

# Social Work - Graduate Programs

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## MSW Program Goals

Goal 1: The MSW Program prepares students to practice effectively and ethically with the full range of social systems, emphasizing evidence-informed practice, a strengths approach, diversity, social justice, empowerment, and a critical thinking perspective.

Goal 2: The MSW program prepares students who understand the global and organizational contexts of social work practice and who are prepared to assume the responsibility for leadership positions, as well as engaging in life long-learning.

Goal 3: The MSW Program prepares students, by valuing social work history and the integration of social work knowledge, to understand professional social work and to be prepared for advanced level concentration in one of the following:

- a. Aging (<https://www.uta.edu/ssw/academics/msw/programs/specialties/aging.php>)
- b. Children and Families (<https://www.uta.edu/ssw/academics/msw/programs/specialties/children-and-families.php>)
- c. Community and Administrative Practice (<https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/social-work/programs/msw/specialty-areas/community-and-administrative-practice/>).
- d. Health (<https://www.uta.edu/ssw/academics/msw/programs/specialties/health.php>)
- e. Mental Health and Substance Abuse (<https://www.uta.edu/ssw/academics/msw/programs/specialties/mental-health-substance-abuse.php>)

## MSW Program Objectives

Upon graduation from the MSW Program, students will demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills in their chosen concentration and specialty across in each of the nine Competencies developed by the Council on Social Work Education, as indicated below.

### Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

### Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers:

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experience; and
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

## Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are

knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

## Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

- use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

## Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers:

- identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

## Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and

apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness.

Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

## Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

## Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Social workers:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

## Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. **Social** workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

- a. Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.
- b. Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practice accordingly.
- c. Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.
- d. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice.

- e. Understand and interpret the history of the social work profession and its contemporary structures and issues.
- f. Apply the knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice with systems of all sizes.
- g. Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- h. Analyze, formulate, and influence social policies.
- i. Evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions.
- j. Use communication skills differentially across client populations, colleagues, and communities.
- k. Use supervision and consultation appropriate to social work practice.
- l. Function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems and seek necessary organizational change.

## Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work Program Goals

The mission of the PhD program is to prepare competent scholars to advance knowledge and scholarship, pursue excellence, and provide leadership and service and to promote social and economic justice and cultural competence with diverse populations.

The program builds on the premise that social welfare must be scientifically and theoretically based and continually responsive to changing local and global societal needs.

The primary goal of the program is to prepare scholars to advance knowledge development and dissemination for the profession of social work. The program seeks to provide students with an opportunity to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field and the profession in order to provide more effective and efficient services in social welfare and qualify for leadership positions in teaching, research, and administration. Graduates of the program are expected to make a significant contribution to the profession of social work through continued research, scholarship, teaching and service.

## Ph.D. Program Objectives

Upon completion of the Ph.D. Program students will display competency in:

- a. Theory and theory development.
- b. Knowledge and skills in research methods and data analysis.
- c. Theory, research, and policy as applied to a specialty practice area.
- d. Understanding and commitment to the underlying values, ethics, and social and economic justice perspectives in the scientific inquiry in social work.
- e. Theory and research as applied to social work practice, policy and social work education.

## Admission Requirements

Please contact the MSW Admissions Office ([sswadmissions@uta.edu](mailto:sswadmissions@uta.edu)) to obtain the complete application checklist and information concerning specific application deadlines. Applicants may also visit the [MSW Admissions webpage \(https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/social-work/admissions/\)](https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/social-work/admissions/) for more information. Students are admitted to the MSW program for Fall or Spring semester with the exception of students that qualify for advanced standing with their undergraduate social work degree. Advanced Standing students can be admitted for a fall, spring or summer semester. The admissions process is the same for all MSW programs, including the Distance Education Cohorts.

\*Please note that the School of Social Work's deadline for application is different from the published deadlines of the Graduate School.

## Admission to the Master of Social Work Program

There are two methods for application to the MSW Program: the Quick Admissions Process, and the Traditional Admissions Process.

### QUICK ADMISSIONS

This process awards the bachelor-level applicant who has earned a 3.0 or better GPA in the last 60 hours of her/his undergraduate degree program a head start by requiring only a two-step process. In step 1, the applicant submits the online application. In step 2, the applicant must submit all official transcripts to the Office of Admissions, Records, and Registration. Once all transcripts have been received and evaluated, students whose GPA is 3.0 or better are generally admitted to the Master of Social Work Program.

Advanced Standing students applying for Quick Admission should follow the same process described above and identify themselves as having earned (or will earn by enrollment) the BSW. The BSW degree is verified by the Office of Admissions, Records, and Registration, and included with other application materials. Advanced Standing status is only granted to individuals who have graduated within the past 6 years from a BSW degree program accredited by CSWE with a 3.0 or better GPA in their last 60 hours. The same evaluation criteria are used for applicants seeking admission to the Advanced Standing MSW program.

## TRADITIONAL ADMISSIONS

In the second admission method, applicants deemed ineligible for Quick Admission to the MSW program (based on the 3.0 GPA requirement) will be considered via the Traditional Admission Process for the traditional program only. Traditional Admission includes, but is not limited to the satisfactory presence of the following six qualifications:

- Possession of a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited U.S. college or university or its equivalent, with a satisfactory GPA of 2.7 or higher.
- Submission of three letters of reference indicating professional or academic promise.
- Submission of narrative essay of three double-spaced pages or less that responds to the following prompt: *Social work practice is often classified as either micro or macro. Explain what is meant by micro practice and macro practice, and why addressing both micro and macro issues is essential to effective social work practice. Use three outside sources to support your statement and include complete citations for each.*
- Submission of GRE test scores.
- For applicants whose native language is not English: Submission of satisfactory scores on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or the TOEFL examination.\*

\*Applicants must submit a score of at least 6.5 on the IELTS, or a minimum TOEFL iBT total score of 79 with sectional scores that meet or exceed the following:

- 22 for the writing section
- 21 for the speaking section
- 20 for the reading section
- 16 for the listening section

## TRANSFER OF CREDIT

Transfer credits for graduate level social work courses may, at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Programs, be accepted by the School of Social Work from comparable coursework taken and passed with a grade of 'B' or better at another Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited program within the last six years. Transfer credits for graduate level course work in related fields may, at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Programs, be accepted by the School of Social Work if comparable to required coursework for the MSW; such courses must have been taken and passed with a grade of 'B' or better within the last six years. Students will be expected to provide syllabi for review. No credit is given for life or work experience.

## FINANCIAL AID

Scholarships are awarded annually and administered by the School of Social Work. For information about scholarships available through the School of Social Work, please visit <https://www.uta.edu/ssw/student-resources/scholarships> (<https://www.uta.edu/ssw/student-resources/scholarships.php>).

A limited number of traineeships are available through the [Center for Child Welfare's Title IV-E Program](https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/social-work/research/title-iv-e-project/) (<https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/social-work/research/title-iv-e-project/>).

## GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS

Candidates for fellowship awards must have a GPA of 3.0 in their last 60 undergraduate credit hours and in any graduate credit hours, and must be enrolled in a minimum of 6 hours in both long semesters to retain their fellowships.

## Degree Requirements

The MSW curriculum provides students with a generalist perspective in the foundation curriculum and allows students to specialize in one of five practice areas through the advanced curriculum. Students must complete required foundation courses prior to taking most advanced courses. Students in the advanced curriculum select a specialty area: Aging, Children and Families, Community and Administrative Practice, Health, or Mental Health and Substance Misuse.

The program leading to the degree of Master of Social Work requires the completion of 61 semester hours of graduate work including class and field instruction, as well as thesis or integrative seminar (non-thesis option).

In addition to the general graduate admission requirements of the University, each graduate student in the social work program must:

- maintain at least a B (3.0) overall GPA in all coursework;
- demonstrate suitability for professional social work practice; and,
- demonstrate knowledge of and adherence to the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers and the Code of Conduct published by the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners.

The Professional Standards Committee will monitor and examine potential violations of ethical violations or lack of professional behavior.

## ADVANCED STANDING

An applicant meeting all regular admissions requirements who has graduated from an accredited undergraduate program in social work within the previous six years will be considered for advanced standing status in the graduate program provided the student graduated with a GPA of 3.0 or better in their last 60 hours of coursework. Foundation coursework will be waived for students who are granted advanced standing status.

## CREDIT HOUR WAIVERS

An applicant meeting all regular admissions requirements who has completed graduate coursework at an accredited master's program in social work within the previous six years may be able to receive credit hour waivers for comparable courses, provided that the grades in those courses are B or better. Students may receive course waivers for more than 23 credit hours, but only 23 hours may be applied to the 61-hour MSW degree. Waivers will be granted on a case-by-case basis contingent upon evaluation of transcripts, syllabi, and any other required supporting information. Waivers will not be granted for life or work experience.

## graduate Certificates

Students may add a Leadership or Military related certificate to enhance their MSW. There are four Leadership Certificates and two Military Certificates available. These certificates prepare students with knowledge in the respective area of social work that will enhance their ability to assume positions in the respective areas. More information can be found on our [Certificates website](https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/social-work/programs/msw/certificates/) (<https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/social-work/programs/msw/certificates/>).

## Dual Degree Programs

Students in social work may participate in dual degree programs whereby they can earn a Master of Social Work and another Master's in an area of their choosing. By participating in a dual degree program, students can apply some semester hours jointly to meet the requirements of both degrees, thus reducing the total number of hours which would be required to earn both degrees separately. The number of hours which may be jointly applied is subject to the approval of the Academic Advisors or Graduate Advisors from both programs.

Those interested in a dual degree program should consult the appropriate Graduate Advisor(s) for further information on course requirements though dual degree information is available on the [School of Social Work's Dual Degrees webpage](https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/social-work/programs/msw/dual-degree/) (<https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/social-work/programs/msw/dual-degree/>).

## MSW Program Location Options

### FORT WORTH CENTER MSW COHORT PROGRAM

The UT Arlington School of Social Work offers an MSW Degree with a specialization in Mental Health and Substance Misuse through our Fort Worth Center location. Classes will be offered twice each week in the evening (scheduling may be subject to change during the summer semester as well as the intersessions). A new cohort of students will be admitted to the MSW program at the UTA Fort Worth Center every fall. Students applying to this program must meet all regular admissions requirements. The application process is the same as for students applying to other locations of the MSW program.

### ONLINE MSW PROGRAM

All classes in the MSW Online Programs are online, though students are required to complete field practicums, which is the only face to face requirement. Field can be completed in their geographical location with approval from the School of Social Work's Office of Field Education. Four of the five specialties are offered online: Aging, Children and Families, Community and Administrative Practice, and Mental Health and Substance Misuse.

## Admission Requirements

To be considered for admission to the Ph.D. program, an applicant must have:

- A Master's Degree:
  - Master's Degree in Social Work
  - Applicants who do not have a Master's Degree in Social Work are expected to have work or volunteer experience in human services and complete an introductory social work course and diversity course prior to beginning the program.
- Transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work documenting:
  - Undergraduate GPA of 3.0 minimum, on the last 60 hours as calculated by the Office of Admissions, Records, and Registration
  - Masters GPA of 3.4 minimum as calculated by the Office of Admissions, Records, and Registration.
- A Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score that evidences an ability to do satisfactory graduate work.
- Curriculum Vitae which outlines (1) work and volunteer experiences in human services; (2) participation in professional organizations and conferences; and (3) publications, if applicable.
- Statement of academic goals consistent with the goals of the Social Work PhD Program goals.
- Professional writing sample that provides evidence of the applicant's writing skills and critical thinking skills.



- Three letters of recommendation, preferably from persons holding Ph.D. degrees, addressing applicant's skills in the areas of analytical thinking and writing skills.
- If English is not the applicant's first language, a minimum TOEFL iBT total score of 90 with a writing sectional score of at least 23 must be submitted.
- An interview will be conducted with applicants meeting the basic admission criteria above.

An application for admission, transcripts of previous academic work and Graduate Record Examination scores must be submitted to Graduate Admissions. An additional separate application and supporting materials must be sent to the Graduate Advisor, Ph.D. in Social Work Program.

## PhD Degree Requirements

The program leading to the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work covers nine semesters (three years) of full-time study and requires the completion of 48 semester hours of graduate work including coursework, a qualifying examination, a comprehensive specialty examination and a dissertation. Students and their faculty supervisory committee together develop a plan of study geared to the students' interests. Included in this plan are a set of required and elective courses in which students pursue their specialized interests.

- 18 hours of Core coursework.
- The core coursework qualifying examination must be satisfactorily completed before progressing in the program.
- Six hours of Research Practicum.
- Six hours electives selected from relevant graduate courses offered outside the School of Social Work.
- Upon completion of 36 hours of required or elective coursework, the specialty comprehensive examination is taken prior to application for candidacy and registration for dissertation.
- Three hours of dissertation tutorial taken upon successful completion of comprehensive specialty examination.
- Nine total hours of dissertation must be taken for a student to graduate.

Successful completion of both the core qualifying examination and the comprehensive specialty examination in the area of study to advance the student to candidacy at which time he or she devotes time to the completion of the dissertation. The last step before the degree is awarded is the successful final defense of the dissertation.

Doctoral students must demonstrate knowledge of and adherence to the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers and the Code of Ethics as currently published by the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners.

## PhD Part-Time Program

A PhD Social Work part-time program is forthcoming.