



MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Master of Social
Work Program
Handbook

College of Health
Sciences
The University of
Texas at El Paso

The Master of Social Work (MSW) Student Handbook is as a reference tool for student and faculty use in understanding the standards, roles and relationships that govern the student's graduate experience in The University of Texas at El Paso Department of Social Work.

Our mission is to educate culturally competent and community-engaged social work practitioners to provide services and promote social and economic justice in partnership with the unique multicultural, international population of the U.S.-Mexico border region and beyond. The Department of Social Work is dedicated to student success.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO MSW PROGRAM

Introduction to the Handbook

The Master of Social Work (MSW) Student Handbook is designed as a reference tool for student and faculty use in understanding the standards, roles and relationships that govern the student's graduate experience in The University of Texas at El Paso Department of Social Work. Student questions or concerns that are not covered in this manual should be addressed to the Chair of the Department of Social Work. The Department of Social Work reserves the right to update or modify any policy or procedure contained in this manual to protect student rights or to comply with university policy. Any change in policies or other manual content will be communicated to students through email to all students enrolled in the program. The student representatives to the MSW Program Committee are responsible for communicating with the MSW students and bringing comments or concerns to the MSW Program Committee meetings for discussion and decision-making.

The University of Texas at El Paso MSW Program

The University of Texas at El Paso MSW Program offers a program of classroom instruction and fieldwork that leads to the Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. The focus and content of this program are guided by the school's mission, the Curriculum Policy Statement of the Council on Social Work Education (www.cswe.org), the educational objectives defined by the faculty and professional commitments to the social work practice community.

The mission of the University of Texas at El Paso Department of Social Work's is:

“. . . to educate culturally competent and community-engaged social work practitioners to provide services and promote social and economic justice in partnership with the unique multicultural, international population of the U.S.-Mexico border region and beyond. The Department of Social Work is dedicated to student success.”

The purpose of the MSW program is to prepare competent social work practitioners to provide high quality services and leadership to the U.S-Mexico border region. This region is comprised of El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Presidio, and Terrell Counties (totaling an area larger than Massachusetts) on the U.S. side and the city of Ciudad Juarez on the Mexican side. The complex and changing, multinational, multicultural environment of the U.S.-Mexico region requires advanced social work practitioners with professional skills to promote human and community well-being for the various client systems of this region. The program's mission and goals incorporate both a generalist foundation (1st year) and an advanced concentration on *Social Work in the Border Region* (2nd year). The generalist foundation is grounded in the “person and environment” construct that requires knowledge, values, and skills to span the continuum of practice. The second-year concentration builds on the generalist foundation, focusing on advanced practice skills that prepare social work professionals who are competent to address the complex social issues that characterize El Paso – Juarez border region.

The MSW program operates in keeping with the policies and procedures for graduation established by the University and The Graduate School, the accreditation standards set out by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the ethics adopted for professional social work practice by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

MSW Program Goals

The goals of the MSW program are derived from the mission statement and reflect the purposes of social work education as delineated in EP 1.1 (Council on Social Work Education).

1. Promote the development of professional social work identity that is reflected in a commitment to competent practice through lifelong learning, participation, and achievement.
2. Provide advanced social work knowledge, skills, and values essential to high quality professional practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
3. Prepare social work graduates with advanced knowledge, skills, values and abilities necessary for culturally competent professional practice within the international, multicultural context of the U.S. Mexico border (Far West Texas/Southern New Mexico/Ciudad Juarez) region.
4. Prepare graduates who are able to use knowledge of mechanisms of oppression to empower client systems at any level in order to create social change and to promote social and economic justice for disenfranchised populations, particularly those living in the border region.
5. Provide a learning environment that embraces an understanding of the utility and process of scientific inquiry as a basis for evidence-based practice, and preparing practitioners who are committed to advancing social work knowledge with specific attention to work with Hispanic populations.

The MSW degree program is designed to prepare competent and culturally sensitive social work practitioners who will work towards enhancing the quality of life and community well-being for all persons living within the U.S.-Mexico border region. The educational process begins with generalist practice where the “person in environment” constructs set the structure for the first year. The second year builds on this generalist perspective, providing more advanced, culturally relevant practice knowledge and the skills to address the biopsychosocial needs of clients and to promote social change in community, organizational and political systems that promote and sustain social and economic injustice for oppressed and disadvantaged populations, particularly within the border region.

Students develop a professional commitment to the NASW code of ethics as guiding all aspects of social work practice, including research. Students are trained to demonstrate commitment to service and a respect for the dignity and worth of every human being, regardless of race, ethnicity, class, age, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigration status, and disability, thereby promoting human and community well-being for residents of the U.S.-Mexico border region. Students develop an understanding that high quality services are dependent upon the use of culturally appropriate interventions that are scientifically valid. The development of professional knowledge and skills is a reciprocal, life-long process based on practice experience and scientific inquiry.

The educational process in the MSW program is built upon the following: essential skill development in critical thinking, commitment to professional values and ethics, and the integration of social work knowledge, values, and skills into all levels of social work practice. The program prepares culturally competent leaders who are dedicated to promoting social and economic justice for all individuals and preventing conditions that encourage oppression.

Eligibility for Admission

A baccalaureate degree from an accredited university or college is required for admission to the MSW program. No credit is granted for life and/or work experiences. Students considered for admission to the Master of Social Work program must meet the following criteria:

- An earned bachelor's degree from a college or university accredited by a recognized regional or international accrediting body.
- A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (a lower overall GPA may be considered as long as the GPA within the undergraduate major is at least a 3.0).
- An undergraduate course in statistics (within the past 5 years from point of admission and having earned a grade of C or better).
- An undergraduate course in general biology, anatomy, or physiology (grade of C or better).
- International students may need to submit TOEFL, PTE or IELTS exam scores to the Graduate School. Check with the Graduate School for more information.

Advanced Standing applies only to graduates of an accredited BSW Program who graduated with a 3.5 overall GPA in social work courses within 5 years of prospective admission to the MSW Program. In addition to meeting the eligibility requirements which include completion of the Competency Assessment Form-see Attachment 1, applicants are expected to successfully complete and pass a simulation, interview and an essay prior to admission.

Additional criteria used in evaluating the application include:

- Personal statement based on four questions contained within the application
- Three professional references (supervisors, professors, professional colleagues)
- Resume (including work, volunteer and internship experience, membership and leadership in community and/or professional organizations, publications, Workshop, community education presentations, awards or honors, and continuing education received)
- Experience Summary Sheet that outlines all work and volunteer activities
- For Advanced Standing applicants only: completion of Competency Assessment Form (See Attachment 1), simulation, interview, and an essay.

Conditional Admission Status

If a student is admitted in the final semester of their undergraduate year, the student will receive a "Conditional Admission" pending final verification of graduation from an undergraduate program. Students may start the MSW Program before the final transcript is received; however, they will be administratively withdrawn if verification of a completed undergraduate degree is not received by the end of June. If a student has been admitted to the MSW Program under a "Conditional Admission" status for other reasons (such as pre-requisites not completed), the student will have up to three semesters (summer, fall and spring) to fulfill the conditional requirements.

The student's advisor will review and approve all students' registration. This enables the advisor to monitor and support the student's progress towards the completion of the conditional requirement. If the requirements have not been met by the end of the third semester, the student will not be allowed to register and must take a "Leave of Absence" until the requirement has been fulfilled. This could result in a delay in graduation.

An extension of the time period for completion of the conditional requirement may be granted under justifiable circumstances; all written requests must be submitted and approved by the Coordinator of the MSW Program. Once a student has met the conditional requirement, they must notify the coordinator in writing or by email requesting removal of the conditional status and must produce evidence that the requirement has been fulfilled. It is the student's responsibility to submit an unofficial transcript showing that they have completed all the requirements to remove the "Conditional Admission." The coordinator will then notify the Graduate School requesting removal of the conditional status.

Students can be accepted into the program conditionally if they do not meet the 3.0 GPA requirement. A student with a GPA of 2.75-2.94 and with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, can be accepted conditionally with the expectation that the student will demonstrate academic commitment by earning A/B grades in their first year of the program.

The student will receive an acceptance letter indicating conditional acceptance and expectations.

Background Checks

Please note that several of the agencies in which we place students in practicum internships require formal criminal background checks. These agencies include all State of Texas agencies, all schools, all placements serving children, courts, and all health care settings. In addition, most of the agencies that are health-related or criminal justice-related require drug screening.

In Texas, [the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners regulates social work professional practice](#). A formal criminal background check is required to sit for the exam. Currently licensed social workers are also required to report any new arrests or convictions. Social Workers employed by state agencies in Texas must pass a criminal background check as a condition of employment. This is also true for federal agencies such as the Veteran's Administration.

MSW Program Concentration

The concentration for the MSW program is *Social Work in the Border Region*, which is infused throughout the educational program (30 credits). It builds on the Foundation coursework offered in the first half of the curriculum that prepares social work students for generalist practice. The concentration extends the generalist foundation to provide advanced knowledge and skills to prepare social workers to address the complex social and health problems specific to the U.S.-Mexico border region.

The MSW program is committed to educating culturally competent, advanced social work practitioners to serve the needs of the border region. The table below breaks out the courses according to the Foundation and Concentration requirements. The Concentration coursework is designed to provide students with advanced theoretical knowledge, practice skills and values as applied to fields of practice and to special populations within the multicultural, bi-national U.S.-Mexico border region and beyond.

The curriculum may be completed through either full-time or part-time enrollment. See Attachment 2 (Degree Plan). The specific curriculum experience is carried out through 30 credit hours of Foundation course work. Most courses must be completed before entering the advanced curriculum year. Entering students who have received equivalent experience in a baccalaureate degree in a social work program accredited by CSWE may be considered for admission to the Advanced Standing (Concentration curriculum).

Courses for Foundation and Concentration

FOUNDATION	CONCENTRATION
The Social Work Profession (3)	Social Work in the Border Region (3)
Social Policy I (3)	Culturally Grounded Social Work Practice (3)
Social Policy II (3)	Theory and Practice with Organizations (3)
Theory and Practice with Individuals (3)	Multi-cultural Macro Practice (Community) (3)
Theory and Practice with Families (3)	Clinical Assessment (3)
Theory and Practice with Groups (3)	Research Project (3)
Research Methods (3)	Free Electives (6)
Foundation Practicum I (3)	Advanced Practicum I (3)
Foundation Practicum I (3)	Advanced Practicum II (3)
Free Elective (3)	
TOTAL CREDITS = (30)	TOTAL CREDITS = (30)

Foundation Year Course Exemptions and Transfer Courses

Full and part-time Foundation Year students may qualify for a Foundation course waiver or transfer of some courses. Students may also be able to **transfer** courses from a graduate MSW Program another graduate program to meet selected requirements. We may require the student to submit a syllabus for the course(s) to be transferred. The transfer of credits is governed by university policies as defined in the Graduate Catalogue. The MSW program has been approved to give up to 29 transfer credit hours for graduate-level courses from accredited universities. A request for the transfer of credits must be approved by both the Coordinator of the MSW Program and the Dean of the Graduate School. Once approved, the transfer credit is recorded on the preliminary degree plan developed with the Advisor. UTEP Graduate Catalog delineates the following criteria for the transfer of graduate-level credits:

- The course is equivalent to a graduate-level course at UTEP
- The course has not already been applied to the fulfillment of any other degree program
- A grade of “B” or better was earned
- The credit was not earned through a correspondence course
- The course was not taken beyond the six-year approval limit for the completion of a master’s program.

Students entering the Full- or Part-Time MSW degree plan that received their BSW within 5 years of admission may request a **waiver** for selected courses in the Foundation content. Only the following courses will be eligible for a waiver:

- SOWK 5300: The Social Work Profession
- SOWK 5357: Social Policy I
- SOWK 5360: Social Policy II
- SOWK 5316: Culturally Grounded Social Work

All the Foundation courses will use textbooks that are more advanced, require more extensive readings, and have more rigorous assignments and examinations than those offered at the BSW level. Therefore, the student must have earned an “A” for the course in which they are requesting the waiver. For UTEP BSW courses in which the students earned an “A”, the degree plan will show WAIVED. To be considered for a waiver, the student who received their BSW from an accredited university other than UTEP must submit course syllabi from the courses previously taken in order to ensure comparability. Any alterations to the degree plan must be approved by the Coordinator of the MSW Program.

Practice Course Sequencing

When courses are sequenced, the student must complete the first course in the sequence before they can register for the second course. These include Field Practicum 1 and 2 and Advanced Practicum 1 and 2.

Course Substitution Requests

Students may request a course substitution for a required course but only under extreme medical or family situations. To request a “Course Substitution”, the student’s request must first be approved by the MSW Coordinator. Once approved, the MSW Coordinator and student must work with the faculty instructor or lead faculty instructor (if the course has multiple sections) of the course for which the student is requesting a substitution. The course selected for the substitution must be approved by both the faculty instructor and the MSW Coordinator. Once approved, the MSW Coordinator must inform The Graduate School of the approved course substitution.

**OVERVIEW OF CURRICULUM
FULL-TIME (24-MONTH OPTION) (* = Concentration courses)**

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Summer 1	SCH	Total
SOWK 5300	The Social Work Profession (may waive with earned A grade in Introduction to Social Work)	3	
SOWK 5331	Theory and Practice with Individuals	3	6

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Fall 1	SCH	Total
SOWK 5335	Foundation Practicum I (<i>linked to internship</i>)	3	
SOWK 5357	Social Policy I (<i>may waive with earned A grade</i>)	3	
SOWK 5380*	Social Work in the Border Region	3	
SOWK 5333	Theory and Practice with Groups	3	12 or
SOWK 5315*	Clinical Assessment (<i>Summer or Fall</i>)	3	15

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Spring 1	SCH	Total
SOWK 5332	Theory and Practice with Families	3	
SOWK 5360	Social Policy II (<i>may waive with earned A grade</i>)	3	
SOWK 5316*	Culturally Grounded Social Work Practice (<i>may waive with earned A grade</i>)	3	
SOWK 5336	Foundation Practicum II (linked to internship)	3	12 or
SOWK	Elective – Upper division course	3	15

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Summer 2	SCH	Total
SOWK	Upper division elective or core course depending on advising	3	3

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Fall 2	SCH	Total
SOWK 5383*/5382*	Theory and Practice with Organizations OR 5382 Multicultural Macro Practice with Communities	3	
SOWK 5370	Research Methods (no waiver)	3	
SOWK	Elective – Upper division course	3	
SOWK 5345*	Advanced Practicum I (linked to internship)	3	12

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Fall 2	SCH	Total
SOWK 5313*	Research Project	3	
SOWK 5383*/5382*	Theory and Practice with Organizations OR 5382 Multicultural Macro Practice with Communities	3	
SOWK	Elective (total of 3 required) – Upper division courses	3	
SOWK 5346*	Advanced Practicum II (linked to internship)	3	12

Total 60 credit hours (*waived courses may reduce total hours needed*)

PART-TIME (36-MONTH OPTION) (* = Concentration courses)

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Summer 1	SCH	Total
SOWK 5300	The Social Work Profession (may waive with earned A grade in Introduction to Social Work)	3	3

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Fall 1	SCH	Total
SOWK 5357	Social Policy I (<i>may waive with earned A grade</i>)	3	
SOWK 5380*	Social Work in the Border Region	3	6

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Spring 1	SCH	Total
SOWK 5360	Social Policy II (<i>may waive with earned A grade</i>)	3	
SOWK	<i>Elective – Upper division course</i> OR SOWK 5315* Clinical Assessment	3	6

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Summer 2	SCH	Total
SOWK 5331	Theory and Practice with Individuals	3	
SOWK	<i>Elective – Upper division course</i>	3	6

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Fall 2	SCH	Total
SOWK 5335	Foundation Practicum I (<i>linked to internship</i>)	3	
SOWK 5333	Theory and Practice with Groups	3	6 or
SOWK 5315*	Clinical Assessment (<i>Summer or Fall</i>)	3	9

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Spring 2	SCH	Total
SOWK 5332	Theory and Practice with Families	3	
SOWK 5316*	Culturally Grounded Social Work Practice (<i>may waive with earned A grade</i>)	3	
SOWK 5336	Foundation Practicum II (<i>linked to internship</i>)	3	12

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Summer 3	SCH	Total
SOWK	<i>Elective - Upper division elective</i>	3	3

Part-Time Program

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Fall 3	SCH	Total
SOWK 5383*/5382*	Theory and Practice with Organizations OR 5382 Multicultural Macro Practice with Communities	3	
SOWK 5370	Research Methods (no waiver)	3	
SOWK 5345*	Advanced Practicum I (linked to internship)	3	9

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Fall 2	SCH	Total
SOWK 5383*/5382*	Theory and Practice with Organizations OR 5382 Multicultural Macro Practice with Communities	3	
SOWK 5313*	Research Project (no waiver)	3	
SOWK 5346*	Advanced Practicum II (linked to internship)	3	9

Total 60 credit hours (*waived courses may reduce total hours needed*)

ADVANCED STANDING (12-MONTH OPTION) (* = Concentration courses)

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Summer	SCH	Total
SOWK 5315*	Clinical Assessment	3	
SOWK 5331	Theory and Practice with Individuals	3	6

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Fall	SCH	Total
SOWK 5383*/5382*	Theory and Practice with Organizations OR 5382 Multicultural Macro Practice with Communities	3	
SOWK 5380*	Social Work in the Border Region	3	
SOWK 5333	Theory and Practice with Groups (recommended or SOWK 5370 Research Methods (recommended) or Upper division elective	3	
SOWK 5345*	Advanced Practicum I (linked to internship)	3	12

Prefix and Number	Required Courses Fall 2	SCH	Total
SOWK 5383*/5382*	Theory and Practice with Organizations OR 5382 Multicultural Macro Practice with Communities	3	
SOWK 5313*	Research Project	3	
SOWK 5316*	Culturally Grounded Social Work Practice (<i>may waive with earned A grade</i>)	3	
SOWK 5346*	Advanced Practicum II (linked to internship)	3	12 or
SOWK 5332	Theory and Practice with Families	3	15

Total 30 hours

MSW Advanced Standing Program

The Advanced Standing Program consists of 30 credit hours. Admitted students begin their coursework in the program's concentration year. It is assumed that the coursework required to obtain the BSW degree from an accredited baccalaureate social work program is equivalent to the Foundation coursework contained within the first year of the MSW program. We also recognize that graduate-level work is more rigorous, which is why we have set standards for admission to the Advanced Standing program at a much higher level. To be eligible, students must have a minimum 3.5 GPA in social work level courses. This assumes that they are more likely to be successful at entering a graduate level program later in the process. In addition, Advanced Standing applicants are required to demonstrate proficiency in the competency assessment and must successfully complete a skills-based interview/simulation with a Standardized Client and essay.

Electives

Electives are designed to increase the students' depth of knowledge and skills in working with specific populations or significant social issues in the border region that are of particular interest to the student. Readings, assignments and exercises draw heavily on border-specific content and evidence-based literature. Students can choose from a variety of electives both within the program and across the University. The Table below shows the electives that are currently recommended for the MSW Program. However, students are free to take graduate-level electives across the University in such programs as Chicano Studies, Women's Studies, Psychology, Sociology, Criminal Justice, Counseling, Public Health, or Rehabilitation Counseling in consultation with their academic advisor.

MSW Approved Electives

Number	Elective Course
SOWK 5320	Evaluación e Intervención en Español (Assessment and Intervention in Spanish)
SOWK 5365	Social Work in Health Care
SOWK 5367	LGBTQI
SOWK 5375	Social Work and the Aging
SOWK 5378, 5278, 5178	Independent Studies
SOWK 5379	Social Work with Military Families
SOWK 5385	Administration and Supervision
SOWK 5393	Special Issues in Social Work (e.g., Native Americans, Assessment and Intervention with Children, Injustice in the Criminal Justice System, Trauma Informed Care, Drug Use and Recovery, Motivational Interviewing, Determinants of Health, Integrated Behavioral Health).

THE PRACTICUM FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Department of Social Work, as a member of the Council of Social Work Education, will provide a Graduate Field Education Program that meets all educational and accreditation standards. The UTEP Social Work Graduate Field Education Program acknowledges the centrality of field education in social work training and its function to bridge classroom content with optimal experiential educational opportunities that permit the actualization of social work professional identity, values, cultural sensitivity, insight, and competent practice. Grounded in a set of defined curriculum competencies and practice behaviors, the Graduate Field Education Program will provide educational structures and processes that will enable students to competently practice in a borderland region in which global complexities abound and change in trans-national, social, political, economic, cultural, and linguistic terms. Please refer to the MSW Field Education Manual on the Department of Social Work website for specific policies and guidelines.

Please note: Liability insurance, which is provided through the University, is required. Additionally, a number of agencies in which we place students for practicum internships require formal criminal background checks. These agencies include but are not limited to: all State of Texas agencies, all schools and placements serving children, courts, and all hospital settings. Most of the health- or criminal justice-related agencies require drug screening. As a result, students desiring placements in these agencies may need to begin the screening procedures as much as six months before beginning the field practicum. The Coordinator of Field Education will assist the student in determining which requirements must be fulfilled for a particular agency.

MSW PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In accordance with CSWE and UTEP standards, the Department of Social Work has established a number of policies and procedures related directly to the MSW curriculum. Familiarity with this material will help students plan their course of study and navigate difficulties, should they occur. For more information about items in this section, contact the Coordinator of the MSW Program.

Student Representation

The MSW Program Committee and the Field Education Committee each have MSW student representatives who are elected by his/her classmates. Committees addressing policies affecting academic and student affairs will be encouraged to have student representation. However, any information that is discussed that deals with personal information about a student or faculty member will occur in executive session, which requires the student representative to leave the room to preserve confidentiality.

The committees for which student representation is sought include: MSW Program Committee and Field Education Committee. The Student Association of Social Workers (SASW) (see below) will provide leadership in identifying student representatives.

Student Association of Social Work (SASW)

There are several mechanisms through which students have input into policies that affect academic and student affairs and to organize around their interests. These include participation in the Student Association of Social Work (SASW), participation on departmental committees, participation in recruitment of faculty and through course-related activities designed to give students opportunities to organize on their own behalf.

The Student Association of Social Workers (SASW) has been in existence at UTEP since 1991. The SASW provides students with opportunities to become active in their profession, practice professional roles, and learn more about the profession and the community while still students. The SASW has a faculty advisor(s) who meets with members on a regular basis. The SASW also provides ongoing feedback to the Department of Social Work about policies that affect students.

The Master of Social Work Student Organization (MSWSO) was formed with the inaugural class in June 2010. In Fall 2017, MSWSO merged with SASW to become one student organization serving both undergraduate and graduate social work students. Together, the organization becomes stronger, more efficient, and above all, a better team to serve UTEP and the surrounding community. SASW serves as a voice for students seeking opportunities to organize around their interests and to participate in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs.

SASW is involved in multiple departmental, university, and community projects each year. Members may have opportunities to attend the state NASW conference, participate in donation drives that benefit local elementary schools and nonprofit agencies, provide food for needy families, and raise funds for social causes and other activities.

In the *University of Texas at El Paso Handbook of Operating Procedures*, Student Affairs, Student Organizations, at <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=30295> (Section II), are expected to meet the following responsibilities

4.3.1.7 Student organizations, through their activities and actions, are expected to always meet the following responsibilities: respect normal University operations (i.e., class schedules, movement of traffic, etc.); honor and support the rights of its members in their academic pursuits; not deny or interfere with the rights of others (this includes respecting the dignity of the human person and the full compliance with the anti-hazing requirements of the University); refrain from discrimination in membership; represent the purpose and intent of the organization accurately and ethically, be aware of and in full compliance with applicable civil laws and University policies and regulations; and display responsible and ethical actions in all exchanges on and off campus as members of the University community.

The Handbook of Operating Procedures (<http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=30295>) further spells out policies related to the recognition and governance of student organizations. These policies are summarized in the current UTEP Graduate Catalog 2015-2016. The Student Engagement and Leadership Center, referenced in this section, has policies that include required registration of student organizations with the Student Engagement and Leadership Center, and the availability of a member of the University faculty or full-time staff who advises the members of the organization. In compliance with university policy, the MSWSO maintains registration as a professional student organization, and a social work faculty advisor is appointed to be available for consultation and support.

The Faculty Advisor works with the SASW in several ways. The advisor attends some of the meetings with the SASW Board and general meetings with members to help ensure that organization activities comply with university policy, to encourage activities that are in keeping with social work philosophy, and to assist students in the development and coordination of SASW activities. Additionally, the advisor meets with the Executive Officers of the SASW Board on an as-needed basis to address leadership and planning.

The Department of Social Work encourages and supports the SASW by allowing limited class time during the academic year for such activities as orientation of new students to the SASW,

dissemination of information, orienting students about upcoming SASW activities, and in the facilitation of the election of SASW officers to the Board.

The SASW is a multi-faceted organization. Based on The Student Engagement and Leadership Center designations of university organizations, SASW could be called a special-interest organization, a professional organization, and a service organization. According to the SASW by-laws, membership is open to all social work students in good standing. All graduate student members are required to maintain a GPA of 3.0 as per university guidelines for academic standing.

Grading

Students must maintain a 3.0 or higher grade-point-average (GPA) in their major field. Credit is given in the Graduate School for grades A, B, and C. Every semester hour of C, however, must be balanced by one of A, in order to maintain the required overall GPA of 3.0. Grades of D or F are not acceptable in courses which are to be used to satisfy minimum requirements for the graduate degree in social work. **Grades of D or F in a core course will result in termination from the MSW Program.** Only upper-division and graduate-level courses taken in graduate status at the University or reserved in the senior year for graduate credit (except thesis, dissertation, etc.), are counted in the average.

In some courses the standard grading system is not practical; such as in field education. Grades which fall in this category include “I” (incomplete), “IP” (in progress), “W” (withdrawal), and “S” or “U” (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory for Pass/Fail courses). A grade of Incomplete can be awarded, but only at the discretion of the instructor and if the student is in good standing at the time of the request for an Incomplete.

The Department of Social Work bases grading on the standards in the UTEP Graduate Catalog. Grades will be assigned as follows:

A	90 – 100%	Excellent
B	80 – 89%	Good
C	70 – 79%	Average
D	60 – 69%	Below Average
F	Below 60%	Failure

For more information on University grading policies, please refer to the UTEP Graduate Catalog.

Course Syllabi

Stated in Section III, Chapter 4 (Miscellaneous Faculty Duties), of the Handbook of Operating Procedures (<http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=30381>), all course syllabi at UTEP must include “...an indication of how the final grade in the course will be determined” (4.8.3). For all MSW syllabi, instructors are expected to provide specific grading criteria for the course as a whole as well as for specific class assignments and activities. All course syllabi are posted on the website prior to student’s beginning their coursework to achieve maximum transparency.

Grade Appeals

This information is found in Section III, Chapter 4, 4.15 and 4.19 of the Handbook of Operating Procedures (<http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=30381>) and covers both informal and formal procedures a student may follow to request review of a grade.

Students should first attempt to resolve the question informally through consultation with the faculty member who assigned the grade. Students may informally request a review and reevaluation of a grade no later than one year after their official grade has been released to the student, or within three months following the semester in which the degree was awarded. As

defined in section 4.19 (<http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=30381>), formal grade appeals must be initiated in writing as soon as possible after receipt of the grade, but not later than one year after the semester in which the course in question was taken. A graduating student must request a grade change within three months after the last day of final examination in their last semester. Grade changes must be approved by the faculty of record, the Department Chair and the College Dean.

Termination of Student's Enrollment in MSW Program

Students may be dismissed or terminated from the MSW program for reasons of academic performance and professional conduct. As described in AS 3.2.7, students are informed of academic expectations through multiple sources. If a student is on academic probation and fails to meet the requirement of a 3.0 cumulative GPA within the requisite time, the student may be placed on suspension for one full semester. In order to be reinstated, the student must submit to the Coordinator of the MSW Program and the Dean of the Graduate School a written appeal to be reinstated. The appeal must include a plan of action, including a description of what interventions will be taken by the Faculty Advisor and the student to ensure academic success. If approved by the Coordinator of the MSW Program, the appeal for reinstatement is forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School who has the ultimate authority to reinstate a dismissed student. If reinstated, the student has one semester to bring their cumulative GPA up to a 3.0 or face termination from the Graduate School and the MSW program.

Given the Department's commitment to student success, faculty are involved in resolving concerns over academic performance in a timely, fair and ethical manner through due process in order to assure that students are afforded every opportunity to demonstrate success in coursework and the field.

The following procedures outline the process for the retention and dismissal of MSW students for academic reasons. These procedures do not govern alleged violations of the *UTEP Student Code of Conduct*, which is administered by the UTEP Office of the Dean of Student Affairs.

- 1) If a faculty member has concerns about a student's academic performance on an assignment, learning endeavor, field education assignment, paper, performance or other academic activity, the instructor will raise the issue directly with the student to find solutions whereby the student can complete the assigned work or activity.
- 2) If a faculty member has concerns about a pattern of academic performance that raises concerns about the potential for that student to complete the class or course, the faculty member will also inform the student's academic advisor. The advisor may meet with the student to provide assistance and support to the student.
- 3) If a student's pattern of academic performance is of concern to the advisor or instructor, the MSW Committee will meet to discuss and develop recommendations to resolve the pattern of academic performance. The student will be given the opportunity to present her/his case as part of the meeting. If a student's major GPA falls below the minimum for two semesters, the student may be dismissed from the program for academic reasons.
- 4) A student admitted into a graduate program and whose cumulative grade point average drops below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation (by the Graduate School). The student must return the cumulative grade point average to a 3.0 by the next nine (9) hours of study. Failure to meet the 3.0 grade point average requirement during the probationary period will result in dismissal from the Graduate School (Source: UTEP Graduate Catalog, 2015).

- 5) A dismissed student will remain on suspension for one full semester before appealing for reinstatement. Appeals for reinstatement are submitted by the respective Graduate Studies Program Committee to the Dean of the Graduate School. Only the Dean of the Graduate School can approve reinstatement of dismissed students (Source: UTEP Graduate Catalog, 2016).
- 6) Appeals must include a plan of action describing intervention to ensure student success. If readmitted, the student must raise the cumulative grade point average to a 3.0 by the end of the first semester of reinstatement or face permanent dismissal from the Graduate School (Source: UTEP Graduate Catalog, 2016).
- 7) Prior to the implementation of any remedial action or student dismissal, the student will be invited to meet with the MSW committee to discuss the student's situation, options, and any extenuating circumstances that may affect the committee's decision. Should the student not meet with the MSW committee then the MSW committee will make a determination.
- 8) The MSW committee will make its decision on recommended action to the Department Chair.
- 9) The Chair's decision and recommendation will go to the Dean of Health Sciences. The Dean will make a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School for final determination.

Professional Conduct: Beginning with students' initial orientation to the MSW program, and continuing in course work, students are taught professional social work behavior, ethics and values. The link between professional ethics and values and professional conduct is stressed and compliance with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics is mandatory throughout social work student's academic career. During orientation and initial advising, all students receive the Student Manual in which the link to the NASW Code of Ethics is provided. Students also sign a document indicating their commitment to comply with the NASW Code of Ethics. In many classes, students receive copies of the Code of Ethics or are provided an electronic link to the document. They are informed of the importance of adherence to social work values and maintaining professional conduct. This is intended to serve as a guide for all social work students as to the expectations of everyday professional conduct of social workers. While the Department recognizes that each student brings his/her own personal values; however, social work ethics is one of the CSWE competencies that students are expected to master while in the social work program. Therefore, students will be expected to demonstrate in field and classroom settings their understanding and demonstration of social work values.

The field practicum is an important opportunity for examination of student's commitment to social work professional conduct, ethics and values. At the beginning of the first semester of practicum, all field practicum social work students must attend an Ethics and Professional Conduct Seminar, along with their social work faculty field liaisons. During this seminar, the importance of adhering to the Six Core Ethical Principles of the Code of Ethics is stressed. Students are expected to consistently demonstrate understanding and application of professional conduct, ethics and values in their interactions with faculty, peers, and field agency clients. This is monitored and evaluated within the classroom through assignments and activities.

University Policies Regarding Student Conduct and Discipline: In addition to the NASW Code of Ethics, the Department of Social Work adheres to the UTEP Student Code of Conduct. The Handbook of Operating Procedures (<http://admin.utep.edu/hoop>) has clearly stated standards of student conduct. These are discussed in detail in Section II (Student Affairs) in Chapter One, 1.3 entitled “Student Conduct and Discipline.” This chapter describes in detail the processes for investigating, hearing, and disciplining a student based on violations of the Student Code of Conduct. Violations of student conduct that may result in disciplinary action include academic dishonesty; violation of federal, state or local laws; possession or use on campus of controlled substances or firearms; hazing, and so forth. Disciplinary actions are also described and may include permanent expulsion of a student from the University. These standards are also summarized in the UTEP Graduate Catalog for 2016-2017, in the section on Student Life, Student Conduct (<http://catalog.utep.edu/grad/student-life-policies-and-procedures/#StudentConduct>) and at the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (<http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/>).

Academic Advising

Mission: Academic Advising engages students in identifying and pursuing their educational, career, and life goals through personalized learning experiences. We support students in developing collaborative relationships that foster student success. Advisors work to strengthen the importance, dignity, potential, and unique nature of each individual served within the academic setting. Students must meet with their advisor each semester. There is an “Advisor Hold” that prevents a student from registering until they have met with their advisor, and the advisor approved his/her moving forward in the registration process. The relationship between advisor and advisee should support the following learning outcomes for the student:

Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate the characteristics of a prepared advisee, by bringing list of current classes, and questions.
- Demonstrate decision making skills by gathering information, assessing alternatives and examining consequences.
- Discuss challenges faced by assessing what caused them, what can be done to resolve them, and how to avoid them in the future.
- Create and document short-term and long-term goals after reflecting on values, interests, strengths, and challenges.
- Understand the relationship between classroom experiences and academic, career, and personal goals.

The design of the responsibilities below is to help ensure a successful graduate career. Academic advising is a learning process supported by a relationship of mutual respect and collaboration between advisor and advisee.

Advisor Responsibilities:

- Meet with the advisee every semester to review his/her degree plan and approve the student’s moving forward with registration.
- Create an environment where mutual respect and trust allows students to define and develop realistic goals.
- Assist graduate students in gaining decision making skills and in assuming responsibility for their educational plans and achievements.
- Assist graduate students in understanding the purpose and goals of Social Work education and competencies and its effect on their lives and personal goals.

- Understand and effectively communicate the MSW Curriculum, academic policies and procedures.
- Guide students in identifying and pursuing resources throughout campus.
- Maintain confidentiality following UTEP policies.

Advisee Responsibilities:

- Be involved in the advising process by being prepared to discuss your goals and educational plans during meetings: bring necessary materials.
- Review your degree plan each term and track your progress toward completing your graduation requirements.
- Take primary and increasing responsibility for your educational plans and achievements.
- Be open and willing to consider recommendations from faculty, advisors, and other mentors.
- Schedule and attend appointments with your advisor each term.

Ultimately the college experience you build is your responsibility. Your advisor will assist you by providing information and resources, but you are responsible for planning your individual program and for meeting academic requirements and deadlines.

Assignment of Advisors

When students are admitted to the program, they are assigned an academic advisor. Initially, students are assigned an advisor randomly. At Student Orientation, students are informed that they may change academic advisors at any time or they may choose to stay with their original advisor throughout their academic program. Any change of advisors must be signed off by both the old and new advisor. Advisors are expected to meet with their advisees at least once a semester.

The hours available to advisees are posted on the faculty member's office door. According to the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures, Academic Affairs, Academic Policies and Faculty Personal Matters, at <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=30381> Section 4.8.2: Academic Policies and Faculty Personnel Matters.

In addition to scheduled office hours, advisees can schedule individual appointments to meet with their advisors. Advisors are also available by phone and email to answer questions or address concerns of their advisees.

Advisors are also responsible for monitoring the progress of their advisee's academic performance. No later than midterm of a semester and again at the end of the semester, instructors inform the advisors if a student's performance has fallen below a "B" within the course. If the student's overall GPA or their grade in a required course has fallen below a "B", the advisor will communicate with the student and the instructor or the Coordinator of the MSW Program, if appropriate, to develop a course of action to improve the student's performance. The advisor prepares a written summary of the academic assessment and plans for improvement. A copy of this document is given to the student, the coordinator, and the original is placed in the student's file. The student's performance will be reviewed again at the end of the semester.

Academic Probation

If an advisor is notified of a student's poor performance at the end of the semester, the advisor will review the transcript to determine the student's overall performance for the semester and the cumulative GPA to determine if a student has fallen below the 3.0 GPA required of graduate students. If the student's overall GPA or their grade in a required course has fallen below a "B", the advisor will follow the same procedure described in the previous section; however, the procedure for academic probation would be initiated. The student's performance will be reviewed again at the end of the next semester. If a student receives less than a "C" in a MSW core course, the student could be terminated from the program. The student will meet with the MSW faculty to review their academic performance and a recommendation will be made as to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from the program (see "Termination of Student's Enrollment in MSW Program" on page 20). If the student's overall GPA falls below a 3.0 (B) average, the student will be placed on academic probation.

PROGRAM AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Residency Requirement

The minimum requirement for any degree is two semesters or the equivalent, which need not be consecutive. A graduate student may register for certain courses without being in residence at the University. These include on-line courses, conference courses (with permission of the instructor), thesis, and dissertation courses.

Completion of the MSW Program – Time Limits

All requirements for a master's degree must be completed within one six-year period, including any transfer work or work completed prior to admission to the program. Work over six years old is lost and can be reinstated only by special permission of the Dean of the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the committee on graduate studies.

Degree Completion Planning

The plan established in the UTEP Catalog at the time of the student's initial enrollment is designed to guide degree completion and identify each semester's courses. The plan adopted by the student at the time of enrollment (i.e. full-time or part-time), will become the basis for each semester's course schedule.

Degree Application Procedures

Graduate degree candidates must submit an Application for Graduate Degree the semester they expect to graduate and by the deadline stated in the Class Schedule. The application is completed by the candidate and approved by the graduate advisor and respective college dean. The candidate must submit the application to the Graduate School before the deadline to allow a complete review of the academic record. Graduate degree candidates will receive email notification from the Graduate School upon approval of the application. The Application for Graduate Degree is only valid for one semester. If the student does not graduate on the date specified in the application, the student must reapply for graduation. Please visit the Graduate Catalog for updated information, forms and requirements (<http://catalog.utep.edu/grad/the-graduate-school/general-degree-requirements/#GraduationRequirements>).

Establishing Candidacy for Graduation

A degree candidate must submit a completed application for graduation before the deadlines listed in the *Class Schedule*. Students should check the Graduate School web page (<http://www.utep.edu/graduate/>) to obtain the form and other graduation information. The candidate for graduation is responsible for satisfying any conditions attached to the candidacy for graduation, such as the transfer of course credits.

Commencement

Master's degrees are awarded by the University at the end of the fall and spring semesters in formal commencement exercises. Each graduate is individually recognized and "hooded" with the master's cape. Graduates, their families and their friends are invited to attend the College of Health Sciences and the University ceremonies. Information on ordering the academic regalia worn by the candidate at the ceremony can be ordered through the University Bookstore prior to the commencement exercise for which the candidate is approved.

Students must have completed all requirements prior to participation in the commencement activities. Students completing their degree during the summer semester would participate in the December graduation ceremony; however, they may choose to participate in the preceding May graduation by indicating this choice on the graduation application. Any other exceptions must be approved in advance by the Department of Social Work and the Graduate School. Exceptions will be evaluated on an individual basis with consideration to compelling cause why the student should participate in the scheduled commencement activities.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Questions about Student Rights and Responsibilities not addressed in this section should be brought to the attention of the Coordinator of the MSW Program. The Department of Social Work affirms its intent to promote and protect student rights and to enforce student responsibilities as part of preparation for successful professional practice in social work.

MSW students have the right to organize, and they are strongly encouraged to exercise this right by joining established student caucuses or creating new ones. The Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) addresses student rights and articulates many of the elements required of MSW programs by CSWE. A complete statement of standards and interpretive guidelines can be found at <http://www.cswe.org>.

Services for Students with Disabilities

The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) provides a program of support and advocacy for students with physical and mental health-related disabilities. CASS also assists students who become temporarily disabled due to an injury, recent surgery, and for women with "at-risk" pregnancies. Reasonable accommodations are provided that are appropriate for the student's disability and course work demands, based on the disability documentation that they provide. CASS also offers services in several key areas including assistive technology, classroom accommodations, exam accommodations and training on issues associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Access to assistive technology is available in several locations throughout the University; the two primary sites are the CASS offices and the Assistive Technology Lab (ATL), which is located on the 3rd floor of the library; it is also available at the various computer labs on campus. Finally, Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) can be checked out that enable private communication with enhanced volume for students with limited hearing.

Classroom accommodations include note-taker services for lectures, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter services, reader/scribe services, use of tape recorders, and extended time for in-class work, adaptive furniture and preferential seating arrangements in classrooms. Exam accommodations include reader/scribe services, use of a calculator, extended time, a quiet test location, alternative exam formats (such as online tests or oral exams, in lieu of a written exam), use of a word processor with spell-check, and use of assistive technology.

Students are also given priority registration so they will be able to select classes close to reserved parking, near building entrances, and to avoid inaccessible classrooms. Accommodation is also provided when needed for campus housing, the student recreation center and during practicums and internships. Students are informed of these services during the MSW student orientation.

Academic Integrity

The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In all matters of intellectual pursuit, UTEP faculty and students must strive to achieve excellence based on the quality of work produced by the individual. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of scholastic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and jeopardizes the quality of the degree awarded to all graduates of UTEP. It is imperative, therefore, that the members of the academic community understand the regulations pertaining to academic integrity and that all faculty insist on adherence to these standards.

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the *Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOOP)* in the section entitled "Student Conduct and Discipline" (<http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=73922>) and available in the Office of the Dean of Students and the homepage of The Dean of Students at www.utep.edu/dos, As stated in the HOOP,

1.2.2 Prohibited Conduct

1.2.2.1 Scholastic Dishonesty

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

Any student found to have committed scholastic dishonesty may result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to failing a grade on the work in question, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension, or dismissal, among others.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense. It has been called “intellectual theft” because it involves taking the ideas and/or words of another and using them as if they were your own. Some plagiarism may be accidental, but most is deliberate. In writing a research paper, students must be prepared to document everything they obtain from outside sources. If they fail to do this, they may be charged with plagiarism. A good rule of thumb to follow in writing a paper is “if in doubt, document.”

When the exact words of another are used, whether these words are spoken or written in print or available in electronic form, they must be enclosed in quotation marks, with the source cited. When summarizing and paraphrasing, quotation marks are not used; however, acknowledgment of the source through formal citation is required. Instructions on how to cite various kinds of sources can be found in the most recent publication of the style manual of the American Psychological Association or online at <http://www.apastyle.org/>.

Issues of Student Conduct

Social Work professionals have the responsibility of serving oppressed and disadvantaged groups of people. In order to provide quality professional education and to ensure that our graduates are able to function in a broad variety of professional situations, faculty, individually and as a whole accepts responsibility to review and make recommendations to students whose field or classroom behavior creates concerns regarding social work values, professional skills, self-management, professional behavior and scholastic performance. Students meeting the criteria for scholastic achievement is necessary, but not sufficient alone, to ensure a student’s continued enrollment in the MSW program and, ultimately, to enter a career in social work practice. Exhibiting one or more of these behaviors may result in a review by the faculty (see “Termination of Student’s Enrollment in MSW Program” on page 20 of this document) and a requirement for resolution to continue enrollment or possible dismissal from the school. Examples of behaviors that threaten a student’s ability to engage in productive social work practice include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Failure to meet or maintain academic requirements for any course;
- Academic dishonesty, including cheating, lying, plagiarism, collusion or falsifying academic records;
- Behavior in violation of the current NASW Code of Ethics;
- Any threat or attempt to harm oneself or someone else;
- Commission of a criminal act that is contrary to professional practice or ethics, occurring during the course of study or occurring prior to admission to the Department of Social Work and becoming known after admission;
- Consistent pattern of unprofessional behavior; and
- Failure to meet any of the standards defined by the Department of Social Work in this manual.

Faculty Review of Student Conduct

Faculty and field instructors concerned about a student’s behavior will address concerns about student conduct with the student on an informal basis. If the concern of the faculty member is not satisfied or if the student requests additional action, a more formal process will be implemented within the MSW Program (see “Termination of Student’s Enrollment in MSW Program” on page 20) or be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

When a faculty member has concerns about a student enrolled in the social work program meeting any academic criteria, whether related to professional behavior or scholastic performance, the faculty member will discuss the concern directly with the student and develop a plan with the student to resolve the difficulties. The faculty member will maintain sufficient personal notes to document student/faculty attention to the concern and its resolution. Concerns resolved through this process will not be reflected in the student's file.

Review of Student Conduct

A faculty member shall report student misconduct (not related to academic performance) to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. A review of student conduct will be evaluated drawing on evidence and testimony provided to this office. Upon receipt of the faculty statements, Director for Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (or designee) will schedule a meeting with the student to review the concern.

Based on the administrative review and the nature of the concern, the Director for Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (or designee) will inform the student and the professor of the decision, which can include one or more of the following actions:

- *Continue the student in the program with no new conditions.*
In these situations, the concern has been addressed and no further action by the student or program is required.
- *Continue the student in the program without condition, but with the following options:*
 - oral or written disciplinary warning or reprimand, without filing a formal report in the student's record;
 - noting of misconduct and actions taken as part of administrative review in student's record;
 - administration of other sanctions consistent with University policies designed to prevent and/or avoid the recurrence of the prohibited conduct, with filing of a formal report in the student's record.
- *Establish formal conditions for the student's continuance in the program.* In these situations, the Director for Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (or designee) will work with the Coordinator of the MSW Program. Specific conditions will be set for the student to remain in the program. Action may include establishing goals, a plan, a timeline and appropriate monitoring; providing mentoring and support; placing the student on probation and monitoring the student during the probationary period; referring the student to counseling and/or advising services; allowing the student to follow a reduced course load or delay entry to the field practicum; requiring the student to withdraw from the program with the option of reapplying; or completion of one-year suspension from the program. Student failure to meet the conditions may result in dismissal from the MSW program and the Graduate School.
- *Discontinue student from the program.* The Department of Social Work Chair will notify the Graduate Office of the decision to discontinue the student from the MSW program. Dismissal will be completed through University policies and procedures.

Students may appeal decisions of the school. Please see the Graduate Catalog for policies, procedures, and the appeals process as indicated in the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedure (see "*Student Conduct and Discipline*" (<http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=73922>)).

Student Information

According to the 1974 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), revised November 21, 1996, all materials accumulated in the school on each student must be filed in the student's folder. This includes all admissions materials, student field evaluations, copies of all external correspondence and pertinent intra-school correspondence. These files are kept in locked offices and file cabinets to protect students' confidentiality.

Student Review of Information

Students wishing to see their Social Work Department file should request access to their records through the Department office. The Coordinator of the MSW Program or an authorized representative will pull the file and set a time and date for student review. By law, the folder must be made available within 45 days following the request. Any reference letters that have been waived for student review and other items that are exempted under FERPA standards will be separated from the file prior to student review and returned after the review. The student will review the file within the office area. If the student wishes to obtain copies of any parts of the file (excluding letters of recommendation), the Department's Administrative Assistant can reproduce the documents at the student's expense. Upon returning the file, the student should submit and sign a statement that the request had been honored and that the file has been reviewed and returned.

Permanent File

The student's transcript and student information (that may show demographic data such as age, work experience, undergraduate education, field placements and last known address) will be retained in the Department's permanent files. Graduates wishing to review their file should make a written request to the Coordinator of the MSW Program.

Grades of Incomplete or In Progress

Assignment of the grade I (incomplete) is made only in exceptional circumstances and requires the instructor to file with the Director of Graduate Student Services an outline of the work to be completed and the time span (in no case longer than one calendar year) allowable for the work's completion. In no case may repetition of the course be assigned as work to be completed. If the incomplete is in a course that is sequenced, the student cannot begin the next course in the sequence until the incomplete is removed. If the work has not been completed at the end of the specified time, the "I" will be changed to an "F." Students will not be cleared for graduation until all incompletes have been eliminated from their record. The grade of "P" (in progress) is limited to specific courses in which re-enrollment is required. Please visit <http://academics.utep.edu/graduate> for updates.

Academic Ineligibility

The MSW program is governed by the conditions for academic ineligibility established in the Graduate School catalogue. A student admitted into a graduate program whose cumulative grade point average drops below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation and must return his or her grade point average to at least 3.0 by the completion of the next nine semester hours of work. Failure to meet the 3.0 grade point average requirement during the probationary period may result in the student's dismissal from the Graduate School. A student who has been dismissed may be readmitted for further graduate study in the same or in a different program only upon the recommendation of the relevant graduate studies committee and the approval of the Director of Graduate Student Services.

Reinstatement Following Academic Ineligibility

Within University policy, students designated as ineligible may be reinstated from suspension. To attain reinstatement, students should petition the Coordinator of the MSW Program in writing. The Coordinator will review the student petition and may specify additional content to be included in the petition before formal review is conducted by the Department of Social Work and the Graduate School. When all requested petition information has been received, the Coordinator of the MSW Program will review the petition with the Chair of the Department of Social Work and may request that the Chair refer additional reviews by the MSW Program Committee. Following formal review and recommendation, the Chair of the Department of Social Work and the Coordinator of the MSW Program will inform the student in writing of the decision and forward the petition to the Graduate School with a letter either endorsing or declining to endorse the student's request. Reinstatement from suspension, if granted, may be either a full reinstatement or a probationary reinstatement with provisions under which the probation will be lifted.

Class and Required Activity Attendance

Any MSW student who does not enroll in classes in accordance with their approved degree plan and without having requested and secured an approved leave of absence shall be dismissed from the MSW program. Attendance policies are set at the discretion of the instructor for each course and included in the course syllabus. According to the Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.utep.edu/grad/academic-regulations/curriculum-and-classroom-policies/>), "Students are expected to attend all classes and laboratory sessions. It is the responsibility of the student to inform each instructor of extended absences. When, however, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may administratively drop the student from the class with a grade of W or F. Please visit the website listed in this section for information on "University Recognized Activities" and "Absence for Religious Holy Days."

Withdrawing from a Course or from the University

There are several conditions under which a student may withdraw from a course or from the University. Please visit the Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.utep.edu/grad/academic-regulations/registration-and-records/>), Dropping Courses and Complete Withdrawals for descriptions and requirements. Students can drop individual courses or completely withdraw from the University as described in this section of the Graduate Catalog. Students must refer to the online Academic Calendar (<http://academics.utep.edu/>) or to the online *Class Schedule* to identify the dates in which students may add, drop, or withdraw from a course; information is also available on pass/fail registration changes.

Requesting a Leave of Absence (Complete Withdrawal of all courses)

Please visit the Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.utep.edu/grad/academic-regulations/registration-and-records/>), Dropping Courses and Complete Withdrawals) for information on how to request a leave of absence. This section of the catalog also lists the various reasons for requesting a Leave of Absence.

For a Leave of Absence, the student must meet with the MSW Coordinator to request a Personal Leave or a Medical Leave of Absence. All requests for leave must be in writing, either in memo or email format. If requesting a medical leave, the request must be accompanied by a health care provider note; the note only needs to verify that the request for a leave is medically necessary and include the anticipated length of the need. The student will require a health provider note verifying the student's ability to return to classes. These documents should be filed in the student's folder and copies sent to The Graduate School.

Withdrawing from the University

Official withdrawal from the University is required if a student wishes to withdraw from all courses after a semester begins. Students who withdraw from the University or from their last course before graduation are required to complete a Withdrawal from the University form in the Graduate School office (see Graduate School Catalog).

To initiate academic withdrawal, the student should meet with his or her faculty advisor and then contact the Coordinator of the MSW Program who must approve the withdrawal. To proceed with withdrawal, a student should obtain a withdrawal form from the Graduate School and complete the steps as indicated on the form. Withdrawing students must obtain clearance signatures from course instructors and University offices as determined by the Chair of the Department of Social Work and the Dean of the Graduate School. Students in field placement must consult with their field advisors and the Director of Field Education. Students must surrender all university issued cards and passes when officially withdrawing in any semester or summer session.

When the steps for requesting withdrawal are completed, the formal request is submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School with the recommendation of the Chair of the Department of Social Work. Failure to register for a semester (even if the student is involved in a field placement) constitutes a complete withdrawal from the University. An official withdrawal must be properly executed for a registered student who has attended as much as one class meeting and for a student who voluntarily withdraws in response to discussions with any office of the University relative to academic performance, personal conduct, personal hardship or other matter.

An official withdrawal constitutes an honorable dismissal from the University and may aid in readmission. Failure to withdraw officially may result in the assignment of a course grade of "Incomplete", which computes as an F grade after one year in calculation of grade point average and determination of future academic eligibility. A graduate student who withdraws during any semester, takes a leave of absence, fails to register for a semester or has been suspended by the University must contact the Graduate School in order to initiate steps to continue work toward a graduate degree. The Graduate School will provide information on the process of applying for readmission, including deadlines for the completion of the application for readmission. The student should also contact the Coordinator of the MSW Program to discuss the intent to apply for readmission and to establish any steps, including deadlines, the School of Social Work may require within the Graduate School readmission process. The student must be aware that applying for readmission does not guarantee that readmission will be granted.

Termination from the University

Students in the MSW program must maintain the standards established by the Department of Social Work and the Graduate School. Failure to meet these standards may result in action by the Department of Social Work to initiate termination from the program and the University. Termination can occur at any time, including the final semester before graduation.

The Chair of the Social Work Department makes a recommendation to the Graduate School for termination, with a recommendation by graduate faculty who have reviewed the student's performance. In considering a recommendation for termination, many aspects of performance are reviewed, including academic problems, professional conduct and suitability for the profession. Criteria considered in a recommendation for termination include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A grade of D or F on any core course, including a field practicum.
- GPA falling below 3.0 for more than one semester.
- Failure to complete requirements for the MSW degree within the six-year time limit established by the Graduate School for all graduate degree programs.
- Report from faculty and/or students of violation of field or classroom concerns regarding social work values and ethics, professional skills, self-management, professional behavior and overall scholastic performance based upon the UTEP Code of Student Conduct, the NASW Code of Ethics and adjudication by the Office of Student conduct and Conflict Resolution.

A recommendation for termination may be initiated outside of the Department of Social Work and include, but not be limited to, violations of the University Student Conduct Code and/or failure to pay tuition or fees assessed by any authorized University entity, including fines imposed for parking or traffic violations.

Readmission after Termination

Requests for readmission after termination are considered the same as an initial application for admission to the Graduate School and the Social Work Department. The decision to grant readmission will be based on the same criteria as those for all first time applicants.

The University of Texas at El Paso Statement on Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment

The University of Texas at El Paso is committed to an academic and employment environment free from inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature. "Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities operated by recipients of Federal financial assistance."

<http://catalog.utep.edu/undergrad/academic-regulations/student-life-policies-and-procedures/#TitleIX>.

Sexual misconduct and sexual harassment are unprofessional behaviors. In addition, sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination and is illegal. The University will take prompt disciplinary action against individuals who are found to have engaged in sexual misconduct and/or sexual harassment against employees and/or students. Sexual misconduct includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favor, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment has been defined by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Texas Commission on Human Rights, is interpreted by state and federal courts in the following manner. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. The submission by an employee or student to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or scholastic achievement.
2. The submission to or rejection of such conduct by an employee or student is used as a basis for employment or scholastic decision affecting that individual.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or scholastic environment.

Title IX violations should be made to the Ms. Sandy Vasquez, Title IX Coordinator located at the Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EO/AA) Office, Kelly Hall, Room 302. To the extent legally

possible, complaints will remain confidential, and information will be provided only to those persons who must know in order to achieve a timely resolution of the complaint. Harassment and retaliation against an individual filing discrimination charges is illegal and will not be tolerated. A copy of the complaint procedure is available at the EO/AA Office.

University Policy of Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability

The University of Texas at El Paso does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. The EO/AA Officer/ADA Coordinator has been designated to coordinate compliance with the non-discrimination requirements contained in section 35. 107 of the Department of Justice regulation. Information concerning the provisions of the American with Disabilities Act, and the rights provided there under, are available from the ADA Coordinator.

Criminal Background Checks and Drug Screening

The MSW Program does not require criminal background checks for admission to the program or to the practicum. However, a number of agencies in which we place students in internships require formal criminal background checks. These agencies include all State of Texas agencies, all schools, programs serving children, court system and all health care settings. In addition, most of the agencies related to health and criminal justice require drug screening.

In Texas, social work professional practice is regulated by the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners. A formal criminal background check is required to sit for the exam. It is also required that currently licensed social workers report any new arrests or convictions. Social workers who are employed by state agencies in Texas must pass a criminal background check as a condition of employment. This is also true for federal agencies such as the Veteran's Administration, as well as many of the practice settings, especially those working with children.

Safety Issues

Students should refer to University of Texas Regents Rules and Regulations (<https://www.utsystem.edu/board-of-regents/policy-library/policies/uts174-environmental-health-and-safety>), and the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures for general, University-wide safety policies and procedures. During field practicum social work students are expected to learn and follow all safety policies and standards at their particular agencies, including at minimum:

- Students should not drive clients in their private vehicles.
- Students should report any accident or mishap experience in field practicum to the Coordinator of Field Education.
- Students who believe that they have been the target of sexual harassment should follow the UTEP and/or field agency guidelines for reporting, as described above.

Confidentiality Policy

Below are the guidelines pertaining to confidentiality, with consideration given to the NASW Code of Ethics.

Regarding Clients

Under no circumstances are students to use clients' actual names or other identifying information in assignments, in class discussion, or in meetings with faculty or faculty field liaisons. In addition, students are to follow ethical standards and agency policies on confidentiality.

In some cases, students placed in different agencies will have a client system in common. If a signed release of information has not been given by the client for the purpose of information sharing, the student is responsible for guarding such information and not disclosing specific characteristics that might allow another student to identify their mutual client.

Regarding the Agency

Agency practices will be discussed for the purpose of learning. If discussing questionable practices of an agency colleague, a student will protect the identity of that individual. In discussions of any problematic agency politics, practices, or policies, all students will maintain confidentiality and will not divulge the topics or substance of these discussions outside the classroom, including in the field practicum agency and in conversations with colleagues or field instructors.

If students observe practices that may constitute unethical or unprofessional behavior, they should discuss their observations and analysis with their field instructor/supervisor.

Regarding Colleagues

Students will not discuss, in their agency or in the community, information about classmates that relates to their professional roles or their contributions to class discussions.

STUDENT ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In addition to formal classroom and field experiences, students at the UTEP Department of Social Work are encouraged to work on their professional development in the following ways:

1. Students are encouraged, but not required, to join the National Association of Social Workers. See their website for additional information on the association and becoming a member: www.socialworkers.org or www.naswtx.org or the state chapter. Special student rates are available.
2. Students are encouraged to participate in the Social Work Department's Student Association of Social Workers (SASW).
3. Students should stay current with social work issues and related research. The UTEP Library subscribes to many professional social work journals, many of which are available on-line.



COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT FORM FOR ADVANCED STANDING

To be completed by the senior year BSW Field Instructor or a MSW Clinical Supervisor in the social service agency where the applicant is employed and attach it to the MSW Applicant Reference Form.

Please rate the applicant’s achievement of the foundation competencies as defined by the Council of Social Work Education. Please circle the number that corresponds to your rating for each of the 10 competencies, using the following scale:

- 0 = not assigned/did not observe
- 1 = did not meet the expected performance
- 2 = marginally met the expected performance
- 3 = met the expected performance
- 4 = exceeded the expected performance

For any competency where an assessment of 1 or 2 was assigned, the field instructor or supervisor must explain why this assessment was given and what is needed to improve their performance.

Applicant name: _____

COMPETENCY	DEFINITION OF COMPETENCY	BEHAVIORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE COMPETENCY	RATING				
			0	1	2	3	4
EPAS 2.1.1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behaviors	Making ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, model for ethical decision-making <i>ethical conduct of research</i> , and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context; use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situation; <i>demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication</i> ; use technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context. • Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations. • Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; 					

	ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.	appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes. • Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior. 					
EPAS 2.1.2: Engage diversity and difference in practice	Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice <i>at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels</i> ; present as learners and engage <i>clients and constituencies</i> as experts of their own experience; and apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse <i>clients and constituencies</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo and macro levels. • Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences. • Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies. 					
EPAS 2.1.3: Advance Human rights and social, Economic, & Environmental Justice	Apply understanding of social, economic, and <i>environmental</i> justice to advocate for human rights <i>at the individual and systems level</i> ; engage in practices that advance social, economic, and <i>environmental</i> justice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply their understanding of social, economic and environmental justice to advance for human rights at the individual and systems levels. • Engage in practices that advance social, economic and environmental justice. 					
EPAS 2.1.4: Engage in Practice-informed Research & Research-informed Practice	Use practice experience <i>and theory</i> to inform scientific inquiry and research; apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research finding; use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research. • Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of qualitative and quantitative research methods and research findings. • Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy and service delivery. 					
EPAS 2.1.5: Engage in Policy Practice	Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services; assess how social welfare and economic policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify social policy at the local, state and federal level that impact well-being, service delivery and access to social services. • Assess how social welfare and economic policies 					

	impact the delivery of and access to social services.	<p>impact the delivery of and access to social services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice. 				
EPAS 2.1.6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities	Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies. • Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies. 				
EPAS 2.17: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities	Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies; apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies; develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies. • Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies. • Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs and challenges within clients and constituencies. • Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge and values and preferences of clients and constituencies. 				
EPAS 2.1.8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities	Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies; apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies; use inter-professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies. • Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies. 				

	collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes; negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes. • Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies. • Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals. 					
EPAS 2.1.9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities	Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes; apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes; critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes. • Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes. • Critically analyze, monitor and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes. • Apply evaluation finding to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo and macro levels. 					

Reviewer (name/signature): _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

UTEP MSW DEGREE PLAN

*Conditional Admission: ___Stat___Biology
 Other_____.

Student Name: _____ Degree Plan: AS FT PT

ID: _____ Scholarship type: _____

Course #	FOUNDATION COURSES	Credits	Semester/Yr (Waive/ Transfer)	Grade	Comments
SOWK 5300	The Social Work Profession ¹	3			
SOWK 5331	Theory and Practice with Individuals (<i>No Waiver</i>) ²	3			
SOWK 5332	Theory and Practice with Families	3			
SOWK 5333	Theory and Practice with Groups ³	3			
SOWK 5357	Social Policy I	3			
SOWK 5360	Social Policy II	3			
SOWK 5370	Research I (<i>No Waiver</i>)	3			
SOWK 5335	Foundation Practicum I	3			
SOWK 5336	Foundation Practicum II	3			

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Course #	CONCENTRATION COURSES	Credits	Semester/Yr (Waive/ Transfer)	Grade	Comments
SOWK 5380	Social Work in the Border Region ¹	3			
SOWK 5315	Clinical Assessment ²	3			
SOWK 5316	Culturally Grounded SOWK Practice ³	3			
SOWK 5383	Theory/Practice with Organizations ⁴	3			
SOWK 5382	Multicultural Practice with Communities	3			
SOWK 5313	Research Project	3			
SOWK 5345	Advanced Practicum I	3			
SOWK 5346	Advanced Practicum II	3			
SOWK#	Elective (Title)	3			
SOWK#	Elective(Title)	3			
SOWK#	Elective (Title)	3			

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Advisor Signature

Student Signature

Date

/ /

Rosario Olivera, MSW: _____
 MSW Program Coordinator

_____/_____/_____
 Date

Revised: 8.2.2018



Advisor Signature

Student Signature

Date

Rosario Olivera, MSW: _____
MSW Program Coordinator

_____/_____/_____
Date

Revised: 8.2.2018

UTEP MSW DEGREE PLAN

*Conditional Admission: ___Stat___Biology
Other_____.

Student Name: _____ Degree Plan: AS FT PT

ID: _____ Scholarship type: _____

Course #	CONCENTRATION COURSES	Credits	Sem (Waive/ Transfer)	Grade	Comments
SOWK#	Elective Title:	3			
SOWK #	Elective Title:	3			

Notes/Observations: _____

*Conditional admission met: ___Statistics Date: ___Grade: ___
___Biology Date: ___Grade: ___

Advisor Signature

Student Signature

_____/_____/_____
Date

Rosario Olivera, MSW: _____
MSW Program Coordinator

_____/_____/_____
Date

Revised: 8.2.2018