



UH GRADUATE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK | **MSW PROGRAM**

NEW STUDENT HANDBOOK

FALL 2025

uh.edu/socialwork



Graduate College of Social Work
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

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WELCOME

Dear MSW Student:

Welcome to the MSW Program at University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work, and congratulations on your admission to one of the top ranked social work programs in the country. The students, faculty, and staff of the GCSW look forward to getting to know you and working with you over the next one to three years. To clarify the way the program is organized and prepare you better for your time with us, we have assembled this handbook to familiarize you with the program and help with some of the questions you are likely to ask along the way. We wish you the very best!

Sincerely,
GCSW Faculty & Staff

ADMISSIONS

MSW Admissions

Admissions Requirements & Necessary Documentation

To be considered for unconditional admission to the MSW Program, applicants must:

- **Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.** The undergraduate education should reflect a sound liberal arts foundation, including courses in the humanities, arts, and in the social and biological sciences. Scanned copies of official transcripts can be used to make an admissions decision. If admitted, an official transcript showing degree awarded must be sent to the UH Graduate School to enroll in classes.
- **Have achieved a grade point average of 3.0 or better** (4.0 scale) for all undergraduate and graduate coursework, or in the last 60 hours of coursework. We will calculate your GPA based on your transcripts. If your cumulative and last 60 hours GPA are below a 3.0 you may be considered for [conditional admission](#).
- **Submit 2-3 recommendations** from people who can address your ability and potential for graduate education and professional social work practice (i.e., former professors, employment supervisors, professional colleagues). If you are applying for Advanced Standing, the suggestion is that at least one of your two references be from an individual in your BSW program who can speak to your BSW performance, which could include the program director, a faculty member, or your Practicum Practicum Instructor or Coordinator.
- **Submit a personal narrative statement** that describes your interest in social work and your commitment to justice. Specific instructions for the narrative statement are provided on the [MSW Application Checklist page](#).
- **Submit a resume** which outlines educational background, paid or volunteer experience in social service agencies or related settings, other work experience, community and/or college activities, and reading and listening interests.

Persons who hold a nonimmigrant type visa or who have received their degrees from outside the U.S. have additional application requirements. Please refer to the University of Houston's [information for International Applicants](#).

Application Fee Waivers

Public Service and Volunteer Groups

University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work supports several public service and volunteer organizations by waiving the application fee of \$50 for current or former volunteers/employees of Teach for America, Peace Corps, Americorps, and City Year. If an applicant of one of these organizations is admitted to the GCSW, they also receive the possibility for a 1-year deferral on admission.

To receive instructions for the application fee waiver, email gcswinfo@uh.edu *before* submitting your application. Please allow 3-5 business days to receive the instructions. Please note that application fee waivers are not retroactive, and we are unable to provide refunds for applications submitted without the waiver code.

In addition to the application fee waiver and deferral, GCSW has a partnership with City Year which provides additional benefits, including scholarships, to City Year corps, alumni, or staff members. You can [read more about the partnership here](#).

McNair Scholars

University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work also offers application fee waivers for McNair Scholars applying to the MSW program. To receive the instructions for the application fee waiver, email gcswinfo@uh.edu *before* you submit your application. Please allow 3-5 business days to receive the instructions. Please note that application fee waivers are not retroactive, and we are unable to provide refunds for applications submitted without the waiver code.

Admissions Reviews & Decisions

Applications are reviewed by the GCSW admission committee members. Reviewers take into account the "whole applicant" and no single criterion automatically determines whether an applicant is or is not admitted into the program. Admissions decisions are communicated electronically; no decisions are given verbally.

Admissions decisions are final for an academic year. Applicants who have been denied admission are welcome to reapply for a future application term. If you are interested in reapplying, we encourage you to email gcswinfo@uh.edu to review the reapplication process and also consider speaking with an admissions representative regarding ways to strengthen a future application.

Before You Apply

The decision to enter a graduate, professional program leading to the MSW is a significant one. The combination of coursework and practicum is demanding and requires careful planning in order to move through the program successfully. Prospective applicants are encouraged to consider the following information.

Course Scheduling

The GCSW strives to maintain a diverse student body, many of whom are employed outside the home, and many of whom have childcare responsibilities in addition to school and/or employment. As a result, students must make numerous adjustments in their schedules in order to attend classes and to fulfill the clock hour requirements for practicum. While we are aware of the multiple demands placed on our students, the foundation components of the program are highly structured. If a student is unable, for whatever reason, to complete foundation as shown in the

enrollment models, the student may have to take a leave of absence from the program and begin again when they are able to complete the semester as prescribed. Applicants are strongly encouraged to plan carefully in order to ensure successful completion of the program. Students must be prepared to adjust work hours, childcare arrangements, and other time constraints during the entire program.

Practicum

Part of the uniqueness of the MSW degree is in its applied focus as reflected by required practicum courses. In practicum courses, students are assigned as interns under the supervision of a social work practicum instructor in various practice settings. The GCSW has affiliation agreements with more than 300 agencies in the greater Houston area that have met our criteria as approved practicum sites. Students are required to complete a total of 900 clock hours in practicum courses, starting in their first year.

Face to Face students complete their practicum work during the work hours between Mondays – Fridays, 8 – 5. Students are typically in their placement for 16 – 20 hours per week. For the advanced practicum placement, students may be required by the agency to be in their placement for up to 24 hours per week.

Hybrid students are matched by the Practicum Team for their generalist (1st year) placement and prioritized for an agency that offers a flexible schedule (flexible placements typically offer 85% of hours in the evening and weekends, but do require some availability during business hours). For the concentration (3rd year) placement, students attend Marketplace (Internship Fair) and interview with Houston-area agencies. There is no guarantee of a placement with only evening/weekend hours.

Online students who live outside the Greater Houston area, with the help of the Practicum Team, will be primarily responsible for locating opportunities in their geographic region. Online students in the Houston area will follow the Practicum Team structured processes to connect with Houston area agencies.

Academic and Professional Advising

The GCSW Office of Admissions and Student Affairs plays a pivotal role in the student's academic life. Advising sessions are held each semester as part of an ongoing process to help students negotiate the curriculum, discuss academic progress, and ensure that all requirements are being met successfully. Advisors are also available to meet individually with students. More information about advising can be found below in the Academic Affairs Section.

Transfer Credit

Students who are transferring credit from another CSWE-accredited MSW program can refer to the [Special Admissions Categories page](#) for more information. Students who would like to transfer credit from a related Master's degree in progress (such as Counseling) can consult the [Transfer](#)

[Credit Policy page](#) for more information. We regret that we do not have the resources to evaluate transfer credit prior to admission.

Credit for Non-Academic Courses and Life/Employment Experience: Under no circumstances will credit toward the MSW degree be approved for correspondence courses, extension courses, continuing education courses, or life or employment experience.

Tuition and Fees: Tuition and fees are based upon rates established by the State Legislature and/or the University of Houston Board of Regents and are determined by residence status and the number of hours taken.

Special Admissions Categories

Advanced Standing

Applicants holding a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited undergraduate program may request review for Advanced Standing admission. There is not a separate application for Advanced Standing applicants. They must meet all regular admissions requirements described previously, plus:

- At least one of your two – three references should be from individuals in your BSW program who can speak to your BSW performance, which could include the program director, a faculty member, or your practicum instructor or coordinator.
- In addition to achieving a 3.0 for the social work major, the applicant must have achieved a grade point average of 3.0 or better (4.0 scale) for all undergraduate and graduate course work OR a 3.0 in the last 60 hours of coursework completed.

Not everyone who applies for Advanced Standing will be admitted with the advanced standing status; the admissions committee may deny Advanced Standing but still approve admission to the regular program. Students may be denied Advanced Standing if they have multiple C's or lower in Social Work courses, lack information or evidence they have been successful in their BSW practicum placement or have other deficiencies in their application.

Applicants with a BSW from a CSWE accredited program who are admitted to the regular (51 SCH) program are not required to take foundation courses if they have covered the content and received a "B" or better in their BSW courses. To be considered for individual course exemptions, applicants must submit syllabi for the courses they believe have similar content to the GCSW foundation courses. The Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs will review the syllabi and make decisions about granting exemptions. Students seeking credit for Generalist Practicum 1 & 2 must also submit copies of their practicum evaluation/s which the Director of Practicum Education will review. Students with exemptions will replace the foundation course(s) with electives.

Admitted Advanced Standing students receive a waiver for 17 credit hours. They are required to complete 34 credit hours in the student's chosen concentration and electives. Maximum enrollment is 15 semester credit hours for fall and spring and 9 hours for summer.

Conditional Admission

Applicants with a grade point average of 3.0 or better (4.0 scale) in all undergraduate and graduate course work will be considered for unconditional admission. If the cumulative GPA is below a 3.0, the last 60 hours GPA may be considered instead. Applicants with grade point averages of less than 3.0 in both cumulative and last 60 hours will be considered for conditional admission. Please address the low GPA in your personal statement.

- Students holding visas (F1 or J1) are not eligible for conditional admission at the graduate level at this university.
- Conditional admission may negatively affect your eligibility for financial aid.
- According to GCSW policy, students admitted conditionally must earn a minimum GPA of 3.0 on their first semester of graduate work. Failure to achieve a 3.0 GPA will result in termination from the MSW program.

Social Work Transfer Students

Students who transfer to the GCSW from another CSWE accredited MSW program must meet all regular admissions requirements, AND submit:

- A Statement of Good Standing from the dean or director of your program
- Syllabi for courses completed

Instructions for uploading these documents will be provided after the application is submitted. A maximum of 25 semester credit hours, earned within five years of the student's graduation date at the GCSW, with grades of B or above, can be transferred for credit toward the MSW degree at UH. Credit will be evaluated after admission but prior to enrollment. For information on non-MSW credit transfer, see our [Transfer Credit Policy](#)

ACADEMICS

Curriculum Overview

The MSW program at University of Houston consists of 51 semester credit hours for full program and 34 semester credit hours for Advanced Standing. The maximum graduate student MSW course load in the Fall or Spring semesters is limited to 15 semester credit hours (SCH) and 6 SCH in the Summer semester (including all summer sessions). Our program offers a 1-5hour foundation, which serves as the prerequisite for all following coursework.

Advanced Standing

The Advanced Standing program allows eligible students with a BSW degree to waive the generalist requirements of the MSW program and move directly into upper-level coursework. The Advanced Standing program is 34 semester credit hours and begins in the fall. Advanced standing is available in the face to face, hybrid, and online enrollment models. Two courses (500 clock hours total) of practicum are required. You can see degree plans for advanced standing in the degree plan section below.

Generalist Curriculum

The intensive generalist curriculum is organized around content on the foundation of professional social work, including coursework in practice, policy, research, and human diversity and development. A practice skills lab and a foundation practicum (200 clock hours) are also required. The foundation totals 15 credit hours. Students must satisfactorily complete 15 credit hours before enrolling in any advanced courses. Full-time, face to face students complete foundation in one semester while hybrid and online students take two semesters.

Advanced Curriculum

In the GCSW curriculum, our two areas of specialized practice or concentrations (Clinical and Macro) refer to *methods* of social work. A social work method is the process of how social work services will be delivered. Students admitted to the full program (non-Advanced Standing) select an advanced concentration in either Clinical Social Work Practice or Macro Practice following the foundation. Fifteen credit hours are required for both concentrations. All students complete advanced courses in Social Policy Analysis, and Confronting Oppression and Injustice and 9 semester credit hours of free choice electives. Finally, all students in the full program complete 900 clock hours of practicum.

Students admitted to Advanced Standing are required to participate in the course, Foundations of Social Work (SOCW 6201) and then go straight into the advanced curriculum. Advanced Standing students select a concentration, Clinical Social Work Practice or Macro Social Work Practice. As in the full program, fifteen semester credit hours are required for both concentrations. Advanced Standing students are required to complete Social Policy Analysis and the Confronting Oppression and Injustice course, as well as 9 semester credit hours of free choice electives. Advanced Standing students complete 500 clock hours of practicum.

PRACTICUM EDUCATION

The Practicum experience is an essential component of the College's professional education for social work practice. The purpose of practicum education is to provide students with opportunities for development, integration, and reinforcement of competence through performance in actual service delivery situations. As students undertake learning within the reality of agency life, theory from the classroom is applied, skills are developed and refined, and attitudes and values are

examined. Students are afforded opportunities for analysis of the effects of social policy on programs and services, opportunities for the development of research questions in relation to practice efforts, and opportunities for evaluation of practice interventions.

The UH-GCSW is affiliated with over 300 social service agencies in the Greater Houston area and beyond. Practicum instruction is provided by qualified social workers practicing within those agencies and is overseen by faculty practicum liaisons from the College. For more information on practicum requirements, visit: <https://uh.edu/socialwork/academics/practicum-education/>

CSWE 2022 EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND ACCREDITATION STANDARDS (EPAS)

The GCSW Student Standards is informed by the Council on Social Work Education accreditation standards. Accreditation is a system for recognizing educational institutions and professional programs as having met a certain level of performance, integrity and quality that entitles them the confidence of the educational community and the public they serve. For the most current EPAS and the competencies outlined for social work students, click here: <https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/policies-process/2022epas/>

NASW CODE OF ETHICS

Our professional organization, NASW, provides us with a Code of Ethics that serves as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers. This Code includes four sections, the preamble which summarizes the social work profession's mission and core values, the purpose which provides an overview of the Code's main functions and a brief guide for dealing with ethical issues or dilemmas in social work practice, Ethical Principles which presents a framework based on social work's core values, that inform social work practice and the Ethical Standards section which guides social workers' conduct. It is another important document for you to become familiar with as you begin your professional life as a social worker. Click here to read the Code of Ethics: <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>
<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-Spanish>

ADVISING

Academic Advising

Academic advising is housed within the GCSW in the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs. Within this office, there are 3 full-time advising staff, for each of our enrollment models. Advising is a process to help students negotiate the GCSW curriculum in a timely manner and to ensure all academic requirements are met for graduation; advising also incorporates assistance in

examining financial assistance options available in the GCSW, the University, or through other sources as well as other resources on and off campus that will support each student's success through and beyond the program. Advising requires a number of meetings with the student during their educational career; all students are strongly encouraged to consult with the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs to discuss educational and related professional issues. Advising staff provide general support to students throughout their time in the program.

To facilitate a successful academic experience and communicate advising procedures, the GCSW's orientation program, beginning right after admission, includes the following:

Welcome Sessions

In the spring and summer months, the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs holds Welcome Sessions for newly admitted students to introduce the program's mission, objectives, curricula requirements, practicum education, and other program information. Sessions are held online via Zoom. One to two of the sessions is specifically focused on financial aid and funding opportunities for the program. The sessions are open to all program options.

New Student Online Orientation Course

Pre-Orientation

In early June, all admitted students are sent a message through CollegeNet that includes reminders about orientation, a link to a Facebook page for admitted students, and information on scholarships and practicum.

Orientation Part 1: Asynchronous Orientation Course

In early July, admitted students are sent their individualized degree plans, with fall class registration numbers. They are also sent a link to an online Orientation course hosted in Canvas that includes multiple modules to assist them with onboarding to the University and the Graduate College of Social Work. Modules include Advising Overview, Advising Action Steps, Practicum Overview, SOCW 6201 Foundations of the Social Work Profession Course information, Financial Aid, Student Engagement, Resources, Orientation Next Steps and Orientation Meeting Re-Cap. Students are given 3 weeks to complete the course.

Orientation Part 2: Orientation Meeting

The second part of orientation is an event (in-person or online) where students engage in large and small group activities, hear a review of upcoming academic experiences, meet classmates, current students and staff, and learn more about student life. Participation in new student orientation is required for all incoming MSW students, but students can choose between attending in-person or online. Typically, the orientation meetings are held the 3rd week of July. During the noon hour of the day, students are invited to participate in a resource fair at which representatives from student organizations, concentrations and focused learning opportunities are available to share their information and answer questions.

Connection Interviews

In August, advisors reach out to every incoming student for a 20-30 minute one on one meeting to discuss the student's background, goals and support needs.

Ice Cream Social for Face-to-Face Advanced Standing Students

An additional orientation event we hold is specific to advanced standing students entering the one-year full-time program. In early August, advanced standing students have an opportunity to meet their cohort members, continuing students, tour the building and meet several faculty and staff members.

On-going Advising

Students meet with their assigned advisor throughout their course of study. Advisors host drop-in online advising sessions at least once a month during the academic year, with additional sessions in the months students register for class. We also send out a weekly newsletter, the Social Word, which includes advising updates and reminders. All students have access to an advising course in Canvas which includes similar modules as their orientation course. This course is updated on a regular basis and includes groups arranged by enrollment model and graduation status, allowing advising staff to send tailored messages. Additionally, we staff bimonthly Support Sessions during which we have a different topic of interest for students each month, assisting them with navigating the program. Topics include selecting a concentration, how to apply for graduation, searching for financial assistance, etc. Students can also schedule individual meetings with the advisor at any time. Students are encouraged to meet with their advisor at least once a semester.

Focused Learning Opportunities

Focused Learning Opportunities (FLOs) of which we have six also include professional development activities and advising. Examples of these programs include the Trauma Education Project (TEP) which provides students additional training in their practicum placements and advising and professional development from the program's director. Participants of the GLOBE (Global Leaders of Behavioral Health Education) receive specialized training in common behavioral health treatments, a practicum placement that offers clinical experience in behavioral health, mentoring, job networking opportunities and a stipend of \$10,000 to be paid in monthly payments during the student's final year of practicum. Part of the Political Social Work FLO, the Austin Legislative Internship is one of a very few opportunities nationally for social work students to participate full-time in the legislative policy-making process. Both Clinical and Macro students, in all program options are eligible to participate, and they receive specialized advising, as part of the process. Students report that this is an incredible and useful learning experience, one that often changes their life. A list of these opportunities is on our website <https://www.uh.edu/socialwork/academics/msw/unique-opportunities/>.

Degree Plans

Sample degree plans can be found on the UH GCSW website at:

<https://uh.edu/socialwork/academics/msw/>

Career and Professional Advising

Career Services, along with the degree from the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work, will unlock lifelong social work job opportunities that will not only enrich each student's professional life but help make our community and our world a better place. Career Services helps students rethink the employment search from "looking for a job" to "selling your knowledge, experience, skills, and personal attributes" in a manner that helps an employer understand that you are the best person for the job.

Individual appointments, lunchtime speakers, classes, and seminars are all a part of what Career Services offers students and alumni. Workshops are held at both the Main Campus and the UH Sugar Land Campus and many are livestreamed for online students. Virtual appointments are available. Topics covered in workshops and individual appointments include career options in Social Work, current job opportunities, resume development and critiques, effective job search techniques, interview strategies, online resources and salary information. The website is also home to a Job Board and other additional career resources. For more information contact Ann Liberman at aliberman@uh.edu, 713-743-8071 or go to: <https://uh.edu/socialwork/alumni/career-services/>

MSW STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Wellness Resources

Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)

As a student, you may encounter academic, emotional, and social concerns at some point in your time at UH. CAPS is available to help students cope and work towards self-understanding and improvement of psychological, interpersonal, and academic functioning. CAPS is located at both the Main Campus in Student Services Center 1 room 226 and the George Building room 119 at the UH Sugar Land campus, by appointment. Online students can call CAPS for crisis counseling and/or referral services. Call (713) 743-5454 to schedule a weekday appointment. For more information: <https://uh.edu/caps/>

Student Health Center & Pharmacy

The University of Houston Health Center is a comprehensive primary healthcare facility. The Health Center offers affordable and accessible quality primary medical and mental health care. The pharmacy offers prescription and non-prescription medications at competitive prices often lower

than off campus. Pharmacy services are available to all currently enrolled students, faculty, and staff. Call 713-743-5151 to contact them. For more information:

<https://www.uh.edu/healthcenter/>

Campus Recreation

Campus Recreation provides the UH community an inclusive environment that cultivates the development of life skills through engaging and meaningful recreation programs, facilities and service. The Campus Rec is home a host of Rec Sports and Family Programs including, Intramural Sports and Sports Clubs. Students taking one or more semester hours automatically become Campus Recreation and Wellness Center (CRWC) members when they register and pay the student fee. For more information: <https://uh.edu/recreation/>

CougarSAFE: UH Emergency Communications

The University of Houston is an open campus filled with people who care about each other. Because of its open accessibility, all students, faculty and staff are encouraged to exercise a sense of personal responsibility for their own safety and well-being, and the safety and well-being of others. While crime can happen anywhere, when we act as a community that knows and cares about the safety of others, ourselves and our property, we lessen the likelihood of being victimized, and we showcase our Cougar Pride. For more information: <https://www.uh.edu/campus-safety-division/index.php>

For the Main Campus, call the University of Houston Police Department at 713-743-3333 for a security escort or to report a crime. Call from any emergency campus phone located on the blue light poles around campus. In case of a personal emergency on campus, you can contact the UH Police Department at (713) 743-3333 or 911 from a campus phone.

For the UH Sugar Land Campus, the Security Office can be found on the first floor of Brazos Hall in room 174 and a satellite desk in the Albert and Mamie George Building. Security can be contacted at slsecurity@uh.edu and at 832-842-2929. Security can be called if students feel they need an escort to their vehicle.

For both campuses, in the event of weather related or other campus wide emergencies, you can access current information by checking the UH website and local media. The university will also communicate with you via text messaging. For this reason, it's important to have your information updated.

UH Go

<https://uh.edu/go/> is the official mobile app for the University of Houston. Here you will find university information and easy access to services from the convenience of your mobile device including maps to help guide you across campus, event information, UH Athletics schedules, emergency notifications, and alerts, and more.

Student Life Resources

Welcome Center

The UH Welcome Center (located at Entrance 1 at the corner of Calhoun & University of the Main Campus) houses university representatives from Registration & Academic Records, Student Financial Services, Scholarship & Financial Aid, Parking & Transportation and the University Copy Center. For more information visit: <https://uh.edu/welcomecenter/>

Center for Student Advocacy

The Center for Student Advocacy and Community (CSAC) is designed to help students meet their essential needs, supporting them in achieving their academic & personal goals. Designed to be a one stop for advocacy, the center connects students to campus and local resources with a focus on holistic wellbeing through signature programs and collaborative efforts with University Career Services, UH Wellness, Campus Recreation, and other campus departments. The center provides food insecurity support, maintains a resource list, and provides homelessness support. For more information visit: <https://uh.edu/csac/>

Women and Gender Resource Center

The Women and Gender Resource Center is open to everyone and provides programs, services and resources. For more information visit: <https://uh.edu/wgrc/>

International Student Resources

International Student and Scholar Services Office (ISSSO) provides for the special needs of international students and exchange visitors related to their status as non-immigrants of the United States. It fulfills the University of Houston's responsibility to comply with the laws and regulations of the U.S. and federal government and promotes internationalization through comprehensive services and programs. To contact ISSSO, call (713) 743-5065 or visit their website at <https://www.uh.edu/oisss/>

Student Centers:

The student center south serves as the main student center and is located near University Drive and Calhoun (entrance 1). The Student Center houses the UH Bookstore, Chick Fil A, Starbucks, Panda Express and Shasta's Cones, TDECU, and more. At the UH Sugar Land Campus, Vending Services are available in the student lounges located on the first floor of Brazos Hall and the first floor of the George Building. Vending machines accept cash and credit card. Vending refunds are available in the George Building, Room 101.

Academic Resources

If You Need Accommodations for a Disability, Register at the Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center (<https://uh.edu/accessibility/>) The Dart Center for Students provides

accommodations and support services to UH students who have any type of temporary or permanent health impairment, physical limitation, psychiatric disorder, or learning disability. To find out more about their services and to begin the registration process with their office, please visit their website. **Faculty cannot make accommodations unless you have registered at the CSD office and accommodations are not retroactive- only proactive- so please contact the office to apply for yours soon if needed.** For UH Sugar Land Campus and Online Program students, the Dart Center allows students who live outside the Houston area to request a phone or virtual appointment.

UH Library Services

The M.D. Anderson Library is located in the middle of campus near the E. Cullen Building and the University Center. The library has study space, computers, printers, and copiers and is open most days of the week. Find out more here: <https://libraries.uh.edu/>

At the UH Sugar Land Campus, the University Branch Library is a joint-collaboration between the University of Houston System (UHS), Wharton County Junior College , and Fort Bend County. UHS students, faculty, and staff may use the library's resources for their academic needs. For more information about the library's services, operations, and hours, see the [University Branch Library webpage: https://uh.edu/sugarland/campus-services/library/](https://uh.edu/sugarland/campus-services/library/) faculty, staff, and students will need a county library card to check out materials and use the computer, printing, and learning resources.

Jose-Luis Quintero is the assigned UH librarian for all GCSW students. Jose can be reached at [jqunte2@central.uh.edu](mailto:jquinte2@central.uh.edu).

UH Writing Center

The University of Houston Writing Center, 234 Classroom and Business Building at the Main Campus, is an essential resource to our students. The Writing Center offers one-on-one consultations in which trained Writing Consultants assist students with various types of writing (available by appointment only). Students also have the option to meet online with trained consultants to discuss their writing from any location through our Online Writing Services. For more information: <https://uh.edu/writing-center/>

Access UH/ MyUH Online Services Portal

Access UH provides access to a host web-based services at UH including Blackboard, Faculty Course Evaluations, Get Involved, University Career Services, and MyUH Self-Service. For more information: <https://accessuh.uh.edu/login.php>

UH Registrar

The Office of the University Registrar (OUR) supports student access and success by maintaining the integrity of academic policies and official student educational records, ensuring compliance with state and federal rules and regulations, and certifying students for graduation, athletic

eligibility, veteran educational benefits, and other purposes. For more information:

<https://uh.edu/enrollment-services/registrar/>

Canvas

Canvas is the learning management system that is used for online, face to face and hybrid courses at the University of Houston. Canvas is where students access course syllabi, course content, assignments, and exams. Students will gain access to Canvas 5-7 days before the official day the class begins or within 1-2 days of registration after classes begin. For trainings and information about Canvas, go to <https://uh.edu/canvas/>

Financial Resources

UH Financial Aid

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid provides financial assistance to students through grants, loans, scholarships, and employment. For more information: <https://uh.edu/financial/>

GCSW Financial Support

UH GCSW makes every effort to assist students in obtaining financial support for their graduate education. We offer a number of scholarships, stipend programs, assistantships, and fellowships to students *as funds are available*. Any non-Texas resident who receives a scholarship of \$1,000 or more will receive in-state (resident) tuition rates. The GCSW Scholarship Application deadline is May 15th each year. For more information, visit: <https://uh.edu/socialwork/current-students/scholarships/>

GCSW Resources

GCSW Career Services

Career Services, along with your degree from the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work, will unlock lifelong social work job opportunities that will not only enrich your professional life but help you to make our community and our world a better place. Career Services helps you to rethink the employment search from "looking for a job" to "selling your knowledge, experience, skills, and personal attributes" in a manner that helps an employer understand that you are the best person for the job.

Individual appointments, lunchtime speakers, classes, and seminars are all a part of what Career Services offers students and alumni. Workshops are held at both the Main Campus and the UH Sugar Land Campus and many are livestreamed for online students. Virtual appointments are available. Topics covered in workshops and individual appointments include career options in Social Work, current job opportunities, resume development and critiques, effective job search techniques, interview strategies, online resources and salary information. The website is also home to a Job Board and other additional career resources. For more information contact Ann

Liberman at aliberman@uh.edu, 713-743-8071 or go to: <https://uh.edu/socialwork/alumni/career-services/>

GCSW IT Support

The Center for Information Technology can assist with any technical problems you may have during your semester. The GCSW IT office in Room 217, 2nd floor. Contact information for the office is gcswits@uh.edu, 713-743-1782.

GCSW Student Lounge and Study Space

At the Social Work Building, main campus, the GCSW has a large student lounge with a refrigerator and microwave on the second floor in Room 227. Students must have their student ID to enter. The lounge includes student organization boards. Additional study space with an area for group meetings is available in Room 218 of the Social Work Building.

UH Sugar Land students have access to student lounges located on the first floor of Brazos Hall and the first floor of the George Building as well as the Computer Lab on the 3rd floor.

Lactation Rooms

The GCSW has a Lactation Room on the 2nd floor, Room 233. To gain access, send an email to gcswinfo@uh.edu or call 713-743-8075. There are additional lactation rooms across campus. For a full list, see <https://ssl.uh.edu/wgrc/resources/lactation-information/>.

The UH Sugar Land Campus does not have actual lactation rooms on campus, however they do have a private conference room that is available for reservation. Students should talk with their advisor if they need to reserve a private space.

GET INVOLVED

Alumni Mentorship Program

Sharing practical, day-to-day experience and knowledge is imperative for the provision of successful, impactful social work. The UH GCSW Alumni Board sponsors the Student/Alumni Mentorship Program which pairs current MSW students with social workers in the practicum of their interest. This support allows current MSW students, recent alumni, or those seeking change within the practicum of social work to make better and more confident decisions to successfully address needs and challenges in their careers. Contact: Ann Liberman at aliberman@uh.edu, 713-743-8071. Website: <http://www.uh.edu/socialwork/alumni/student-alumni-mentorship/>.

Cohort Communicators

Cohort Communicators includes representatives from each MSW cohort (including Advanced Standing student groups) who attend a Zoom meeting once a month with GCSW administrative staff from the Practicum Office, Office of Admissions and Student Affairs and the Hybrid/Online

Program. The communicator's role is to serve as a liaison between their cohort and GCSW staff. Information about GCSW events, deadlines and other information is communicated and then shared by the communicators with their cohorts. Communicators also have the opportunity to share about their cohort's needs with GCSW staff. The goal of the Cohort Communicators program is to enhance the overall student experience and build strong communication lines. Contacts: Michael Kern at mkern@uh.edu or Amber Mollhagen at amollhagen@uh.edu.

GCSW Ambassadors

GCSW Student Ambassadors are enthusiastic students who work with the GCSW Admissions and Recruitment team to represent the college and the profession of social work out in the community and with prospective students. We are looking for individuals who are passionate about their professional goals and have a sense of pride in the college. Ambassadors assist with recruitment and retention events, orientation and other college-wide events. Applicants must be incoming or current students of the GCSW (MSW or PhD) and be in good standing with the GCSW. Contact: Anna Hunter at anjohns8@central.uh.edu.

GCSW Student Organizations

Joining a GCSW Student Organization is a wonderful way to get involved with other students, faculty and community members who share your interests and professional goals and provides students with leadership and professional development opportunities, and opportunities to engage in social activities and build friendships and a professional network. Some organizations require a small fee for membership. Click here for a full list of organizations - <http://www.uh.edu/socialwork/current-students/organizations/>.

UH Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA)

GPSA provides an interdisciplinary community for University of Houston graduate and professional students to collaborate on academic endeavors and social life experiences. For more information: <https://uh.edu/graduate-school/gpsa/>

MSW New Student Glossary

Academic Advisor: Professional staff member who works with students to help with course planning and other academic matters. You will receive your academic advisor assignments at orientation. The academic advisor also helps students with issues that emerge during the program.

Areas of Specialized Practice or Concentrations: All MSW students are required to select one of two concentration choices: Clinical Practice or Macro Practice. Full program students will begin to take their concentration courses after their foundation classes are completed. Advanced standing students will take concentration courses in their first semester.

Canvas: Canvas is the learning management system that stores all course content including the syllabus, readings, assignments and grades.

Clinical Social Work: The application of theories, methods, skills, values and ethics needed to enhance the cognitive, mental, emotional, behavioral, physical and social well-being of individuals, couples, families, groups and communities. Its methods are relationship-centered, contextualized, culturally sensitive and strengths focused and includes knowledge about biopsychosocial functioning - and - evidence based interventions.

Cohort Communicators: Student representatives from each cohort who meet with GCSW administrators to share information, feedback and suggestions.

CSWE: Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is the national accreditation entity for social work education.

Practicum Education: Your practicum placement or internship in the MSW program. Full program students will take 4 practicum courses for a total of 900 clock hours in the practicum in two different settings. Advanced standing students take 2 practicum courses for a total of 500 clock hours in one setting.

Practicum Liaison: The GCSW practicum office representative who assists you with your practicum placements. They will support you at your practicum site and meet with you and your practicum instructor.

Practicum Instructor: The person who provides you with supervision and instruction while at your agency. This person is usually an employee of the agency at which you are assigned.

FLO's: Focused Learning Opportunities (FLO's) are optional ways MSW students can develop an in-depth and holistic focus in a specific area of social work practice. FLOs are organized around areas of expertise of current GCSW faculty, enabling students to pair learning in a variety of environments (classroom, practicum, community engagement, trainings, etc.) with meaningful mentorship from GCSW faculty members. FLOs are not a requirement of the MSW program, but rather an additional opportunity available to students. Additional information is available here:

<https://uh.edu/socialwork/academics/msw/unique-opportunities/>

GCSW: Graduate College of Social Work

LMSW: Licensed Master Social Worker. In order to become licensed upon graduation, you must pass an exam that you will be eligible to sit for once you complete the MSW program. This license is required before the LCSW in Texas. To learn more, see the [Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council](#).

LCSW: Licensed Clinical Social Worker. In Texas, this license is only available to those who have an LMSW and required supervision hours. To learn more, visit this website:

<https://bhec.texas.gov/texas-state-board-of-social-worker-examiners/>

Macro: Social work in communities, organizations & policy settings. Think big picture and systems.

Micro: Clinical social work. Therapy (individual & group) and case management are micro skills.

NASW: National Association of Social Workers, the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of social workers, to create and maintain professional standards and to advance sound social policies.

Social Word: Weekly newsletter sent to all MSW students which includes updates from the Dean, advisors, the practicum office and information about events and activities at the GCSW and in the community. A must read!

Summary of Expectations Of Students

Here are a few things to keep in mind about what the faculty and staff expect of you as a new MSW student.

- If you don't know or understand, ask the appropriate person.
- Take advantage of college and university resources.
- Meet with your Academic Advisor at least once a semester.
- Meet with your Practicum Liaison at least once a semester.
- Check your e-mail daily and read all GCSW e-mails.
- Finish all required tasks and paperwork by stated deadlines.
- Address grievances through appropriate channels.
- Find allies to support you including professors, practicum faculty, staff and your peers.
- Reach out when you're struggling.
- Practice good self-care.

DIRECTORY

Main Contact Information

Phone: 713-743-8075

Fax: 713-743-8149

Email: gcswinfo@uh.edu

Website: www.uh.edu/socialwork

For a full list of faculty, visit: <https://www.uh.edu/socialwork/about/faculty-directory/>

For a list of all staff and administrative offices, visit: <https://www.uh.edu/socialwork/about/admin/>

BUILDING ART HIGHLIGHTS

Calligraffiti

Located on the on east side on GCSW building, Calligraffiti was installed by artist eL Seed. It's purpose is to bridge the ancient classical art of Arabic calligraphy with 21st century street expressions. It reads, in the poetic script of Arabic: "Knowledge is the food of genius, and my son, let no opportunity escape you to treasure up knowledge." -Sam Houston

Malala Painting

The painting of Malala on the 2nd floor of the building is the product of a student project in the Global Justice course and was done to raise awareness of the right of every girl to access free, safe, and quality education around the world.

Pulling Together Mural

The "Pulling Together" Tile Mosaic Mural was initially installed on the first floor of the Social Work Building by public artist Reginald Adams on March 31, 2000. The mural covered seven interior walls of the GCSW lobby and included life-sized images of people pulling chains of oppression that prevent entry into a world characterized by Social and Economic Justice for All. Many of the images were of faculty, students, staff, and community members of the GCSW from the year it was dedicated. The mural was meant to capture the journey of the students who graduated and went into the community to contribute to various organizations. Adams describes, "The idea was that we are all 'pulling together' - the title of the mural- in that narrative around the University's values and objectives".

With the renovation of the first floor in 2021, Adams had an opportunity to redo this project with a focus on reengaging the common community and bringing more life to the mural. The mural was recreated to its original likeness but with finer attention to detail and serves as a memory as it continues to speak to this college and resonates with the students, faculty and visitors of the University.

MSW STUDENT STANDARDS

The MSW Student Standards document is a GCSW faculty approved comprehensive set of policies and procedures for MSW students in the Graduate College of Social Work. The MSW Student Standards document is available online for your reference here:

<https://uh.edu/socialwork/current-students/policies/>

University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work MSW Student Standards

Adopted May 5, 2000, revised 3/1/2002, 2/6/2004, 3/5/2004, 1/9/2012, 3/11/2014, 4/8/2014, 12/12/2014, 5/14/2015, 8/21/2017, 4/6/2018, 5/3/2024

The Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW) faculty and professional staff are responsible for determining whether students demonstrate the required level of classroom, practicum, professional, and ethical achievement appropriate for professional interactions with colleagues, faculty, practicum instructors, administrators, staff, and clients.

The College is committed to the treatment of students with fairness and equity throughout the program. This policy is applied to students' enrollment in the MSW program at any point in time, from admission to graduation. Each admitted student is required to read, comprehend and complete the Student Standards Contract. Students are required to adhere to MSW program policies, GCSW and University of Houston (UH) policies.

STUDENT STANDARDS

Due to the professional nature of social work practice, the GCSW has different expectations of students than do non-professional programs. In order to meet its responsibilities to provide quality professional social work education and to ensure that its graduates are able to function in a broad array of professional activities, GCSW faculty evaluates the academic performance of students in five general areas: professional readiness, professional commitment and ethical conduct, professional behavior, scholastic performance, and attendance and punctuality. Meeting the criteria for scholastic performance is necessary, but not sufficient to ensure continued enrollment in the program. Demonstration of professional and ethical behavior, commitment, and readiness is also required. Below are the fundamental requirements for successful completion of a degree from the GCSW.

PROFESSIONAL READINESS

Students are expected to demonstrate generally accepted standards of personal integrity, health and emotional stability, self-care, stress management, communication skills, interpersonal skills and self-awareness. This includes the following.

1. Personal Integrity: Is open to learning and is honest with oneself and colleagues.

2. **Health & Emotional Stability:** Uses thoughtful judgment in professional situations. Responsibly addresses one's own health and emotional challenges that may interfere with scholastic and professional performance.
3. **Self-Care & Stress Management:** Seeks and effectively practices self-care, uses help, and demonstrates ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms.
4. **Communication Skills:** Communicates responsibly, sensitively and with respect toward colleagues, faculty, practicum instructors, administrators, staff, and clients.
5. **Interpersonal Skills:** Expresses ideas and feelings which can be heard and understood by others. Demonstrates willingness and an ability to listen to others.
6. **Self-Awareness:** Exhibits knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships. Accurately assesses one's own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice on an ongoing basis. Shows a beginning level of self-awareness and of how one is perceived by others. Reflects on one's own limitations as relate to professional capacities. Is willing to examine and change behavior when it interferes in working with clients and other professionals.

PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT AND ETHICAL CONDUCT

1. Exhibits a strong commitment to the essential values of social work and the pursuit of promoting social, economic and political justice:
2. Adheres to the NASW Code of Ethics and the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners Code of Conduct.
3. Appreciates the value of diversity. Works with and relates to others who are different from oneself, regardless of the student's own personal, religious, and/or cultural values. Provides service to all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious beliefs, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or value system.
4. Comprehends other individuals' ways of life and differing values. Uses empathic communication and support of the client as a basis for a productive professional relationship.
5. Shows respect for the rights of others. Commits to the clients' and human rights to freedom of choice and self-determination.
6. Maintains the professional standard of confidentiality as it relates to: human service, classroom and research activities, and practicum placement.
7. Demonstrates consistent honesty and integrity by being truthful about one's own background, experiences, and qualifications.
8. Demonstrates clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. Refrains from sexually harassing others, making verbal or physical threats, being involved in sexual relationships with clients, abusing others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways, or participating in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.
9. Evaluates clients and their situations in a systematic, factual way. Refrains from imposing personal biases during interactions with others.
10. Uses technology ethically and appropriately.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

1. Exhibits behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, and professional ethical standards in classroom, practicum, and community settings.
2. Shows appearance and demeanor that are appropriate to the roles and settings encountered during the educational experiences.
3. Shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work ethics, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, observing deadlines, completing tasks on time, and keeping appointments or making alternate arrangements.
4. Works effectively with others, regardless of level of authority or academic position.
5. Advocates for one's self in a constructive manner and first uses established channels for conflict resolution.
6. Shows a willingness to acknowledge constructive feedback or supervision, as well as uses such feedback to enhance professional development.
7. Takes responsibility in following through with referrals to campus resources to enhance the probability of academic success, professional development and self-care.
8. Uses oral, written, and electronic communication professionally.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Policy on Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

The full explanation of the UH Academic Honesty Policy and Procedure is available [here](#).

“Academic dishonesty” means employing a method or technique or engaging in conduct in an academic endeavor that contravenes the standards of ethical integrity expected at the University of Houston or by a course instructor to fulfill any and all academic requirements.

Process: Students shall have the responsibility of reporting incidents of alleged academic dishonesty to the instructor of record involved or to the appropriate authority if the alleged act is not associated with a specific class within 5 class days of the incident. Faculty or instructor of record shall have the responsibility of reporting incidents of alleged academic dishonesty through their departmental hearing officer within 5 class days of the incident (see Article 5 of the Academic Honesty Policy). The faculty should include the recommended sanction in the report. The departmental hearing officer will notify the student of the report and recommended sanction. The student can accept the sanction and waive a hearing or request a departmental hearing.

If either the student or the instructor wishes to appeal the decision of the departmental hearing officer, they must file a written request for a hearing with the college hearing officer within 10 class days of the departmental hearing officer's decision. The Academic Honesty panel will consist of two faculty and three students chosen by the college hearing officer.

GPA Requirement, Academic Warning and Probation

Students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) and satisfactory performance in all courses, including practicum. If a student's cumulative GPA falls below 3.00, the student is placed on Academic Warning. When a student is placed on Academic Warning, the student will be notified and will be instructed to contact their academic advisor.

A student regains satisfactory academic standing when their cumulative GPA returns to 3.00 or above. If the student does not raise the GPA to 3.0 after one long semester on Academic Warning, the student will be placed on Academic Probation. A student on Academic Probation will be dismissed from the program if either of the following occurs:

1. the student's cumulative GPA remains below 3.0 after completing an additional 9 SCH of letter-graded coursework.
2. the student has not completed 9 SCH of letter-graded coursework within two long semesters after being placed on academic probation and the student's cumulative GPA remains below 3.0.

Failure to maintain a 3.00 GPA may also result in loss of financial support. Students admitted conditionally must earn a minimum GPA of 3.0 in their first semester of graduate work at the GCSW. Failure to achieve a 3.0 GPA will result in dismissal from the MSW program.

Practicum Policies

All practicum policies are driven by and in accordance with the Council on Social Work Education 2022 Educational Policies & Accreditation Standards (EPAS 2022).

Practicum Placement Requirements

All practicum courses (Generalist 1 & 2, Macro 1 & 2, Clinical 1 & 2, Practicum Elective) require an approved practicum setting and designation of a practicum instructor who has an MSW and at least two years of post-social work degree practice experience in social work.

At least 900 clock hours in practicum education must be completed for the MSW degree. No practicum hours can be counted or accrued until after full approval of the practicum setting and onboarding of a qualified practicum instructor have been received.

Each practicum course has specific course requirements, such as a minimum number of clock hours, a practicum form, and may include monthly supervision logs, which must be completed in full to receive a course grade.

Practicum Grades

All practicum courses are assessed and graded Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. A Satisfactory grade is earned once sufficient demonstration of the 9 competencies and behaviors is achieved and all course requirements are met. A Satisfactory grade is recommended by a practicum instructor on the Practicum Form during the Evaluation Phase. The student then reviews and signs the form,

which indicates agreement with the assessment and recommended grade. The assigned Practicum Faculty will review that all course requirements have been met and then sign the form, indicating approval of the grade and finalization of the form. Final grades are approved and entered by the faculty of record, typically the Director of Practicum Education and/or the Assistant Director of Practicum.

Incomplete grades are assigned for practicum courses when course requirements are not completed by the Evaluation Phase due date. A student must be currently passing the course or have a reasonable chance of passing the course to be assigned an Incomplete. Students should stay in contact with the Practicum Team about an Incomplete status in any practicum course. Policies in the Incomplete Grades section of this policy document are applicable to practicum courses.

An Unsatisfactory grade can be earned for reasons such as, but not limited to, unacceptable progress in demonstration of the 9 competencies and behaviors, documented harmful conduct and/or lack of progression towards course requirements. An Unsatisfactory will be assigned following a review and approval from the Practicum Faculty and Director or Assistant Director. A practicum instructor must discuss unsatisfactory performance with the student and Practicum Faculty prior to the Evaluation Phase. If a student is concerned, they may receive an Unsatisfactory grade recommendation, they should contact their Practicum Faculty immediately.

An Unsatisfactory grade counts as a low grade and is subject to any GCSW Low-Grade Policy. No credit is received for the practicum course with an Unsatisfactory and all requirements must be repeated.

Practicum Stop/Changes

After a placement is confirmed and/or started any change in placement will require student participation in a practicum stop process. A practicum stop may result in a loss of accrued practicum hours and once approved will require participation in a re-placement process. A new/different practicum placement cannot be started without approval by the Practicum Team. The re-placement process may impact the student's degree plan and graduation timeline.

NOTE: All additional and expanded practicum policies and procedures can be found in the Practicum Education Manual.

No Credit

Although grades of D+ and lower are included in the computed grade point average, the university awards no credit toward the degree for courses in which the student receives a grade below C-. Students will also not receive credit for courses completed with a U. If such courses are required for the degree, the student will be required to take the courses again.

Automatic Academic Dismissal

Whether or not in repeated courses, a student is automatically dismissed from the program based on the Low-Grade Rule as follows:

Receives 3 low grades of D's, F's and/or U's in graduate courses attempted at this college, whether or not in repeated courses.

A student on Academic Probation (see Academic Warning and Probation) will be dismissed from the graduate program if either of the following occurs:

1. the student's cumulative GPA remains below 3.0 after completing an additional 9 SCH of letter-graded coursework.
2. the student has not completed 9 SCH of letter-graded coursework within two long semesters after being placed on Academic Probation and the student's cumulative GPA remains below 3.0.

Students admitted conditionally must earn a minimum GPA of 3.0 in their first semester of graduate work at the GCSW. Failure to achieve a 3.0 GPA will result in dismissal from the M.S.W. program.

A dismissed student is ineligible for an MSW degree at this College and will not be allowed to re-enroll in the MSW Program.

Low GPA at Time of Graduation

University of Houston will not award or honor a degree with a cumulative GPA below 3.0, despite successful completion of coursework.

Incomplete Grades

The temporary grade of I (incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade assigned when students for non-academic reasons beyond their control have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements for a course. The student must:

1. be currently passing the course or have a reasonable chance of passing the course, in the judgment of the instructor (which may include the Office of Practicum Education);
2. contact the instructor immediately regarding the reasons that prevent the student from completing the course, final assignment and/or final examination, and initiate the request for an I grade as soon as possible, before the end of the term;
3. not re-enroll for the courses in which their grade is currently recorded as an I. Even when the conditions for fulfilling the course requirements include participation in all or part of the same course in another semester, the student must not re-enroll for the course;
4. make arrangements with the instructor to complete the course requirements, if assigned;

5. understand that the only way to have an I grade changed to a passing grade is to fulfill course requirements in accordance with the conditions and timeline specified by the instructor;
6. understand that the grade of I (incomplete) must be changed by fulfillment of course requirements within 12 months of the end of the term or session in which the I grade was received, or it will be converted automatically to an F or U (in S-U graded courses); and
7. understand that the grade of I may be changed only to another letter grade. If the student does not complete the course requirements in the time allotted (see point f. above) the I grade will convert to an F grade and will be noted as a lapsed incomplete on the student's transcript. An I grade, once lapsed to an F grade or changed to another letter grade, may not be changed back to an I grade or to a grade of W.

After the course work is completed by the student, the instructor will submit an electronic grade change form to change the I grade to the grade earned. Incomplete grades must be resolved before graduation. In the case of a student enrolled in the graduating semester, a grade of I which has not been changed by the date of graduation will have the effect of an F or U.

DEGREE PLAN POLICIES

Foundation Curriculum

The generalist curriculum includes 15-semester credit hours of foundation coursework which serves as the prerequisite for all other GCSW courses. Students must successfully complete the foundation courses listed below (with grades of C or better or grades of S) before they can enroll in advanced or concentration coursework. Failure to complete one or more of the classes listed here may delay students' progression in the program, and students' degree plans may be adjusted. In this situation, students can be permitted to enroll in Generalist Practicum 2 and/or open electives.

Foundation courses include:

1. Foundation of Social Work Profession (2 SCH)
2. Social Work Policy in the Social Work Environment (3 SCH)
3. Human Diversity/Human Development (3 SCH)
4. Research and Knowledge Building for SW Practice (3 SCH)
5. Social Work Practice Skills (3 SCH)
6. Generalist Practicum 1 (1 SCH)

Enrollment Status

Students must register for courses in the specific enrollment model (face to face, hybrid, or online) to which they were admitted. Students who wish to change their enrollment status must submit a Request for Change in Enrollment Model form to the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs. Any student who enrolls in a course outside their enrollment model prior to receiving approval will be dropped from the course/s.

Time Limitation on Completion of Degrees

Students enrolled as graduate students at the University of Houston must complete the MSW program within five years of the enrollment date.

Transfer Credit Policy

Students admitted to the GCSW who have previous graduate course work or wish to take classes outside the college may discuss transfer of credit with their academic advisor. Six to nine hours of graduate course work may be applied to the MSW degree. Course reviews for previously taken graduate classes will not be initiated until the student has successfully completed foundation. Students who wish to take classes outside the College must have the syllabus preapproved before enrolling in the class. Approval is subject to successful completion of foundation coursework. A grade of B or better is required for any credits to be transferred. The course must be within 5 years at the time of the awarding of the MSW. Work taken while in pursuit of an earned degree cannot be transferred.

Enrollment Limit Policy

The maximum graduate student MSW course load in the Fall or Spring semester is 15 semester credit hours (SCHs) and 6 SCH in the Summer semester with the exception of pre-approved degree plans that allow for 9 SCH in the Summer semester.

1. The Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs can approve a course overload for any one semester under necessary circumstances. A student must complete and submit an overload request form on which they can specify the reason for the course overload request.
2. An MSW student's course load can be limited based on the individual student's academic program and/or academic performance.
3. There is no minimum SCH requirement for course enrollment in a given semester. However, if no courses are taken in a semester, the student must complete and submit a Request for Leave of Absence (LOA) Form to the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs. International students should check with ISSSO for additional enrollment policy information.

Continuous Enrollment and Leave of Absence

Students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment throughout their course of study. A temporary, time limited leave of absence generally up to 12 months may be granted for compelling reasons. To take a leave of absence, students should complete a Request for Leave of Absence (LOA) form. Students who fail to maintain continuous enrollment without initiating an official leave of absence will be considered as having withdrawn from the MSW program. Students may be required to reapply for admission without continuous enrollment or an approved LOA request.

ACTIVE COURSE ENGAGEMENT

To get a full learning experience at the GCSW, it is expected that students actively engage with all courses, including practicum. Within our program, courses may have a range of expectations around attendance and engagement with course materials and activities. Students are responsible for adhering to attendance and engagement expectations stated in each course syllabus and for understanding and seeking clarification for the expectations for each course in which they enroll. Faculty may contact students and/or the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs to support them if they have concerns about student attendance or engagement.

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND/OR ADDRESS CONCERNS

Students have the right to provide feedback and offer input regarding academic and student affairs. Opportunities for providing feedback or to address concerns include the following:

1. Providing general feedback:
 - a. To provide feedback about a course: Students can complete confidential mid-semester and end of course evaluations. Students can also share concerns with their assigned cohort communicator who meets with administrators once a month during the long semesters.
 - b. To provide feedback about the program: Students can complete the GCSW's annual end of year survey. Students can also share concerns with their assigned cohort communicator who meets with administrators once a month during the long semesters.
2. Addressing concerns:
 - a. To address concerns about a faculty member, advisor, or administrator: Students are encouraged to first attempt to informally resolve issues with the person or office with whom they have a concern prior to moving to more formal channels.
 - b. To submit a complaint about a faculty member, advisor, and/or administrator: Students can contact the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to share their concerns by email or to set up a meeting.
 - c. To submit a complaint about a practicum instructor or preceptor: Students can contact the Office of Practicum Education to share their concerns
 - d. To seek redress of any grievances related to academic affairs: Students can participate in the grievance process outlined in Section 4 of the Student Standards.
 - e. To confidentially raise and discuss concerns about academic issues, interpersonal difficulties and to receive assistance in identifying options for resolving the conflicts and concerns: Students can seek out Ombuds Services:
<https://www.uh.edu/graduate-school/ombuds-services/>
3. Reporting misconduct or discrimination:
 - a. To report sexual misconduct or discrimination on the basis of race or color, national origin, religion, age over 40, sex or gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and

expression, disability, genetic information, or veteran's status: Students can submit a report form with UH EOS here: <https://www.uh.edu/eos-forms/>

VIOLATIONS OF STUDENT STANDARDS

Three levels of review can occur in reviewing student's academic performance.

Three Levels of Review

Level 1

When a faculty member or practicum instructor has a concern in practicum or the classroom regarding a MSW student's professional readiness, professional commitment and ethical conduct, professional behavior, scholastic performance and/or attendance and punctuality, a discussion should be held with the student and the faculty member or practicum instructor expressing the concern.

The faculty member or practicum instructor will:

1. Communicate concerns directly with the student and seek to work with the student to resolve the concerns.
2. Inform the practicum liaison or advisor of the concerns in order to identify potential patterns and issues related to the student.
3. Document date/s and content of meeting with the student.

Level 2

When a faculty member, practicum liaison/instructor, advisor or administrator has a concern in practicum or the classroom regarding a MSW student's professional readiness, professional commitment and ethical conduct, professional behavior, scholastic performance, and/or attendance and punctuality that has not been resolved with talking with the student, the faculty member or practicum instructor will meet with the student along with an administrator or advising staff member.

The group will:

1. Discuss concerns directly with the student and seek to work with the student to resolve the concerns.
2. Initiate a student action plan (see description of action plan below), in consultation with one another, if applicable.
3. Document date and content of meeting with student.

An Action Plan establishes formal conditions that must be met by the student and can include, but is not limited to: reduced course load; resource or support referrals; delayed enrollment in a practicum course; or leave of absence. An action plan can be initiated by faculty or staff.

Level 3

Should the student fail to meet the specified outcomes identified and agreed to in the Action Plan or there are serious concerns, the faculty member and the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs or Director of Practicum Education will make a recommendation to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to establish formal conditions for the students' continuance or to dismiss the student. The Associate Dean will notify the student, the faculty member, the Dean, and other necessary persons, of the decision in writing.

Direct Referral to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

For circumstances that present immediate danger to person/s or property, 911 and/or the campus police will be called.

When the situation does not present an immediate danger or after a dangerous situation has subsided, a direct referral to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will be made. Situations that are reported include but are not limited to racial or sexual harassment, use of firearms or other weapons on University property or in a practicum placement, damage or destruction of University property, and behavior that threatens health, safety, or wellbeing of any University student or employee or practicum agency staff or client. Additionally, a UH CARE report with UH Dean of Students Office should be filed.

If a referral is made to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the student will be notified. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may establish formal conditions for the student's continuance or to dismiss the student.

ACADEMIC GRIEVANCES

Students have the right to seek redress of any grievances related to his or her academic affairs. A grievance is an actual incident, or issue, which can be substantiated, and is regarded by a student as a just cause for protest. Persons against whom a grievance may be submitted include a classroom instructor, academic advisor, administrator, or other staff or faculty member of the Graduate College of Social Work. Students pursue a grievance with a desired outcome within the grievance. For other opportunities to provide feedback or offer input regarding academic and student affairs, see section above, STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND/OR ADDRESS CONCERNS.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO FILE A GRIEVANCE

A Notice of Intent to file a grievance can be submitted to the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs within thirty (30) business days after the date of the incident, giving rise to the grievance, or within thirty (30) business days of the time when the student became aware, or should have become aware, that a grievable incident has occurred, whichever occurs first.

When the Notice of Intent is submitted, the student will receive a copy of this policy, together with a Formal Grievance Cover Sheet from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Acknowledgement of receipt of these items is required.

The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will send the Notice of Intent to the respondent. After a Notice of Intent has been submitted, the student must attempt to resolve the issue informally before they may file a formal grievance. At a minimum, the student must meet with the respondent to discuss the matter in a good faith effort on both parts and to attempt a resolution.

If the dispute has not been resolved after a discussion between the student and the respondent, the student may request a meeting with the respondent and their academic advisor and/or the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs. If the issue is resolved informally, the Notice of Intent will be void.

If the issue is not resolved informally, the student may decide to terminate the process altogether OR proceed to file a formal grievance. If the student decides to terminate the process, this will be considered a final action that cannot be reversed via filing a grievance at a later date. If the time of 60 business days to file a grievance lapses, the Notice of Intent will be void.

Procedure for Filing a Formal Grievance

If the decision is to proceed with a Formal Grievance, a written statement, accompanied by a Grievance Cover Sheet, must be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs within sixty (60) business days from the date of submitting the Intent to File. The statement should include:

1. A one-page (maximum) description identifying the grievable issue or incident, including date and place (if applicable).
2. The name of the respondent (i.e., against whom the grievance is being filed).
3. The names of any witnesses to the incident (if applicable).
4. Evidence to support the grievance.
5. The outcome desired by the student.

Grievance Process

Upon receipt of the formal grievance statement and cover sheet, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, or their designee, will – within 10 business days – appoint an ad hoc Student Grievance Committee (“the Committee”).

The Committee will consist of three (3) full-time GCSW faculty and two (2) GCSW students. Faculty who hold administrative appointments of Associate or Assistant Dean are not eligible to serve.

The Committee will convene within 10 business days from its composition to select a chair, and the chair must be a faculty member.

The Committee chair will identify potential hearing dates with the Committee and the student filing the grievance. Reasonable attempts to schedule the hearing will be made by all parties. However, the hearing must be held within 20 business days from the date the formal grievance was filed.

The chair will inform all parties (including the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs) of the date, time and location of the hearing.

The student has the right to withdraw his/her grievance up to 72 hours (about 6 days) prior to the scheduled hearing, but must do so in writing, to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. In this case, the Associate Dean will notify the Committee and the respondent, and no further action will be taken at the college level.

Hearing Procedures

The hearing will be called to order by the chair who will explain the hearing procedures to the student, the Committee, and the respondent. The hearing is closed; only the Committee, the student, and the respondent are present, unless witnesses have been identified and are called in advance by the chair of the Student Grievance Committee to provide additional information. When the grievance involves the practicum, the practicum instructor and/or preceptor will be called by the chair as a witness for the hearing. The student may bring a support person (an attorney or other representative) to the hearing, but this person is not permitted to advocate for or otherwise participate in any part of the discussions. The student must inform the chair of the Student Grievance Committee at least 48 hours (about 4 days) prior to the hearing if an attorney will be present. No persons under age 18 are permitted to be present at a grievance hearing. The University's Office of General Counsel will be present at the hearing if an attorney is present for the student and further will likewise not be permitted to advocate for or otherwise participate in any part of the discussions.

1. The student will be given ten (10) minutes in which to make an opening statement and then may present his/her evidence.
2. The respondent is given ten (10) minutes to open and then may provide evidence refuting the allegation(s).
3. The Committee is given the opportunity to question the parties or to request further evidence/testimony.
4. Both the student and the respondent are given an opportunity to make brief closing statements.
5. All parties, except Committee members, are dismissed.
6. The Committee deliberates, with the Chair presiding.
7. No tape or video recording of the hearing will be made without written permission from all parties, and only when the Committee feels it is necessary to do so.

Grievance Outcomes

The findings and directives of the Committee are final.

Within 5 business days of the close of the hearing, the Committee chair will transmit a written report to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. The report must include a summary of the grievance, the respondent's rebuttal, and the Committee's findings and directives.

The Committee may find in favor of the student and direct the respondent to take appropriate corrective action.

The Committee may find in favor of the respondent and recommend no corrective action.

Within 5 business days of receipt of the Committee's report, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs transmits the report to the student and the respondent.

Grievance Reports will be held in the Office of Academic Affairs for a period corresponding to the UH Document Retention Policy, after which time they will be destroyed.

Appeal Process

If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Committee, he or she may appeal in writing to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs within 30 calendar days of when the decision is mailed.

The Associate Dean has the authority to reverse the Committee's decision only if there were serious errors in process or procedure that may have altered the final outcome.

If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, they may petition for a university level review by the UH Graduate School Grievance Committee (GSGC) which is under the purview of the Dean of the UH Graduate School. This petition for appeal must be made in writing and filed with the GCSW Office of Academic Affairs within 30 calendar days of the final disposition in the GCSW.