

# Social Work

## Department of Social Work MSW Program

Training the finest professionals in the areas of clinical/medical social work requires settings that provide the best opportunities for students to develop the complex skills needed to provide services.

Students in the UAB Master of Social Work program will receive advanced training using an innovative model of evidence-based education in the resource-rich environment provided by UAB, including world-class Schools of Medicine and Public Health.

The MSW program will prepare students for clinical and community practice, including specific focus on interventions demonstrated to be effective for specific populations. Combining extensive internships in health and mental health settings with coordinated classroom learning, students will be uniquely trained in clinical and community practice.

The MSW is a terminal professional degree, focusing on developing advanced practice competencies. The majority of non-academic Social Work jobs are at this level, and an MSW degree is required to achieve licensure for independent clinical practice.

The program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

## Program Requirements

We offer four curricular pathways to obtain the MSW including full-time and new part-time program options (beginning Fall 2021).

### Regular Program (Full-Time)

This MSW curriculum consists of 60 credit hours, divided into foundation level (12 hours) and concentration level (48 hours). Courses are sequenced so that students will graduate in four semesters. Foundation courses are compressed into a single semester, allowing students three semesters to gain advanced clinical skills. The concentration sequence is three semesters of coursework with specific focus on courses aimed at developing specific practice competencies, and courses on the specific populations who will be the recipients of behavioral health and health interventions. Regular Program students have field experiences over four semesters consisting of 900 total contact hours.

### Advanced Standing (Full-Time)

Students holding a Bachelor of Social Work degree from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) may be admitted to the MSW program with advanced-standing status. The Advanced Standing curriculum consists of 42 credit hours and is completed over three semesters (Fall/Spring/Fall). Advanced Standing students have field experiences over three semesters consisting of 600 total contact hours.

### Regular Program (Part-Time)

The part-time version of the Regular Program curriculum consists of 61 credit hours, divided into foundation level (12 hours) and concentration level (49 hours). Courses are sequenced so that students will graduate in four years (11 semesters, including summers).

### Advanced Standing (Part-Time)

Students holding a Bachelor of Social Work degree from a CSWE-accredited BSW program may be admitted to the MSW program with advanced-standing status. The part-time version of the Advanced

Standing curriculum consists of 42 credit hours and is completed over 2.5 years (7 semesters, including summers).

## Field Practicum

In the Field Practicum, students are prepared for post-graduate employment through a series of experiences in community agencies. Students are paired with Field Supervisors who are professionals with at least two years of post-graduate experience.

Activities in the field are sequenced to lead to independent practice, beginning in the initial setting with practice simulations and service learning in community agencies, continuing on with shadowing and supervised direct practice. The field experience is integrated across the curriculum, including conducting a research project as part of field practicum experience, and assignments paired to practice courses.

The field experience uses closely monitored experiences in community settings to allow students more direct experience. This approach is designed to increase student readiness for the more specialized upper level practice associated the clinical social work.

## Admissions Requirements

An admissions packet will consist of:

- Academic transcripts with GPAs (note: please have transcripts mailed directly to the UAB Graduate School — transcripts will not be accepted in the Department)
- Two recommendation letters, ideally one academic and one professional (note: please ask individuals to upload formal letters of recommendation to the Graduate School application — recommendation letters will not be accepted in the Department). Letters must be signed by the recommendation writer to be accepted.
- A professional resume
- A personal statement about your path to social work and professional goals (writing prompt found in application)
- A formal academic writing sample (writing prompt found in application)
- International students will be required to submit scores from the TOEFL

Additional admissions requirements established by the UAB Graduate School include: completion of a Bachelor's degree (or higher) with a minimum GPA of 3.0 (on a four-point scale) in junior and senior level course work. The GRE is not required.

## Master of Social Work in Clinical/ Medical Social Work

Students who have a non-social work undergraduate degree from an accredited College or University may be admitted as a student to 2-year (4 semester/61 credit) curriculum (Regular admission). Students who hold a BSW from a social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education may apply for Advanced Standing admission. Students entering the program as Advanced Standing are not required to complete Foundation courses and begin with the advanced curriculum (3 semester/48 credit).

Requirements	Hours
SW 510 Social Work Practice with Individuals, Groups & Organizations	3

SW 520	Social Work Policy	3
SW 530	Research I	3
SW 590	Field Practicum I	2
SW 591	Field Practicum Seminar I	1
SW 610	Diagnosis and Assessment for Health and Behavioral Health	3
SW 640	Human Behavior in the Social Environment for Health and Behavioral Health	3
SW 630	Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations I	3
SW 693	Field Practicum Seminar II	1
SW 690	Field Practicum II	4-6
SW 631	Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations II	3
SW 615	Evidence-informed Interventions in Health and Behavioral Health I	3
SW 620	Policy Analysis and Advocacy Practice for Health and Behavioral Health	3
SW 691	Field Practicum III	4-6
SW 692	Field Practicum IV	4-6
SW 694	Field Practicum Seminar III	1
SW 695	Field Practicum Seminar IV	1
<b>Electives</b>		<b>9</b>
SW 599	Special Topics	
SW 650	Evidence-Based Practice in Mental Health	
SW 651	Evidence-Based Practice in Addictions	
SW 653	Social Work Practice along the HIV Continuum of Care	
Total Hours		54-60

## Courses

### SW 510. Social Work Practice with Individuals, Groups & Organizations. 3 Hours.

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to the profession's change process that facilitates change and improves social functioning. Students will learn about the advanced generalist model application of social work practice with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations. Students will be introduced to the principles of evidence-based practice. The course also explores theories, concepts, and knowledge about human development and behavior. In addition content includes discussion of how factors such as social class, sexual orientation, gender, physical ability, age, race, ethnicity, and culture influence human development and behavior. The course also focuses on adherence to NASW Code of Ethics and ethical practice.

### SW 520. Social Work Policy. 3 Hours.

This course provides the foundation for social welfare policy and policy practice for social workers. It helps understand what social welfare is, its historical background, and values and beliefs that have shaped social welfare policy and analysis of social welfare policies. Issues around poverty and economic inequality, key social welfare policies and programs, and policy making processes will be discussed to help evaluate status-quo policies and advocate for vulnerable populations.

### SW 530. Research I. 3 Hours.

This is the foundation research course that covers basic research methods, provides the foundation to conduct evidence-based practice and evaluation of practice. Students will be introduced to basic types and methods of research and evaluation, with a focus on deductive methods. Students will be introduced to statistical analyses and learn descriptive statistics as part of their quantitative data education. Students will learn ethics related to research and evaluation.

### SW 590. Field Practicum I. 2 Hours.

Practicum I is a foundational level practicum experience. Students participate in a 100 hour clinical placement in an approved social service agency under supervision of master's-level social workers. This course has a weekly one-hour seminar/lab. This course includes both classroom learning and simulation and service learning opportunities in health and behavioral settings. [SW 590](#) is developed to provide students who do not enter with any direct practice experience initial skills that allow them to succeed as they move into the later Field Practicum classes. Educational experiences will include simulation and service learning experiences in community health and mental health.

### SW 591. Field Practicum Seminar I. 1 Hour.

Practicum I is a foundational level practicum experience. Students participate in a 115 hour clinical placement in an approved social service agency under supervision of master's-level social workers. This course has a weekly one-hour seminar/lab. This course includes both classroom learning and simulation and service learning opportunities in health and behavioral settings. [SW 590](#) is developed to provide students who do not enter with any direct practice experience initial skills that allow them to succeed as they move into the later Field Practicum classes. Educational experiences will include simulation and service learning experiences in community health and mental health.

### SW 599. Special Topics. 1-3 Hour.

Special topics in social work.

### SW 610. Diagnosis and Assessment for Health and Behavioral Health. 3 Hours.

The purpose of this course is to educate the student in formal assessment processes using standardized diagnostic tools. Specifically, students will learn to conduct multidimensional assessments using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) and International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD). Students will learn differential diagnosis for both mental disorders and specific health conditions, including HIV/AIDS. Training in assessment of diagnosis will include interview skills engaging the client or family system to elicit accurate information around specific symptoms and diagnostic rule-outs, explore the effect of culture and diversity on reporting symptoms, understand how socioeconomic factors can impact on both the reporting and severity of specific symptoms, conduct assessments in a professional and ethical manner, and how to write up diagnostic statements for both mental health and health conditions. Students will be trained on how to use this information as Social Workers on a multidisciplinary team to advocate for appropriate use of the diagnosis in designing interventions.

**SW 615. Evidence-informed Interventions in Health and Behavioral Health I. 3 Hours.**

The purpose of this course is to train students on providing evidence-based interventions for children and families addressing health and behavioral health conditions. Students will be trained in skills in identifying appropriate evidence-based practices, then translating and implementing these practices at appropriate individual and families. Identifying appropriate evidence-based practices will include the ability to ask answerable questions, identify relevant available material, assess the evidence-supporting material, and make evidence-driven decisions based on available information. Translating and implementing practices includes awareness of individual-level information as well as available resources in the various practice settings. In translating and implementing practices, particular attention is paid to diversity and culture, including race, ethnicity and culture, gender, sexual orientation, age and family structure. Students will receive information and training relative to advanced intervention processes, including engagement, assessment, conducting the specific intervention and evaluation. As part of training in the evidence-based intervention process, students will learn about practice ethics related to working with children and families (e.g., mandated reporting of abuse). This course will focus primarily on conditions that occur first in childhood, including both acute and chronic conditions, and interventions with children and families.

**SW 616. Evidence-informed Interventions in Health and Behavioral Health II (Groups, Organizations, Comm). 3 Hours.**

The purpose of this course is to train students on providing evidence-based interventions for adults addressing health and behavioral health conditions. Students will be trained in skills in identifying appropriate evidence-based practices, then translating and implementing these practices at appropriate individual, group, family, organization and community levels. Identifying appropriate evidence-based practices will include the ability to ask answerable questions, identify relevant available material, assess the evidence-supporting material, and make evidence-driven decisions based on available information. Translating and implementing practices includes awareness of individual-level information as well as available resources in the various practice settings. In translating and implementing practices, particular attention is paid to diversity and culture, including race, ethnicity and culture, gender, sexual orientation, age and family structure. Students will receive information and training relative to advanced intervention processes, including engagement, assessment, conducting the specific intervention and evaluation. This course will focus primarily on chronic conditions, often with onset in early adulthood (e.g., severe mental illness, substance use disorders, diabetes, HIV) and severe health conditions (e.g., cancer). As part of training in the evidence-based intervention process, students will learn about practice ethics related to working with adults, specifically concentrating on ethics related to older populations (e.g., mandated reporting of abuse). The course will pay considerable attention to interventions with older populations including illnesses associated with aging populations (e.g., Alzheimer's disease) and those associated with normative aging processes (e.g., mourning).

**SW 620. Policy Analysis and Advocacy Practice for Health and Behavioral Health. 3 Hours.**

This course provides students with necessary knowledge and skills to identify policies at the local, state and federal level relevant to health and behavioral health settings and to analyze the impact of policy on clients and constituent groups. Policy issues are examined in the context of their impact on diverse populations and, particularly, socioeconomic oppression. This course teaches advanced advocacy skills and policy formulation.

**SW 630. Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations I. 3 Hours.**

This course provides students with necessary skills to begin to assess, generate, evaluate, translate and implement evidence in clinical and policy practice. Students will become familiar with the evidence-based practice and learn how to implement EBP in health and behavioral health settings. This course introduces students to evaluation methodologies such as single system designs, quasi-experimental and experimental group designs, as well as protection of human subjects and research ethics. Students will also learn how to generate and interpret descriptive and inferential statistics applicable to those designs.

**SW 631. Research with Health and Behavioral Health Populations II. 3 Hours.**

This course introduces students to evaluation methodologies that include qualitative and mixed-methods designs for implementing and testing clinical and policy practice. Students will learn how to generate and evaluate data including qualitative and quantitative analysis, as well as protection of human subjects and research ethics for these methodologies. This course teaches students how to apply such evaluation to clinical practice in health and behavioral health settings.

**SW 640. Human Behavior in the Social Environment for Health and Behavioral Health. 3 Hours.**

Students will learn conceptualizations of health and mental health, including historical constructs and current conceptualizations. Students will learn human biology, including brain functions and genetics and epigenetics. Students will be introduced to pharmacology related to health and mental health conditions. Students will be exposed to various constructs of types of diversity, and how they relate to both health and behavioral health. Students will learn about social, economic and environmental justice, and how it relates to both practice and policy. This course will examine how human behavior in the social environment effects the intervention process, including engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation.

**SW 650. Evidence-Based Practice in Mental Health. 3 Hours.**

This course will provide students with skills for working with populations coping with mental illness. The course teaches students to move from specific diagnoses, to identifying and implementing evidence-based practices at a variety of levels—including individual, groups, families and organizations. As part of the implementation process, students will learn about the interaction of multiple psychiatric and medical diagnoses, as well as how diversity effects treatment. The course will teach specific skills related to evidence-based practices, such as cognitive behavioral therapy and dialectical behavior therapy.

**SW 651. Evidence-Based Practice in Addictions. 3 Hours.**

The purpose of this course is to provide advanced skills in treatment of addictions. Evidence-based models will be presented, including motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioral therapy, and psychopharmacologic approaches. Students will receive in-depth training in implementation of evidence-based models, including a specific focus on the skills necessary to identifying and translating the approach for individual clients. Specific attention will be paid to issues around working with diverse populations.

**SW 653. Social Work Practice along the HIV Continuum of Care. 3 Hours.**

This course is designed to examine the field of HIV/AIDS and will acquaint students with the basic and most advanced facts about HIV/AIDS. It will take different approaches of the impact of HIV infection and AIDS on the individual, family, society, and institutions that provide care and will sensitize students to the challenges that HIV/AIDS has generated in public health, social policy, and social service delivery. The course is especially framed by the HIV Continuum of Care which illustrates related social work HIV practice from prevention and testing to linkage to primary medical care, retention in care, and viral suppression. Social work students will have an opportunity to explore their own beliefs, values and approaches to the issues regarding HIV/AIDS, in addition to the cultural, political, social, legal, ethical, spiritual, and public health issues and the perspectives of people living with HIV infection and AIDS that are needed to inform practice and policy.

**SW 690. Field Practicum II. 4-6 Hours.**

The first experience of a 900-hour field practicum experience over three semesters in approved social service agencies under the supervision of an MSW with three or more years of experience. As the students' progress through Practicum II-IV they will be expected to function at increasing levels of difficulty, independence, autonomy, initiative, resourcefulness and diligence in the performance of assigned tasks. This course has a weekly one-hour seminar/lab. Students will participate in activities in approved agencies that will allow them to develop advanced generalist practice skills with populations coping with health and behavior health issues. Students will demonstrate knowledge in evidence-based interventions for individuals addressing health and behavioral health conditions and apply that knowledge in conducting interviews and assessments, development of treatment plans, and evaluating their practice. Students will manage personal and professional values and use their understanding of human behavior and diversity to advocate for clients at all systems levels. Course assignments are designed to encourage students to utilize critical thinking to analyze data and formulate plans that will improve practice, policy and service delivery. Seminar/lab sessions will utilize lectures, focused discussion questions and interactive activities to help students integrate classroom knowledge and practice experience.

**SW 691. Field Practicum III. 4-6 Hours.**

SW 691 Field Practicum (4-6 hours) and Seminar III (1 hour) is the second experience of a 900-hour field practicum experience over three semesters in approved social service agencies under the supervision of an MSW with three or more years of experience. The practicum experience provides the opportunity for social work majors to strengthen and augment knowledge, values and skill bases acquired in the classroom through applying evidence-based theory and other theory-based methods to situations found in actual professional practice. This course has a weekly one-hour seminar/lab. Students will participate in activities in approved agencies that will allow them to develop advanced generalist practice skills with populations coping with health and behavior health issues. Students will demonstrate knowledge in evidence-based interventions for individuals addressing health and behavioral health conditions and apply that knowledge in conducting interviews and assessments, development of treatment plans and evaluating their practice. Students will manage personal and professional values and use their understanding of human behavior and diversity to advocate for clients at all systems levels. Course assignments are designed to encourage students to utilize critical thinking to analyze data and formulate plans that will improve practice, policy and service delivery. Seminar/lab sessions will utilize lectures, focused discussion questions and interactive activities to help students integrate classroom knowledge and practice experience.

**SW 692. Field Practicum IV. 4-6 Hours.**

SW 692 Field Practicum (4-6 hours) and Seminar IV (1 hour) is the last experience of a 900-hour field practicum experience over three semesters in an approved social service agencies under the supervision of an MSW with three or more years of experience. Each field practicum experience will include a concurrent integrative seminar/lab. The course also provides the opportunity for students to examine the principles of social work practice and to develop critical thinking skills. The practicum experience provides the opportunity for social work majors to strengthen and augment knowledge, values and skill bases acquired in the classroom through applying evidence-based theory and other theory-based methods to situations found in actual professional practice. This course has a weekly one-hour seminar/lab. Students will participate in activities in approved agencies that will allow them to develop advanced generalist practice skills with populations coping with health and behavior health issues. As students progress through Practicum II-IV, they will be expected to function at increasing levels of difficulty, independence, autonomy, initiative, resourcefulness and diligence in the performance of assigned tasks. Students will demonstrate knowledge in evidence-based interventions for individuals addressing health and behavioral health conditions and apply that knowledge in conducting interviews and assessments, development of treatment plans, and evaluating their practice. Students will manage personal and professional values and use their understanding of human behavior and diversity to advocate for clients at all systems levels. Course assignments are designed to encourage students to utilize critical thinking to analyze data and formulate plans that will improve practice, policy and service delivery. Seminar/lab sessions will utilize lectures, focused discussion questions and interactive activities to help students integrate classroom knowledge and practice experience.

**SW 693. Field Practicum Seminar II. 1 Hour.**

The first experience of a 1080-hour field practicum experience over three semesters in approved social service agencies under the supervision of an MSW with three or more years of experience. As the students progress through Practicum II-IV they will be expected to function at increasing levels of difficulty, independence, autonomy, initiative, resourcefulness and diligence in the performance of assigned tasks. This course has a weekly one-hour seminar/lab. Students will participate in activities in approved agencies that will allow them to develop advanced generalist practice skills with populations coping with health and behavior health issues. Students will demonstrate knowledge in evidence-based interventions for individuals addressing health and behavioral health conditions and apply that knowledge in conducting interviews and assessments, development of treatment plans, and evaluating their practice. Students will manage personal and professional values and use their understanding of human behavior and diversity to advocate for clients at all systems levels. Course assignments are designed to encourage students to utilize critical thinking to analyze data and formulate plans that will improve practice, policy and service delivery. Seminar/lab sessions will utilize lectures, focused discussion questions and interactive activities to help students integrate classroom knowledge and practice experience.

**SW 694. Field Practicum Seminar III. 1 Hour.**

SW 691 Field Practicum (6 hours) and Seminar III (1 hour) is the second experience of a 1080-hour field practicum experience over three semesters in approved social service agencies under the supervision of an MSW with three or more years of experience. The practicum experience provides the opportunity for social work majors to strengthen and augment knowledge, values and skill bases acquired in the classroom through applying evidence-based theory and other theory-based methods to situations found in actual professional practice. This course has a weekly one-hour seminar/lab. Students will participate in activities in approved agencies that will allow them to develop advanced generalist practice skills with populations copying with health and behavior health issues. Students will demonstrate knowledge in evidence-based interventions for individuals addressing health and behavioral health conditions and apply that knowledge in conducting interviews and assessments, development of treatment plans and evaluating their practice. Students will manage personal and professional values and use their understanding of human behavior and diversity to advocate for clients at all systems levels. Course assignments are designed to encourage students to utilize critical thinking to analyze data and formulate plans that will improve practice, policy and service delivery. Seminar/lab sessions will utilize lectures, focused discussion questions and interactive activities to help students integrate classroom knowledge and practice experience.

**SW 695. Field Practicum Seminar IV. 1 Hour.**

SW 692 Field Practicum (7 hours) and Seminar IV (1 hour) is the last experience of a 1080-hour field practicum experience over three semesters in an approved social service agencies under the supervision of an MSW with three or more years of experience. Each field practicum experience will include a concurrent integrative seminar/lab. The course also provides the opportunity for students to examine the principles of social work practice and to develop critical thinking skills. The practicum experience provides the opportunity for social work majors to strengthen and augment knowledge, values and skill bases acquired in the classroom through applying evidence-based theory and other theory-based methods to situations found in actual professional practice. This course has a weekly one-hour seminar/lab. Students will participate in activities in approved agencies that will allow them to develop advanced generalist practice skills with populations coping with health and behavior health issues. As students progress through Practicum II-IV, they will be expected to function at increasing levels of difficulty, independence, autonomy, initiative, resourcefulness and diligence in the performance of assigned tasks. Students will demonstrate knowledge in evidence-based interventions for individuals addressing health and behavioral health conditions and apply that knowledge in conducting interviews and assessments, development of treatment plans, and evaluating their practice. Students will manage personal and professional values and use their understanding of human behavior and diversity to advocate for clients at all systems levels. Course assignments are designed to encourage students to utilize critical thinking to analyze data and formulate plans that will improve practice, policy and service delivery. Seminar/lab sessions will utilize lectures, focused discussion questions and interactive activities to help students integrate classroom knowledge and practice experience.

**SW 696. Field Practicum V. 4 Hours.**

SW 696 Field Practicum (4 hours) and SW 697 Seminar V (1 hour) represents the conclusion of a field practicum experience carried out over four semesters for part-time MSW students. Practica are carried out in approved social service agencies under the supervision of an MSW with three or more years of experience, and the field practicum and integrative seminar/lab must be registered for concurrently. The courses provide the opportunity for students to examine the principles of social work practice and to develop critical thinking skills. The practicum experience provides the opportunity for students to strengthen and augment knowledge, values and skill bases acquired in the classroom through applying evidence-based theory and other theory-based methods to situations found in actual professional practice. As part-time students progress through Practicum II-IV-V, they will be expected to function at increasing levels of difficulty, independence, autonomy, initiative, resourcefulness and diligence in the performance of assigned tasks. Students will demonstrate knowledge in evidence-based interventions for individuals addressing health and behavioral health conditions and apply that knowledge in conducting interviews and assessments, development of treatment plans, and evaluating their practice. Students will manage personal and professional values and use their understanding of human behavior and diversity to advocate for clients at all systems levels. Course assignments are designed to encourage students to utilize critical thinking to analyze data and formulate plans that will improve practice, policy and service delivery. Seminar/lab sessions will utilize lectures, focused discussion questions and interactive activities to help students integrate classroom knowledge and practice experience.

**SW 697. Field Practicum Seminar V. 1 Hour.**

SW 696 Field Practicum (4 hours) and SW 697 Seminar V (1 hour) represents the conclusion of a field practicum experience carried out over four semesters for part-time MSW students. Practica are carried out in approved social service agencies under the supervision of an MSW with three or more years of experience, and the field practicum and integrative seminar/lab must be registered for concurrently. The courses provide the opportunity for students to examine the principles of social work practice and to develop critical thinking skills. The practicum experience provides the opportunity for students to strengthen and augment knowledge, values and skill bases acquired in the classroom through applying evidence-based theory and other theory-based methods to situations found in actual professional practice. As part-time students progress through Practicum II-IV-V, they will be expected to function at increasing levels of difficulty, independence, autonomy, initiative, resourcefulness and diligence in the performance of assigned tasks. Students will demonstrate knowledge in evidence-based interventions for individuals addressing health and behavioral health conditions and apply that knowledge in conducting interviews and assessments, development of treatment plans, and evaluating their practice. Students will manage personal and professional values and use their understanding of human behavior and diversity to advocate for clients at all systems levels. Course assignments are designed to encourage students to utilize critical thinking to analyze data and formulate plans that will improve practice, policy and service delivery. Seminar/lab sessions will utilize lectures, focused discussion questions and interactive activities to help students integrate classroom knowledge and practice experience.