THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

2024-2025 DSW Student Handbook

Table of Contents

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Greetings DSW Students,

Welcome to our DSW program at University of Tennessee! We congratulate you on your decision to undertake this challenging and rewarding endeavor, which will undoubtedly change your life. The faculty, staff, and administration of the College of Social Work are pleased to join with you on this journey dedicated to learning.

We will actively support your efforts to achieve the goal of becoming scholar-practitioners in our field of social work. Begin by building relationships with your cohort of fellow students and engaging with faculty, and you will have resources to draw on both now and in the future. We hope you will explore how your professional interests overlap with our faculty and build connections. This handbook is filled with helpful information to become knowledgeable about your pathway through the program. When you are looking for answers to common questions, your DSW Handbook is your best source of DSW policies and procedures, professional and academic standards, curriculum requirements, research projects, and advancement policies.

We are committed to providing you with a high-quality educational experience and dedicated to creating a collegial school environment that embraces diversity, equity and and inclusion. We pledge to support you to develop your critical thinking, advanced clinical practice and leadership skills that will result in your becoming scholar-pracitioner. We are dedicated to creating an inclusive learning community, an opportunity for rigorous inquiry, and sparking the leadership potential of our students. I look forward to getting to know you and to supporting your professional development and success.

Sincerely,

Sharon E. Bowland

Sharon Elizabeth "Lizzie" Bowland, LCSW, PhD

College of Social Work: Vision, Mission, and Values

Overview of the College of Social Work
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville is the official land-grant institution for the state. It is a comprehensive institution offering a wide variety of graduate and undergraduate programs. The UTK College of Social Work has four academic programs (BSW, MSSW, DSW and PhD) as well as a Social Work Office of Research and Public Service and a Center for Behavioral Health Research.

Vision
Thriving communities with equitable outcomes for all.

Mission
Pursuing a more socially just society through education, scholarship, and engagement.

To do this, we…
…equip professional social workers with the knowledge and skills to facilitate well-being and equity.

…conduct groundbreaking, interdisciplinary research that informs policy and practice.

…build partnerships that leverage our resources to improve lives in Tennessee and beyond.

Values
Innovation: Committing to a spirit of continual learning and creativity in education, scholarship, engagement, and administration.

Respect: Recognizing and honoring the dignity, value, and well-being of each person, in all of their identities and interests.

Empathy: Informing action with curiosity and understanding.

Inclusion: Equipping programs and decision-makers to provide equitable access to opportunities and resources.

Collaboration: Building authentic, mutually beneficial relationships that empower shared success.

Integrity: Exemplifying transparency, accuracy, and the highest standards of professional ethics.

Accountability: Holding ourselves and one other responsible for living into our shared values.

INTRODUCTION FROM THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

In order to serve the mission and vision of the Graduate School and preserve the integrity of Graduate Programs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, information related to the process of graduate education in each department is to be provided for all graduate students.

Based on Best Practices offered by the Council of Graduate Schools, it is important that detailed articulation of the information specific to the graduate degrees offered in each department/program be disseminated.

The Department Graduate Handbook does not deviate from established Graduate School Policies noted in the Graduate Catalog, but rather provides the specific ways in which those policies are carried out.

The Graduate Catalog

The Graduate Catalog represents the offerings and requirements in effect at the time of publication, but there is no guarantee that they will not be changed or revoked. The course offerings and requirements of the institution are continually under examination and revision. However, adequate and reasonable notice will be given to students affected by any change. This catalog is not intended to state contractual terms and should not be regarded as a contract between the student and the institution. The institution reserves the right to change any provision, offering, or requirement to be effective when determined by the institution. These changes will govern current and readmitted students. Enrollment of all students is subject to these conditions. The current catalog should be referred to during each year of study. The university further reserves the right to dismiss a student from the university for any cause at any time.

Student Responsibility

Graduate students must assume full responsibility for knowledge of rules and regulations of the Graduate Council and departmental requirements for the chosen degree program. Any exceptions to the policies stated in the Graduate Catalog must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. Individual colleges and departments may have requirements beyond the minimum established by the Graduate Council. A calendar of deadlines and policies and procedures for graduate programs are found on the [Gradudate School website.](#) A statement of graduate students' rights and responsibilities is included with the admission notification.

 Current information about the university can also be found at the below:

[The University of Tennessee Homepage](#)

[Hilltopics Student Handbook](#)

[The Graduate School](#)

[Graduate Admissions](#)

[Office of the University Registrar](#)

[Office of the Bursar](#)

[Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)

[Center for International Education](#)

[Student Counseling Center](#)

[Student Disability Services](#)

[Office of Information Technology](#)

[Student Health Center](#)

[University Libraries](#)

PURPOSE OF DSW HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize DSW students with procedures, policies, and requirements of the DSW program. In addition, it provides information regarding admission, registration, advising, financial assistance, and other pertinent information.

This handbook is meant to supplement the policies and procedures in the Graduate Catalog and *Hilltopics.* **Graduate students are expected to be familiar with and satisfy all regulations governing their work and study at the university.** If information is unavailable or lacks clarity, the student should immediately reach out their DSW Chair Mentor, or the DSW program director.

For additional information please refer to the [Graduate Catalog](#), *[Hilltopics](#),* and to the publications on the [Appeals Procedures](#). Many rules and regulations govern a student's progress through the doctoral program; for the most part, requirements and deadlines are firm with few if any exceptions allowed. However, there may be extenuating circumstances which might justify modification of these requirements and deadlines. If a student feels that special consideration should be given to their situation, they should discuss the matter with the DSW program director, who can determine whether or not the DSW Program Committee or the Graduate School should be petitioned.

Changes in Curriculum Requirements
This Handbook represents the offerings and requirements in effect at the time of publication, but there is no guarantee that they will not be changed or revoked. The course offerings and the requirements of the institution are continually under examination and revision. However, adequate and reasonable

notice will be given to students affected by any changes.

The Handbook is not intended to state contractual terms and should not be regarded as a contract between the student and the institution. The institution reserves the right to change any provision, offering, or requirement to be effective when determined by the institution. These changes will govern current and readmitted students. Enrollment of all students is subject to these conditions. Current University catalogs are available [online](#).

The University further reserves the right to dismiss a student from the University for any cause at any time.

THE DSW PROGRAM

The College of Social Work DSW program is designed for MSSW/MSW graduates with significant clinical social work practice experience interested in earning a doctoral degree in social work in clinical practice and leadership.

Program Mission

The DSW program in the College of Social Work at The University of Tennessee Knoxville (UTK) fosters diverse groups of forward-looking MSW/MSSW practitioners interested in advancing their clinical practice, scholarship and leadership. Doctor of Social Work (DSW) scholar-pracitioners are committed to generating a more inclusive, equitable and just society through dynamic leadership in their fields of practice that improves the social services and health of all persons in their communities. Upon completing this program, DSW graduates are able to draw on a range of inclusive empirical, theoretical, and emerging client-centered sources of knowledge to bring about anti-oppressive, anti-racist and anti-stigmatizing innovations in social work.

Program Goals

(1) The program will train learners to apply knowledge and critically translate clinical practice research to address the socio-emotional and physical health of the community, with a particular focus on implementing anti-oppressive, anti-racist and anti-stigmatizing innovations.
(2) The program will mentor learners to execute research projects, with particular consideration for conducting anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and resiliency-informed research.
(3) The program will instill in learners the ability to assume both leadership in their communities and management in their organizations that embraces anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and anti-stigmatizing practices.

Upon completing this program, DSW graduates are able to draw on a range of inclusive empirical, theoretical, professional and client-centered sources of knowledge to bring about anti-oppressive/anti-racist innovations in social policy and community practice. Writing and scholarship expansion leads DSW trained scholar-pracitioners to write proposals, papers, and grants. They develop the capacity to

disseminate their creative work through multiple channels, such as teaching/training, professional presentations, publications, mentoring, and administration.

The DSW is a professional practice degree to enhance community-level resources. The degree is not intended to prepare students for academic careers as researchers. Instead, it is designed to prepare MSW/MSSW practitioners, experienced at the master's level in social work, for advanced clinical practice, translational research and advanced practice leadership. The DSW Program is an intensive accelerated program that enables students to satisfy all degree requirements in three years, without career disruption. The program is designed for the development of advanced clinical skills in the practitioners' current area of practice, including mental health, medical social work, trauma, substance abuse, gerontology, child welfare, developmental and physical disabilities, practice with military and veterans and their families, and other established or emerging areas.

Application to the DSW Program
Application requirements include the completed Graduate Admissions application, a nonrefundable $60 application fee, official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work, the DSW professional statement, resume, and three letters of recommendation/evaluation forms. Applicants may also submit an optional writing sample.

Admission Standards/Procedures
Admission to the DSW program is based on the following requirements:
- Submit online application to the Office of Graduate Admissions. Meet requirements for admission to the Graduate School.
- Hold a Master's degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Applicants from international programs will be reviewed on an individual basis.
- Have three years of post-MSSW/MSW clinical practice experience.
- U.S. degree holders must have a minimum GPA of 2.7 out of a possible 4.0 on all undergraduate work and a minimum GPA of 3.0 out of a possible 4.0 on all previous graduate work. Individuals with degrees from foreign institutions must have a minimum of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale on all undergraduate work and a minimum of 3.3 on a 4.0 scale on all previous graduate work.
- Have a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale for previous graduate work.
- Have TOEFL scores of at least 550 on the paper test or 80 on the internet-based test or a 6.5 overall band score on the IELTS, if native language is not English.
- Demonstrable information technology skills.

Academic Standards/Special Requirements and Policies
- Each student must hold personal professional liability insurance.
- Students must adhere to ethical and professional standards indicated in the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Students will attend an annual week of on-campus residency each summer devoted to intensive study and skills practice, including a 3-day orientation before the start of their first year.

- Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0.
- Any grade below a "B" in a required course is grounds for dismissal from the DSW program.
- All requirements must be completed within five years.

Additional Requirements
- Students must successfully complete all coursework in years 1 and 2 to be eligible to advance to candidacy. This includes maintaining a minimum 3.0 GPA.
- Students must successfully defend their DSW research projects to advance to candidacy. The DSW research project defense occurs during summer semester of the second year (semester 6), and serves as the qualifying exam for the DSW program.
- In case of failure of the qualifying examination, a student may request a retake of the exam.
- The result of the second qualifying examination is final.
- The DSW comprehensive exam in the last semester of the program is composed of a portfolio assignment. The exam assesses student learning and growth over the whole program and integrates the three focus areas of clinical practice, leadership and scholarship/research.

Previous Work and/or Life Experience
The DSW program does not grant course credit for previous work or life experience. Applicants and other constituents are informed about this policy, as the statement is included in admissions information on the program website.

Transfer Credit
No courses taken at other universities may be substituted for DSW courses without approval of the DSW Program Committee.

Curriculum
The outlined courses are required for all post-MSW students who enroll in the Doctor of Social Work program (48 credits). Two courses are taken per semester. A new cohort begins every fall term and meets continuously for eight semesters. Courses listed below are presented in the expected sequence of the DSW curriculum.

DSW Courses (Listed in Order Taken)	Curriculum Description	Credits
Fall Year 1 **SW 607 Neuroscience for Clinical Practice**	Brain science & impact on lifespan development & our understanding of mental health disorders	3
Fall Year 1 **SW 609 Epistemological Processes & Methods in Advanced Social Work Practice**	Foundations of Social Work knowledge & the Evidence-Based Practice Process	3
Spring Year 1 **SW 615 Psychopathology & Psychopharmacology**	DSM V diagnoses & psychopharmacological Interventions across the lifespan	3

Spring Year 1 **SW 620 Clinical Research and Applied Statistics**	Builds on the evidence-based practice process, with knowledge about conducting research & analyzing data	3
Summer Year 1 **SW 610 Cognitive Behavioral Therapy I**	Covers specific protocols & interventions for specific disorders	3
Summer Year 1 **SW 614 Interpersonal & Psychodynamic Psychotherapy**	Psychodynamic & Relational psychotherapies. Exposure to different models, case review & conceptualization, & technique development	3
Fall Year 2 **SW 624 DSW Research Project I**	Selection of a research area, formulating a research question, literature review, & developing a research proposal	3
Fall Year 2 **SW 622 Research Methods & Design**	Research methods and design for students developing a research proposal	3
Spring Year 2 **SW 625 DSW Research Project II**	Completion of the research project from Research Project I & developing a professional quality paper	3
Spring Year 2 **SW 618 Trauma-Focused Interventions with Adults from Diverse Populations**	Focuses on healing trauma and shame, and development of self-compassion. Includes evidence-based interventions, the acquisition of advanced diagnostic & treatment skills	3
Summer Year 2 **SW 616 Advanced EBP for Addictions & Dual Diagnosis Treatment**	Examines co-occurring disorders, including case conceptualization, assessment, & intervention	3
Summer Year 2 **SW 617 Clinical Management**	Examines principles of leadership & management, strategic planning, program design & development, financial management, resource development, & infomatics	3
Fall Year 3 **SW 621 Clinical Leadership, Supervision & Consultation**	Skill development for clinical supervision, clinical teams, & educational andragogy	3
Fall Year 3 **W 611 Cognitive Behavioral Therapy II**	Advanced understanding of the spectrum of cognitive & behavioral interventions & their theoretical underpinnings	3
Spring Year 3 **SW 619 Implementing Translational Science in Service Delivery**	Focuses on translating evidence-based interventions into community service delivery systems, especially with under-resourced groups	3
Spring Year 3 **SW 623 Emergent Interventions with Complex Populations**	Identification & evaluation of emerging interventions that have relevancy for clinical practice	3
Total DSW Program Hours		**48**

CIRTL (Center for Teaching, Research & Learning)

UTK DSW students interested in developing their teaching skills have the opportunity to complete the associate level online teaching and through the Center for Teaching Research & Learning (CIRTL). It is possible to earn a teaching certificate through taking these asynchronous online programs. More information is available at https://teaching.utk.edu/futurefaculty/. The programs may be completed at any time during the DSW Program. These resource programs are available to all UTK graduate students at no additional cost.

SW 675 Teaching Methods in Social Work

There may be an elective option offered, SW 675, Teaching Methods in Social Work, during winter break, as an intensive online course. Please contact the program director to indicate your interest in this course. It is not part of the regular curriculum and requires additional tuition.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

The College of Social Work provides an opportunity for students about to enter the third year of the DSW Program to apply for Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA). Two students who are interested in developing their teaching skills are selected through an application process to teach two courses (one in fall and one in spring) in our MSSW or BSSW programs, during their third year in the DSW Program. GTAs will receive full tuition coverage during fall and spring semesters of their third year, as well as a stipend. Students who apply must complete the Associate Level CIRTL course described above and/or take SW 675 as an elective. Further details are available by contacting the program director.

Course Descriptions

YEAR 1

Semester 1—Fall

607 Neuroscience for Clinical Practice (3)
Using a developmental framework, this introductory course will provide an overview of brain structure and function across the lifespan and associations with cumulative risks, adverse childhood experiences, social determinants of health, and enriching environmental experiences. We will review the neurobiological stress response, epigenetics, neurocognitive and affective development, the neural circuitry of various mental health conditions, and the impact of treatment.

609 Epistemological Processes & Methods in Advanced Social Work Practice (3)
Examines the foundations of knowledge that inform research questions and processes as a DSW practitioner-scholar. Introduction to methods that incorporate anti-oppressive frameworks into research and practice. Explores tools to find and critically evaluate resources. Designs tailored interventions to meet the needs of under-resourced populations.

Semester 2—Spring

615 Psychopathology and Psychopharmacology (3)
Examines psychopharmacological interventions for psychopathological conditions across the lifespan.

620 Clinical Research and Applied Statistics (3)
Explores the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods and applied statistics.

Semester 3—Summer

610 Cognitive Behavioral Therapy I (3)
Reviews theoretical underpinnings of CBT (behavioral, social learning, cognitive, acceptance based /mindfulness), development of case conceptualizations, and technique development.

614 Interpersonal & Pyschodynamic Psychotherapy (3)
This course examines the role of relational and psychodynamic processes in biopsychosocial problems. Provides the basic framework of 1) Psychodynamic Theories of Diagnosis and Technique, and 2) Cultural Competence in the context of Psychoanalytic Theory.

YEAR 2

Semester 4--Fall

624 Research Project I (3)
Selection of a research topic, preparation of a literature review, identification of a research question(s), development of a research proposal, and presentation of an oral defense of the research proposal.

622 Research Methods & Design (3)
Research methods and design for students developing a research proposal.

Semester 5--Spring

625 Research Project II (3)
Conducts and completes the research project proposal from SOWK 624 (Research Project 1). This includes preparation of a professional-quality journal-style paper based on the research project.

618 Trauma Focused Interventions with Adults from Diverse Populations (3)
Focuses on healing trauma and shame, and development of self-compassion. Includes evidence-based interventions, the acquisition of advanced diagnostic and treatment skills for treating adults, and strategies for preventing vicarious trauma.

Semester 6—Summer

616 Advanced EBP for Addictions & Dual Diagnosis Treatment (3)
Examines the biopsychosocial/cultural factors associated with addictive behaviors and co-occurring mental health disorders. Focus is placed on case-conceptualization, assessment, and evidence-based interventions for multiply diagnosed clients.

617 Clinical Management (3)
Examines principles of leadership and management, Management practice (employee supervision and evaluation, conflict resolution), Strategic planning, Program design and development, Financial management, Resource development (grant writing) and Infomatics.

YEAR 3

Semester 7--Fall

611 Cognitive Behavioral Therapy II (3)
Advanced practice course that covers specific protocols and CBT interventions for specific disorders.

621 Clinical Leadership, Supervision, & Consultation (3)
Designed to develop professional capabilities required for clinical leadership practice in a variety of areas. There is a heavy emphasis on developing practical skills such as teaching and supervision techniques.

Semester 8--Spring

619 Implementing Translational Science in Service Delivery (3)
Examines how to translate evidence-based interventions into service delivery systems,
especially with under-resourced populations and explores implementation practices as agency-organizational leaders.

623 Emergent Interventions with Complex Populations (3)
Presents a review and exploration of emergent and cutting-edge intervention methods and clinical skills.

Transfer Credit
No courses taken at other universities may be substituted for DSW courses without approval of the DSW Program Committee.

On-Campus Requirement
Newly admitted students must attend a 3-day orientation prior to attending their first semester of study. First and 2nd year students must attend an annual one-week residency of intensive study and skills practice development. Course credit for the campus residency is awarded as part of the summer courses.

Research Project Process
SW 624 Research Project I (Fall Year 2)
SW 622 Research Methods & Design (Fall Year 2)
SW 625 Research Project II (Spring Year 2)

At the beginning of fall term of the second year and continuing in spring term, students are assigned a chair mentor who guides them through completion of a research project. Students participate in weekly *learning community* class meetings composed of all their peers and research mentors. Critical feedback is provided at each step during project development and completion.

Fall Semester/Year 2
During fall semester, students develop a research project that is relevant for the social work profession and takes into consideration the Grand Challenges of Social Work (see Appendix D). The project is designed and a proposal is written. Students may complete an Institutional Review Board application if required for their project.

Spring Semester/Year 2
Students in DSW Research Project II will conduct their research project based on the proposal completed in the previous semester. Upon completion of data analysis, the research project will be written as a formal professional quality research paper. The Chair Mentor and one other doctorally-prepared evaluator will be responsible for completing the final course (SW 625) rubric assessment. After successful completion of the final research paper, and in preparation for the Summer Research Symposium during intensive week, the students will develop a research project presentation.

Summer Semester/ Year 2
Presenting at the Summer Research Symposium (usually the last week of June) and receiving feedback from evaluators serves as the final academic requirement for the research project. The DSW project defense serves as the qualifying exam for the DSW program. Students must successfully defend their DSW research project to advance to candidacy.

Advancement to Candidacy
Students will be admitted to doctoral candidacy after completing the period of residence (defined as 6 consecutive semesters of 6 hours of enrollment) and successfully defending their research projects.

Comprehensive Exam
The DSW comprehensive exam occurs in the last semester of the program. It is composed of a portfolio assignment located within two courses, SW 623 and SW 619. The exam assesses student learning and growth over the whole program and integrates the three focus areas of clinical practice, leadership, and scholarship/research.

Deadlines for Completion of Coursework & DSW Program
Students in the DSW Program are expected to complete their research proposals by the end of Fall

term, their research papers by the end of the Spring term, and to successfully defend their research projects by end of Summer term in the second year of the program. Students must successfully defend their research projects before continuing forward in the program.

Incomplete Courses
Should an extraordinary circumstance lead to an "I" in any course in the DSW curriculum, the student must successfully complete the incomplete within <u>one calendar year</u> from the beginning date of the course. Forward progress in the program cannot continue beyond the research sequence until all requirements for advancement to candidacy are completed.

 The DSW program qualifying exam must be successfully completed within three years. All requirements must be completed within five years.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Registration for Courses

All students are required to register online. Instructions for registering are found on the University's One Stop. Once on the One Stop web page follow the instructions in the box titled "How to Register" that takes you through the registration process. If you have any questions about registering for your classes, please call the doctoral program support staff at (865) 974-6481.

Note: The normal maximum course load for graduate students is 15 hours per semester with 9 hours considered a full load; however, in the DSW 6 hours is considered a full load.

Grades, Grading, and Grade Point Averages (GPA)

The College of Social Work follows the regulations found in the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Graduate Catalog in relation to grades and grading. The following paragraphs briefly explain these grading policies.

A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 is required on all graduate course work taken at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville to remain in good standing and to receive any graduate degree or certificate from the university. All course work taken for graduate credit is computed into the GPA. A cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher is required for graduation; therefore, grades of C+ or C must be offset by higher grades to attain a 3.0 cumulative GPA.

Evaluation of Student Performance

There are several means by which students are evaluated. Before a student is admitted into the program, their academic record and letters of recommendation are evaluated by the DSW Admissions Committee and the Graduate School personnel.

Evaluation of each student's academic progress is based on performance: 1) On successful oral defense of the Research Project I proposal; 2) on successful oral defense of the research project at the Summer Research Symposium, and 3) on completion of an integrative portfolio assignment in the final semester.

In addition, as stated in the UTK Graduate Catalog:
"Graduate education requires continuous evaluation of the student. This evaluation includes not only periodic objective evaluation, such as the cumulative grade-point average, performance on the comprehensive examinations and acceptance of the thesis or dissertation, but also judgments by the faculty of the student's progress and potential. Continuation in a program is determined by consideration of all these elements by the faculty and the head of the academic unit." (See "Academic Standards," in the current University of Tennessee, Knoxville Graduate Catalog.)

Grading Scale

A   (4.00 quality points per credit hour) superior performance.

A-   (3.70 quality points per credit hour) intermediate grade performance.

B+   (3.30 quality points per credit hour) very good performance.

B   (3.00 quality points per credit hour) good performance.

B-   (2.70 quality points per credit hour) intermediate grade performance.

C+   (2.30 quality points per credit hour) less than satisfactory performance.

C   (2.00 quality points per credit hour) performance well below the standard expected of graduate students.

D   (1.00 quality point per credit hour) clearly unsatisfactory performance and cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.

F   (no quality points) extremely unsatisfactory performance and cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.

I   (no quality points) a temporary grade indicating that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course but, due to unforeseen circumstances, has been unable to finish all requirements. An "I" is not given to enable a student to do additional work to raise a deficient grade. The instructor, in consultation with the student, decides the terms for the removal of the "I", including the time limit for removal. If the "I" is not removed within one calendar year, the grade will be changed to an F. The course will not be counted in the cumulative grade point average until a final grade is assigned. **No student may graduate with an "I" on the record**.

S/NC (carries credit hours, but no quality points) S is equivalent to a grade of B or better, and NC means no credit earned. A grade of Satisfactory/No Credit is allowed only where indicated in the course description in the Graduate Catalog. The number of Satisfactory/No Credit courses in a student's program is limited to one-fourth (25 percent) of the total credit hours required.

P/NP (carries credit hours, but no quality points) P indicates progress toward completion of a thesis or dissertation. NP indicates no progress or inadequate progress and does not count toward degree requirements.

W   (carries no credit hours or quality points) indicates that the student officially withdrew from the course.

Academic Probation

Every doctoral student is expected to maintain a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0, although it is hoped that all students will exceed the minimum requirement of the Graduate School. Individual grades below "B" in elective courses are tolerated as long as a student maintains a cumulative average of 3.0, but if a student receives many grades below "B" their GPA will suffer. When a graduate student's GPA drops below a cumulative 3.0, they will have one semester in which to bring it back up to at least 3.0. Failure to achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in that semester may result in termination from the program. *Any grade below a "B" in a required course is grounds for dismissal from the DSW program.*

Grades of Incomplete

Under extraordinary circumstances and at the discretion of the instructor, a grade of I (Incomplete) may be awarded to students who have satisfactorily completed a substantial portion of the course requirement but cannot complete the course for reasons beyond their control. The instructor, in consultation with the student, decides the terms for the removal of the incomplete, including the time limit for removal. Incomplete grades must be removed within one calendar year, but a shorter period may be set by instructor in consultation with student. In such instances an Incomplete Grade Form should be completed and a copy retained in the student's file. If the incomplete is not removed within one calendar year, the grade will convert to an F; *exceptions will not be made and this change to a failing grade is permanent*.

- The I (Incomplete) grade is not issued in lieu of the grade of F.
- The terms for the removal of the I, including the time limit for removal of the I, is decided by the instructor.
- It is the responsibility of the student receiving an I (Incomplete) to arrange with the instructor whatever action is needed to remove the grade at the earliest possible date, and in any event, within one calendar year of the assignment of incomplete.
- Students cannot remove an "I" grade by re-enrolling in the course.
- The "I" grade does not carry quality points and is not computed as a grade of F in the grade point average. If the "I" grade is not removed within one calendar year or upon graduation, it shall be changed to an F and count as a failure in the computation of the grade point average.
- A student need not be enrolled at the university to remove a grade of incomplete. No student may graduate with an "I" on his or her record.

Policy on Repeating Courses

Per DSW Program policy, no student may retake a course in order to improve a grade.

Grade Appeals

Students with grievances concerning grades should file a formal complaint with the Graduate Council through the Graduate Council Appeals Committee, *but only after grievances have been duly processed, without resolution, through the College of Social Work's appeals procedure as outlined below.* As described in *Hilltopics,* students may appeal grades only on the basis of one or more of the following allowable grounds:

(1) A clearly unfair decision (such as lack of consideration of circumstances clearly beyond the control of the student, e.g., a death in the family, illness, or accident);

(2) Unacceptable instruction/evaluation procedures (such as deviation from stated policies on grading criteria, incompletes, late paper examinations, or class attendance);

(3) Inability of the instructor to deal with course responsibilities; or

(4) An exam setting which makes concentration extremely difficult.

An appeal based solely on a difference of opinion regarding the substance or quality of the student's performance is not a sufficient basis.

The initial grade appeal must be filed no later than 30 days after the after the final grade has been issued. To appeal a grade in the College of Social Work, students must follow these steps:

1. A student is instructed to begin the process by first appealing in writing directly to the course instructor regarding the final grade. The written appeal should articulate the allowable grounds by which the grade is being appealed (see list above).

2. If no resolution is reached, then the student may initiate the formal appeal process through a letter to the Program Director. The course instructor should respond in writing to the student appeal and this response must be included with the student's letter to the Program Director. This appeal must be submitted to the Program Director no later than 14 days after receiving a written response from the course instructor.

3. If the matter is not resolved at the Program Director level, the student may then appeal in writing to the Associate Dean of the College of Social Work.

4. If the matter is not resolved with the Associate Dean, the student may then appeal in writing to the Dean of the College of Social Work. Appeals to the Associate Dean and Dean must be submitted no later than 14 days after receiving a written response from the Program Director and Associate Dean, respectively.

5. If the matter is not resolved at the college level, the student may write an appeal letter to the Graduate Council Appeal Committee. Please consult the university's Graduate Catalog or the Graduate School's Graduate Council Appeal Procedure for more information.

Leave of Absence

Prior to the completion of the final semester the student may request a leave of absence. A leave of absence may be granted only for semesters during which the student will not be using University facilities or working with faculty. A request for a leave of absence should indicate the reason for the leave and stipulate that the student will not be using University facilities or working with faculty. It must be submitted to the director of the doctoral program. If the director approves the request, the student must submit the request to the Dean of the Graduate School, who must also approve the leave. The request should be made in advance. Approval is not automatic. A student will be granted leave until the following academic year at the same time due to courses being offered only once per academic year. All DSW degree requirements must be completed within five years of a student's first enrollment in the DSW program.

Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct

Students in a graduate program in social work are simultaneously participating in both academic and professional worlds. This means that behavior must be governed by the norms of academia and professional social work practice, including the NASW Code of Ethics, University of Tennessee College of Social Work Standards of Professional Conduct (See Appendix A) and the behavioral guidelines in *Hilltopics.* Each student must hold professional liability insurance.

Academic Conduct

The purpose of the academic environment is to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to develop and disseminate knowledge. A degree, such as the DSW, is in part an assessment by the faculty that these purposes have been accomplished. Such an assessment means that a student is committed to the pursuit of knowledge and to an understanding of its meaning. Consequently, plagiarism, or any other form of cheating, is inimical to this purpose and is grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program. Graduate students are expected to understand the proper use and referencing of the material of others' in their own written work and to comply with academic standards in this regard. Guidelines for proper referencing and citations can be found in the current *Style Guide of the American Psychological Association.*

Professional Conduct

In addition to maintaining acceptable academic standards, students must conduct themselves in a professionally ethical manner towards their student colleagues, faculty, and all other persons. Because membership in a profession implies an encompassing set of values, professional conduct is expected at all times, on-campus and off-campus. The College subscribes to the NASW Code of Ethics. Students are advised to familiarize themselves with its provisions. Any act that would constitute unethical practice or a violation of law, whether committed in college-related activities or not, is grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.

University Policy on Email

All students are provided with a university e-mail account. The University of Tennessee uses the university-supplied e-mail account as an official means of communication with all students. Official communication can include, but is not limited to, information and notices about financial obligations, student conduct, course schedules, cancelled courses, and financial aid. Students are responsible for activating, maintaining, and checking their university-supplied account and for all official university communication sent to that account. Please plan to check your account on a daily basis. For more information about student e-mail accounts and responsibilities, and to set up your UT e-mail account, visit Office of Information Technology.

RESOURCES FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS

UT Libraries

Students must be currently enrolled to access online resources and to use library services. The library offers a variety of unique services to distance education students, including home delivery of books and other materials.

Social Work Librarian:
Steven Milewski is available to provide assistance by phone, email, and online chat.

Research Computing Support

Available through the Office of Information Technology (OIT), the Research Computing Support Center can assist with statistical consulting, qualitative analysis, content analysis, and text or data mining. Appointments are necessary due to the demand for and nature of statistical consultations. The first point of contact for the research computing support is the OIT Helpdesk.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Expenses

The fees and tuition can be found in the current UTK Graduate Catalog. Fees and tuition are a significant part of the cost of a student's education.

OneStop

Financial Aid is managed by OneStop. Students should visit OneStop.Edu for more information. Students must be admitted into a degree program and be enrolled for a minimum of 6 credit hours each semester to receive student loans.

Graduate students and applicants who wish to be considered for financial aid from the University should obtain the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) from the UT Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. The web site for this office provides additional information, including deadlines, forms, mailing addresses, etc. Applicants interested in federal financial aid should submit a FAFSA even if they have not yet been notified of their acceptance into the College of Social Work.

DSW Fund for Clinical Excellence

Each spring enrolled DSW students have the opportunity to apply for the DSW Fund for Clinical Excellence. DSW support staff will send out the scholarship form link and a reminder each spring.

APPENDIX A: PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

CSW Standards of Professional Conduct

Separate and distinct from the University of Tennessee's Standards of Conduct, and the CSW's standards for academic performance (which are contained elsewhere in this handbook and in the Graduate Catalog), there are certain cognitive, emotional and character requirements that students must possess that provide the CSW with reasonable assurance that students can complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of social work education and the professional practice of social work. Students in the CSW are expected to possess the following abilities and attributes at a level appropriate to their year in the program. They are expected to meet these standards in the classroom and in their practice. Attention to these standards will be part of evaluations made by faculty responsible for evaluating applications for admission and faculty responsible for evaluating students' classroom and practicum performance.

Professional Behavior - The social work student behaves professionally by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, adhering to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the Tennessee Board of Social Worker Standards of Conduct (1365-01-.10) as found in the [Tennessee Board of Social Work Certification and Licensure General Rules and Regulations](#).

Interpersonal Skills - The social work student communicates and interacts with other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals in a professional manner, and demonstrates respect for and consideration of other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals in spoken, written and electronic form. The social work student expresses her/his ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates a willingness and ability to listen to others.

Self-awareness - The social work student is willing to examine and change their behavior when it interferes with her/his working with clients and other professionals, and is able to work effectively with others in subordinate positions as well as with those in authority.

Professional Commitment - The social work student has a strong commitment to the essential values of social work (the dignity and worth of every individual and her/his right to a just share of the society's resources). The social work student is knowledgeable about and adheres to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the Rules of the Tennessee Board of Social Worker Certification.

Self-care - The social work student recognizes the signs of stress, develops appropriate means of self-care, and seeks supportive resources if necessary.

Valuing Diversity - The social work student appreciates the value of human diversity. Social work students do not impose their own personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on other students, faculty, staff, clients or professionals. Social work students are willing to serve in an appropriate manner all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious affiliation (or lack of), gender, disability, sexual orientation and/or value system.

The following list provides examples, but is not exhaustive, of professional misconduct :

- Misuse, alteration or falsification of documents.
- Unauthorized or improper use of University equipment, services and facilities.
- Harassing, coercing and intimidating behavior.
- Obstruction or disruption of teaching.
- Criminal activity.
- Failure to comply with an order from a legitimate university authority and failure to attend required meetings called by university faculty or administration such as Academic Committee Meetings and Field Evaluation Meetings.
- Threatening behavior and verbal abuse.
- Inappropriate relationships.
- Inability to secure, sustain, or perform satisfactorily in a field placement.
- Other behaviors determined to be unprofessional conduct towards colleagues, faculty, staff and/or clients.

CSW Professional Standards Committee

Except for alleged academic dishonesty, which shall be addressed through the procedures set forth in *Hilltopics*, the following procedures are used to address a faculty member's concern that a social work student has failed to meet or maintain the CSW's professional standards:

The faculty member/major professor should discuss the concern(s) with the student and seek agreement with the student on the question of the student's failure to meet or maintain professional standards. If a plan of remediation is recommended by the faculty member and agreed upon by the student, the faculty member should document the plan of remediation. The documentation should include a description of the student's conduct, the plan of remediation, and an indication that the student has agreed to the plan of remediation. Copies should be provided to the student, the student's record the student's major professor, and Program Director.

If the faculty member believes dismissal from the CSW is appropriate, or the faculty member believes that the student should be given an opportunity to remedy their failure to meet or maintain a standard but the faculty member and the student cannot agree on a plan for remediation, the faculty member shall notify the student's Program Director. The Program Director shall call a meeting with the faculty and student involved in an attempt to resolve the matter. If the matter cannot be resolved, the Program Director, in consultation with the Associate Dean, shall convene a hearing of the Professional Standards Committee as soon as practicable.

A Professional Standards Committee will be constituted each year. The Associate Dean will select a faculty chairperson and 3 faculty members from the full-time faculty to serve on this Committee. The term of office is one year and can be renewed. The Professional Standards Committee meets on an as needed basis. Faculty members of the Professional Standards Committee having direct prior involvement with a case shall recuse themselves. In such a circumstance, the Associate Dean will appoint an alternative faculty for consideration of that case.

The student shall be provided with written notice (e-mail is sufficient) of the time and place of the hearing of the Committee at least 48 hours in advance of the hearing.

The faculty member's prior written documentation of the student's conduct and proposed plan for remediation will be submitted along with any other germane supporting documents. Prior to the hearing, the student may also submit written materials to the Committee. Copies of materials submitted to the Committee must be provided to the opposing party.

At the hearing, the Committee will hear orderly presentations from the student and the faculty member(s) who raised the concern(s). Each party will be allowed to present witnesses in support of her/his position, ask questions to opposing witnesses, and rebut the presentation of the opposing party. However, a hearing of the Committee is not a legal proceeding and legal representation of the parties is not permitted in the hearing.

The Committee will deliberate in private and make a decision on the appropriate course of action, which may include, but is not limited to: no action against a student; placement of a student on probationary status; changing the student's field placement; putting the student on a leave of absence; or dismissing the student from the CSW.

A student may appeal the decision of the Committee by sending a written appeal to the Associate Dean within 14 days, who then shall make a decision on the student's appeal and communicate that decision to the student in writing. A student may appeal a decision of the Associate Dean to the Dean of the CSW by sending a written appeal to the Dean within 14 days of receiving the appeal of the Associate Dean, who then shall make a decision on the student's appeal and communicate that decision to the student in writing. To appeal the decision of the Dean of the College of Social Work, a student shall file a written appeal in accordance with the Graduate Council Appeal Procedure. The Graduate Council considers student appeals only after they have been duly processed through the College of Social Work. A complete statement of the Graduate Council Appeal Procedure is available from the UT-Knoxville Graduate School.

APPENDIX B: FORMS

Completion of required forms at each step of the student's progress through the DSW program is the student's responsibility.

UT College of Social Work DSW forms

Graduate School's Forms Central

APPENDIX C: Web Resources for Graduate Students

Student Resources
College of Social Work
Graduate School
Graduation Deadlines
Graduate School Forms
Graduate Catalog
Student obligations and appeals process
Graduate Student Senate
Office of Graduate Admissions
Student Conduct and Community Standards
Office of Equity and Diversity
Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence, and Stalking
Office of Multicultural Student Life
Office of Research Integrity
 Institutional Review Board
Office of Information Technology

Professional Development and Training
Best Practices in Teaching Program
UT Libraries Information for Graduate Students
Center for Career Development
Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center
UT CIRTL: Center for Integration of Research and Teaching
Experience Learning

Funding
Costs and funding opportunities
Graduate Student Senate Travel Awards
Financial Aid and Scholarships

APPENDIX D: Grand Challenges Of Social Work

https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/#the-challenges

INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY WELL-BEING
Ensure healthy development for youth
Close the health gap
Build healthy relationships to end violence
Advance long and productive lives

STRONGER SOCIAL FABRIC
Eradicate social isolation
End homelessness
Create social reponses to a changing environment
Harness technology for social good

JUST SOCIETY
Eliminate racism
Promote smart decarceration
Build financial capability and assets for all
Reduce extreme economic inequality
Acheieve equal opportunity and justice