 overall or in the last 60 hours of academic coursework.

Requirements for admission to the MSW Program-Advanced Standing Track (pending) include:

1. Hold an earned BSW from a program that is CSWE-accredited or an equivalent degree recognized by CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Services within five (5) years prior to applying.
2. Have achieved an overall grade point average of 3.0.

The following courses are recommended; although not required, they may help you better prepare for the MSW program.:

1. Courses with substantial content on abnormal psychology, mental health deviance, drug addictions, violence, etc.
2. Life Span Development
3. Any biology course covering anatomy and physiology that emphasizes the impact of impairments in organic chemistry and body systems on human behavior (Note: not Introduction to Biology).
4. Social Science with Macro context (e.g., social institutions, organizations, systems, policies. Intro to Sociology, American Government, Political Science.)

In addition to the above-mentioned requirements, favored applicants show:

1. Adherence to the highest standards of conduct and ethics.
2. Emotional maturity.
3. Leadership and problem-solving ability.
4. An aptitude for understanding and relating to people.
5. A demonstrated history of social service experience through volunteer or paid work experience in human service settings.

These skills and qualities are assessed through professional and academic recommendations, an interview with the MSW faculty admissions committee, student transcripts, and a resume.

All students who meet the minimum application requirements are welcome to apply. No student will be denied admission based on race, gender, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, culture, creed, class, ethnicity, or national origin.

Criminal conviction or pending criminal charges will not necessarily disqualify a student from admission to the MSW program. However, past or current criminal activity or conduct may limit or inhibit a student from completing a social work internship, which is required to complete the degree, and/or render the student ineligible to receive state certification or licensure to practice social work.

Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission. Students are encouraged to contact their academic advisor to discuss what will make them most competitive as candidates.

Students admitted to the program will have a combination of excellent grades, relevant work/internship/volunteer experience, strong recommendations from professors and/or supervisors, and a thoughtful, concise critical-thinking essay. Students denied admission to the program may reapply at any time.

Program Descriptions

MSW Program-Traditional Track

The traditional track program is a 60-credit-hour degree that includes a minimum of two fall and two spring semesters, or two full academic years as a full-time graduate student. Other options are available to meet the academic needs of most students accepted into the program.

MSW Program Advanced Standing Track (Pending)

The advanced standing track program is a 38-credit-hour degree that includes two summer courses and one full academic year as a full-time graduate student. Advanced-standing students complete 8 credits over the summer, in addition to 30 credits in the specialized-year curriculum. The advanced standing program is scheduled to begin in Summer/Fall 2027.

****Students accepted into either MSW program track must be able to attend on-campus classes. Course delivery is designed for face-to-face, with some online courses. ****

For details on applying to the MSW program, see **“How to Apply”** on the following page.

Title IV-E Child Welfare Program

The Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership (CWP) program at Texas A&M University is a collaboration between the Social Work Program and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). More information on program requirements and how to apply is available at <https://tamut.edu/academic-programs/social-work/titleiv-e.html>.

Accreditation

Accreditation assures students and the public that a social work program's courses, faculty, and policies meet the profession's expectations. Earning accreditation indicates that a program provides a recognized foundation in social work for its graduates. TAMUT's MSW Program is currently accredited by the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Board of Accreditation through June 2031.

How to Apply

To make your application to the MSW program as strong and accurate as possible, and for the benefit of the admission committee members who will be reviewing and scoring each application, please ensure that you have carefully read and followed the instructions below before submitting your application. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Questions regarding the application process may be directed to your academic advisor, the graduate admission office, or the MSW Program Director. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis; the initial deadline for application for the fall semester is June 15th. However, late applications will be accepted until July 15th.

1. Ensure that you are eligible for the program (see "Program Eligibility" section in this handbook).
2. Complete the online application at <https://www.applyweb.com/texasamu/index.ftl>.
3. Provide official copies of undergraduate transcripts from each institution you have attended via secure email to transcripts@tamut.edu. Students who completed their degree with TAMUT will not need to provide them.
4. Provide the contact information for three references. References can be past/current employers, professors, or a combination of both. If an applicant has been in college within the last five years, at least one reference must be from a faculty member. No personal references will be accepted.
 - a. For students applying for advanced standing, the letters of reference must include:
 - i. One from the BSW program director or faculty advisor recommending readiness for advanced standing, and
 - ii. One from the applicant's undergraduate field supervisor, field director, or current social work supervisor.
5. Submit a resume that details work and/or volunteer experience. (While not required, paid and/or volunteer experience in the human services is highly valued and will be seriously considered in the application evaluation process.)
6. Pay a non-refundable application fee

Advanced Standing Track

Advanced-standing applicants who receive a grade below a “B” in required undergraduate courses in human behavior in the social environment, policy, or research methods must take the corresponding course in the graduate program. Graduate elective credits may not be used to meet this requirement. Applicants with a grade below a “B” in any foundation practice course are not eligible for the advanced standing program and may apply to the 60-credit MSW program.

Transfer Students

Transfer students are encouraged to apply to the program. Requests for transfer credit may require a review of course syllabi to ensure alignment with the program's goals and the expected MSW curriculum.

****Per university policy, no more than 12 graduate credits may be transferred. Transferred credits must have been completed from a CSWE-accredited MSW program. ****

Review of Applicant Process

Once applications are received by the graduate admissions office, they will be forwarded to the MSW Applicant Review Committee. This committee consists of full-time social work faculty, and if necessary (due to disagreements or a conflict of interest), arrangements will be made for another outside professional educator to review the applications as well. The review of submitted applications will focus on academic achievement, commitment to social work ethics, an initial understanding of the social work profession, professional attitude and behavior, emotional maturity, and the ability to express oneself in writing.

Students will be asked to complete a formal interview with the admissions committee to demonstrate their readiness for a career in social work. The interview will be held in person on campus or virtually. The admissions committee may seek additional information from faculty, the applicant, or other formal sources. Applicants are encouraged to ask any questions about the program prior to the conclusion of their interview.

Applicant Notification of Status

Applicants will be notified of the committee’s decision by email only by the MSW Program Director.

Admission will be granted contingent upon completing all admissions criteria before beginning the MSW program. All applicants who submit their application by the deadline will be notified via email of the committee’s decision no later than the first day of the Fall semester.

Deferment

Under special circumstances, students accepted into the program may defer admission for up to one year, but they must submit a written request via email to the MSW Program Director for approval. Students who have registered for classes before the deferral request is approved will need to contact the registrar’s office to withdraw from any courses for the semester.

MSW Program Requirements

MSW Degree Requirements for Graduation

Traditional Track

1. Completion of a minimum of 60 semester credits within the MSW, or with the inclusion of acceptable transfer credits.
2. Overall grade point average of 3.0 or above.
3. The completion of all 900 field practicum hours.

Advanced Standing Track

1. Completion of a minimum of 38 semester credits within the MSW.
2. Overall grade point average of 3.0 or above.
3. The completion of 500 field practicum hours.

Please consult your faculty advisor to create your academic plan and to review all admission and program requirements.

Life Experience

The MSW Program at TAMUT does not award credit for work or other life experiences.

Course Substitutions

The TAMUT MSW program seeks to avoid students repeating courses they have already mastered. Students who have completed social work minor courses and/or those who have earned a BSW but do not meet the requirements for the advanced standing track may consider submitting course-substitution requests. The program will utilize two mechanisms to ensure students do not repeat what has been achieved in their baccalaureate social work studies:

1. TAMUT social work minor students may request course substitutions through a written request to the MSW Program Director for the following generalist courses:
 - a. SOCW500-Interviewing, Writing, and Documentation (substituted for
 - b. (2) SOCW370-Social Welfare Policy & Analysis (substituted for SOCW520-Social Welfare Policy);
 - c. SOCW360-Human Populations (substituted for SOCW530-Human Populations).
2. The social work program will implement an Advanced Standing track beginning in Summer/Fall 2027, allowing applicants holding a BSW degree from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)- accredited program and a GPA of 3.0 or higher to begin specialized concentration coursework without repeating generalist courses. This will ensure these students are not repeating undergraduate courses.
3. BSW graduates not in the Advanced Standing program, or students holding B.A., B.S., or other undergraduate degrees that have taken social work courses, may request substitutions for no more than three (3) generalist courses.

How to Request Course Substitutions

Requests for course substitutions must be submitted in writing to the MSW Program Director. Students should follow the following procedure when making their request:

- a. Students who meet the criteria must submit the request (see the appendix) via email to the MSW program director.
- b. The program director verifies the student's eligibility by checking their transcripts.
- c. If the student is eligible, the program director arranges for the student to submit course syllabi to ensure the course is equivalent to the TAMUT course.
- d. The program director reviews the syllabi to make sure the course is equivalent to the TAMUT course.
- e. The program director will notify the student within two weeks of the review with their determination on whether the requested substitution will be granted or denied.
- f. The granting of course substitution does not result in an award of credit. Students who are granted course substitution(s) must select elective courses to replace the credits for the courses to replace the credits for the courses to be substituted to meet the 60-credit hour requirement for the MSW degree.

Descriptions for the courses below can be found on the TAMUT MSW web page located at <http://catalog.tamut.edu/graduate-studies/nursing/human-services/msw/#coursesequencetext>

MSW Course Sequence

Table 1: Standard MSW-2 Year Plan - Full Time

	Title	Hours
First Year-Fall		
SOCW 501	Practice I: Social Work with Individuals	3
SOCW 510	Human Behavior and the Social Environment	3
SOCW 500	Writing, Documentation, and Interviewing Skills in Social Work	3
SOCW 530	Human Populations	3
SOCW 551	Generalist Field Practicum I	4
Fall Total Semester Credit Hours		16
First Year-Spring		
SOCW 502	Practice II: Social Work with Families and Groups	3
SOCW 540	Research Methods in Social Work	3
SOCW520	Social Welfare Policy & Analysis	3
SOCW 552	Generalist Field Practicum II	4
SOCW 562	Mental Health Assessment and Diagnosis	3

Spring Total Semester Credit Hours		16
Second Year-Fall		
SOCW 521	Practice III: Social Work Practice with Communities and Organizations	3
SOCW 553	Specialization Field Practicum I	4
SOCW 560	Trauma-Informed Practice	3
SOCW 563	Advanced Clinical Practice	3
Social Work Elective		3
Fall Total Semester Credit Hours		16
Second Year-Spring		
SOCW 541	Practice and Program Evaluation	2
SOCW 554	Specialization Field Practicum II	4
SOCW 564	Clinical Issues in Addiction	3
Social Work Elective		3
Spring Total Semester Credit Hours		12
Total Semester Credit Hours Required for Degree		60

Table 2: Standard MSW-2 Year Plan – Part-Time

	Title	Hours
First Year-Fall		
SOCW 501	Practice I: Social Work with Individuals	3
SOCW 510	Human Behavior and the Social Environment	3
SOCW500	Writing, Documentation, and Interviewing Skills in Social Work	3
SOCW 530	Human Populations	3
Fall Total Semester Credit Hours		12
First Year-Spring		
SOCW 502	Practice II: Social Work with Families and Groups	3
SOCW 540	Research Methods in Social Work	3
SOCW520	Social Welfare Policy & Analysis	3
SOCW562	Mental Health Assessment & Diagnosis	3
Spring Total Semester Credit Hours		12
First Year-Summer		
SOCW 551	Generalist Field Practicum I	4
SOCW 552	Generalist Field Practicum II	4
Summer Total Semester Credit Hours		8

Second Year-Fall		
SOCW 521	Practice III: Social Work Practice with Communities & Organizations	3
SOCW 560	Trauma-Informed Practice	3
SOCW 563	Advanced Clinical Practice	3
Social Work Elective		3
Fall Total Semester Credit Hours		12
Second Year-Spring		
SOCW 541	Practice and Program Evaluation	2
SOCW 564	Clinical Issues in Addiction	3
Social Work Elective		3
Spring Total Semester Credit Hours		8
Second Year-Summer		
SOCW 553	Specialization Field Practicum I	4
SOCW 554	Specialization Field Practicum II	4
Summer Total Semester Credit Hours		8
Total Semester Credit Hours Required for Degree		60

Table 3: Standard MSW- 4 Year Plan-Track-Option C (Part-Time)

	Title	Hours
First Year-Fall		
SOCW500	Writing, Documentation, and Interviewing Skills in Social Work	3
SOCW501	Practice I: Social Work with Individuals	3
Fall Total Semester Credit Hours		6
First Year-Spring		
SOCW520	Social Policy	3
SOCW502	Practice II: Social Work Practice with Groups	3
Spring Total Semester Credit Hours		6
Second Year-Fall		
SOCW510	Human Behavior and the Social Environment	3
SOCW530	Human Populations	3
Fall Total Semester Credit Hours		6
Second Year-Spring		
SOCW 502	Research Methods	3

	Social Work Elective	3
Spring Total Semester Credit Hours		6
Second Year-Summer		
SOCW 551	Generalist Field Practicum I	4
SOCW 552	Generalist Field Practicum II	4
Summer Total Semester Credit Hours		8
Third Year-Fall		
SOCW 521	Practice III: Advanced Macro Practice	3
SOCW 560	Trauma-Informed Practice	3
Fall Total Semester Credit Hours		6
Third Year- Spring		
SOCW 541	Practice and Program Evaluation	2
SOCW 564	Mental Health Assessment & Diagnosis	3
Spring Total Semester Credit Hours		5
Fourth Year-Fall		
SOCW 563	Advanced Clinical Practice	3
Social Work Elective		3
Fall Total Semester Credit Hours		6
Fourth Year-Spring		
SOCW564	Clinical Issues in Addiction	3
Fourth Year-Summer		
SOCW 553	Specialization Field Practicum I	4
SOCW 554	Specialization Field Practicum II	4
Summer Total Semester Credit Hours		8
Total Semester Credit Hours Required for Degree		60

Note: Students may also pursue alternative options if they need more flexibility in their degree plan. Students may also choose approved electives from other disciplines, but doing so may cause their total credits to exceed the required 60.

MSW Student Advising

All students, once accepted into the MSW program, are required to go through academic advising with the MSW Program Director prior to enrolling in courses for their first semester. At that time, students will review degree plan options, decide whether to be admitted to the program as a full-time or part-time student, and determine which track best aligns with their needs.

After meeting with the MSW Program Director, students will be assigned an MSW faculty member as their advisor for the duration of the program. Students are encouraged to meet with their assigned advisor each semester to ensure they have enrolled in the correct course(s) for the following semester. Students should note that failure to take required courses at the indicated time may prolong their graduation from the program. The MSW Faculty are available during their scheduled office hours (in person or virtually) to meet with students for advising.

Good Standing

To remain in good standing in the MSW Program, several expectations must be met. Policies explaining the requirements for remaining in good standing in the MSW program, and exactly what this entails, are further specified later in this handbook.

Policies and Procedures for Evaluating Students' Academic Performance

It is the responsibility of the faculty to evaluate each student's performance in the courses they teach and in the field practicum. Faculty use a wide variety of teaching methods to meet the different ways students learn and give them the best chance of success. Course evaluation criteria are outlined within each individual syllabus and reviewed with students at the start of each course. Students are encouraged to reach out to faculty if they are struggling in their classes to request assistance.

Faculty members review the course syllabus with students on the first day of class. They may opt to administer a syllabus quiz to check student comprehension of course expectations. In addition to holding weekly office hours, faculty have mechanisms in place for students to seek help outside of class. If the student has difficulties requiring additional resources, the faculty member may refer the student to the Office of Student Success, which provides tutoring, writing support, organizational skills support, and other services. Students who may need counseling/therapy support can be referred to the Student Counseling Center.

Student Complaint Procedures

The MSW program follows TAMUT's grading policy: A student with a grievance about a course grade should first attempt to resolve the issue by conferring with the course instructor. A student challenging a final grade must show that the instructor's judgment was unfair based on some basis other than performance; that standards different from those applied to other students in the same course section were used; or that there was a substantial, unreasonable, and unannounced departure from previously articulated standards or the syllabus. The burden of proof lies with the student.

Program faculty and administration attempt to resolve all grade dispute issues at the program level. However, if the student is not satisfied with the outcome, they may file an appeal. For information regarding the formal "Grade Grievance and Appeal Process," students are referred to

the Student Complaint process posted on the university website: <https://tamut.edu/student-affairs/complaints.html>

Academic Standards, Probation, and Termination

Academic Standards

To remain in good standing in the MSW Program, students must meet the following qualifications:

- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 at the completion of each semester.
- No more than six credits with a C grade, regardless of GPA
- No grade of D or F, regardless of cumulative GPA
- Adherence to applicable university policies, including the MSW Student and Field Handbooks
- Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics
- Completion of provisional or probationary requirements from an admission decision or from a previous review
- No grade of C for a readmitted student, regardless of having previously earned a grade of C or not in any attempted coursework prior to dismissal.
- Acceptance into a field placement. A student may be terminated from the program if they interview for field placement and are rejected by two field agencies that are deemed by the MSW program to provide appropriate field experiences.

Probation/Suspension

The MSW Program Director communicates with students whose academic or professional performance places them at risk of dismissal from the program. At-risk students will receive a written email notification to schedule a meeting with the MSW Program Director to discuss their concerns. The Program Director will meet with the students to help them develop a realistic plan to address the specific concern(s). The MSW program adheres to TAMUT's and the MSW Program's probation and termination policies, based on the identified qualifications that must be met to continue in the program.

TAMUT Probation Policy for Graduate Students

- Graduate students may be placed on probation after completion of 12 credit hours if the cumulative GPA is below 3.0.
- Students will remain on probation until their cumulative GPA is 3.0 or above.
- While on probation, students must maintain a semester GPA of 3.0 or higher.

MSW Probation Policy for Students

- Students with full admission status who fail to meet any of the academic standards can be placed on academic probation

- Students who fail to meet the required GPA of 3.0 at the end of a semester will be placed on academic probation. If the student fails to achieve a 3.0 overall GPA at the end of the next semester of enrollment, the student will be placed on academic suspension for two semesters. (Fall & Spring)
- Any student who violates the ethical values and principles outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics may be placed on probation or terminated from the program.
 - Whether the student will be placed on probation or will be terminated will be decided by the program director and other assigned social work faculty. In the event of a conflict of interest, another faculty member may be delegated.

Termination

Termination from the program is the last and most adverse action the MSW Program can take. In addition to failing to meet academic expectations, termination may result from professional misconduct. Thus, the MSW Program reserves the right to dismiss students who do not meet the professional expectations of the MSW Program, the NASW Code of Ethics, and overall professional expectations of the social work field.

TAMUT Termination Policy for Graduate Students

- At the end of a fall or spring semester, graduate students on probation will be terminated if their semester GPA and/or overall GPA falls below 3.0.

TAMUT MSW Termination Policy for Students

- Any student who receives a grade of D or F, regardless of their cumulative GPA, will be terminated from the program.
- Any student who receives more than two courses with a grade of a C will be terminated from the program.
- Any student who is dismissed from two (2) field placements will be terminated from the program. More details on this are in the MSW Field Manual.
- Any student who fails to meet the completion requirements for provisional or probationary status under an admission decision or a previous review will be terminated from the program.
- Any student terminated from the MSW Program will be allowed to reapply to the program after one calendar year, following the admission process. Any student readmitted after termination from the program may be admitted only on a probationary status with identified requirements that must be met to continue in the program.

Procedures for Notification of Status

Students at risk of academic probation or dismissal from the program are notified in writing via email to meet with the MSW Program Director to discuss their program status. These meetings will take place during the 10th week of the semester and can be in person or virtual. The student will attend, provide a progress update, and receive any updates/concerns from the MSW faculty.

Students who are placed on academic probation or terminated from the program will receive an email to their student email address within 10 business days after the end of the semester. Letters will outline which academic standard was not met, their status in the MSW Program, and the appeal process. Students will sign the letter to acknowledge receipt. The signed letter will be

placed in the student's program records, and a copy will be sent to the Human Services Division Chair and the College Dean.

Appeal Process

Students who disagree with any probation or dismissal decision may appeal. Students may appeal to the MSW Program Director using the appeals form within five (5) university working days. MSW Program Director will begin the initial review and submit completed appeals to the Division Chair for review. If the student disagrees with the Division Chair's decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Dean of the College of Nursing, Health, and Human Services. Dean's decision will be considered final.

Step 1: Submission of Appeal

- Students must submit a completed Appeal Request Form
- Appeals must be submitted within five (5) university working days of receiving the decision
- All supporting documentation must be included at the time of submission

Step 2: Initial Review

- The appeal will be reviewed by the MSW Program Director or designated faculty member to ensure completeness
- Incomplete appeals may be returned to the student without review

Step 3: Division Chair Review

- The Human Services Division Chair will evaluate the appeal
- The Division Chair may request additional information or clarification if needed
- In some cases, the student may be invited to provide a written or verbal statement

Step 4: Decision

- The Division Chair will issue one of the following decisions:
 - Approved (appeal granted)
 - Denied (original decision upheld)

Decisions will be communicated in writing within 10 business days after review.

Conditions of Reinstatement

If an appeal is approved, conditions may include recommendations for:

- Development of an academic improvement plan
- Required meetings with an advisor or faculty
- Participation in academic or wellness support services
- Successful completion of specific coursework

Final Level of Appeal

If the Division Chair denies the student's appeal. The student can request for the Dean of the College of Nursing, Health, and Human Services to review the appeal.

Finality of Decision

The Division Chair's decision is considered final at the program level. Students may have the option to pursue further appeal through the College of Nursing, Health and Human Services Dean, if applicable.

Evaluating Student's Professional Performance

The TAMUT MSW program expects all students to obey the law, respect properly constituted authority, fulfill contractual obligations, maintain absolute integrity and high standards of individual honesty in their daily lives, especially within the academic and professional environment. In short, a student enrolled in the program accepts the obligation to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner acceptable at an institution of higher learning and within the social work profession. Failure to meet these professional standards may result in a failing grade and termination from the social work program.

Because of the nature of professional social work practice, the social work program has different expectations of students than other non-professional programs. Social workers traditionally serve vulnerable populations. The MSW program has a responsibility to protect consumers and to ensure that social work students are competent to begin practice and meet professional ethical standards. This program's policies are designed to support students' development into effective, competent social work professionals and to clarify expectations and procedures for addressing academic performance concerns, including professional behavior.

The MSW program expects students to exemplify professional and ethical behavior in accordance with current professional social work standards, as described in the NASW Code of Ethics. For the NASW Code of Ethics in its entirety, go to: <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>. Each student is expected to read and comply with the Code's standards. Students who are unable or unwilling to follow the Code of Conduct and the NASW Code of Ethics will be subject to probation or termination.

Because social work is a professional degree program in which students may work with vulnerable populations, the program reserves the right to request additional information, such as references from employers and others. Students should also be aware that if personal data, such as information on the application for state licensure, indicates a potential threat to public safety and welfare, a student may be denied continuance in the MSW program or encouraged to withdraw from the program. Should that situation arise, students will be assisted in finding a more suitable program/profession.

Professional Performance Disciplinary Procedure

Students must maintain the standards of behavior established by the university, the MSW program, and the social work profession. A student whose inappropriate behavior constitutes a significant violation or pattern of violations of professional standards (for example, failure to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics), may be dismissed from the program.

Disciplinary Procedure

If a student falls below professional standards or demonstrates unprofessional behavior in the classroom, in campus meetings and activities, or during practicum, it will trigger a disciplinary process. This process can be initiated by a faculty member or administrator, a practicum supervisor, another student, or a campus employee through a written complaint.

1. The complaint must be made in writing to the program director and include supporting documentation.
2. The program director will meet with the student to discuss the complaint.
3. If the complaint has merit, the director will have the option to:
 - a. Give the student a written warning.
 - b. Place them on probation for a semester or until the problem has been remediated.
 - c. Terminate them from the program.

Appeal of Termination due to Professional Performance

When the student receives notice that they have been terminated from the program and wishes to appeal the decision, the process is as follows:

1. The student fills out the appeal request form explaining why the decision is in error.
2. The student includes any documentation that supports their position.
3. The Division Chair will consider the appeal form and documentation and, if needed, may request a meeting with the student to clarify the student's position.
4. The Division Chair will make a final decision and notify the student via email within five (5) university business days.
5. If the student disagrees with the Division Chair's decision, they may request an appeal to the Dean.
6. The Dean will make a final decision and notify the student via email within five (5) university business days.
7. The Dean's decision is final.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

The Master of Social Work (MSW) Program at Texas A&M University-Texarkana supports the responsible and ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly, Copilot). Students are expected to use these tools in ways that uphold academic integrity and align with the values and standards of the social work profession.

Core Expectations

- a. Students must ensure that all academic work:
 - i. Represents their own knowledge, skills, and critical thinking;
 - ii. Demonstrates honesty and academic integrity;
 - iii. Reflects adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics, including professional responsibility and ethical decision-making

Acceptable Use of AI

- b. AI tools may be used to support learning in limited ways, including:
 - i. Brainstorming ideas or organizing thoughts
 - ii. Improving grammar, sentence structure, and clarity
 - iii. Reviewing general concepts or study materials
 - iv. Assisting with citation formatting (must be verified for accuracy)

Unacceptable Use of AI

- c. Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor, students may not:
 - i. Submit AI-generated work as their own
 - ii. Use Ai to complete assignments, exams, or discussion posts
 - iii. Generate or fabricate sources, references, or data
 - iv. Rely on AI in place of independent critical thinking
 - v. Input confidential or sensitive information related to field education or clients

Disclosure Requirement

- d. Students must clearly disclose any use of AI in coursework when permitted. A simple statement such as the following is sufficient unless otherwise directed:
 - i. “AI was used to assist with [specific task]. All submitted work reflects my own understanding and analysis.”
- e. Failure to disclose AI use may be considered a violation of academic integrity policies.

Instructor Guidelines

- f. Individual instructors may:
 - i. Restrict or prohibit AI use in specific assignments
 - ii. Provide additional requirements for documentation or disclosure
- g. Students are responsible for following each course syllabus

Consequences of Violations

- h. Improper use of AI may result in:
 - i. Academic penalties (e.g., assignment failure)
 - ii. Referral for academic integrity violations
 - iii. Additional disciplinary action according to university policy for academic misconduct

Student Responsibility

- i. Students are responsible for:
 - i. Understanding appropriate AI use
 - ii. Using technology ethically and responsibly
 - iii. Asking instructors for guidance when uncertain

Accessing Mental Health Services

MSW Program Student Guidance

The MSW program at TAMUT places a strong emphasis on mental health, trauma, and addiction. Recognizing the emotional and psychological demands of both the curriculum and field experiences, the program is committed to supporting student well-being. Students are encouraged to proactively access mental health services whenever needed to maintain personal wellness and professional effectiveness.

When to Seek Support

Students are encouraged to seek mental health support at any point, including (but not limited to):

- Experiencing stress, anxiety, burnout, or emotional overwhelm
- Processing trauma-related material encountered in coursework or field placement
- Feeling impacted by client interactions or vicarious trauma
- Managing personal mental health or substance use concerns
- Coping with life events that affect academic or professional performance
- Noticing changes in mood, behaviors, concentration, or overall well-being

Seeking help is a sign of professional responsibility and self-awareness, both essential competencies for social work practice.

Available Mental Health Resources

University Counseling Services

Student Counseling Services at A&M-Textarkana

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., Monday- Friday

The university provides confidential counseling services to all enrolled students. Services may include:

- Individual counseling sessions
- Crisis intervention
- Substance use counseling
- Referrals to community providers if longer-term care is needed, or unable to provide the type of services needed, or requested

Students can access services by:

- Visiting the counseling center website-<https://tamut.edu/counseling/index.html>
- Visiting the counseling center office-Central Plant
- Calling the counseling center directly- (903)334-6613
- Scheduling appointments through email, although email is not a confidential form of communication-counseling.services@ace.tamut.edu

Note: Services are free for students.

24/7 Crisis Support

If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, immediate support is available:

- **AVAIL Crisis Hotline:** (800) 832-1009
- **National Suicide Prevention Hotline:** 1-800-273-TALK (8225)
- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (U.S.)** – Call 988 or Text “HELLO” to 741741
- **UPD:** (903) 334-6611
- **Emergency services:** (911)
- **Telus Health Student Support App:** <https://tamut.edu/counseling/telus.html>

Other Emergency Information

Local Mental Health Authority

- **Community Healthcore:** (903) 831-7585/2435 College Drive Texarkana, Texas 75501

Students are encouraged to prioritize safety and seek emergency assistance without hesitation.

Field Placement Support

Field education can be emotionally demanding. Students are encouraged to:

- Communicate with their field supervisor about challenges impacting their role
- Seek consultation from the Faculty Field Liaison
- Request adjustments or additional support if needed

Field educators are trained to support student learning, including managing emotional responses to practice.

MSW Program Support

The MSW program offers additional layers of support:

- Academic advisors for guidance and resource referral
- Faculty members who can provide support and flexibility when appropriate
- Program leadership for more intensive concerns impacting academic progression

Students may request private meetings to discuss concerns and explore available supports.

Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations

All counseling services are confidential within legal and ethical limits. Accessing mental health care will not negatively impact a student's academic standing or professional evaluation.

Students are encouraged to maintain boundaries between their personal therapeutic work and academic or field roles, while recognizing that self-awareness and self-reflection are integral to social work education.

Self-Care and Professional Responsibility

Engaging in ongoing self-care is an essential component of ethical social work practice. Students are encouraged to:

- Develop a personal self-care plan
- Monitor signs of burnout or secondary traumatic stress
- Seek supervision and consultation regularly
- Utilize peer support when appropriate

The ability to recognize and respond to one's own mental health needs is a core professional competency.

If You Are Concerned About a Peer

If you are worried about a fellow student:

- Encourage them to seek professional support
- Share information about available resources
- Contact program faculty or staff if there is concern for safety

- In emergencies, contact 911 or appropriate crisis services

The MSW program is committed to fostering a supportive learning environment where mental health is prioritized. Students are strongly encouraged to utilize available services and supports as needed. Accessing care reflects strength, professionalism, and commitment to ethical social work practice.

Field Practicum

Placement in the Field Practicum

Social Work at the graduate level is a licensed profession in Texas. Practitioners must be able to apply professional knowledge, values, and skills ethically. Practice courses provide activities for students to develop skills such as interviewing and assessment, intervention, and evaluation. Students complete field practicums to solidify the knowledge and apply it with clients under supervision. Students are assigned to social service agencies by the Field Director, with consideration of the students' interests and learning needs, and the availability of field agencies. These internships provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills learned in classes to real-life situations with clients. Field practicum students are supervised and guided by professional social workers in agencies to ensure that they have productive educational experiences. The MSW program expects students to exemplify professional and ethical behavior in accordance with current professional social work standards.

Field Practicum Requirements

The field practicum requires students to complete 900 clock hours of social work. Specifically, students complete 400 hours in the generalist year and 500 hours of clinical work in the specialization year. Practicum also includes weekly attendance at a seminar on campus and enrollment in related, concurrent classes. The Field Director makes field agency assignments with input from the student and field agency staff. Most students feel that their field internships are among the most valuable experiences in the program. Field experiences often help a student narrow their choices for a field of practice within social work. Field instructors can be very helpful in assisting students with the job search process. Many students are hired by agencies in which they completed internships, or by agencies they learned of while in field.

Practicum Standards Violation

When a student fails to comply with practicum agency expectations, it will result in the following process:

1. The Field Director will meet with the agency to discuss concerns and goodness of fit for the student and agency.
2. The Field Director will request a written letter or written evaluation from the field instructor documenting their concerns.
3. The Field Director will meet together with the Program Director and the student to discuss the agency's concerns and hear the student's perspective of the situation.
4. The Field Director, in consultation with the agency, will make the final determination of student's continuation at the agency.
5. The program reserves the right to deny continuation in the program. The Student Review Committee is charged with making decisions regarding program termination.
6. If the program denies continuation, faculty will work with the student to help determine an alternative career path.
7. The student may appeal to the dean in the same manner as for academic termination.

Participation in MSW Student Affairs

Student representation is an important part of any social work program and is a microcosm of their future work in the profession. TAMUT MSW students have organized a Social Work Student Association (SWSA) in accordance with the TAMUT clubs and organizations policy and Phi Alpha, the National Honor Society for Social Work. Students are nominated and elected by their peers to hold student leadership positions. These organizations have developed their own constitution and bylaws.

Social Work Student Association

In SWSA, student input and representation will be solicited in the following ways:

1. Two students, one in the generalist year and one in the specialization year, will serve as representatives to the MSW Program Committee to share the student perspective of program policies, academics, and activities. Each student will be elected by their own cohort, and their term of service will be one year.
2. One student will be elected as the representative to the National Association of Social Workers. They will be the TAMUT student voice to the state organization. The student will help plan and carry out the annual NASW membership drive and keep students apprised of NASW concerns and events.
3. Two students, one from the generalist year and one from the specialization year, will serve as members of the Field Advisory Committee. They will represent the student voice for field policies and concerns.

Students will also be encouraged to participate in TAMUT Student Government and other campus organizations of interest.

Phi Alpha Honor Society

The purpose of this organization is to recognize and promote scholastic achievement among students and faculty in the graduate social work program at Texas A&M University-Texarkana. The students pledge to advance the goals of social work in the community, state, nation, and world, and promote interest in preparing for a career in social work.

- Graduate students shall be enrolled in a graduate program in social work, have completed nine (9) semesters of required social work graduate courses, and rank in the top 35% of their class.
 - Any student who meets the criterion will be notified by email by either the Chapter President and/or the Faculty Advisor.

National Association of Social Workers

National Association of Social Workers (NASW): NASW is a national professional association serving the diverse needs of social workers. It is the largest professional membership organization representing social workers in the United States. NASW provides a wide variety of services designed to help students achieve their full potential as social workers and to be socialized into the profession. These services include NASW professional publications (including the annual subscription to the NASW journal, *Social Work*), conferences, educational opportunities, and networking opportunities. NASW is a significant force in promoting social and economic justice through lobbying efforts on behalf of clients and social workers at the state and national levels. Students joining NASW may do so at a reduced rate. Each year, students are encouraged to become members of NASW and to attend the NASW/Texas State Conference. Students may be selected as monitors for various sessions, thereby providing them with additional educational opportunities and growth experiences. Students are also encouraged to submit abstracts for scholarly presentations at the conference. Application forms for NASW membership are available in the school office. Faculty and staff are also available to assist students with any questions. Students are strongly encouraged to join and become active in at least one professional social work organization during their educational experience. NASW and NABSW (National Association of Black Social Workers) are but two of these professional organizations.

Social Work Licensure

Chapter 505 of the Texas Occupations Code requires that anyone identified to the public as a social worker be licensed under the laws and regulations of the state. Any public use of title or initials that could be construed by a reasonable individual as authorization to practice social work is restricted by law to those individuals who are currently licensed. Students who plan to practice as social workers in Texas upon completion of a master's degree in social work must take the licensing examination. The Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners, with administrative assistance from the Texas Department of Health, is responsible for the enforcement of the law protecting the title and position of social work. Students graduating from the MSW program at TAMUT are qualified to sit for the licensure examination in the state of Texas.

Categories of licensure that MSW graduates may qualify for are:

- Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) requires a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program.
- Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) requires three (3) years of clinical social work experience after acquiring a master's degree, with two (2) of those years under the direct supervision of an approved supervisor.

All applicants must pass the board's jurisprudence examination. 1-800-821-3205 or (512) 305-7700 or Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council.

Most states regulate the practice of social work through certification or licensure. Persons without these credentials are prohibited by law from calling themselves social workers or practicing social work. The State of Texas licenses social workers at several levels: Licensed Bachelor of Social Work (LBSW), Licensed Master of Social Work (LMSW), and Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). The LBSW requires a BSW from an accredited (or from a program in candidacy), and you may sit for the exam upon graduation. The LMSW and LCSW both require an MSW from an accredited program (or from a program in candidacy). For more information, go to: www.dshs.texas.gov/socialwork.

SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM FACULTY AND STAFF

<https://tamut.edu/academic-programs/social-work/faculty.html>

Questions? Contact Us

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Template Forms & Documents

I. Letter to Request Course Substitution for Courses Taken

[Your Full Name]

[Student ID Number, if applicable]

[Your Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

[Email Address]

[Phone Number]

[Date]

[Program Director / Department Chair Name]

[Department Name]

[University Name]

[University Address]

Dear [Program Director/Department Chair Name],

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to formally request a course substitution for coursework I have previously completed, to be applied toward the requirements of the [Program Name, e.g., Master of Social Work (MSW) program] at [University Name].

Specifically, I would like to request that **[Course Title and Code at your current institution]** be considered as a substitute for **[Required Course Title and Code]**. I completed this course at **[Previous Institution Name]** during **[semester/year]**, earning a grade of **[grade]**.

The content of the completed course closely aligns with the learning objectives and competencies of the required course. Topics covered included **[briefly list relevant topics, skills, or competencies]**, which correspond with the program's expectations for this requirement. I have attached supporting documentation, including course syllabi, transcripts, and any additional materials that may assist in evaluating this request.

I am committed to ensuring that my academic preparation meets the high standards of the [Program Name], and I respectfully request your consideration of this substitution. Please let me know if additional information or documentation is needed to facilitate your review.

Thank you for your time and attention to this request. I appreciate your support and guidance.

Sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

II. Deferment Request Sample Letter

[Your Full Name]

[Your Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

[Email Address]

[Phone Number]

[Date]

Admissions Committee

Master of Social Work Program

[University Name]

[University Address]

Dear Members of the Admissions Committee,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for my acceptance into the Master of Social Work (MSW) program at [University Name] for the [term, e.g., Fall 2026]. I am deeply honored by this opportunity and enthusiastic about pursuing graduate study in a field to which I am strongly committed.

Due to [briefly state reason—e.g., unexpected personal circumstances, family responsibilities, health-related concerns, or financial considerations], I respectfully request a deferral of my admission to the [requested term, e.g., Fall 2027]. This has been a difficult decision, as I am eager to begin my professional training in social work; however, I believe that taking this time will allow me to address these circumstances fully and return better prepared to engage meaningfully in both the academic and field components of the program.

My commitment to the values and mission of social work—including service, social justice, and advocacy for vulnerable populations—remains strong. I am confident that beginning the program at a later date will position me to more effectively contribute to classroom discussions, field education experiences, and the broader university community.

I would greatly appreciate your consideration of my request. Please let me know if any additional documentation or forms are required to process a deferral. I remain fully committed to enrolling in the MSW program at [University Name] and look forward to joining your academic community.

Thank you for your time, understanding, and support.

Sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

III. MSW Appeal Request Form

Student Information

- **Full Name:** _____
 - **Student ID Number:** _____
 - **Email Address:** _____
 - **Phone Number:** _____
 - **Program:** ☐ Full-Time ☐ Part-Time
 - **Concentration (if applicable):** _____
-

Appeal Information

- **Type of Appeal (check one):**
 - ☐ Academic Dismissal
 - ☐ Academic Probation
 - ☐ Field Placement Issue
 - ☐ Course Grade
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
 - **Semester/Term of Issue:** _____
 - **Date of Notification of Decision:** _____
-

Basis for Appeal

(Please explain the reason for your appeal. Include any extenuating circumstances that contributed to the situation. Attach additional pages if needed.)

Student Responsibility Statement

(Describe your understanding of the situation and your role in the outcome.)

Plan for Academic Success

(Explain what has changed and what steps you will take to ensure success moving forward. Be specific.)

- ☐ Academic support services
- ☐ Counseling or wellness support
- ☐ Time management plan
- ☐ Meetings with advisor/faculty
- ☐ Other: _____

Explanation:

Supporting Documentation

(Check and attach all that apply)

- ☐ Medical documentation
- ☐ Counseling/mental health documentation
- ☐ Advisor or faculty statement
- ☐ Employment verification
- ☐ Other: _____

Student Statement of Commitment

I acknowledge responsibility for my academic performance and affirm my commitment to upholding the standards of the MSW Program and the NASW Code of Ethics. I am prepared to meet program expectations if my appeal is granted.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

For Program Use Only

- **Date Appeal Received:** _____
- **Reviewed By:** _____
- **Decision:**
 - ☐ Approved
 - ☐ Denied
 - ☐ Conditional Approval
- **Comments:**

Signature: _____

Date: _____