



UNIVERSITY *of* MARYLAND  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



# **2025-2026**

## **STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Welcome to the University of Maryland School of Social Work's 2025-2026 Student Handbook, which provides information on program requirements, policies and procedures, and available services. It also provides a framework of our social work values and expectations.

Students are expected to adhere to SSW and UMB policies and procedures upon matriculation into the program. This Handbook is updated prior to the start of each Fall semester and applies to all students registered during that academic year.

## **Mission and Goals**

### **Mission of the MSW Program**

The University of Maryland School of Social Work's mission is to develop practitioners, leaders, and scholars who advance the well-being of people and communities and promote social justice. As national leaders, we create and use knowledge for education, service innovation, and policy development.

All educational programs and activities at the University of Maryland School of Social Work are informed by our mission.

### **Goals of the MSW Program**

Our goals are to prepare students to:

- use a person-in-environment framework and a strengths-based perspective that recognizes the multiple and intersecting causes of personal problems: psychological, biological, familial, organizational, community, political, economic, and social;
- embrace social work's fundamental mission to promote social, economic, racial, and environmental justice, which requires practice with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed populations and people of diverse backgrounds and needs within multiple systems, domestically and internationally;
- practice competently—working across the spectrum of social work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and society—and build on this strong foundation to practice at an advanced level in a method of concentration (clinical or leadership, policy, and social change).
- practice in a manner that reflects the values and principles underlying the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW);
- critically assess, implement, and inform evidence-based and best practices in social work;
- understand the critical influence of social policy on social work practice and engage in advocacy for socially just policies at all levels of society; and
- pursue ongoing professional development to become highly skilled practitioners and the next generation of social work leaders.

## Requirements for Success

MSW students must make a significant commitment to successfully complete the program.

- The MSW curriculum is rigorous. Students should designate approximately three hours of preparation time for each hour spent in class. This time is for library research, assigned readings, group meetings, writing papers, studying for exams, and completing other assignments. In addition, MSW students work in their practicum 2 days each week in the foundation year and 3 days each week (or 2 days on an extended schedule) in the advanced year.
- Attending the MSW program is demanding and requires significant time commitment. Students should consider how they will manage competing demands to prioritize their academic commitments, including practicum. This will require flexibility and compromise. **While possible, students have found working full-time when in the program to be difficult, and it is not recommended.**
- It is the MSW student's responsibility to remain flexible regarding class schedules and practicum days and locations. The SSW cannot arrange academic schedules and practicum around students' other commitments.
- MSW students will stay informed about and meet all announced deadlines. The Elm, video display monitors, MSW websites, and e-mail are vehicles to help MSW students meet this professional obligation. Students should regularly check their SSW email, own a computer, and have access to reliable internet while in the program.

## Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Core Competencies & Behaviors

Our CSWE-accredited program is also guided by the CSWE competencies that graduating MSW students are expected to acquire in a master's program as outlined in the [EPAS](#). These competencies detail the fundamental behaviors students develop and use in their new roles as professional social workers. The MSW program assesses student competence in courses and practicum. The 9 core competencies as outlined by the CSWE are as follows:

- Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
- Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research- Informed Practice
- Engage in Policy Practice
- Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

## Disability and Accessibility at the UMSSW

At the UMSSW, we value accessibility, neurodiversity, and the varied ways in which we embody and physically engage with content and spaces. A commitment to disability justice is part of our mission to foster a culture of inclusion and belonging both within our school and our greater society. The UMSSW strives towards a university structure that reduces the need for accommodations for people with disabilities through proactive, inclusive design and a culture of equitability for people with disabilities. You can learn more about our efforts [here](#)

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# MSW CURRICULUM & REQUIREMENTS

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## MSW Degree Requirements

- An overall minimum GPA of 3.0 is required for graduation and a “P” (Pass) for all practicum courses.
- Before the first day of classes all incoming students must complete the 0-credit prerequisite, SOWK 690, which includes three modules: 1) Blackboard Orientation, 2) Academic Integrity and Anti-Plagiarism, and 3) A Brief History of Oppression and Resistance. This self-paced online course in [Blackboard](#) takes approximately 35 hours to complete all three modules.
- No course may be taken without having received credit for its prerequisite.
- All students must select a concentration in their advanced curriculum.
- All students must submit a graduation application during their final semester. More information can be found [on the Registrar's website](#), including the application deadline.

## Program Options

The MSW degree can be pursued in a variety of formats from 11 months to 4 years. For more information, explore the various [plans of study online](#) and [specific curriculum requirements](#).

### 60-Credit Hybrid MSW Program

Students in the 60-credit Hybrid MSW program earn their degree at the Baltimore or Shady Grove campus, with full-time students typically earning their degree in two years. They complete 27 credits of Foundation curriculum and 33 credits of Advanced curriculum determined by their concentration. Students must complete their MSW within four years of registration.

### 60-Credit Online MSW Program

Students in the 60-credit Online MSW (OMSW) program complete the degree over three years, including summer sessions. While all coursework is delivered virtually, both practicums are completed through in-person placements.

### 36-Credit Hybrid Advanced Standing Program

Advanced standing is awarded only to graduates holding degrees from baccalaureate social work programs accredited by CSWE, recognized through its International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Services, or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors. Students in the 36-credit Advanced Standing MSW program must have earned a BSW within five years of applying and complete the MSW program within two years of initial registration. Their 36 credits of Advanced curriculum are determined by their concentration.

## Foundation Curriculum

The 27-credit Foundation Curriculum provides educational and skills development in the values, concepts, and processes at the core of social work practice. Coursework helps students develop a problem-solving framework with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations.

- SOWK 600 - Social Welfare and Social Policy
- SOWK 610 - Structural Oppression and Its Implications for Social Work Practice
- SOWK 630 - Social Work Practice with Individuals (taken with SOWK 635)



- SOWK 631 - Social Work Practice with Communities and Organizations (taken with SOWK 635; part-time students may take this course the summer before SOWK 635)
- SOWK 632 - Social Work Practice with Groups and Families (taken with SOWK 636)
- SOWK 635 - Foundation Practicum I
- SOWK 636 - Foundation Practicum II
- SOWK 637 - Foundation Practicum Seminar I (taken with SOWK 635)
- SOWK 638 - Foundation Practicum Seminar II (taken with SOWK 636)
- SOWK 645 - Human Behavior & the Social Environment
- SOWK 670 - Social Work Research

For more information, please refer to [curriculum overviews](#) online.

Students also complete a two-semester practicum taken two days a week in a social service placement. Under the guidance of a practicum instructor, they engage in carefully supervised and progressively more responsible social work practice.

## Advanced Curriculum

All students must select a [concentration](#) to guide their advanced curriculum and practicum placement. The advanced curriculum includes an advanced policy course, four methods courses in the chosen concentration, and 2 electives (60 credit program program) or 3 electives (advanced standing program).

### Concentrations

For their advanced year, students choose their concentration by declaring it on their advanced practicum application. The concentration guides the Advanced placement process and has specific course requirements. Students at the USG campus and the Online program automatically follow the Clinical concentration. At the Baltimore campus, students have the choice between the Clinical concentration and the Leadership, Policy, & Social Change (LPSC) concentration. Students can also choose a primary and secondary concentration as described below. If a student wants to change their concentration during their Advanced year, they must first seek approval from their practicum coordinator and the academic advisor. Please note that it will most likely disrupt the practicum placement.

#### **Secondary Concentration Option**

Students who select a primary and secondary concentration (i.e., Clinical/Leadership, Policy, & Social Change) are placed in their Advanced Practicum based on their primary concentration only. A secondary concentration exposes the student to some of the content from the other concentration, replacing two electives with specific courses from the secondary concentration.

## Practicum Education

- Practicum is the signature pedagogy of the MSW program and gives students an opportunity to apply classroom learning to practice. It is a required component of the MSW curriculum, where students can demonstrate skill development in all professional competencies and behaviors that all students are expected to acquire in a MSW program accredited by CSWE. Students in the 60-Credit Hybrid or Online MSW programs complete both a foundation practicum and an advanced practicum. 36-Credit Hybrid Advanced Standing students only participate in an advanced practicum. Foundation practicum students participate in a monthly, 90 minute, online synchronous seminar rooted in anti-oppressive practice with a practicum seminar instructor and 10 students.



- The Office of Practicum Education (OPE) places all MSW students in various social work agencies throughout Maryland and other nearby regions.
- Placements typically occur during traditional workday hours for the full academic year beginning in the fall and continuing through the spring semester. The OPE cannot arrange placements that are exclusively during evening and/or weekend hours.
- Placements are generally within a (50) mile radius of the student's home.
- The foundation and advanced practicums typically take place in different settings.

See more information within the [Practicum Education Manual](#).

### **Employment-Based Placement Option**

Students working in a social service setting may consider an employment-based placement option if their proposal meets strict criteria and is approved by the agency and the Office of Practicum Education. If you are interested in pursuing this option, please reach out to the Office of Practicum Education at [practicum@ssw.umaryland.edu](mailto:practicum@ssw.umaryland.edu). More information on employment-based practicum options may also be found on the [Office of Practicum Education's website](#).

### **Foundation Practicum**

Foundation placements are arranged by the OPE with the goal of developing generalist skills in an agency that expands on a student's previous experience. Foundation year placements are typically two full days a week (usually Tuesdays/Thursdays) for at least 15 weeks each semester and 55 total days for the Foundation year. Each practicum day must be no less than four hours and should not exceed eight hours. Foundation students participate in a practicum seminar throughout the first year of their practicum experience. Foundation Practicum I & II (SOWK 635 and SOWK 636) and Foundation Practicum Seminar I & II (SOWK 637 and SOWK 638) constitute 2.5 and .5 credits each semester, respectively.

### **Practicum Seminar**

The Foundation Practicum Seminar promotes cultural humility and anti-oppressive practice. The seminar meets online each month during the academic year as small groups of students and is facilitated by a seasoned seminar instructor. Students are expected to consider, and critically reflect upon, the implications of privilege and oppression in their placement experiences. Practicum Seminar also provides students with an opportunity to discuss their placement experiences and bridges the application of theory in practice. Practicum Seminar is .5 credits each semester and is graded as Pass/Fail. Students must successfully complete each practicum seminar to progress in the program.

### **Advanced Practicum**

Advanced year practicum placements are three full days a week (usually Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays) for a minimum of 15 weeks each semester and 85 total days for the Advanced year. Each practicum day must be no less than four hours and should not exceed eight hours. Advanced practicum students do not participate in seminars. Advanced Practicum (SWCL/SWOA 794 and SWCL/SWOA 795) constitutes 6 credits each semester.

### **Advanced Extended Practicum**

Advanced students may choose an extended practicum option, which requires two (2) days per week from September through July. This option must be requested by the student in their practicum application and requires approval by the agency and the Office of Practicum Education. Students who choose this option do not complete the MSW until July, must complete the required graduation application for July (not May) and receive their diplomas in August as summer graduates.

### **SSW International Practicum Placement Program**

International Advanced placements are offered in London, UK and Cochin, India. Students live on campus at the partnering university and take MSW courses in the social work department there. Practicums are arranged in local agencies based upon the students' concentration.

In both locations, students are in residence for five to six months and complete 18 credits towards their advanced curriculum including their complete Advanced practicum requirement. These experiences begin in summer and extend through the fall semester. Interested students complete an application and interview as part of the selection process, followed by preparation and team building activities.

## **SSW Course Catalog**

A comprehensive listing of MSW courses can be found at [Course Offerings](#). Not all courses are offered each semester or every academic year.

### **Electives**

Depending on a student's plan of study, they may have the opportunity to take two or three electives. Electives can be any course that a student has met the prerequisite for from the course catalog. Students also have the choice to enroll in some of the following specialty elective courses:

#### ***Global Education Opportunities***

Each year, the SSW typically offers one or more specialized courses that include campus classes and short-term travel to another country. Recent courses have focused on social justice, health research, and comparative social work practice with travel to India, Germany, and Israel: [Global Opportunities](#).

#### ***Independent Study (SOWK 798)***

An independent study is an opportunity to explore an area of social work practice not available in our advanced curriculum. Students who are interested in completing an independent study should first identify a faculty member who can serve as the instructor. The student should then consult with the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for procedures for approval of the course. The deadline to submit finalized materials for approval is April 1<sup>st</sup> for the fall semester and October 1<sup>st</sup> for the spring semester. An independent study course may be counted as an elective and range from 1-3 credits.

#### ***Courses from other University of Maryland Institutions or Outside the SSW***

Students who are interested in taking graduate courses to fulfill their elective requirements either at another University of Maryland institution or another SSW must first consult with their academic advisor. Course syllabi will then be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. To ensure transferability, students must discuss their planned choices prior to enrolling in a class.

#### ***Credit for Work Experience***

The Council on Social Work Education **does not allow** accredited MSW programs to provide credit for work experience.

## Dual Degree Programs

The SSW offers six [dual degree programs](#) in partnership with other schools on campus and universities in the region. Students accepted into the MSW program and one of the participating dual-degree programs must meet with the designated SSW faculty coordinator and the academic advisor to develop an individualized plan of study.

### MSW and Juris Doctor

The MSW/JD program is offered in collaboration with the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law and can be completed within four years, with study for one summer typically required. The 27-credit MSW Foundation Curriculum is the same for all students; however, the MSW Advanced Curriculum accepts 6 credits from the law school, selected with the SSW Faculty Coordinator. The MSW-JD program is valuable preparation for careers in advocacy, as well as in the administration of human service organizations and in executive, legislative or judicial arenas in all areas of social welfare and social policy including child welfare, family law, criminal justice, health, and well-being.

### MSW and Master of Arts in Jewish Studies, Education, and Communal Leadership

The MSW/MA dual degree program is offered in collaboration with Towson University and can be concurrently completed in two years with summer classes or a mini-mester enrollment; however, a three-year program is recommended. UMSSW accepts 6 credits to be transferred from TU to apply to the Advanced Curriculum requirements. TU accepts 6 credits transferred from the UMSSW. This program prepares students to be skilled in social work, be knowledgeable about Judaism, and receive professional experience in the Jewish community. This program emphasizes the development of students' capacities for effective communication, critical analysis, and flexible thought.

### MSW and Master of Business Administration

The MSW/MBA dual degree program is offered in collaboration with the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) Robert H. Smith School of Business and can be completed within four years, excluding summers. This program requires 90 credits, with 39 taken at UMCP and 51 taken at the UMSSW. Students typically complete year one in the MSW, years two and three in the MBA, and year four in the MSW. Financial and business expertise combined with social work practice, knowledge, and experience is invaluable in nonprofit, public, and for-profit human service organizations. The MSW and MBA degrees complement each other and provide graduates with the combination of knowledge, skills, experience, and values necessary in business and the human services to effectively deliver quality services.

### MSW and Master of Public Health

The UMSSW offers two MSW/MPH dual-degree programs. The first is a partnership with the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health. The second is in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health. Both dual-degree options can be completed within three years. Students typically complete year one in the MSW, year two (including summer) in the MPH, and year three in the MSW. The School of Social Work allows 6 to 9 credits of its program to be completed in the MPH program; these may include 3 credits of research requirements and 6 credits of advanced policy or electives. This allows students to complete both the MSW and MPH programs with fewer courses than if they had to enroll in each program separately. The MSW/MPH dual degree program prepares graduates to assume leadership positions and program administration in health-related agencies and settings, to advance the science of health disparities research, and to deliver multi-level practice interventions for at-risk populations.

### **MSW and Master of Public Policy**

Offered through University of Maryland School of Social Work and University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) School of Public Policy and can be completed in three years, including summers. This program requires 90 credits, with 51 credits taken in the MSW program and 39 credits taken in the MPP program. Students can complete year one in either program, year two in the alternate program, and year three is spent split between both programs. Each program accepts 9 credits in transfer. This program prepares graduates for practice in public policy and social service agencies and settings in which a combined expertise in social work and public policy would enable them to assume policy and leadership positions.

### **MSW and Medical Cannabis Science, Therapeutics, and Policy Certificate**

This dual degree program is in collaboration with the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy. The Graduate Certificate in Medical Cannabis Science, Therapeutics, and Policy is a two-semester, 12-credit program that provides a foundation in cannabis pharmacology and clinical science, the history of medical cannabis, and the current political landscape for this rapidly expanding field. The MSW program accepts 6 credits of electives from the Certificate program, and both can be completed in two years if the student takes summer courses.

**Applicants to any dual-degree program must apply separately to each program. Admission to one program does not guarantee admission to the other. Specific information on the dual-degree programs and faculty coordinators is available here: [Dual Degree Programs](#).**

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## **COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS & ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT**

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### **Community Expectations, Professional Conduct, and Academic Standards**

As social work professionals, we hold ourselves to high ethical, academic, community, and professional standards in our work and school settings and within our communities of practice.

### **Community Expectations**

To foster a culture of inclusion, dignity, and respect within our community, we offer these principles to clarify what is expected of each community member.

At the University of Maryland, Baltimore's School of Social Work (SSW), we are committed to empowering students to their full potential both inside and outside of the classroom as they pursue a career in social work. These guiding expectations serve as the foundation for our approach, emphasizing the centrality of community and human relationships, the value of diversity, and the prioritization of social justice, anti-racism, and anti-oppression. As you read through these shared commitments and expectations, know that this represents the work of numerous students, staff members, alumni, and faculty who have lent their voices and perspectives to articulate the agreements we uphold as a community.

We firmly believe that every individual within our community, whether student, staff, faculty, or administrator, possesses agency and should be treated with the utmost dignity and respect. By embracing communal accountability, support, and our collective dedication to these principles, we hope to shape both academic experiences and those beyond the classroom, nurturing a compassionate and inclusive environment where everyone can thrive and contribute meaningfully.

These expectations are further rooted in the following:

<b>NASW Code of Ethics</b>	<b>UMB Core Values</b>
1. Service	1. Respect and integrity
2. Social justice	2. Well-being and sustainability
3. Dignity and worth of the person	3. Justice and equity
4. Importance of human relationships	4. Discovery and innovation
5. Integrity	
6. Competence	

The following table identifies the four core areas of focus for our community expectations, which include cultivating a culture of belonging and inclusion, communication, commitment to personal development, and being present. In it, we identify what is meant in each domain, why it is important for creating the culture we wish to foster, and we provide examples of how this is accomplished. These lists are not exhaustive, nor is this document stagnant. Please use [this form](#) to provide feedback.

## UMSSW Community Principles

WHAT DO WE EXPECT?	WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?	WHY DOES THIS MATTER?	HOW IS THIS EXHIBITED?
<b>CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF INCLUSION AND BELONGING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identities are acknowledged and respected</li> <li>Community members feel appreciated, recognized, and as though their experiences are validated.</li> <li>People are open about their opinions and express themselves collegially without fear of retaliation</li> <li>Power is acknowledged and discussed</li> </ul>	As social workers we center relationships, recognizing that connectedness is essential for learning and wellbeing. In our work, we seek to create a more just and supportive society. Here we can model that space where everyone is embraced by the community to create an engaging, affirming space to learn and grow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use indicated pronouns and chosen names</li> <li>Acknowledge the salience of social identities and how people are impacted by power differences</li> <li>Validate the experiences of others</li> <li>Seek to honor different ways of being, learning, engaging, and communicating (physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally)</li> <li>Recognize the identities that are centered in your conversations</li> </ul>
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proactive Communication</li> <li>Managing Conflict</li> </ul>	Communication is key to self-expression. It also fosters trust and community-building if care is taken to listen, learn, and understand. Honest exploration and trust are possible when good communication skills are utilized.	<p><b>Being Proactive:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen to understand rather than to respond.</li> <li>Consider the setting</li> <li>Respond in a timely manner</li> <li>Ask for clarification</li> <li>Ask for and extend grace when needed</li> </ul> <p><b>Managing Conflict</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take responsibility (Accountability)</li> <li>Seek accountability rather than punishment</li> <li>Manage conflict directly with the person(s) involved first whenever possible. Seek consultation with the next appropriate person if further assistance is needed.</li> <li>Approach disagreement with curiosity</li> <li>Seek to restore relationships by repairing harm</li> </ul>

<b>COMMITMENT TO PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	Self-awareness and self-reflection Responsible for your own learning Consider the influence of systems of oppression and power	Intentional growth is the cornerstone of learning. We co-create a space where reflection and mutual accountability foster healthy relationships with one another.	Acknowledge your gaps in understanding and begin to find answers through self-efficacy before turning to others with lived experiences. Seek to understand your own positionality and how it impacts situations and relationships Explore your own points of privilege and marginalization Recognize that we all make mistakes, but we can only grow from them if we take responsibility for our actions Accept discomfort as part of the learning process Focus on getting it right not being right -Ask yourself do I want to be effective, or do I want to be right?
<b>PRESENCE</b>	Showing up physically, cognitively, and emotionally	In order to contribute to a vibrant and just community, you need to be present.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend classes, practicum and seminar</li> <li>• Do what you say you are going to do</li> <li>• Contribute to discussions and projects</li> <li>• Actively take care of yourself. Rest and make space for self-care, so that you are able to be fully present in learning and working.</li> </ul>



## **SSW Technical Standards and Conduct Policy**

Students must consistently, accurately, and independently demonstrate essential technical standards. These standards, distinguished from academic requirements, refer to the minimum cognitive, professional, and behavioral standards required for a student to matriculate and satisfactorily complete all essential aspects of the program. Academic requirements refer to educational requirements like prerequisite course completions and grade point averages.

### *Essential Technical requirements include:*

Intellectual and conceptual capacity to adequately learn, analyze, synthesize, and integrate information so that service can be provided to client populations, social agencies and other community services.

- These standards are met through demonstrated effective problem solving that occurs in a timely fashion, demonstrated exercise of good judgment, and prompt completion of all responsibilities related to clients and School of Social Work curriculum responsibilities.

Communication standards to retain and recall information effectively and promptly, and perceive and respond appropriately to oral, non-verbal, and written communications.

- Communication standards are met through demonstrated professionalism and sensitivity with faculty, staff, students, practicum colleagues, clients, School of Social Work stakeholders, and the community.

Behavioral, ethical, and professional standards consistent with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. This includes respect for faculty, staff, students, practicum colleagues, clients, School of Social Work stakeholders and the community, and differences in culture and values. A summary of the Social Work Code of Ethics is provided on the [NASW Website](#).

- These standards are met through demonstration of emotional health required to function in stressful situations, adaptation to changing environments, and prompt completion of all responsibilities related to the School of Social Work curriculum requirements.

## **Academic Integrity Policy**

The University of Maryland School of Social Work is an academic community whose fundamental purpose is the pursuit of knowledge. The success of this educational mission depends on the SSW's commitment to upholding clearly defined principles of academic integrity. The integrity of academic work is also a cornerstone of the social work profession, rooted in the CSWE National Statement on Research Integrity in Social Work and the NASW Code of Ethics. As future social workers, students must understand and commit to the ethical responsibilities and principles that guide the profession, ensuring that their academic and professional conduct upholds the highest standards of integrity and social justice.

This policy aims to promote these values, preparing students to ethically engage in research, practice, and advocacy in their future careers.

### *Definitions of Academic Misconduct*

The following definitions will help students understand what behaviors are not allowed:

1. **Cheating:** Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. This includes copying from others during an exam, using notes without permission, or obtaining and using tests or other academic material without

authorization.

2. **Plagiarism:** Representing the words, ideas, or data of another person as one's own without proper acknowledgment. This includes copying text without quotation marks or proper citation, paraphrasing without crediting the source, and using others' research or findings without attribution.
3. **Re-using One's Own Work (Self-Plagiarism):** Submitting the same academic work for credit more than once without authorization. This includes reusing a paper or project for different classes without prior approval from the instructors.
4. **Fabrication and Falsification:** Creating or altering data, research results, citations, or information dishonestly. This includes making up data or results and reporting them, altering or misrepresenting existing data or results, and providing false information in an academic context.
5. **Facilitating Academic Dishonesty:** Helping or attempting to help another student commit an act of academic misconduct. This includes sharing test questions, completing work for another student, and allowing others to copy one's work.
6. **Unauthorized Collaboration:** Working with others on assignments meant to be completed individually without the instructor's permission. This includes collaborating on homework, projects, or papers without explicit permission.
7. **Misrepresentation:** Falsely representing oneself or one's work, claiming credit for work not done, and failing to give proper attribution to collaborators. This includes lying about attendance, submitting false documentation, and impersonating another student.
8. **Use of Unauthorized Tools:** Instructors may allow or prohibit specific technologies such as Large Language Models (ex. Chat GPT, CoPilot), Generative Text Tools (ex. Quillbot, Grammarly AI), "tutoring websites" (ex. Chegg, Course Hero), recording tools, digital assistants, or other emerging technologies. Students are responsible for using tools as specified in the syllabus of each course.

## Policy on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tool Usage

Generative artificial intelligence tools, software that creates new text, images, computer code, audio, video, and other content, have become widely available. Well-known examples include ChatGPT or CoPilot for text and DALL•E for images. This policy governs all such tools, including those released during the academic year.

While individual instructors may allow the use of these tools, as specified in their course syllabus, it is essential to understand and adhere to the following guidelines:

### Prohibited Use

- **Assignment Completion:** The use of AI tools to complete assignments on your behalf is strictly prohibited. This includes papers, exams, discussion board posts, self-reflections, practicum process recordings, and presentations, among others. All assignments should reflect your independent thinking, analysis, and synthesis of course materials.
- **Assessments:** Students must not use AI to obtain answers on any assessments, including exams and quizzes. Students should consult with their practicum instructors for guidance on AI use in placement.
- **Citation Accuracy:** Do not use sources that are cited by AI tools without reading those

sources yourself. This is crucial because:

- AI tools can create citations for sources that do not exist.
- AI tools may cite real pieces of writing, but the cited content may be inaccurate.
- **Confidentiality and Privacy:** You may not copy the academic work, discussion posts, or reflections of another student into any type of AI tool as their privacy cannot be guaranteed on these platforms. Similarly, do not include identifying practicum recordings, client notes, and personal information in your AI prompts.

### **Academic Integrity and AI Tool Usage**

The use of AI tools should enhance your understanding and critical thinking, not replace your intellectual engagement and analysis. It is your responsibility to clearly communicate the AI's involvement in your work and distinguish your original contributions from any AI-generated content.

- **Citing AI Tools:** To maintain academic integrity, always cite the use of AI tools appropriately in accordance with the APA citation style guidelines. The [APA blog provides specific instructions on how to cite ChatGPT](#) and similar AI models.
- **AI Transparency Statement:** If you choose to use AI or other technologies, you are required to include an AI Transparency Statement. The statement should describe the AI tools you utilized and discuss their impact on your project (i.e. grammar correction, content generation, data analysis) in less than 300 words. Position the statement after the references section of your APA formatted works.

By adhering to these guidelines, you can responsibly incorporate AI tools into your work while ensuring academic integrity and transparency.

### **Addressing Bias and Accuracy**

Be aware that AI algorithms replicate systematic biases found in academic and popular media and may provide inaccurate information. As scholars, it is crucial to approach AI-generated content critically and use your content knowledge or seek information from reputable secondary sources to verify any potentially biased or inaccurate information. This will ensure that your academic work is well-informed, reliable, and free from any unintended bias introduced by AI tools.

### **Course Attendance and Engagement**

Students are expected to attend and engage in all sessions. **Students who miss five (5) class sessions or more (excused and unexcused) cannot pass the course and will have to retake it later.** Please note that individual instructors may have additional attendance guidelines and expectations set forth in their syllabus, including a grade penalty for missing class meetings.

Student attendance and engagement is a critical element of classwork, allowing not only individual learning, but also group discourse, community connectedness, and accountability. Increasingly, attendance is understood as a precursor and leading indicator for student success. Student learning must be both self-motivated and facilitated by professors and classmates.

On occasion, unusual circumstances may warrant considering an exception to this policy. Students who believe they meet these criteria may contact the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

Students who are in danger of not meeting attendance expectations should consider dropping the course by the drop deadline. After the semester begins, students will not receive a refund if dropping an individual course.

### **Online Asynchronous Attendance Policy**

Participation and attendance are assessed through a student's participation and completion of weekly course activities, including discussion boards and other assignments. Students are expected to log into the course on a weekly basis and may need to log in several times throughout the week to complete assignments and participate in course discussions. Students are expected to complete readings, discussions, and assignments by due dates found in the course syllabus and calendar. Faculty can view students' log-in activity to ensure they are actively involved in the course (e.g., time spent in module, listening to or viewing lectures, etc.). Students should maintain communication with their instructors if they will not be able to complete course assignments or their work for the week. They should also discuss with their instructor whether it is possible to make-up missed work or get an extension, in accordance with the late assignment guidelines set by the instructor. Failure to complete weekly activities or assignments by the due date may result in a deduction of points or a lower grade. Students who miss five (5) weeks of class in an asynchronous course will not be able to pass the course, despite any ability to make up coursework.

### **Failure to Meet Standards and Expectations of the Program**

The UMSSW strives to create a restorative culture in which accountability, reparation, and remediation are the initial goals. Students who do not meet the standards and expectations detailed above will be referred to the appropriate office for consultation. Potential outcomes may include:

- Discussion with a plan for remediation
- Referral to campus or external resources
- Failure of associated assignments
- Failure of associated class
- Referral to the Student Review Committee (See Appendix B)
- Dismissal from the program

Situations which pose a risk to clients and/ or the school or social work community may result in an immediate suspension pending a review. The School of Social Work reserves the right to order a fitness for duty evaluation, suspend and/or dismiss any student for illegal conduct, unsafe practice, or a threat to the health or safety of themselves, others, or to the good order of the UMB community.

In the event of an allegation of the unacceptable personal or professional conduct described above, the dean of the School of Social Work may suspend the student pending the outcome of due process proceedings. The dean will notify the student promptly in writing and the student can appeal the suspension in writing to the dean within 10 business days of the student receiving a notice of suspension. A Student Review Hearing will then commence (*see Appendix B*).

## Rescinding an Offer of Admission

The University of Maryland School of Social Work (UMSSW) reserves the right to withdraw or rescind an offer of admission for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Misrepresentation:** Any part of the application contains misrepresentations.
- **Failure to Graduate:** The applicant fails to graduate, does not receive an undergraduate diploma (or its equivalent) by the end of the current school year, or otherwise will not hold the academic credentials presented as part of the application.
- **Academic Performance:** The applicant, if currently enrolled in a degree program, shows a significant drop in academic performance between application and graduation, as determined by the SSW.
- **Behavioral Concerns:** The applicant engages in behavior that brings into question their professional suitability based on the NASW Code of Ethics.
- **Violation of Policy:** The applicant engages in conduct that violates the UMB Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy, SSW Technical Standards and Conduct Policy, and/or the SSW Academic Integrity Policy.

## Procedures for Rescinding Offers of Admission

The decision to rescind an offer of admission is made jointly by the Associate Dean of Admissions and Enrollment and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and the student will be notified via email. An appeal of a rescinded offer of admission, if any, is heard by the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, whose decision in such matters is final.

Admitted applicants become official MSW students on the first day of classes. At this time, the policies and procedures for enrolled students must be followed. These policies and procedures can be found within this handbook and our [UMB Policies and Procedures](#).

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## UMSSW POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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### Course Exemptions

All newly admitted 60 credit students at the Baltimore and USG campuses are eligible to take [exemption exams](#) for three foundation courses:

SOWK 600—Social Welfare and Social Policy [3 credits]

SOWK 645—Human Behavior and the Social Environment [3 credits]

SOWK 670—Social Work Research [3 credits]

Students who successfully pass the exemption exam must take another elective course in its place, as they must still complete 60 credits at the UMSSW to earn the MSW degree. Students who are exempted from courses should consult the academic advisor for special assistance in program planning. Students must complete exemption exams by the conclusion of their first semester in the MSW program.

Advanced standing students are not eligible for exemption exams for foundation courses.

## Credit Load

The maximum credit load for [Fall and Spring semesters is 16.5 credits](#), and [6 credits for the Summer semester](#). A student can request approval to seek an exception to the maximum credit load by completing the semester specific Academic Overload form on the website.

### Academic Overload Policy

Registering for more than 16.5 credits in the Fall and Spring or 6 credits in the Summer requires approval from the Office of Records and Registration by completing an [Academic Overload Request Form](#). Academic overload forms will be assessed for approval on June 1<sup>st</sup> for the Fall semester, December 15<sup>th</sup> for the Spring semester, and May 1<sup>st</sup> for the summer semester. To meet the requirements for an academic overload, students must:

- Be in current good academic standing (3.0 GPA and no failing grades).
- For incoming students, their undergraduate GPA must be above 3.0.
- Meet the current competencies in Practicum Education.
- Attest to the following on the academic overload form:
  - An academic overload requires considerable time commitment. Each class requires 6-9 hours of prep time per week.
  - Dropping a single course during the semester will not result in a refund.
  - Academic overloads are accepted based on course availability
  - Students may only submit an overload request for a non-practicum education course

### Minimum Credit Policy

To be eligible for federal financial aid, students must be enrolled in their academic program for at least 6 credits per semester. Students who plan to enroll in fewer than six credits in a semester should connect with their academic advisor for a review of their plan of study to ensure timely completion of their degree.

### Part-Time Admitted Students

Students who are admitted part time typically take 6 credits in their first semester. Part-time students who wish to enroll in fewer than 6 credits or more than 6 credits in their first semester should connect with their academic advisor for a review of their plan of study. While the program's tuition is per-credit, taking 9 credits or more during the fall and spring semester incurs full-time fees and requires that a student be enrolled in a health insurance plan.

## Campus Transfer Policy

At the School of Social Work, students play a crucial role in shaping their educational journey by choosing a specific campus for their studies: Baltimore, Shady Grove, or Online. This decision forms a fundamental commitment that students are expected to uphold upon acceptance of their admission letter. It is essential to recognize that both the Shady Grove and Online campuses typically admit a maximum number of students, making it unfeasible to assume available vacancies. While we understand the desire for flexibility, transferring between campuses within the School of Social Work is a rare occurrence, with the exception being transferred into the Baltimore campus. If approved, students may only switch between campuses once during their academic program.

**Important Note:** Changing your campus will result in adjustments to campus-related fees.

# Grades

## Grades in Academic Courses

The letters A through C- and F are used to evaluate performance in classroom courses; the letter P (Pass) is the passing grade for practicum courses (practicum and seminar) and SOWK 610. No Mark (NM) indicates that the instructor has not yet submitted the final grade.

A cumulative grade point average of "B" or 3.0 is required for graduation. Every credit hour below a 3.0 must be balanced by a credit hour above 3.0, unless it is repeated. When a course is repeated, the new grade, whether higher or lower, replaces the old grade and becomes the grade of record for calculating the grade point average. A course, regardless of the grade, may only be repeated once.

The grade of "F" indicates failure to achieve a satisfactory level of performance, and the course must be repeated. The original "F" grade remains on the student's permanent record, but it is the subsequent passing grade that is used to compute grade point average. Thus, a grade "F" cannot be balanced.

GRADE	QUALITY POINTS	NUMERICAL EQUIVALENT
A	4.00	93 – 100
A-	3.67	90 – 92.9
B+	3.33	87 – 89.9
B	3.00	83 – 86.9
B-	2.67	80 – 82.9
C+	2.33	77 – 79.9
C	2.00	73 – 76.9
C-	1.67	70 – 72.9
F	0.00	0 – 69.9
P	N/A	N/A
I	N/A	N/A
NM	N/A	N/A

## Grades in Practicum Education

A grade of Pass ("P") is awarded to MSW practicum education courses (practicum placement and seminar) to denote satisfactory completion of requirements. Courses assigned the grade of "P" will not be computed in the student's grade point average.

### Incomplete Grade

An incomplete grade may be given under exceptional circumstances for a student who has made satisfactory progress in the course and because of illness or circumstances beyond the student's control is unable to complete the course requirements by the end of the semester.

The grade of "I" may only be considered if:

- The student has met the attendance requirements, AND
- The student has completed half of all coursework with at least a grade of "B" (or a grade of passing for a pass/fail course), AND
- There is a reasonable expectation that the student will pass the course by the conclusion of the incomplete period.



More appropriate avenues for long illnesses or circumstances are to withdraw from the course, retake the course, take a leave of absence from the program, or withdraw from the program.

The instructor retains the right to make the final decision on granting a student's request for an "I", even though a student may meet the eligibility requirements for this grade. An instructor may not grant an incomplete unless the student meets the eligibility requirements.

If the course in which an "I" is assigned is a prerequisite for another course, the student cannot attend the other course until a final grade for the prerequisite course is entered.

#### Incomplete Grade Procedure:

- The instructor submits an [Incomplete Grade Form](#) and enters an incomplete 'I' grade.
- The instructor and student determine a deadline to submit the remaining coursework. It is the student's responsibility to complete the remaining assignments
- The instructor will submit the grade change, converting the "I" to a letter grade, no later than six weeks from the last day of the semester in which the course was attempted. All grade changes must be submitted by the instructor to the Office of Records and Registration using the Supplemental Grade Report Form.
- If the course is a pre-requisite for a course in the next semester, instructors must submit the Supplemental Grade Form no later than "the last day to cancel registration with 100% refund," for the following course. This can be found on the [Registration and Important Dates Calendar](#).
- If the student does not meet the deadline, the "I" will automatically convert to an F.

#### Incompletes For Practicum Education:

For Practicum Education courses, if there is not enough time between semesters to make up missed time and assignments, the student, practicum instructor, and faculty liaison will develop a written plan for completion of missed time and assignments using the [Incomplete Grade Form](#). This plan may not exceed 4 weeks from the last day of the semester. The Director of Practicum Education must approve this plan in writing.

#### Grieving a Grade

Students who wish to grieve a grade for either a course or practicum should follow the procedures outlined in *Appendix A: Student Grievance Committee*.

### Course Registration

The schedule of course offerings is published online, and registration takes place in June for the Fall semester, April for the Summer semester, and in November for the Spring semester. Registration dates and required materials are emailed to students and posted on the SSW Registration and Academic Calendar online. The School of Social Work follows the common calendar of the University. This consists of a fall semester, a spring semester, and a summer session: [Calendars and Course Schedules](#)

#### Registering for Classes

Students register for classes in SURFS (Student User Friendly System). Please use the guide on our [How to Register](#) page for up-to-date information on how to register for classes.

## Course Sections and Format

Section ID	Delivery Method	Eligible to Register
HG1, HG2, etc.	Hybrid	USG students only
HY1, HY2, etc.	Hybrid	Baltimore students only
IG1, IG2, etc.	In-Person	USG students only
IP1, IP2, etc.	In-Person	Baltimore students only
OA1, OA2, etc.	Online Asynchronous	Baltimore and USG students
OS1, OS2, etc.	Online Synchronous	Baltimore and USG students
OM1, OM2, etc.	Online asynchronous and synchronous courses	Online MSW Program only

- Hybrid Classes require students to participate partially in-person and partially online.
  - Hybrid In-Person Meetings will take place for odd-numbered sessions (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15)
  - Hybrid Online Meetings will take place for even-numbered sessions (2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14)
  - Instructors may need to adjust this schedule, and will communicate this on the course syllabus, as well as through email, Blackboard or other methods.
- In-Person Classes require students to participate fully in-person for listed days and times.
- Online Asynchronous Classes allow students to complete their work at their own pace. Students are given a timeframe – it's usually a one-week window – during which they need to connect to their class at least once or twice.
- Online Synchronous Classes require students to participate in partial to entire sections of class at the exact same time. Students and instructors are online at scheduled dates/times to participate in lectures, discussions, activities, and presentations.

## Cross Campus Registration

Baltimore and USG students can only take in-person or hybrid courses at their respective campuses unless the course is specifically open to all students. USG students may request to take courses that are only offered at the Baltimore campus by completing the [USG-Baltimore Course Request Form](#). Baltimore students are not authorized to enroll in coursework offered at the USG campus. Additional USG schedule information is available [here](#).

For the Online MSW (OMSW) program:

- Only students officially admitted to the OMSW program may enroll in its courses.
- OMSW students may request to take their advanced policy course and up to two electives from either Hybrid program using [this form](#), provided those courses are not available within the OMSW curriculum.
- OMSW students must be enrolled in at least one OMSW course during each fall and spring semester.

**Note:** Submitting a request form does not guarantee enrollment. Students from the designated campus or program receive registration priority. If space remains closer to the start of the term, approved students from other campuses or programs may be added.

## Waitlist for Closed Courses

Students submit waitlist requests to the Office of Records & Registration through SURFS.

## **Auditing a Course**

A course may be audited on a space-available basis with priority given to students taking the course for credit. The course will appear on the student's transcript as Audit (AU) but will not count toward the credit requirement for degree completion. A student may not change their status to audit or vice versa once the semester has started. Charges for audit courses are the same as credit courses. Students interested in auditing a course should complete the [Request for an Academic Audit Course form](#) prior to the start of the semester.

## **Adding and Dropping Courses Once Semester Has Begun**

Based on availability, a student may add a course to their schedule during the first week of classes. This must be done by emailing the Office of Records and Registration at [sswregistration@ssw.umaryland.edu](mailto:sswregistration@ssw.umaryland.edu). Courses may be dropped until the semester's drop date, however once the semester has started there is no refund for students who drop courses or for students who change their status from full-time to part-time (fewer than 9 credits).

Students who register for a course and decide not to take it must officially drop it by that semester's drop date to avoid submission of a failing grade. This may be done by submitting the [Request to Drop a Course Form](#). Students should refer to the SSW [Registration and Academic Calendar](#) to obtain the specific dates for drop/add.

## **Academic Standing**

### **Academic Probation Policy**

At the end of every semester, each student's Grade Point Average (GPA) is reviewed by the Office of Records and Registration to determine if the student is in good academic standing. Good academic standing is having a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

A student who obtains an overall GPA below 3.0 will be placed on Academic Probation. A student on Academic Probation for the first time is strongly encouraged to meet with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs to develop an academic success plan. Once on Academic Probation, a student is not eligible for incomplete grades (with practicum as the only exception).

A student will be dismissed from the MSW program after 2 consecutive semesters of having a GPA below 3.0 (i.e., on Academic Probation). The Office of Student Affairs may consider an exception to dismissal for a student with a strong potential for achieving a 3.0 GPA by the end of the next semester. If granted the exception, a student must achieve a 3.0 GPA by the end of that one granted semester to remain in the program.

### **Repeating Courses**

A course may be repeated only once. Although the first grade continues to appear on the student's transcript, the second grade becomes the grade of record and is the one computed in the overall grade point average.

### **Suspension**

Suspension is the denial of enrollment for a specified period of time. Grounds for suspension include but are not limited to:

- ethical violations,
- academic dishonesty,
- conviction of a crime, and
- falsifying information on the admissions application.

(See *Appendix B for the Student Review Committee (SRC) Policy for an explanation of the SRC*

*referral and hearing process).*

A student who is suspended does not need to reapply to the school but must comply with the written terms of the suspension. Suspension may be up to one year in duration. The student must document and submit evidence of compliance in a written appeal requesting re-instatement to the School of Social Work, in accordance with the timeline given in the terms of the suspension. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs will communicate the decision regarding the appeal for re-entry into the school.

## **Dismissal**

Dismissal is the administrative disenrollment of a student. A student who has demonstrated “academic failure” or egregious ethical violations or problematic professional behavior will be dismissed from the program.

Examples of academic failure include but are not limited to:

- having earned failing “F” grades in two, three-credit courses OR
- having earned failing “F” grades in two semesters of practicum OR
- having earned failing “F” grades in a combination of one, three credit course and one semester of practicum OR
- two semesters of Academic Probation.

For a course where the student receives their first “F” the student may retake the course. The grade received for the re-take will be placed on the student’s transcript and calculated in the student’s revised GPA. However, the initial F will remain on the transcript. The second “F” will result in automatic dismissal, even in circumstances when the first “F” has been replaced with a passing grade. A course where a student receives a second “F” grade may not be repeated.

Grounds for dismissal for egregious ethical violations or problematic professional behaviors include but are not limited to:

- ethical violations,
- academic dishonesty,
- conviction of a crime, and
- falsifying information on the admissions application

*(See Appendix B for the Student Review Committee (SRC) Policy for an explanation of the SRC referral and hearing process.)*

## **Readmission and Reinstatement after Dismissal**

Following the required 2-year waiting period, students may be eligible for a one-time request for reinstatement via the process below:

- a) complete an application for admission to the UMSSW
- b) communicate their intention to apply for reinstatement in writing to the Associate Dean for Admissions and Enrollment
- c) submit a one-time request for reinstatement by completing the Reinstatement Request Form found [here](#). As part of the reinstatement request, students are expected to describe the changes they have or will make in their academic preparation and strategies that will improve their potential for successfully completing their program.

The Reinstatement Review Committee, a subcommittee of the UMSSW Admissions Committee, reviews requests for readmission and reinstatement and may request the student participate in an interview. Decisions are binding and not eligible for appeal.

Decisions will be communicated to the applicant within 30 days.

Students readmitted will work with a representative from the Office of Student Affairs to create a customized academic success plan. The readmitted student must also meet with the academic advisor before their returning semester starts. Students who are approved for reinstatement will be readmitted on Academic Probation status and must be in good academic standing, with a GPA of at least 3.0 after their first semester.

Reinstated students who do not achieve good academic standing will be dismissed without possibility of future reinstatement.

## **Taking a Leave of Absence**

A Leave of Absence (LOA) is used by students who do not plan to enroll for a semester or for registered students who want to drop all courses after the semester has begun. A leave may be taken from the School of Social Work prior to the drop deadline. Students who, due to extenuating circumstances, seek to take a leave after the drop deadline must request approval from the Associate Dean of Student Affairs. Students may take a leave of absence for up to two regular semesters, after which they must apply for readmission to the MSW program.

Students should complete the Request for a Leave of Absence [form](#) which is submitted to the Office of Records and Registration for approval. Students are financially liable for the semester tuition and fees as outlined in the UMB ["Refund Schedule for Withdrawal"](#) and are encouraged to discuss their circumstances with a representative from Student Affairs.

## **Withdrawal from the SSW**

Students who wish to withdraw or disengage from the School of Social Work with no intention of returning should complete the Withdrawal from the School of Social Work form located on the School's website ([here](#)). A student can withdraw from the School at any time during the semester, but may be financially liable for the semester tuition and fees as outlined in [the UMB "Refund Schedule for Withdrawal" refund-schedule](#).

## **Graduation Application**

All degree candidates must file a formal [Graduation Application](#) with the UMB Office of the Registrar during the semester in which they expect to graduate. The deadline for submission is on the campus wide Academic Calendar and will be emailed to students by the Office of Academic Affairs, Office of Student Affairs, and Office of Records & Registration. Applications should be submitted online in SURFS in the Student Records area. Students enrolled in Advanced Practicum on an extended schedule will apply for Summer (July) graduation because they will not complete their required practicum hours until July

## **Convocation**

The UMSSW holds a Convocation ceremony in May. Students who complete degree requirements in May, the prior December, or expect to complete requirements in July are all invited to attend and walk at the ceremony. Expected July graduates are not certified, nor do they receive their diploma, until all requirements are completed and the summer semester has ended. More information is listed on the UMSSW's website: [Convocation Information](#)

## **Licensing Information**

Each student who earns an MSW degree completes the coursework requirements needed for licensure as a Licensed Master Social Worker. In depth licensing and exam information can be [found here](#).

To practice as a Social Worker in the U.S., you must be licensed. The social work licensure examinations given throughout the U.S. are overseen by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB). The ASWB website contains answers to common questions regarding the licensing exam and social work licensure in general ([www.aswb.org](http://www.aswb.org)).

## **Obtaining a Transcript/Record of Academic Work**

Students may request an official transcript in [parchment](#). Transcripts will be sent in hard-copy at no charge via U.S. Mail ([Official Transcripts and Verification](#)).

## **Post MSW Coursework (Special Student Status)**

Under certain circumstances and with approval of the Office of Records and Registration, non-matriculated individuals who have completed an MSW may register for a course as a “special” student. Once approved, the person must communicate with the Office of Admissions to complete an abbreviated application and include both an official transcript and a statement as to the reason for enrollment. The matriculated application fee and per credit hour tuition and fees apply to “special” students. Students who have been dismissed from the MSW program may not come back as “special” students. “Special” students may register on a space available basis.

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## UMB POLICIES

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### UMB Code of Ethics and Conduct

UMB Personnel subject to this Code include UMB administrative and academic officers, faculty, employees, fellows, students (including student employees), and volunteers. In fulfilling the responsibilities of their positions at UMB, UMB Personnel are expected to adhere to and act in accordance with this Code and all laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures applicable to their UMB activities.

This Code reflects the requirements of laws and policies that relate to ethical conduct, including: the Maryland Public Ethics Law, the Maryland Whistleblower Law, and policies of the Board of Regents of the University System of Maryland (USM) and UMB that relate to reporting known or reasonably suspected wrongdoing. UMB Code of Ethics and Conduct is located [here](#).

### VA Educational Benefits

Students attending the School of Social Work using Veterans Education and Training Benefits may receive assistance with enrollment certification at the SSW Office of Records and Registration. Please see [here](#) for more information.

### Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act

The Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act (Public Law 101-542), signed into federal law Nov. 8, 1990, requires that the University of Maryland make readily available to its students and prospective students the following information: Financial aid; costs of attending the University of Maryland; refund policy; facilities and services for students with disabilities; procedures for review of School and campus accreditation; completion and graduation rates for undergraduate students; loan deferral under the Peace Corps and Domestic Volunteer Services Act; campus safety and security; campus crime statistics. To obtain any of this information, visit [www.umaryland.edu/oac/student-right-to-know](http://www.umaryland.edu/oac/student-right-to-know)

### FERPA Notice

Pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the UMB Confidentiality and Disclosure of Student Records Policy, this notice is given to students to advise them that the following information about a student is directory information subject to disclosure by the University upon request: name; address telephone listing; date and place of birth; photograph; major practicum of study; dates of attendance; degrees and awards received; and most recent previous educational institution attended. The directory information concerning a student may be disclosed even in the absence of consent unless the student files written notice informing the University not to disclose any or all of the categories within three weeks of the first day of the semester in which the student begins each school year. Notice not to disclose may be filed with the student's school Office of Student Affairs.

It is the policy of the University of Maryland, Baltimore to adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (also known as FERPA or the Buckley Amendment). Students can access their educational records by making a formal request to the Office of Records and Registration, [sswregistration@ssw.umaryland.edu](mailto:sswregistration@ssw.umaryland.edu).

### Financial Aid Policies

[Please click here for financial aid policies.](#)



## **Policies Related to Students with Disabilities**

The University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) is committed to the principles of equal access and opportunity for persons with disabilities in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. You can find more information [here](#).

## **Educational Support and Disability Services**

UMB's office of [Educational Supports and Disability Services \(ESDS\)](#) coordinates services to assist students with disabilities in obtaining reasonable accommodations through an interactive process involving the student and the UMSSW. Pregnant and parenting students may also connect with the Title IX Coordinator for additional support. [The Title IX Coordinator](#) can coordinate specific actions to prevent sex discrimination and ensure the student's equal access to UMB's education program or activity.

## **Notice of Nondiscrimination**

The University of Maryland, Baltimore prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. Individuals may report concerns or questions to the Title IX Coordinator. Read the [UMB Notice of Non-Discrimination](#) for more information.

## **Additional University Policies**

The University publishes policies and procedures [online](#).

- [Nondiscrimination Notice Policy](#)
- [Public Safety Policies](#)
- [Administration Policies](#)
- [Immunization, Social Media, and Student Affairs Policy](#)
- [Financial Affairs Policies](#)
- [Academic Integrity](#)

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## APPENDIX A: STUDENT GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE (SGC)

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### Purpose

The SGC, a standing committee of the faculty, is the committee to which MSW students may grieve actions of the faculty, administrators, and/or staff at the school.

Membership consists of a faculty chair and five faculty members. Selection and representation is delineated in the Faculty Plan of Organization (FPO). A voting student representative will be selected by the Student Government Association (SGA) for each grievance. The Committee will make recommendations to the SGC Chair and the Dean.

Note:

- View Student Policies [here](#).
- The faculty member, administrator or staff person must be a current employee of UM throughout the grievance process.

**Discrimination Complaints:** The SGC does NOT review discrimination complaints. The University of Maryland, Baltimore is committed to fostering a safe and just environment for its students, faculty and staff. UMB does not tolerate discrimination in any form including sexual harassment and violence or illegal discriminatory practices. All discrimination should be reported promptly to the Office of Accountability and Compliance. The Report Form located at [this link](#) may be used to report prohibited sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct. Information will be kept as private to the fullest extent possible and will be disclosed only to those individuals who need to know in order to investigate and resolve the complaint, and/or as required by law.

### Scope

The SGC shall review any grievance brought to it based on one or more of the following:

1. arbitrary and capricious action on the part of a faculty member in, but not limited to, evaluations or grading. (As defined by the Board of Regents USM Policy II – 1.20, “the term ‘arbitrary and capricious’ grading means:
  - 1) the assignment of a course grade to a student on some basis other than performance in the course;
  - 2) the assignment of a course grade to a student by unreasonable application of standards different from the standards that were applied to other students in that course; or
  - 3) the assignment of a course grade by a substantial and unreasonable departure from the instructor’s initially articulated standards.”)
2. violation of due process according to generally accepted norms of the University community by faculty, administrators, and/or staff;
3. any behavior that violates the [University’s Policy on Faculty, Student and Institutional Rights and Responsibilities for Academic Integrity \(III – 1.00\)](#)

### Procedures

#### For Grievances against Faculty:

- Grievant (student) and faculty member whose action is the subject of the grievance shall meet. It is the responsibility of the student to request the meeting.
- Failing resolution in the meeting, the grievant (student) should meet and discuss the matter with the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs (for courses) or the Director of Practicum Education (for practicum).
- Failing resolution in this meeting, the student shall arrange to communicate and meet with

the SGC Chair. (If the grievance is against the SGC Chair, the next senior-in-rank SGC Committee member shall assume the Chair role on a pro term basis.)

- There may be situations where the before established channels cannot be followed due to the nature of the allegation and the student may go directly to the SGC chair (i.e. fear of retaliation).

**For Grievances against Administrators, Exempt Staff or Non-exempt Staff:**

- Arranged by the grievant (student), a meeting to discuss the matter shall be held with the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.
- Failing resolution at this meeting, a meeting shall be arranged with the SGC Chair.
- There may be situations where the before established channels cannot be followed due to the nature of the allegation and the student may go directly to the SGC chair (i.e. fear of retaliation).

**Documentation/Decision Process**

Once the above procedures have been completed the Grievant (student) must submit to the SGC Chair a written grievance petition, which includes:

- A statement that the grievance falls within the scope of the committee.
- Facts that clearly delineate and support the grievance, attaching copies of all relevant documentation.
- A description of the specific steps that the student has taken in an attempt to resolve the conflict through established institutional channels before submission to the Committee.
- The student is encouraged to keep and present in support of the grievance a record of all meetings and what is found to be an unsatisfactory resolution of each step.

**SGC Chair Review/ Response:**

- Upon receipt of the grievance submission, the SGC chair will review the petition for determination of whether it constitutes a grievance that falls within the scope of the SGC in keeping with the SGC Committee internal procedures.
- When a petition is determined to fall within its purview, the SGC chair shall notify the person(s) named in the grievance (Respondent) and provide them with a complete copy of the petition.
- The SGC Chair shall offer mediation of the grievance to the parties, and if mediation is to be used, all parties must accept it and a resolution will be offered by the SGC Chair. (Mediation is not binding and does not preclude continuation of the grievance by the student.)
- If mediation fails to resolve the grievance, the SGC Chair shall appoint faculty members and a student representative for each grievance as needed, following Committee procedure. This constitutes the Grievance Review Committee (GRC). (No SGC member may be appointed to the Grievance Review Committee if the member is a respondent of the alleged grievance.) In addition, the Respondent is notified within 14 calendar days to submit a written response.

**Time Restrictions and Notifications:**

- A written grievance petition shall be submitted to the SGC Chair within 10 calendar days of the action/ incident/grading. If the grievance relates to a grade, then 10 calendar days from the posting of the grade.
- The SGC Chair will notify the respondent when the procedures (mediation) have failed to produce a solution and request a written response from the respondent within 10 calendar days of the receipt of this notification. The respondent's written response will be shared

with the student (grievant).

- If a GRC Committee meeting is necessary the recommendation should be completed, or a status report generated within 20 calendar days of its receipt of the grievance petition, and the respondent's written response.
- The SGC Chair will be notified of the Committee's recommendation and then this recommendation is forwarded to the Dean for final decision. (If the respondent is the Dean, and the grievance was sustained then the recommendation is forwarded instead to the President of the University for decision and final action.)
- The required timetable for the grievance review and recommendation may be suspended for the period of June 16 to August 20 as determined by SGC chair.

#### **Grievance Review Committee Meeting:**

- The SGC Chair will provide all received documents (grievant and respondent) to the GRC Chair.
- The GRC Committee may request the student and respondent to appear before the Committee. If so, both parties may bring an advocate. (Advocate may not be an attorney.)
- The Grievant has the option of deciding if the committee's student representative shall participate in the meeting.

#### **Decision:**

- The Dean will consider the GRC recommendation and the documentation prior to making a decision on the grievance. The Dean may accept, modify or reject the committee recommendation.
- The Dean's decision, which is final, will be sent in writing to the student, the respondent, the SGC chair and the GRC chair.

#### **Grievance Process Synopsis**

If a student (Grievant) believes they have a grievance based upon the before listed information, they should:

1. Meet with Respondent (faculty, administrator or staff person) to discuss and attempt to clarify/resolve issue.
2. Meet with Associate Dean to discuss and attempt to resolve if step 1 is unsuccessful.
3. Meet/communicate with SGC Chair to discuss the grievance if step 2 is unsuccessful.
4. Provide documentation to SGC Chair as requested after meeting. This should occur within the timeframe noted above.
5. Meet with SGC Chair and Respondent for mediation if offered.
6. Meet with GRC Committee if requested
7. Receive final decision from Dean

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## APPENDIX B: STUDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

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### Purpose and Scope

The Student Review Committee (SRC), a standing committee of the faculty, is responsible for reviewing allegations of egregious ethical violations or problematic professional behaviors in the classroom, practicum site or the school community at large; allegations may be brought to the SRC by any member of the school community. Additionally, the Committee reviews allegations of illegal behavior and/or conviction of a crime by/of a student brought to its attention. Members of the school community include faculty, practicum instructors, students and staff.

The SRC shall consist of the Chair, and two faculty members, (selection and representation as delineated in the Faculty Plan of Organization), one student representative designated by the Student Government Association (SGA) as available, a representative from the Practicum Education Office, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (non-voting); and the Director of Records and Registration (non-voting).

### Procedures

The Student Review Committee will consider student referrals from the Office of the Dean, the Office of Practicum Education, faculty and students.

1. The Office of the Dean may refer students for conviction of a crime, academic risk and/or review of the educational progress of the student when considered necessary.
2. The Office of Practicum Education may refer students for:
  - a. rejection by three different practicum agencies,
  - b. being asked to leave a practicum agency,
  - c. withdrawal from practicum instruction when performance is not of passing quality,
  - d. receiving an "F" in practicum instruction,
  - e. practicum performance that is judged to be at risk of academic failure or an inability to adequately carry out practicum assignments and/or,
  - f. problematic behavior.
3. The Office of the Dean, the Office of Practicum Education, faculty and/or students shall refer students for an allegation of an act of academic dishonesty
4. The Associate Deans for Student Affairs and Academic Affairs may refer students for:
  - a. academic risk or failure
  - b. problematic behavior or any violation of the [University's Student Policies](#) or the NASW Code of Ethics.

The referring party bringing the allegation must provide the SRC a detailed written statement of the allegations, providing as much supporting documentation as possible including the student's written material and corroborating statements of other faculty, staff, agency personnel, students and others, if applicable.

1. Referrals for academic dishonesty: In cases of alleged academic dishonesty, a review by the SRC will be initiated either by a student, a member of the faculty, or the administration.
  - a. When a student suspects that an act of academic dishonesty has occurred, the student will consult with the SRC Chair.
  - b. When a faculty member suspects that an act of academic dishonesty has occurred, the faculty member shall offer to meet with the student to clarify the concerns. If the matter cannot be resolved, the faculty member shall put in writing to the SRC the action that he/she is taking. The referral letter shall describe the alleged act of dishonesty, when it occurred and under what circumstances, in addition to the faculty

member's subsequent actions, and the rationale for the faculty member's decision. The faculty member shall notify the student of the referral and retain pertinent documentation of the incident in his/her files.

2. Referrals for conviction of a crime:
  - a. Upon referral by the Dean's Office of a student convicted of a crime, the Dean's Office will advise the student of the referral to the Committee. The Dean's Office will provide the Committee with a report presenting the specifications of the conviction. The student will be requested to provide the Committee with a written response reviewing the circumstances of the conviction, and present a review of the circumstances at a Committee hearing.
3. Referrals of demonstrated inability to adequately carry out practicum assignments:
  - a. The Office of Practicum Education will notify the student of referral to the SRC Committee and provide the SRC Chair with documentation of the student's performance by the practicum instructor, the practicum liaison, and any other relevant source.
  - b. The student will be requested to provide the Committee with a written response, a review of the practicum performance, and will be requested to present a review of the performance at a SRC Committee hearing.
  - c. When the Committee considers Office of Practicum Education referrals, the student's practicum liaison shall be requested to attend.

## **Documentation/Decision Process**

Copies of the referral letter and supporting materials shall go to the SRC Chair, who will be responsible for sending copies to the student and the Committee members.

1. The SRC Chair shall review the referral and its supporting documents and make a decision to accept or reject the case for review. The Chair shall notify the parties of the decision and provide the parties with details of the charge(s).
2. If the case is to be reviewed, the SRC Chair shall convene the Committee within 10 working days, if practical. Under extenuating circumstances, the Chair may, upon request, allow the student additional time to prepare a response to the allegations. If graduation is imminent and contingent upon the actions of the SRC Committee, the Committee shall convene at its earliest opportunity.

## **Hearing**

- The Chair shall set a time convenient to all parties to hear arguments, allow points to be clarified, and collect any additional information that the Committee deems relevant.
- The student shall have the option of discussing their educational performance and/or charges of problematic behavior with the Committee. Students may choose not to attend the hearing.
- Students have the option of deciding whether the Committee's student representative remains a part of the Committee process.
- Students who choose to meet with the Committee may bring support persons to the hearing. Each student may bring one support person, though it is not required. The support person may choose to make a brief statement of support on behalf of the student but may not ask questions of the Committee or of other witnesses. By University policy, the support person may not be an attorney (practicing or otherwise). Students cannot be accompanied by attorneys at these hearings unless the subject of the review concerns alleged criminal behavior for which criminal charges are or may be pending. In such instances, attorneys may be present to advise their clients but may not address the Committee directly.
- At the conclusion of the hearing, the Chair will excuse everyone in attendance except the

Committee members. The Committee will first discuss and then vote on whether to uphold the allegations in the referral. The Committee shall determine whether or not it believes the incident(s) occurred and whether it meets the standards of academic dishonesty or unprofessional (problematic) behavior.

- If the allegation(s) is not upheld, then the deliberations are ended and the Chair will notify the student to that effect. If the Committee does uphold the allegations in the referral, it will next deliberate on, formulate, and vote on the disposition. The Chair will forward the disposition to the student and to the Dean.
- Examples of SRC outcomes are:
  - Take no action,
  - Place the student on academic probation,
  - Suspend the student,
  - Dismiss the student.
- The SRC Chair will keep a record of the proceedings.

## **Notification**

- The student will be informed of the decision regarding the disposition of the hearing in writing, usually within 2 weeks of the hearing. The student may request to receive a copy of the Committee's written disposition and a tape recording of the hearing.
- If the case is heard and the charges of problematic behavior, academic dishonesty, or criminal conviction are not substantiated, the written material shall be expunged.
- All notifications, except dismissal, will come directly from the SRC chair. If a student is dismissed as a result of the SRC hearing, notification of dismissal will come directly from the Dean.

## **Appeal Procedures**

- Students have the right to appeal the SRC's decision to the Dean under the following circumstances:
  - Failure of due process
  - New evidence that could not be presented earlier
  - Evidence that a result was unjust
- An appeal must be filed with the Dean's office within 30 calendar days of receiving the disposition.
- The Dean will conduct an appeal by reviewing all documentation, including any relevant new information, and will render a final disposition within 2 weeks.



The University of Maryland, Baltimore is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104 (267-284-5000)). Both the baccalaureate program (offered at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County campus) and Master of Social Work program (offered at the School of Social Work, University of Maryland, Baltimore) are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, the authorized professional accrediting body for social work in the United States.

No provision of this publication shall be construed as a contract between any applicant or student and the University of Maryland, Baltimore. The University reserves the right to change any admission or advancement requirement at any time. The University further reserves the right to ask a student to withdraw at any time when it is considered to be in the best interest of the University. Admission and curriculum requirements are subject to change without prior notice.

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