

2025-2026 MSW Student Policies and Procedures Manual

College of Social Work
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

2025-2026 MSW Student Policies and Procedures Manual

This manual covers the Fall, Spring, and Summer terms of the 2025-2026 academic year. This manual is intended only to provide information for the guidance of the University of South Carolina College of Social Work students. The information is subject to change and the College of Social Work reserves the right to depart without notice from any policy or procedures referred to in this manual. This manual is not intended to be and should not be regarded as a contract between the University of South Carolina College of Social Work and any student or other person.

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE STATEMENT

The College of Social Work is committed to creating an environment in which every student, faculty, and staff member is recognized, valued, and respected. We do this through promoting honest conversations, diverse collaborations, and expanded access for groups who are- and who have historically been- systemically targeted for oppression.

We recognize that we are stronger as a profession and as a college when all voices are at the table and our perspectives reflect the diversity present in the populations that we serve. We acknowledge that the obstacles to this work are systemic and deeply rooted in a history of racism, colonialism, and oppression that plague institutions at all levels of society, including our college and profession.

We envision a path forward by taking responsibility for how we can better embody and advance the principles of anti-oppressive social work. This work is on-going, and we invite students, faculty, staff and partnering agencies to join us in this effort:

Diversity:

Continuously expanding the range of human differences, identities, cultures, backgrounds, and lived experiences represented in our community because we recognize that having broad perspectives positively impacts our students, faculty, and staff, and those we serve.

Equity:

Identifying, responding to, and eliminating bias, harassment, and discrimination-or any other barrier that impedes full and meaningful participation and contribution- so that all students, staff, and faculty can thrive with the resources they need.

Inclusion:

Cultivating a culture of belonging, trust, and safety through the creation and preservation of empowering spaces where each person is valued, supported, and validated.

Accessibility:

Ensuring that everyone can experience our physical, social, and academic spaces to the fullest potential by identifying and addressing visible and invisible barriers.

PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS, AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

MSW Program Mission

The College of Social Work MSW Program prepares MSW students to become advanced generalist practitioners who serve diverse communities in South Carolina and beyond. The MSW Program provides students opportunities to develop essential and culturally relevant knowledge, skills, and values to practice effectively, ethically, and collaboratively with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. MSW students are trained to respond to dynamic and diverse needs to alleviate oppression and inequities to advance cultural and human rights and social, economic, racial, and environmental justice.

MSW Program Goals and Learning Outcomes

The program views its goals as supporting both practice competencies that are essential and unique to social work, as well as other key professional competencies (e.g., critical thinking, communication).

Goal 1: The program prepares graduates for competent and ethical practice that focuses on the dignity and worth of the person and respect for diversity, differences, equity, and inclusion.

- Learning Outcome 1: Graduates will engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. (CSWE 2022 EPAS Competency 6)
- Learning Outcome 2: Graduates will assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. (CSWE 2022 EPAS Competency 7)
- Learning Outcome 3: Graduates will intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. (CSWE 2022 EPAS Competency 8)
- Learning Outcome 4: Graduates will evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. (CSWE 2022 EPAS Competency 9)

Goal 2: The program prepares graduates to develop a strong professional ethical identity and mastery of competencies to advance cultural and human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

- Learning Outcome 5: Graduates will demonstrate ethical and professional behavior. (CSWE 2022 EPAS Competency 1)
- Learning Outcome 6: Graduates will engage diversity and difference in practice. (CSWE 2022 EPAS Competency 3)
- Learning Outcome 7: Graduates will advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice. (CSWE 2022 EPAS Competency 2)

Goal 3: The program prepares graduates to demonstrate professional judgement and understanding that the person-in-environment perspective requires a critical analysis of practice contexts and research findings.

- Learning Outcome 8: Graduates will engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice. (CSWE 2022 EPAS Competency 4)
- Learning Outcome 9: Graduates will engage in policy practice. (CSWE EPAS Competency 5)

Program Evaluation

The MSW Program routinely collects and evaluates data to monitor progress and achievement of program goals. Students are included in this process through their involvement in surveys for course evaluations, assessment of learning outcomes, evaluations of field practicum organizations and field practicum instructors, and other measures. Students are also invited to provide additional feedback through the social work student associations and through student membership on college committees.

ADMISSIONS

All applicants must fulfill the general admission requirements of both The Graduate School and the College of Social Work. Applicants must be recommended to The Graduate School for acceptance by the MSW Program. Acceptance by The Graduate School and the MSW Program is based on the evaluation of an applicant's total academic profile. The MSW Program is committed to diversity in its student body. Admission is limited and competitive and is contingent upon admission to The Graduate School.

Admission Requirements

Minimal requirements for admission include:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
    - Applicants to the Advanced Standing program option must have earned a bachelor's degree in social work from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)-accredited institution within the last 5 years.
- A cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale).
    - Applicants to the Advanced Standing program option must have also earned a B or better GPA in the last 60 credit hours of an accredited bachelor's degree and a B or better in all required undergraduate social work classes. ***Applicants to the Advanced Standing program option should be aware that meeting the minimal requirements does not guarantee admission to this program option*.
- Official transcripts of all college and university credits earned.
- A Statement of Purpose stating the applicant's desire to enter the degree program and outlining long-term professional goals, motivation, and capacity to work with people.
- At least two letters of recommendation should come from individuals who can address characteristics such as maturity, self-discipline, commitment, cooperativeness, and professionalism. The MSW program requires letters to be written by individuals who can attest to an applicant's potential for graduate study and social work practice (e.g., professor, supervisor, or community leader). Letters from those an applicant has a personal relationship with (e.g., relative, friend or neighbor) will not be adequate.
    - Applicants to the Advanced Standing program option are required to submit three letters of recommendation. Of the three letters of recommendation, one must be from the BSW program director or faculty advisor recommending readiness for Advanced Standing and one be must from the undergraduate field supervisor or current social work supervisor if employed.

- A current CV or resume that demonstrates evidence of service and/or work experiences congruent with social work values, skills, and knowledge.

Note: An interview may also be required.

International applicants are required to meet additional requirements such as language and English proficiency. Please see International Applicants webpage for more information.

Awarding Advanced Standing

The advanced standing curriculum does not duplicate any courses or content areas already mastered from BSW program requirements. The College of Social Work recommends Advanced Standing admission to the graduate school only for applicants who have earned a bachelor's degree in social work from a Council on Social Work Education accredited institution within the last five years, with a cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.00 or better (on a 4.00 scale), and a 3.0 (on a 4.00 scale) or better in each undergraduate social work course.

Applicants to the Advanced Standing program option are required to submit three letters of recommendation regarding their readiness for Advanced Standing. Of the three letters of recommendation, one must be from the BSW program director or BSW faculty member and one must be from the undergraduate field supervisor or current social work supervisor if employed. The third letter of recommendation must be written by someone who can attest to an applicant's potential for graduate study and social work practice, but not someone with whom the applicant has a personal relationship (e.g., relative, friend, neighbor, therapist).

Meeting the minimal requirements does not guarantee admission to Advanced Standing.

Evaluation of MSW Admission Applications

The CoSW reviews and evaluates all completed application files for admission to the MSW Program.

Notification to MSW Applicants of Admission Decision

The CoSW notifies all MSW applicants with complete files whether they have been recommended for program admission to the USC Graduate School. After reviewing the applicants' credentials and CoSW recommendation, the USC Graduate School makes the final admission decision and notifies the applicants.

Conditional Admission

Applicants to the MSW Program may be conditionally admitted when they do not meet all requirements for admission.

- Applicants recommended for conditional admission to the MSW Program will be notified of these conditions at the time of admission. Applicants must sign a contract acknowledging their conditional status, the specific conditions required for continuing in the program, and receipt of the MSW Program's conditional admissions policy.
- Students admitted conditionally with a cumulative undergraduate GPA below 3.0 must meet the following conditions:
    - Students in the Advanced Standing or Full-Time programs must earn a graduate GPA of at least a B

(3.0) for the first term.
    - Students in the Extended-Time program must earn a cumulative graduate GPA of at least a B (3.0) for the first two terms.
- Students conditionally admitted must meet with their academic advisors two times for academic coaching sessions. Students and academic advisors will meet at the beginning of the semester to identify resources they need to meet their academic goals and again before the Withdraw/Fail deadline to ensure students are meeting the conditions required to remedy the academic deficit. Students must participate in these academic coaching sessions before being eligible to register for courses for the following semester.
- Following completion of the term(s):
    - If conditions have been met, the Academic Advisor will submit a Change of Status form to the Graduate School and the student will be in good academic standing.
    - If conditions have not been met, students will undergo a progression review by the Assistant Dean for Students, the MSW Program Director, and Student Services to determine continued eligibility in the program.

Transfer of Course Credit

Course work not part of a completed certificate program or graduate degree from USC or another institution may be transferred for credit toward a Certificate of Graduate Study, a master's, or doctoral degree. Students may request transfer of graduate credits from other CSWE-accredited programs. Transcripts, course descriptions, and syllabi must be submitted to the MSW Program Director for review. Applicants must have earned at least a B in each course for which credit is requested. Transfer credits must be approved by the Graduate School.

The MSW Program follows the Transfer of Course Credit policy in the Graduate Academic Regulations Bulletin.

- No more than 15 semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred into a master's program that requires 37-45 hours.
    - This standard applies to the Advanced Standing option of the MSW Program option.
- No more than 18 semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred into a master's program that requires 46 or more semester hours.
    - This standard applies to the Full-time and Part-time options of the MSW Program option.

Only credits with grades of B or better may be transferred from another institution into any graduate degree program. Course work transferred for credit toward a graduate degree must be from an accredited institution and must be no more than six years old at the time of graduation.

Credit for Life Experience

In accordance with the mandates of the Council on Social Work Education, no credit is given for life experiences. Students will not receive academic credit for life experience or previous volunteer, service-learning activities or assignments, or work experience in social work. Academic credit will not be granted for life experience or previous work experience, and such experience will not be substituted for any of the courses in the professional foundation areas or the field practicum.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for the MSW degree include the completion of 60 hours for all Full-time and Extended-time students and 42 hours for Advanced Standing students, with a GPA of 3.00.

All work for the Master of Social Work degree must be completed within a six-year period. Other general requirements for the Master of Social Work degree are the same as those established by The Graduate School and in accordance with accreditation standards established by the Council on Social Work Education.

At the time of graduation, the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA) must be at least 3.00. Additionally, the student's average on all grades recorded on the program of study for courses numbered 700 or above must be at least 3.00 and all courses listed on the program of study must be at least 3.00.

Comprehensive Assessment

All candidates for a master's degree must complete a comprehensive assessment in the major field of study that is distinct from program course requirements. A comprehensive assessment is one that requires a student to synthesize and integrate knowledge acquired in coursework and other learning experiences and to apply theory and principles in a situation that approximates some aspect of professional practice or research in the discipline.

Completion of course requirements or satisfaction of a specified GPA does not satisfy the comprehensive assessment requirement. The Graduate School must be notified by the MSW Program of the student's academic program of successful completion of the comprehensive assessment. Completion remains valid for one year after which the assessment must be repeated.

The comprehensive assessment is administered to students in the spring semester of the advanced/specialized practice year and all students must submit their assessments through their Blackboard account. Options for the comprehensive assessment may include an essay assessment, an exam assessment, or an alternative assessment determined by the college. The CoSW MSW Comprehensive Assessment Subcommittee oversees the review and evaluates all assessments as Pass or Fail. If the student does not pass the assessment, the MSW Program Director notifies the student and develops a corrective plan. When a student passes the assessment, the MSW Program Director notifies the graduate school and verifies assessment completion for graduation clearance. All students must complete and pass the assessment to graduate from the MSW Program.

Application for Degree

All students enrolled in a Master's degree program must file the application for degree/graduation available on the website of the Office of the University Registrar with The Graduate School within the first 15 class days of the fall or spring semester in which the degree is to be awarded, or within the first 10 class days of Summer Session if the degree is to be awarded at the end of the summer.

PROGRAM MATTERS

Program Options

Program Overview

The MSW program offers an advanced generalist competency-based curriculum. Graduates are expected to demonstrate professional competencies across levels of practice. These competencies are informed by social work knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes and applied in the service of enhancing the well-being of individuals and communities.

All MSW program options and master plans of study have been carefully designed to ensure graduates gain advanced specialized practice competencies across all five client system levels including individual, families, groups, organizations and communities.

Program Options

The MSW program is designed to be flexible and help students earn their degree on a timeline that best fits their needs.

- **Columbia Program Option:** The Columbia MSW Program option offers a face-to-face 11-month Advanced Standing program, a two-year Full-time program, or a three-year Extended-time program of study.
- **Greenville Program Option:** The Greenville MSW Program option offers a face-to-face three-year Extended-time program of study.
- **Charleston Program Option:** The Charleston MSW program option offers a face-to-face three-year Extended-time program of study.
- **Online Program Option:** The online program option offers a two-year Full-time program using asynchronous delivery method with some synchronous sessions.

Pathways to degree completion include the following master plan of study options:

- 11-Month Advanced Standing Program in Columbia for students who have earned a bachelor's degree in social work
- Two-Year Full-time Program in Columbia
- Two-Year Full-time Online Program: Asynchronous Courses with some synchronous sessions required
- Three-Year Extended-time Program in Columbia, Greenville and Charleston

Degree Requirements

The MSW Program's academic regulations are consistent with the Graduate School and in accordance with accreditation standards established by the Council on Social Work Education.

- Full-time and Extended-time students must complete 60 credit hours
- Advanced Standing students must complete 36 credit hours
- All graduate-level studies must be completed in six years

The following plans of study outline the expected progression through the MSW Program. All policies, course listings, and program information are subject to change as approved by The Graduate School and the University of South Carolina, consistent with accreditation requirements set by the Council on Social Work Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Plan of Study: ADVANCED STANDING

Advanced/Specialized Practice Year

SUMMER	SOWK 701	Professional Development Bridge
	Elective	3 credit hours
FALL	SOWK 735	Advanced Social Work Practice with Individuals
	SOWK 775	Advanced Social Work Practice with Groups
	SOWK 755	Advanced Social Work Practice with Organizations
	SOWK 792 *OR* SOWK 793	Evaluation of Social Work Practice *OR* Evaluation of Social Work Programs
	SOWK 783	Field Instruction III: Advanced Social Work Practice
SPRING	SOWK 718	Systems Analysis of Social Work Practice
	SOWK 766	Advanced Social Work Practice with Families
	SOWK 776	Advanced Social Work Practice with Communities
	SOWK 784	Field Instruction IV: Advanced Social Work Practice
	Elective	3 Credit Hours

Plan of Study: FULL-TIME

Foundation/Generalist Practice Year

FALL	SOWK 712	Human Behavior and the Social Environment I
	SOWK 714	Diversity and Social Justice Issues for Social Work Practice
	SOWK 716	Human Behavior and the Social Environment II
	SOWK 781	Field Instruction I: Generalist Social Work Practice
	SOWK 791	Social Work Research Methodologies
SPRING	SOWK 722	Social Work Practice with Individuals, Families and Small Groups
	SOWK 732	Social Work Practice with Organizations and Communities
	SOWK 742	Social Welfare Policy Analysis
	SOWK XXX	Elective Course
	SOWK 782	Field Instruction II: Generalist Social Work Practice

Advanced/Specialized Practice Year

FALL	SOWK 735	Advanced Practice with Individuals
	SOWK 775	Advanced Practice with Groups SOWK
	755	Advanced Practice with Organizations
	SOWK 792 *OR* SOWK 793	Evaluation of Social Work Practice OR Evaluation of Social Work Programs

	SOWK 783	Field Instruction III: Advanced Social Work Practice
SPRING	SOWK 718	Systems Analysis of Social Work Practice
	SOWK 766	Advanced Social Work Practice with Families
	SOWK 776	Advanced Practice with Communities
	SOWK XXX	Elective Course
	SOWK 784	Field Instruction IV: Advanced Social Work Practice

Plan of Study: EXTENDED-TIME

1st Year Foundation/Generalist Practice Year

FALL	SOWK 712	Human Behavior and the Social Environment I
	SOWK 714	Diversity and Social Justice Issues for Social Work Practice
	SOWK 781.JXn	Field Instruction I: Generalist Social Work Pactice (with Seminar)
SPRING	SOWK 716	Human Behavior and the Social Environment II
	SOWK 722	Social Work Practice with Individuals, Families, and Small Groups
	SOWK 782.JXn	Field Instruction II: Generalist Social Work Practice (with Seminar)
SUMMER	SOWK 742	Social Welfare Policy Analysis
	SOWK 732	Social Work Practice with Organizations and Communities
	SOWK 782.JXn	Field Instruction II: Generalist Social Work Practice (no seminar)

2nd Year, Transition to Advanced Generalist

FALL	SOWK XXX	Elective Course
	SOWK 791	Social Work Research Methods
	SOWK 783.JXn	Field Instruction III: Advanced Generalist Social Work Practice
SPRING	SOWK XXX	Elective Course
	SOWK 792	Evaluation of Social Work Practice
	SOWK 783.JXn	Field Instruction III: Advanced Generalist Social Work Practice
SUMMER	SOWK 735	Advanced Social Work Practice with Individuals
	SOWK 775	Advanced Social Work Practice with Groups
	SOWK 783.JXn	Field Instruction III: Advanced Generalist Social Work Practice

Third Year Advanced Generalist Practice Year

FALL	SOWK 755	Advanced Social Work Practice with Organizations
	SOWK 766	Advanced Social Work Practice with Families

	SOWK 784.JXn	Field Instruction IV: Advanced Generalist Social Work Practice
SPRING	SOWK 718	Systems Analysis of Social Work Practice
	SOWK 776	Advanced Social Work Practice with Communities
	SOWK 784.JXn	Field Instruction IV: Advanced Generalist Social Work Practice

Extended-time Program Option Regional Classes

The MSW Program offers classes to students enrolled in the Extended-time program option in Columbia, Charleston, and Greenville. The Extended-time program option is the *only* option offered in Charleston and Greenville; only the classes that satisfy the plan of study for the extended-time program option will be offered in these regional locations. The MSW Program will not offer exceptions to students who choose to pursue a full-time plan of study while enrolled as an extended-time student in Charleston or Greenville.

Certificate Programs

The College of Social Work administers the **Drug and Addiction Studies** certificate program. Students may pursue the certificate independently or in conjunction with another graduate course of study. The certificate program provides graduate students with opportunities to develop competencies in preparation for employment in a range of settings addressing alcohol and drug-related problems. For more information, students should send inquires to coswdaas@mailbox.sc.edu.

The College of Social Work also administers the **Social and Behavioral Health with Military Members, Veterans and Military Families.** Students may pursue the certificate independently or in conjunction with another graduate course of study. The certificate program provides graduate students with specific knowledge and skills necessary to interact in a military setting and in community settings where the needs of veterans and their families are met. For more information, students should send inquiries to coswmilt@mailbox.sc.edu.

The College of Social work administers the **Trauma-Informed Practice**. Students may pursue the certificate independently or in conjunction with another graduate course of study. The certificate program provides graduate students with specialized knowledge of trauma and trauma-informed practices. Students acquire competency in trauma prevention, assessment, intervention and policy practice and will develop targeted trauma-informed practice skills. For more information, students should send inquiries to patricep@mailbox.sc.edu.

Students may enroll in other graduate certificate programs, including:

- **Women's and Gender Studies**, administered by the College of Arts and Sciences. For more information, contact Dr. J. Daniel Jenkins at jenkinsj3@mailbox.sc.edu.
- **Aging**, administered by the Arnold School of Public Health. For more information, contact Dr. Ken Watkins at watkinsk@mailbox.sc.edu.
- The Graduate Certificate in Play Therapy administered through the College of Education, contact **Jessie**

Guest at **jessied@email.sc.edu** or 803-777-1937.

Combination Degree Programs

The College of Social Work participates in the following combination degree programs:

Social Work and Public Health (Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior)

The Social Work and Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior combination degree is offered in conjunction with the Arnold School of Public Health. Graduates are prepared with the skills to assess and improve the physical, psychological, and social health and well-being of individuals and the communities in which they live by furthering their empowerment, autonomy, and self-determination, as well as health-related, economic and social justice, through teaching, research, and service. For more information, please refer to the Social Work / Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior bulletin.

Social Work and Public Health (Health Service Policy and Management)

The Social Work and Health Service Policy and Management combination degree is offered in conjunction with the Arnold School of Public Health. Graduates are prepared for positions in health services management, policy, public health programs, research, and education. For more information, please refer to the Social Work / Health Service Policy and Management bulletin.

Social Work and Public Administration

The Social Work and Public Administration combination degree is offered in conjunction with the Department of Political Science in the College of Arts and Sciences. Graduates are prepared to promote the health and well-being of increasingly diverse and often vulnerable populations across communities, the state, region, and nation by furthering enhanced and effective performance of government agencies, not-for-profit groups and other public affairs organization through teaching and research. For more information, please refer to the Public Health / Social Work bulletin.

Social Work and Law

The Social Work and Law combination degree is offered in conjunction with the School of Law. Graduates are prepared to promote a better understanding of and advocacy for the special needs of vulnerable populations within the legal system, across communities, the state, region, and nation, by advancing economic and social justice, fighting oppression and discrimination, and furthering the protection and development of all people through teaching, research, and service. For more information, please refer to the Social Work / Law bulletin.

Students should contact Michael Ottone at ottone@mailbox.sc.edu to learn more about the combination degree programs.

Course Descriptions

Course Descriptions, including credits hours and prerequisites, can be found in the Graduate Studies Bulletin.

Field Practicum Education

The MSW Field Practicum Education Program at the College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina is structured according to the mandates of the Council on Social Work Education. The Program is guided by the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) and the National Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics. The tenets of these documents are found throughout the MSW curriculum including the MSW Field Practicum Education program.

Field practicum education is the signature pedagogy of social work education. The intent of field practicum instruction is to provide students with an opportunity to apply the knowledge, values, and skills learned in the classroom to actual social work practice situations in the field placement.

All MSW students are accountable to all policies, procedures, and practices that govern the MSW Field Practicum Education Program that can be found in the Field Practicum Education Manual. All students are required to complete the mandatory field practicum orientation to assist with field placement readiness. Students should refer to the Field Education Manual for additional information.

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)

The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) is a national initiative to provide more access to online courses while maintaining compliance standards with state regulatory agencies. SARA allows institutions to provide online courses outside of their own state borders by seeking and maintaining state approvals via a streamlined process. The University of South Carolina Columbia pursues authorization to offer distance education programs and experiential learning opportunities (internships, practica, clinicals, and fieldwork) in other states.

Social Work licensure and certification vary by state. Each state has its own licensing board with its own social work licensure requirements. As a program fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), Master of Social Work degree graduates from the University of South Carolina ***may*** be eligible to sit for professional licensure in the state of South Carolina. The program cannot confirm that it meets the specific requirements for professional licensure in another state. Students planning to seek licensure should visit the South Carolina Board of Social Work Examiners website and/or the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Licensing Board or College Websites, Statutes and Administrative Rules webpage.

STANDARDS AND EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE

The following information highlights some of the key academic standards and policies for MSW students. It should be noted that **not all** standards and policies are included here. Students are expected to be familiar with the UofSC Policies and Procedures Manual, the Graduate Admission Bulletin, the Graduate Academic Regulations Bulletin, and the Master's Degree Requirements Bulletin.

Student Attendance in Classes

MSW Students are expected to meet all academic objectives as defined by the instructor. Students are responsible for completing all assigned work, attending all class meetings from the beginning of the semester, and to participate in class. The College aims to ensure the highest academic standards while recognizing that events occur beyond the personal control of students or faculty. Different courses demand different approaches to assessing student

attendance and participation. Therefore, subject to certain limitations described below, instructors should notify students, specifically in the course syllabus, of the attendance policy for the course by the first day of class. Should an instructor fail to provide a written attendance policy, this general policy applies.

Students are responsible for satisfying the requirements for attendance and participation for any class in which they are enrolled, including requirements for notification and documentation of excused absences. Whenever possible, and as specified below, documentation is required in advance of any excused absence.

This policy applies to all MSW courses offered by the College, including synchronous or asynchronous online courses.

Excused Absences

Instructors requiring attendance as a component of a student's grade must distinguish between excused and unexcused absences in the syllabus.

Excused absences may not be penalized in a student's grade, and the student must be permitted to make up coursework missed due to an excused absence or to complete an equivalent assignment agreed upon with the instructor. Online courses, whether synchronous or asynchronous, are not exempt from this rule. In all cases of excused absence, the instructor of record must engage in an interactive process with the student to determine reasonable make-up work.

Instructors may refuse to grant a request for an excused absence or for make-up work that would result in a fundamental alteration of the essential academic requirements of the course. In such instances, students should be apprised of the University's policy regarding course withdrawals.

As required by law, the University of South Carolina and the College must excuse absences from class for the following reasons:

- Performance of a military duty or obligation imposed by state or federal law, as documented in writing by the appropriate state or federal authority.
- Legal obligation to appear at or participate in a judicial or administrative proceeding, including the performance of jury duty, as documented in writing by the appropriate judicial or administrative authority.
- Any medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth, as documented by the student's health care provider, requiring the student's absence from class.
- A disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and as documented by the Student with the Student Disability Resource Center, which prevents the student from attending class.
- Observance of a religious practice, holiday or holy day, if the instructor of the class is provided written notification by the student of their intent to observe such religious practice, holiday or holy day no later than the end of the second week of regularly scheduled classes in a full fall or spring semester term, and within twice the length of the drop/add period for any other term. Change / Drop dates can be found here.
- Any other absences required to be excused by applicable state or federal law.

The University of South Carolina requires that absences from class for the following reasons must also be excused:

- Participation in an authorized University activity, in which the student plays a formal, required role. Such activities include, but are not limited to, musical performances, field-based research or other research activities sanctioned by the university, academic competitions, academic and professional conferences with permission from faculty/advisors, and varsity athletic events. University documentation of participation should be provided in advance of the absence.
- Illness or injury that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class, with appropriate documentation.
- Death or severe illness of an immediate/dependent family member, with appropriate documentation. •

University closure for weather-related or other emergencies.
- International student visa conflicts, which may prevent a student from arriving on campus.

Requesting Excuses

To arrange excuses for absences that can be anticipated at the start of a term--including, but not limited to, authorized university activities and religious observances--students should submit a request in writing (email is acceptable) stating the dates of the anticipated absence, explaining the reason for absence, providing supporting documentation as required above, and including any request for make-up work. Students should submit this request no later than the end of the second week of regularly scheduled classes in a full fall or spring semester term and within twice the length of the drop/add period for any other term. Change / Drop dates can be found here.

To arrange excuses for absences that cannot be anticipated at the start of a term--including, but not limited to, legal proceedings or illness--students should submit in writing a request stating the date of absence, the reason for absence, and any request for make-up work as soon as reasonably possible after they become aware of the need to be absent. For instance, in the case of a contagious illness a student should notify the instructor soon after becoming aware of this illness. Instructors should not maintain records of student medical conditions. On the Columbia campus, the Graduate Student Ombuds is available to certify any excuses involving confidential personal information.

MSW courses numbered 500-699 must comply with the undergraduate attendance regulations and conform to the "5 percent rule." The Undergraduate Attendance Policy states that instructors may exact a grade penalty for unexcused absences of more than 5 percent of the scheduled class sessions.

Grades and Credits

The COSW MSW program follows a uniform grading scale designed to ensure fairness and consistency when evaluating students' academic performance:

- A 93-100
- B+ 88-92
- B 80-87
- C+ 78-79
- C 70-77
- D+ 67-69
- D 60-66
- F Below 60

Grades are determined by quality of work, performance on course assignments, examination grades, and class attendance and participation. The MSW Program follows the Grading Policies in the Graduate Academic Regulations Bulletin. Refer to these policies for additional information.

The credit value for each course is usually equal to the number of hours the class meets each week for one term (e.g., three hours/week for a 3-credit course).

- The letter grades **A, B, C, D**, and **F** are employed to designate excellent, good, fair, poor, and failing work, respectively. The grades **B+, C+**, and **D+** also may be recorded.
- Courses graded **D+** or lower cannot be applied to graduate degree programs.
- **C** is the lowest grade permissible for graduate credit in any course.
- **S** and **U** indicate, respectively, satisfactory (passing) and unsatisfactory (failing) performance in courses carried under the Pass-Fail option. Courses completed with an S may be counted in total credits earned. Graduate-level

courses completed with the grade of U are calculated as an F in the cumulative graduate grade point average.

- **I** is assigned for Incomplete at the discretion of the instructor when a student is unable to complete some portion of the assigned work in a course because of an extenuating circumstance. Re-enrolling in the course will not make up an Incomplete grade. A grade of incomplete for all MSW social work courses, including field education courses, is assigned by the instructor of record only under the following conditions:
    - Incompletes are not an option until after the Drop/Withdrawal Period.
    - The student is in good academic standing in the course with a passing grade average.
    - The student has approximately no more than 50% of assignments for the total grade unmet in the course.
    - The student must request the Incomplete grade in writing by the last day of class.
    - The student and instructor of record have completed an Assignment of Incomplete Grade Form (AS-5) (submitted to Student Services for tracking due dates).
    - The student and instructor of record have an agreed date of submission for all outstanding course requirements. The due date for submitting final assignments should be before the start of the next semester. Only under extenuating circumstances, shall the due date be extended into the next semester. Under no circumstances shall the due date for submission exceed 12 months.

- **NR** is temporary mark on the transcript assigned by the Office of the University Registrar if a grade has not been submitted by the instructor at the designated time.

Students' grades are reported on Self Service Carolina. Students may also access grade reports in person at the Office of the University Registrar. Course syllabi provide the instructor's expectations including attendance, required assignments and exams and the weight to be accorded to each, and the grading scale.

Minimum GPA

Graduate courses may be passed for degree credit with a grade as low as C, but a degree-seeking student must maintain at least a B (3.00 on a 4.00 scale) cumulative grade point average. Academic standards for grade point average (GPA), progression, and suspension can be found in the Graduate Academic Regulations Bulletin.

At the time of graduation, the student's graduate cumulative grade point average (GPA) must be at least 3.00 (B) on a 4.00 scale. Additionally, the average of all grades recorded on the program of study for 700-level and up courses must be at least 3.00 and all courses listed on the program of study must be at least 3.00.

Evaluating Academic Performance

The College of Social Work has a responsibility to ensure that its graduates will be prepared to meet the standards of professional social work practice and provide competent service to systems at all levels. For this reason, the college monitors student academic performance each semester. Criteria for good academic standing and adequate academic progress includes 3.0 cumulative GPA or higher, no more than three incompletes, and must earn a grade a C or above in all courses. For candidates of graduation, students must also complete the comprehensive assessment and meet the required credits for graduation. Students are informed of these requirements at orientation, advising, and in the MSW Student Policy and Procedures Manual. Forms acknowledging receipt of the student manual signed at orientation will be maintained in students' official files.

Referral Criteria for Student Academic Performance Evaluation and Review

Faculty members, instructors of record, field instructors, or Student Services staff members may refer students for unsatisfactory academic performance as defined by the policies of the University, Graduate School, and/or the College of Social Work for the following reasons:

- Cumulative GPA below 3.0.
- Three or more incompletes.
- Grade below C in any course.
- Failure to demonstrate minimally adequate verbal or written communication skills.
- Failure to demonstrate the capacity to understand program, classroom, or practicum organization content presented verbally or in writing and the ability to complete assignments that require use of the English language.
- Failure to demonstrate cognitive ability and study skills necessary for successful completion of the degree or certificate program in which they are enrolled.
- Failure to demonstrate academic behaviors, including but not limited to:
    - Attending classes or practicum as scheduled or expected, arriving on time for class and appointments or otherwise notifying others and making alternate arrangements.
    - Accepting supervision and constructive criticism and using such feedback for academic development.
    - Advocating for themselves in an appropriate and responsible manner, and using proper channels for conflict resolution; and
    - Demonstrating willingness to examine and change professional behavior when it interferes with working with clients and other professionals.
- Failure to demonstrate a commitment to the core values of the social work profession as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Persistent personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance use, or mental health conditions that:
    - Compromise scholastic and other performance, (word smith to put first)
    - Interfere with professional judgment and behavior, or (standalone)
    - Jeopardize the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility (as outlined in the Codes of Ethics of the National Association of Social Commented [RD1]: hyperlink 2 Workers, USC Honor Code, Carolinian Creed and the South Carolina State Board of Social Worker Examiners for Social Work Licensure); (standalone)
- Failure to respond to any type of communications from instructors of record within the designated time.

Academic Probation

Academic probation is a specified period in which students must improve their academic standing by meeting or making sufficient progress toward graduation requirements.

Students in the MSW Program must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher to remain in good academic standing. Any student whose cumulative GPA falls below these requirements is no longer in good academic standing and will undergo a review by the Program Coordinator, the Assistant Dean for Students, and the student's Academic Advisor. The review will provide conditions for the student to remain in the program. The student will also be placed on academic probation.

On academic probation, students will have one semester to raise their GPA to 3.0 or higher for the MSW Program. Course work used in raising the GPA must be a part of normal degree requirements. When placed on academic probation, students must meet with their academic advisors two times for academic coaching sessions. Students and academic advisors will meet at the beginning of the semester to identify resources they need to meet their academic

goals and again before the Withdraw/Fail deadline to ensure students are meeting the conditions required to remedy the academic deficit. Students must participate in these academic coaching sessions before being eligible to register for courses for the following semester. If students do not meet the minimum GPA requirement during the semester on probation, they will be placed on academic probation for a second major semester.

While on probation, students may not seek or hold office in any student organization or student cohort at the College of Social Work or university level. Students holding any such office must temporarily step down while on probation.

MSW students who remain on academic probation for a second consecutive semester are not eligible to receive Graduate Assistantships, Fellowships or Scholarships.

Students who do not meet the conditions of academic probation within one academic year will be suspended from the program.

Students who meet the conditions of academic probation will be removed from probation and resume good academic standing.

Academic Suspension

Academic suspension prohibits a student from advancing in the curriculum for one academic year. Students will be suspended if they do not meet the conditions of academic probation by the second semester. A student on suspension is given an opportunity to reorder priorities and reassess his or her situation before returning. Consistent with university policy, a suspended student may not be admitted to, or continue in, any academic program of the University. Credit earned at any other institution while a student is on suspension from the CoSW and University may not be applied toward a degree from the CoSW. Suspended students will not be allowed to seek or hold office in any professional organization or class at the College of Social Work or university level. Suspended students are ineligible for the privileges associated with registration.

Reinstatement After Academic Suspension

Consistent with Graduate School policy, reinstatement after suspension to graduate study cannot occur sooner than 12 months.

Appeals for reinstatement in the MSW Program may be initiated at any point following suspension, but petition packets must be received by the Graduate School at least 45 days before the start of the term for which the student requests to be readmitted. To meet this graduate school deadline, students seeking reinstatement in the MSW Program must submit a completed petition packet to the Program Coordinator by the following dates:

- October 1st for spring reinstatement
- March 1st for summer and fall reinstatement

The Program Director will only forward completed petition packets to the Graduate School which contain all required letters, documentation, and recommendations.

A student seeking reinstatement after suspension must participate in an interview with their Program Director and Academic Advisor. Prior to scheduling an interview, the student must submit the following appeal documents:

1. A letter from the student to the Program Director explaining the factors that resulted in their academic suspension. The letter must also include how the student will overcome the extenuating circumstances noted in the student's letter of appeal (e.g., medical treatment, change of major, adjustment of work demands) and

raise their GPA. Supporting documentation of extenuating circumstances must be included.
2. An adjusted Master Program of Study (MPOS) completed by the student and academic advisor.
3. A current unofficial transcript with current GPA and a feasible projection of what grades will be required in what courses and which semesters to yield the requisite overall cumulative GPA of 3.0.

Based on the review of the above documentation and interview, the Program Director may write a letter confirming that all materials for this appeal are in order, endorsing the letter from the student, and recommending reinstatement. The Program Director must recommend reinstatement for an appeal to go forward.

In cases when the Program Director does not recommend reinstatement and the student believes that the decision needs to be reconsidered, the student may file a grievance using the Grievances, Petitions, and Appeals Policy and Procedure as outlined in the MSW Student Handbook.

Note: Students who have not been enrolled for three or more years must reapply to Graduate School.

Academic Termination

Termination of student enrollment due to academic performance is called academic termination. Academic termination prohibits a student from continuing in the curriculum. A student may be terminated from enrollment in the College of Social Work programs for the following academic reasons, but not limited to:

- Failure to meet grade requirements per university policies, the Undergraduate or Graduate Bulletins, or the College policies.
- Accumulation of "incompletes" or grades below thresholds established per university policies, the Undergraduate or Graduate Bulletins, or College's policies.
- Failure to fulfill conditional admission requirements.
- Failure to fulfill conditional or probationary requirements from a previous review.
- Violation(s) of Academic Responsibility – The Honor Code standards defined by the College or University.
- Violation(s) of university regulations as described in the Carolinian Creed;
- Violation(s) of the NASW Code of Ethics or the South Carolina Board of Social Work Examiners.

A student is recommended for termination by the Program Director to the graduate school and is notified in writing. The Graduate School makes the final determination on the student's termination status and notifies the student in writing.

Students who have been terminated may petition for the program to consider readmission after one year of termination.

Evaluation of Professional Performance

A student's progress is based on nonacademic as well as academic performance. The CoSW is committed to upholding the ethical standards required of social workers in their relationships with clients, classmates, colleagues, co-workers, and members of the public. Students are expected to engage in ethical conduct and decision-making in accordance with the values, ethics and standards established for the profession of social work, as formalized in the NASW Code of Ethics and as written in the program manuals.

One of the most important competencies is the demonstration of personal values and ethical principles in all professional and social contexts. Professional behavior policies are presented here and violation of such may result in disciplinary action.

Professional Conduct

Students must:

1. Act ethically in conformity with the law, agency, and university standards, and social work values.
2. Ensure that appearance, dress, and general demeanor are appropriate to the context.
3. Demonstrate suitability for the profession and commitment to the profession's core values of service, social justice, honesty, and competence.
4. Maintain constructive interpersonal relations with faculty and staff, field agency representatives, fellow students, and other professional colleagues.
5. Understand and adhere to all the academic and field education policies and procedures detailed in the respective program Student Handbook and the Field Education Manual.
6. Deal with conflict and disagreement in a respectful and forthright manner.
7. Follow the USC's Honor Code and Carolinian Creed and show respect and courtesy to other members of the campus community.

Essential Performance Expectations

1. **Communication**: Students are expected to communicate effectively and respectfully with others orally and in writing in all communication modes (i.e., including but not limited to written assignments, text messaging, social media, telephone, video conference, email).

2. **Self-Awareness and Reflection**: Students are expected to assess their own suitability for professional practice. This requires the ability to engage in self-evaluation and to modify behaviors that may interfere with academic and/or professional performance.

3. **Judgment**: Students are expected to exercise sound professional and personal judgment and effectively attend to professional roles and boundaries.

4. **Cross-Cultural Skills**: Students are expected to acquire cross-cultural proficiency sufficient to successfully work with a wide variety of diverse groups and communities. Cross-cultural proficiency includes eliminating displays of personal bias and imposition of personal values on others, as well as approaching differences with an attitude of humility and respect, acknowledging the importance of cultural differences in shaping life experiences.

5. **Emotional Management and Coping**: Students are expected to be aware of the way they manage their expression of emotions in academic and professional environments and all other times. Building self-regulatory and coping skills in a manner that enables students to remain consistently engaged, attentive to duties, and professional in conduct and attitude is expected. This may include seeking and using professional support, if appropriate or as needed.

6. **Physical and Mental Abilities**: Students are expected to have sufficient physical and mental capacities to meet the demands of a professional Social Work degree program. These capacities include the ability to concurrently attend classes and complete field education courses as required by the degree program in which the student is enrolled. If students need accommodations, they must register with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC). The SDRC will formally communicate with faculty members, in advance of assignments or coursework, any necessary accommodations.

7. **Required Student Disclosures**: Students are expected to disclose to the USC CoSW Dean, Associate Dean for Curriculum, their Program Coordinator, Field Education Director and their Academic Advisor, any legal involvement

that takes place before or during enrollment in the program, including arrest, criminal and civil charges, criminal conviction, plea of guilty, plea of no contact and no contest, plea of nolo contendere, Alfred plea, deferred prosecution, prayer for judgment, or any other acceptance of responsibility for the commission of a crime other than a traffic-related misdemeanor or infraction. Students are also expected to disclose any discipline imposed by a state licensing board, the National Association of Social Workers, or similar organizations.

Violations of Behavioral Standards

Circumstances that may result in a review of a student's behavioral performance can include (but are not limited to) any of the following:

1. Failure to meet or maintain any of the professional performance standards stated herein or contained elsewhere in the respective Student Handbook; Certificate Handbook, Student Guide to Field Education; or the Graduate Division Guide to Graduate Policy.
2. Any violation of field placement agency policies, procedures, or regulations.
3. Violations of the NASW Code of Ethics or the Campus Code of Student Conduct.
4. Any form of scholastic dishonestly or other violation of academic integrity.
5. Any threat or attempt to harm oneself or others.
6. Consistent pattern of unprofessional behavior.

For procedures related to the review of professional behavior violations, see **Appendix A**.

Probation, Suspension, and Termination due to Professional Performance

The MSW Program has a responsibility to ensure that its graduates will be prepared to meet the standards of professional social work practice, including the provision of competent service to client systems at all levels. All students will be provided access to and are expected to understand the criteria and procedures for probation, suspension, and termination. These criteria and procedures are in **Appendix A** of this manual. Students will be asked to sign an acknowledgment form that will be maintained in their files.

Students are also expected to adhere to the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers.

See the Academic Suspension Policy and the Reinstatement After Suspension Policy in the Graduate Academic Regulation Bulletin for additional information.

STUDENT SERVICES

Academic and Professional Advisement

The college assigns two advisors to each degree student: An Academic Advisor and a Faculty Advisor. In special circumstances, an alternate Faculty Advisor may be assigned.

All degree students are provided academic advisement throughout their matriculation through the program.

Academic Advisement: Academic Advisors provide guidance regarding plan of study, course registration, program progression, campus resources and completing university forms (e.g., Registration Exception Form, Registration overrides, Course Overload Form)

Professional Advisement: Faculty Advisors provide guidance and mentoring regarding the social work profession, career choices, and professional identity. Faculty Advisors may refer students to campus resources. To access further resources, Graduate Faculty Advisors may submit a Referral for Absent, Disengaged or Struggling MSW Students.

Registration for Courses

Prior to registering for courses, students are advised to consult the master schedule for course listings. The social work course designator is SOWK.

Registering for classes is an online process that students complete through Self Service Carolina. Students are encouraged to use the Registration Checklists located on the Office of the Registrar's webpage to navigate the registration process.

The basic process for course registration is as follows:

- Login to Self Service Carolina.
- Navigate to the Student section, then click on the Registration tab.
- Choose the Schedule Planner option and build your ideal schedule.
- The social work course designator is SOWK.
- Course sections coded with a J prefix are offered online.
- Course sections coded with prefixes of 0CX or 2CX are offered in Charleston and are only for part-time students enrolled in the Charleston cohort.
- Course sections coded with prefixes of 0GX or 2GX are offered in Greenville and are only for part-time students enrolled in the Greenville cohort.
- Course sections coded with prefixes of 0PX or 2PX are offered in Columbia and are only for part-time students enrolled in the Columbia cohort.
- Send your schedule to the Registration Cart and leave it there until your time ticket begins.
- Once your time ticket begins, revisit Schedule Planner, confirm your class selections, and send your final selections to the Registration Cart.
- Choose the Submit option. You will then see a screen that shows which sections you successfully registered in. If you need to select additional classes, revisit Schedule Planner, and select the classes you need. Repeat the process above until you finalize your schedule.
- View Student Detail Schedule - As a final step, review your schedule.

Course Cancellation

The COSW will offer the courses required for matriculation, with enough sections of each course to enroll students. In addition, the COSW offers a variety of elective courses which may vary each term/year. In general, elective courses require a minimum of 10 students to avoid cancellation. The COSW may cancel elective courses or required courses for low enrollment if there are sufficient seats available in other course sections. The COSW may also cancel or combine sections based on available instructors and classrooms.

If a course must be cancelled for low enrollment, Student Services will inform the affected students in advance and assist them in identifying alternate courses.

Course Loads A student may enroll for a semester load not to exceed 15 hours (including audits and undergraduate courses). Students requesting an overload exception over 15 hours must submit the required Course Overload

Enrollment Authorization (CEO) Form to the Dean of Graduate Studies for approval prior to the beginning of the term for which the exception is requested. Students should consult their academic advisor for assistance. Additional Course Enrollment Load information can be found in the bulletin.

Full-time benefits for veterans are determined by the Office of Veterans Services.

Auditing a Course

The option of auditing a course is available with prior approval of both the Dean of the College and the faculty members involved. University policy on auditing courses at the graduate level requires that a student be enrolled in at least one course for credit unless permission from the Dean of the Graduate School is given for an audit only. Regularly enrolled students are always given priority over auditors concerning seats in a class. No record of an audit shall appear on a transcript unless the student has attended a minimum of seventy-five percent of all regularly scheduled classes in the course being audited.

Dropping Courses and Withdrawal

Students should check for last day to drop a course without a grade of 'W' being recorded and for the last day to drop a course or withdraw without a grade of 'WF' being recorded students should refer to the Academic Calendar. Failure to complete the official course withdrawal process has serious implications for calculation of the final course grade and calculation of grade point averages.

There are multiple ways for students to drop or withdrawal from undergraduate classes. Each option has separately defined rules for grades and tuition/fees. See the Dropping Courses and Withdrawal policies in the Graduate Academic Regulations Bulletin for additional information.

Students are prevented from dropping or adding courses during the Free Drop/Add Period if they have an active registration hold on their record. Students may drop or withdraw from courses through Self Service Carolina.

Withdrawal from all courses constitutes withdrawal from the University. All students wishing to withdraw from the University, or to discontinue enrollment from all courses for the semester, should first consult with their academic advisor. When requesting to drop the last course and to withdraw from the University, the student should follow the instructions on Self Service Carolina. Additionally, the Student Ombudsman Office can provide information, referral assistance or counseling. Students requesting withdrawal for extenuating circumstances after the penalty date (last day for W grade) should contact their academic advisor or the MSW Program Coordinator.

Students should be aware of the academic and financial consequences incurred by withdrawing from all courses. Financial Aid and Scholarship recipients should contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships.

Students who are experiencing academic difficulty and/or personal or family crises that interfere with their successful completion of course work are strongly encouraged to consult with their instructors, the academic advisor, and/or the MSW Program Coordinator.

Revalidation of Out-of-Date Courses

Students may request revalidation of UofSC graduate courses over six (6) years old for inclusion on the program of study. All instructions for revalidation must be followed and the Permit for Revalidation Examination form must be

completed and submitted to the dean of The Graduate School for approval prior to revalidation. Proof of payment of revalidation fees must be submitted with the Permit for Revalidation Examination form.

Note: Courses completed at other institutions may not be revalidated.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all students to be aware of the University of South Carolina's and the College of Social Work's standards regarding both academic and nonacademic expectations of students.

Equal Opportunity Statement

The University of South Carolina does not discriminate in educational or employment opportunities based on race, sex, gender, gender identity, transgender status, age, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, genetics, protected veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions.

Student Rights and Protections at the University

Below are some key policies that address the rights of protections of students at the University of South Carolina - this is **not** an exhaustive list. The full policies and procedures manual can be found here.

- Academic Freedom
- Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action
- Non-discrimination Policy
- Student Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment Policy
- Handling of Student Records (Student rights under FERPA)
- Student Grievance Policy—Non-Academic
- Academic Grievance Policy

Professional and Academic Responsibility - Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

The Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity empowers students to be responsible citizens and uphold the core values of our academic community.

Students are expected to adhere to the University's policy on Student Code of Conduct.

> *Be aware that arrests by law enforcement agencies outside of USC's Division of Law Enforcement and Safety must be reported by the student to the Office of Student Conduct within 72 hours of arrest. Penalties for non-compliance to this mandate may include suspension or termination from the BSW Program and/or University*.

Students are expected to adhere to the University's policy on Academic Responsibility - The Honor Code.

> *Every student has a role in maintaining the academic reputation of the university. It is imperative that you refrain from engaging in plagiarism, cheating, falsifying your work and/or assisting other students in violating the Honor Code.*
>
> *Two important components of the Honor Code:*

- *Faculty members are required to report potential violations of the Honor Code to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.*
- *When a student is uncertain as to whether conduct would violate the Honor Code, it is their responsibility to seek clarification from the appropriate faculty member.*

The Carolinian Creed is a complement to the University's conduct code and emphasizes openness and civility.

As a Carolinian...
I will practice personal and academic integrity;
I will respect the dignity of all persons;
I will respect the rights and property of others;
I will discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas and opinions;
I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings, and their need for conditions which support their work and development.

Student Rights to Participate in Academic and Student Affairs Policymaking

Students serve on several standing committees within the College to review, formulate and modify policies affecting academic and student affairs.
The committees that include student representatives are:

- MSW Program Committee
- Practicum Education and Workforce Advisory Committee
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism Committee
- Ad hoc committees (May include student representatives as appropriate)

Student members will be excused when the committee meets in executive session to discuss confidential student matters as it relates to FERPA or individual personnel matters.

Students Representative Responsibilities

MSW Student Representatives are elected by MSW students to represent their peers on designated committees (e.g., MSW Program Committee, DEI, Wellness, Practicum Advisory). In special cases, they may be appointed by faculty or staff.

In addition, MSW Student Site Representatives are elected by MSW students from their respective sites to represent their cohorts (i.e., Greenville, Charleston, Columbia). In special cases, they may be appointed by faculty or staff.

MSW Student Representatives provide a vital channel of communication between the COSW and students – representing, communicating, and giving feedback on college and student matters. They are not authorized to make any formal or informal decisions on behalf of the college.

While the college has responsibility to formally communicate to all students the names of the MSW Student Representatives of each committee (e.g., college website, BlackBoard site), MSW Student Representatives are expected to set up forms of communication with the classmates who they represent and their fellow representatives. MSW Student Representatives should keep the Program Director apprised of any student concerns or questions in writing.

MSW Student Representatives' responsibilities may include the following:

- Promote a positive learning experience at the COSW
- Be in good academic standing
- Adhere to the college's professional behavior policy
- Set a good example for the cohort in both academic and non-academic areas.
- Act as a key liaison/contact between faculty/staff and their peers regarding academic, facility, and MSW student welfare needs.
- Engage actively MSW students within their cohort or site to enhance students' academic experience via approved events and/or fellowships.
- Assist in the dissemination of information within their relevant cohort or site, when requested by the COSW.
- Be aware of all policies relating to academic and MSW student support and point students to respective departments for any support needs.
- Maintain confidentiality and adhere to data protection of any shared information.
- Coordinate with MSW student organizations.
- Attend and participate regularly on the committee for which they've been elected or appointed (MSW Student Representatives)
- Identify and make regular reports to their respective Site Coordinators on their cohort needs, concerns, and/or new ideas as needed (MSW Student Site Representatives)

Grievances, Petitions, and Appeals for Academic Performance

Students sometimes face an academic issue or problem that requires assistance to resolve. These issues or problems are categorized as grievances, appeals and petitions. In general,

- ***Grievances*** are alleged violations of the teaching responsibilities of the faculty, free expression policies, or other violations of responsibilities as stated in the USC Faculty Manual or of the official policies or procedures of the University.

- ***Appeals*** are requests to reconsider decisions that have been rendered.

- ***Petitions*** are requests to make individual exceptions to written requirements imposed by the program, the College of Social Work, the Graduate School, or the university. For further discussion, refer to the Graduate Bulletin concerning Academic Exception Petitions and Appeal of Academic Decisions and the Undergraduate Bulletin concerning Academic Standards Policies.

This policy is consistent with STAF 6.30, Academic Grievance Policy for the University of South Carolina, and STAF 6.27, Student Grievance Policy-Non-Academic.

Note: Grievances, Appeals and Petitions do not extend to matters of grading student work, where the substance of the complaint is simply student disagreement with the mark or grade placed upon the work. Such matters are to be discussed between the student and course instructor. Final authority for grade assignment shall remain with the course instructor.

Note: This policy does not refer to issues involving allegations of harassment or discrimination. For such issues, students are referred to the USC Office of Civil Rights & Title IX and the associated policies.

The primary objective of the grievance procedure is to ensure that concerns are promptly dealt with, and resolutions reached in a fair and just manner.

A grievance must be initiated within 30 calendar days from the date of the alleged violation. The CoSW Student Ombudsman will advise students on grievance procedures. Students are encouraged to first attempt to resolve the grievance with the person with whom they have a grievance. If the student has good reason not to attempt a resolution with this person or cannot reach a resolution, the CoSW Student Ombudsman will arrange for the student to meet with the Associate Dean for Curriculum within one week to address the grievance. The Associate Dean for Curriculum will respond to the grievance in writing within one to two weeks of receiving the grievance. If the student wishes to appeal the Associate Dean's decision, the CoSW Student Ombudsman may facilitate a meeting between the student and the Dean. The Dean will respond to the grievance in writing within two weeks. Students who wish to appeal the Dean's decision may appeal to the university ombuds for further guidance.

For procedures related to the grievances, petitions, and appeals for academic performance in the College of Social Work, please see **Appendix B**.

Grievances and Appeals for Professional Performance

For procedures related to the appeal for professional performance reviews, please see **Appendix A**.

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

University Leadership and Service Center

The University's Leadership and Service Center has a wealth of resources and services for the more than 500 student organizations that call the University of South Carolina home. Information about these organizations can be found via Garnet Gate.

College of Social Work Student Associations

Students are offered the opportunity to participate in student associations within the College of Social Work. The associations are:

- The **Phi Alpha National Social Work Honor Society** provides an opportunity for MSW students who have excelled in Social Work scholarship to form bonds and promote Social Work values. Membership requirements are a minimum of 15 completed credit hours in the MSW program with a 3.5 or better GPA.
- The **Social Work Student Association (SWSA)** promotes interest in social work and social work issues through association with others who are interested in this field; provides supplemental educational experiences for students; acts as an advocate for students in academic and administrative matters; and enhances social interaction among the membership. Membership is open to any MSW student registered full-time or part-time in the College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina. Four officers of the association – the

president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer - are elected annually by the College of Social Work's student body from among the student population.
- The **Black Social Work Student Association (BSWSA)** facilitates open dialogue and retention of MSW students of color, promote academic excellence, scholastic networks, and cultural diversity, foster professional and recreational activities, as well as provide a nurturing environment and advocate for students.

Professional Development and Organizations

In addition to formal classroom and field experiences, students in the MSW Program are encouraged to work on their professional development in the following ways:
- Attend available College sponsored trainings and events.
- Join the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).
- Join the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors (BPD).
- Join the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).
- Join the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR).

STUDENT RESOURCES

University of South Carolina Resources

Financial Assistance and Scholarships: May be available for those students who qualify. Students are encouraged to apply as early as possible.

Information Technology: Provides information and support to students for common resources such as Blackboard, email, IDs and security.

Writing Center: Offers free consultations to UofSC students, faculty, and staff. Through collaborative consultations, the Center provides feedback to help writers accomplish their own goals.

Academic Success Resources: Resources are available for any student looking to improve performance in the classroom and in life. Faculty serve as teachers, advisers and mentors, while current students serve as peer leaders and tutors.

Student Disability Resource Center: Coordinates efforts to ensure that students with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations, and we serve as consultants to faculty, staff, and campus partners. To apply for accommodations, students should start the application process as soon as they are admitted to the University.

Career Center: Helps students realize their career goals and locate employment upon graduation. Services include resume writing, job searches, interview preparation, exploration of graduate school, etc.

Thomas Cooper Library: Contains most of the University library collections on the Columbia campus.

Student Health Services: Provides comprehensive physical and mental health care services right on campus to help contribute to students' success and overall well-being.

Wellness & Prevention: Encourages and supports healthy lifestyles for all members of the UofSC community.

Counseling & Psychiatry Services: Provides essential therapy and emotional wellness services for students at the

University of South Carolina.

Stop Sexual Assault: Advocates offer support and a variety of services to students, faculty and staff who are survivors of interpersonal violence (sexual assault, attempted sexual assault, intimate partner violence and/or stalking).

Suicide Prevention: Provides support and education to students.

Carolina Closet - Leadership and Service Center | University of South Carolina (sc.edu)Provides business professional clothes to the University of South Carolina students.

The Gamecock Pantry: Campus food pantry created for students, by students.

Off-Campus Living & Neighborhood Relations: Provides information to students about off-campus housing.

Transfer Student Success - Student Success Center | University of South Carolina Offers support for transfer undergraduate students. The office advocates for the need of transition services on campus, provides support resources for a seamless transition into UofSC, and provides consultation services.

Office of Multicultural Student Affairs: Encourages students to work together to create an inclusive learning community at the University of South Carolina.

Office of Diversity and Inclusion: Supports USC's commitment to creating and sustaining an inclusive learning, living and working environment where all members of the university's community feel that they are welcomed, valued and supported. Students have access to diversity data and programs, the Student Access Scholarship application, and the portal to report incidents of bias or hate.

International Student Services: Provides a wide range of services for international students, including pre-arrival information, orientation programs, immigration advising, personal assistance, and student programs and activities.

Parking and Transportation Services: A variety of parking options for students on the Columbia campus is available.

College of Social Work Resources

Computer Lab: The BSW/MSW Student Computer Lab is located in Hamilton College, Room 201B.

Mailboxes (Columbia Students): Student mailboxes are located on the 1st floor of Hamilton College.

MSW Student Listserv COSWMSW@listserv.sc.edu**:** MSW students are automatically subscribed to this listserv. The listserv is closed to the public - only current students, faculty and staff of the College of Social Work are eligible to join the listserv. The listserv is used by College administration to communicate with students about news, events, and activities.

APPENDIX

A: Professional Performance Review Procedure, including Appeal

All COSW students are required to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics (https://www.socialworkers.org/about/ethics/code-of-ethics), and the rules for academic and behavioral conduct established by the University of South Carolina (for Undergraduate Academic Regulations: https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations/; for Graduate Academic Regulations: https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/graduate/policies-regulations/graduate-academic-regulations/#text; for USC's Student Code of Conduct: http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf626.pdf). Violations of these requirements may result in a review process, leading to possible sanctions including suspension or termination. Procedures for student review are described below.

Review Procedures

1. Initial Conversation:

When a faculty member, instructor, or staff member has concern about a student's behavior, they shall first try to address that concern and explore ways to resolve it with the student directly. The goal of this initial conversation is to work toward a mutual understanding and resolution of the concern. Faculty members, instructors, staff members or students may consult with the program coordinator or student services staff, as well as other campus resources, for advice and technical assistance with campus policies and procedures.

2. Informal Behavior Review

If concern about the behavior is not successfully resolved by this direct intervention, the faculty member, instructor, or staff member may request involvement by the student's Program Coordinator (BSW, MSW, or PhD) or the Field Education Director (if the problem occurs in or affects the field placement). This involvement may include meeting with the student individually, facilitating discussion between the referring faculty/staff member and student, engaging the student's advisor, and referring the student to academic support, mental health, or other services on campus. The Program Coordinator or Field Education Director shall report their involvement and the outcome of that involvement to Student Services for inclusion the student's permanent record.

3. Automatic Behavior Reports

Faculty members, instructors, or staff members shall automatically report certain student behaviors to appropriate college officials, university officials, or both:

- Certain behaviors merit an automatic report by faculty members to the student's Program Coordinator and Assistant Dean of Students to initiate possible supportive intervention. These behaviors include excessive absences, nonresponse, and other concerns that undermine academic performance. Report these concerns using the Absent, Disengaged or Struggling Student Form. As appropriate, attach emails or other documentation to substantiate the report.
- Certain behaviors merit an automatic report to the UofSC Student Care and Outreach Team. These behaviors include self-injurious behavior (e.g., suicide attempt or talking about suicide, self-harming, illegal drug use, disordered eating) and other concerning behavior (e.g., substance use, unusual behavior, victimization, grieving, emotional distress). Report these behaviors using the Student Care and Outreach Team Incident Report.
- Certain behaviors merit an automatic report to UofSC Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. These include potential academic integrity violations such as plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty.

Instructors report suspected violations using the Honor Code Violation Report.

- Other behaviors also merit an automatic report to UofSC Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. These include alcohol and drug misconduct, damage to property, disruptive activity, fraudulent behavior, health and safety concerns, theft and burglary, violent conduct, and weapons. Instructors and others report these behaviors using the Code of Conduct Violation Report.
- Behaviors that merit automatic report to any UofSC offices above, also merit report to the student's Program Coordinator. A behavior report and any response by COSW officials will become part of the student's permanent record.

4. Formal Behavior Review:

When a student's behavior problems do not respond to remediation or efforts at remediation are not adequate, the faculty member, instructor, staff member, program coordinator or student services shall refer the student for review by the student's program coordinator.

A. Program Review Committee.

The Program Coordinator assigns a Review Committee from membership of the Program Committee. In the event of a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, members of the Review Committee may recuse themselves. If recusals result in a Review Committee having fewer than three members, the Program Coordinator will appoint additional ad hoc members from the faculty. Review Committee members shall designate one member to serve as chair of the committee.

Program Coordinator will send written documentation about the behavior concern to the Review Committee. The Program Coordinator will also send written notification of the review committee to the student, the student's faculty advisor, the student's academic advisor, the Associate Dean for Curriculum, and other relevant parties within one week.

The Review Committee may meet to determine how to proceed with the review process and to schedule a meeting with the student. The Review Committee will hold a meeting with the student, the student's advisors, and other relevant parties. The student may invite the Student Ombudsperson to be present at this meeting. If the student chooses to invite others who are not UofSC personnel, the student must sign a FERPA Release Form. Signed forms will be maintained in the student's permanent file.

At their meeting with the student, Review Committee members consider any evidence provided by the referring faculty member, instructor, staff member, or student. They will ask questions and allow the student to share information and offer perspective.

Following the meeting, the Review Committee will deliberate based on the information presented and recommend a course of action. The committee may recommend one or more of the following actions:

- **Continuation**. Allow the student to continue in the program with no conditions. In these situations, the concern has either been determined to be unfounded or not to require further action by the student or program. If determined unfounded, no record will be kept.
- **Continuation with conditions**. Establish formal conditions for the student to continue in the program. In these situations, specific conditions must be met for the student to remain enrolled in the program. The disposition must include specific actions requested of the student and a timeline for completing these actions. Actions may include participating in mentoring; writing an essay or otherwise demonstrating increased awareness of the consequences of their actions; referring the student to counseling and/or advising services. A student's failure to meet requirements for continuation may

result in termination from the program.

- **Probation**. In consultation with the Associate Dean for Curriculum, the student's Program Coordinator may recommend to the CoSW Dean that the student be placed on probation. Like continuation with conditions, probation establishes formal conditions for the student to continue in the program. These specific conditions must be met for the student to remain enrolled in the program. The disposition must include specific actions requested of the student and a timeline for completing these actions. Unlike continuation with conditions, probation generally involves more stringent conditions and requires Dean approval.
- **Consult with and/or refer to UofSC officials**. For some behaviors, the UofSC Vice President for Student Affairs, Office of General Counsel, or the Division of Law Enforcement and Safety may be consulted or notified. Behaviors that may result in consultation or referral include scholastic dishonesty; racial or sexual harassment; possession or use of firearms or other weapons on UofSC property; damage, destruction, or misuse of UofSC property; and conduct that endangers the health or safety of any University student, employee, or campus visitor.
- **Suspension**. When the student is suspended from the program, the student will be provided with documentation regarding the specific reasons for suspension and the conditions under which the student may be reinstated. Suspension requires Dean approval.
- **Termination**. When a student is terminated from the program, the student will be provided with documentation regarding the specific reasons for his/her dismissal. Termination requires Dean approval.

Within one week of meeting with the student, a Review Committee shall submit a written report and recommendation to the student's Program Coordinator and Associate Dean for Curriculum.

Within one week of receiving the Review Committee report, the Program Coordinator shall inform the student in writing of the final disposition. The Program Coordinator may simply endorse the Review Committee's recommendation or reach another conclusion. If the decision requires Dean approval, the Program Coordinator must obtain it before informing the student of a final decision. The final disposition shall be documented in the student's permanent file.

B. Formal Behavior Review Appeal Process.

A student may appeal the Program Coordinator's decision to the CoSW Associate Dean for Curriculum within one week of receiving the final disposition. The Associate Dean for Curriculum shall issue a written decision within one week of receiving the student's appeal. The Associate Dean's decision may be appealed to the CoSW Dean within one week of receiving the decision. The Dean shall issue a written decision within one week of receiving the student's appeal. Right to any further appeal, if any, shall be determined by applicable UofSC policies and procedures. To the extent consistent with university policies and legal requirements, if a student is suspended or terminated from the program and appeals that decision, the student is allowed to continue in the program until the appeal is concluded.

All information disclosed during any of these stages of remediation will be kept confidential unless other relevant parties need to be notified based on their role within the educational context, or there is a legal requirement to report. Review processes with the CoSW do not supersede any UofSC policies and procedures related to both academic and behavioral issues.

Termination from the Program

A student may be subject to termination from a CoSW program for:

1. Failure to meet the necessary professional behavior standards in a professional program.
2. Violations of the Code of Student Conduct as determined by the Vice Chancellor, Division of Student Affairs at the recommendation of the Office of Student Conduct and with the concurrence of the Dean.

B. Academic Performance Grievances, Petitions, and Appeals Procedure

When a student decides to file a grievance, they begin by reaching out to the CoSW Ombudsperson via phone or email. The Ombudsperson will meet with the student to listen to their concerns. The ombudsperson will provide the student with the grievance policy and procedure and answer any questions they may have about the policy or procedure.

The ombudsperson will first encourage the student to attempt to resolve the grievance with the person with whom they have a grievance. If the student has already attempted this without success, or has good reason not to attempt the resolution, the ombudsperson will instruct the student to put the grievance in writing and send it to the Associate Dean of Curriculum via email within one week. The ombudsperson will also arrange for the student to meet with the Associate Dean of Curriculum if needed.

The Associate Dean of Curriculum will review and respond to the grievance in writing within two weeks of receiving the grievance. The Associate Dean of Curriculum may also choose to meet with the student within this time frame. The Associate Dean of Curriculum will also inform the student of their right to appeal the response/decision to the dean.

If the student wishes to appeal, they will send the written grievance to the dean via email within one week of receiving the Associate Dean of Curriculum's decision.

The dean will review and respond to the appeal in writing within two weeks of receiving the appeal. The dean may also choose to meet the student within the same time frame. The dean will also inform the student of their right to contact the university ombudsperson for further guidance should they wish to appeal the dean's decision.