



# TCU Department of Social Work

## Master of Social Work Program Handbook



## *Master of Social Work Program Handbook*

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**TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**  
***www.tcu.edu***

**Department of Social Work**

Harris College of Nursing and Health Sciences

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Fort Worth, TX 76129

The Department of Social Work has been committed to excellence in preparing generalist Social Work practitioners since its inception in 1975. As the University has grown and modified its mission, so has the Department. Both the University and the Department emphasize ethical behavior, life-long learning, service to the community, and the importance of a knowledge base. Social Work has long been viewed as the conscience of the University and as specifically applying the University mission in its educational process. The University values dignity, respect, inclusiveness, tolerance, and ethical leadership qualities consistent with Social Work values.

The Master of Social Work Program mission is consistent with the Social Work profession's purpose and values and the program's context. The mission of the MSW Program to prepare highly competent, ethical, and culturally-responsive advanced generalist social workers.

**TCU Mission**

To educate individuals to think and act as ethical leaders and responsible citizens in the global community.

**TCU Vision**

To create a world-class, values-centered university experience for our students.

**TCU Core Values**

TCU values academic achievement, personal freedom and integrity, the dignity and respect of the individual, and a heritage of inclusiveness, tolerance and service.

**Harris College Of Nursing and Health Sciences Mission**

The mission of the Harris College of Nursing and Health Sciences is to enhance the human condition by preparing graduates who think and practice as ethical leaders, and by advancing knowledge of health and human development within the global community.

**Department of Social Work Mission**

Through experiential learning opportunities, innovative research, and student-focused mentoring, the TCU Department of Social Work prepares competent, ethical, culturally-responsive social work leaders. We train our students to critically interrogate structural inequities, apply a trauma-informed approach, and advocate for social change with local and global communities. By doing

so, the Department equips graduates to partner with diverse populations, specifically those who endure marginalization and oppression, to promote an equitable and just society.

### **TCU MSW Program Mission**

The TCU MSW Program prepares highly competent, ethical, and culturally-responsive advanced generalist social workers. Through our hands-on approach to teaching, research, and mentorship, students are prepared to challenge structural inequities, implement trauma-informed approaches, and lead social change at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. Program graduates are leaders within the social work profession, who meaningfully partner with diverse populations to transform local and global communities for the greater good.

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

MSW Program goals are derived from the mission of the department and program, and supported throughout the efforts of the department. The goals are incorporated as objectives in the syllabi of the social work courses and in the expressed competencies and practice behaviors assessed in field education. The goals form the basis for the design of the curriculum and are discussed in both classroom and field experiences.

The MSW Program has three goals, each of which relates to the competencies that will be assessed in relation to that goal. The goals reflect the MSW Program's commitment to its mission and to the mission of the University.

1. To prepare advanced practitioners to practice with an emphasis on human rights and social justice, in order to enhance the quality of life for all people;
2. To prepare advanced practitioners to contribute to the social work profession through leadership, administration, and supervision; and
3. To prepare advanced practitioners with competence to address human needs both locally and globally.

These goals are accomplished through a course of study consisting of a foundation curriculum required of all students, followed by an advanced curriculum. The MSW Program ensures students have the knowledge, values, and skills required to move into advanced social work practice, and incorporates the core competencies specific to the advanced generalist concentration. The curriculum is developed in a structured manner building on the foundation content and moving into more advanced practice content. The MSW Program emphasizes that advanced generalist social workers have a common base of social work knowledge, values, and skills that prepares students to move into positions of leadership. The advanced generalist concentration requires professional judgment and proficiency to apply the professional foundation within service systems of various sizes and types.

The MSW Program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The [Council on Social Work Education](#) (CSWE) uses the [Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards](#) (EPAS) to accredit baccalaureate- and master's-level social work programs.

## ***TCU DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK***

<b>Name/Position</b>	<b>Teaching Interests</b>	<b>Research Interests</b>
<a href="#">Sh'Niqua Alford</a> , DSW, LCSW BSW Program Director Assistant Professor of Professional Practice	Field Education Advanced Practice Direct Practice with Children/Families Child Welfare Micro Practice Social Work with Adolescents	Child Welfare Mental Health
<a href="#">Nada Elias-Lambert</a> , Ph.D., LMSW Department Chair Associate Professor	Research Intimate Partner Violence Professional Foundation Diversity	Sexual Violence Prevention Bystander Interventions Program Design, Implementation, and Evaluation
<a href="#">D. Lynn Jackson</a> , Ph.D., LCSW, ACSW Director of Field Education Professor	Group Practice Policy Field Education	Women's Issues Social Policy
<a href="#">Aesha John</a> , Ph.D., LMSW Associate Professor	Human Behavior in Social Environment Social Work with Children and Families Developmental Disabilities Research	Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Attachment and Parenting Program Evaluation
<a href="#">Katie Lauve-Moon</a> , Ph.D. Assistant Professor	Policy Communities & Organizations Gender & Inequality Macro Practice & Social Issues	Work & Gender Sociological Social Work Organizations & Inequality Gender & Religion
<a href="#">Ashley Palmer</a> , PhD, LMSW Assistant Professor	Micro Practice Policy Professional Foundation Diversity & Social Justice Child Welfare	Healthy Development among Youth and Young Adults Positive Mental Health Poverty and Inequality Open Educational Resources Social Work Education
<a href="#">Tenisha Polk-Potts</a> , LCSW-S Assistant Professor	Field Education Intimate Partner Violence Child Welfare Direct Practice with Children & Families Mental Health	Mental Health Women's Issues Attachment and Parenting
<a href="#">Mary Twis</a> , PhD, LMSW-AP MSW Program Director Assistant Professor	Macro and Micro Practice Mental Health Interpersonal Violence	Human Trafficking Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Sexual Abuse
<a href="#">Tee Tyler</a> , Ph.D., LCSW Associate Professor	Micro Practice Methods (IND, FAM, GRP) Research Methods Diversity & Social Justice	Parent-LGBTQ Child Relationships Social Work Education Interprofessional Education Social Identity Transitioning
<a href="#">Avery Amador</a> , Academic Program Specialist		
<a href="#">Eva Leon</a> , Administrative Assistant		

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## *Section I: MSW Policies*

### **I. MSW POLICIES**

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#### **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

Academic advising is an intentional process that involves a collaborative partnership between the student and the academic advisor. Successful advising is a shared responsibility that will equip students with knowledge and tools to make responsible decisions and to enable them to identify and achieve their educational and career goals ([Code of Student Conduct](#)).

Each student is assigned an academic advisor upon admission into the program. Advisors are Social Work faculty and are responsible for overseeing student degree plans and being accessible to students regarding job opportunities, doctoral education, and professionalism. The Department Chair has primary responsibility for overall accountability of advising. Each student is expected to meet with their academic advisor at least once each semester. It is expected that advising will be more in-depth in the advanced year when determining which electives and field placements will best advance the student's career goals and aspirations upon graduation.

Any student who is assigned a grade of I (incomplete), a grade of C, or who is placed on academic warning status must contact their assigned advisor before registering for the following semester.

For students experiencing difficulties, faculty advisors refer them to appropriate resources inside or outside the university setting. University services most frequently used include the Counseling Center, the Writing Center, the Health Center, and the Center for Academic Services. Social Work faculty members limit their advising role to those concerns relevant to the educational needs of students. When students require or request ongoing professional counseling, faculty refer them to appropriate resources, both on and off campus.

The Director of Field Education may also serve in an advisory function to students as they work to determine which field placement locations best fit their educational and professional goals.

#### **ACADEMIC WARNING STATUS AND TERMINATION**

If a student's overall grade-point average falls below 3.0, the student is placed on academic warning status. While in warning status, a student who wishes to continue in the degree program may not drop any course or withdraw from the University without the approval of their academic advisor, MSW Program Director, and Department Chair. In the next semester in which the student enrolls, the overall grade-point average must be raised to 3.0 or the student is dismissed from further study.

Certain additional circumstances make it possible for a student to be dismissed from continuation in the MSW program. All students receiving a grade of C or below or an I (incomplete) in any semester will have their academic progress in the program reviewed in a joint meeting of their academic advisor and the program director. Additionally, students who earn two or more C's or a single F grade during the program will be terminated from the program. If the third C or a single F is earned in the final semester, a degree will not be conferred. Students will be notified in writing of adverse decisions regarding their continuation in the program. They may also follow the

university grade appeal process if they would like to appeal a course grade.

Additionally, faculty may identify, in writing, those students who demonstrate behaviors that raise serious questions about their continuing towards the professional degree in Social Work. Such students' names will be submitted to the program director who will coordinate a review, including appropriate faculty members in such a process.

Students conditionally admitted by the University and MSW program will be notified of these conditions at the time of admission. If the conditions placed on admission have not been fulfilled within the time specified, the student may be dismissed from subsequent registration.

## **ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE & PROCESS**

### **Composition of Admissions Committee**

The MSW Program Admissions Committee will consist of four to six members, including:

1. MSW Program Director
2. Admissions Coordinator – non-voting staff member
3. Department Chair
4. Director of Field Education
5. One to two faculty members from the Department of Social Work

Positions on this committee may rotate as faculty composition of the department changes. The program's MSW Admissions Coordinator will coordinate all admissions efforts with the TCU Office of Graduate Studies. The MSW Admissions Coordinator is responsible for the initial eligibility screening of all applicants.

### **Process for Admission**

There is a four-stage process for admissions to the MSW Program:

1. Eligibility Review
  - a. MSW Admissions Coordinator reviews the application to determine if basic eligibility is met and indicates if the applicant has any unique characteristics.
2. Preliminary Consideration
  - a. The MSW Admissions Committee reviews applications and assesses them according to the MSW Program Application Review Scoring Rubric.
  - b. Applicants are separated into one of three categories:
    - i. Exceeds required qualifications/criteria
    - ii. Meets required qualifications/criteria
    - iii. Does not meet required qualifications/criteria
  - c. Those placed in the "Exceeds" or "Meets" categories will be included for final consideration.
3. Final Decisions
  - a. The MSW Admissions Committee reviews those in the top and middle tiers.



- b. The MSW Admissions Committee will make admissions decisions for the top candidates.
- c. The MSW Admissions Coordinator will send letters of acceptance to those accepted into the MSW Program. A second tier of applicants will be maintained as a wait list and will be notified as such.

Additional applications may be accepted if there is space available in the program.

- 4. Conditional acceptance is offered for those who need to complete prerequisites prior to enrollment.

### **Follow-Up and Offer Acceptance**

Students admitted to the program will be given the opportunity to view financial aid details. Those accepting an offer of admission will need to pay a \$300 non-refundable deposit to secure their seat in the program for the upcoming academic year. This deposit will be applied to their tuition.

The MSW Admissions Coordinator and MSW Program Director will provide fall course enrollment instructions and any additional materials needed by students. If needed, students admitted to the program may submit documentation for transfer credit consideration (see Transferring Courses).

A student orientation meeting will be held with all new graduate students before classes begin in the fall semester. Orientation is mandatory for all students accepted into the MSW program.

### **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

The admissions policy and procedures are designed to ensure that graduate students entering the MSW Program are committed to upholding the values, ethics, and principles of the social work profession and are committed to the mission of the MSW Program. The admission criteria and selection process are designed to ensure that students possess the academic abilities and motivation, and in the case of the Advanced Standing option, requisite knowledge and credentials to be successful in the MSW Program.

In addition to meeting the general admission requirements of TCU and the TCU Office of Graduate Studies, applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Traditional (2-year) or Advanced Standing (1-year) MSW program. Applicants may be reviewed for entry into either of the programs.

Admissions decisions will be based on a wide range of information, including the stipulated qualifications described below. Admission to the program presumes the ability and willingness to follow the sequential curriculum structure.

### **Traditional Program Students**

Traditional students are considered those who will complete 60 credit hours to graduate with their MSW from TCU. Traditional students should expect to complete the program in two years.

Required qualifications for admission:

1. *Prior Degree:* Students accepted for the MSW Program must have completed or be near completion of a baccalaureate (e.g. BA, BS) degree from an accredited college or university.
  - a. *Note:* International applicants with a bachelor's in social work must have their degree recognized by [CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service](#) to be considered for the Advanced Standing program.
2. *Transcripts:* Applicants should submit an unofficial transcript from every university or college attended.
  - a. *Note:* International applicants must submit an English translated copy of their transcript. *Note:* Current and former TCU students will not need to complete this step. Copies from the Registrar's Office will be obtained for all TCU graduates.
3. *GPA:* Applicants should have strong academic preparation as demonstrated by an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) in the last 60 hours of coursework. International student GPAs will be calculated using the World Education Services [GPA calculator](#).
4. *Course Prerequisites:* Applicants must have one college-level course in each of the following: statistics, sociology, and psychology before registering for the first semester in the MSW Program.
5. *References:* Applicants must submit three letters of recommendation from individuals who can address the applicant's academic abilities and interpersonal skills, potential for graduate education and potential for professional social work practice. It is required that at least one reference be an academic reference from an academic advisor or instructor.
6. *Resume:* Applicants must submit a current resume or vitae with their application.
7. *Professional Statement:* Applicants must submit a well-written professional statement (750 to 1500-word max) that addresses the following:
  - a. What motivated you to decide to pursue an MSW?
  - b. How do your personal values connect with the values of the social work profession?
  - c. What are strengths and weaknesses that will impact the student as a social worker?
  - d. Describe any experiences and leadership opportunities that will contribute to success in this graduate program?
  - e. Discuss any significant volunteer and/or work experiences related to social work.
  - f. What are your professional goals and plans in social work?
  - g. If you are offered admission to the program you may have an opportunity to work closely with a faculty member as a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) or Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA). Describe your research and/or teaching interests, and how you would like to build upon these interests to further your development as a social worker. Additionally, please share two TCU Department of Social Work faculty members you would be interested in engaging with during your time in the TCU MSW program. If you are able, please connect your research and teaching interests to your faculty member interests.

Optional framing for your personal statement: We value diversity, equity, and inclusion in the TCU MSW program and will use this information to better serve our students in the MSW program, but it will not be used to make admissions decisions. If you'd like to share a perspective you bring or experiences you've had to help us understand you better—perhaps related to a community you belong to, your sexual orientation or gender identity, or your family or cultural background—we encourage you to do so.

8. *Petition for Academic Exception*: MUST be completed by the applicants whose undergraduate GPA is below 3.0. An applicant who believes that his or her individual circumstances warrant consideration for a waiver of the minimum university admissions requirement of an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 must petition the MSW admissions committee.

The request should be a one-page statement entitled “Petition for Academic Exception”. The petition should include a statement indicating how not meeting the minimum admissions requirement of a 3.0 GPA should be waived, as it does not adequately represent the applicant’s capabilities. The applicant should briefly discuss how he or she has demonstrated a capacity for successful achievement in a rigorous graduate program. For example, an applicant might provide evidence of:

- a. Superior grades during the final 60 hours of undergraduate coursework indicating a trend toward improved performance;
- b. Competence through achievement in another graduate program;
- c. Outstanding work experience in human services (volunteer or paid)
- d. The applicant should also discuss if granted admission to the program, how he or she plans to address obstacles to successfully complete the program (for example, if a low GPA was viewed as the result of a “needing to work full time during my undergraduate studies” the applicant should discuss why that is not likely to be a factor during his or her graduate study).

Petitions must be uploaded along with all other application documents.

### **Advanced Standing Students**

Advanced Standing students are students who have earned a BSW from an accredited BSW program within seven (7) years and will complete 30 credit hours to graduate with their MSW from TCU. Advanced Standing students should expect to complete the program in one year.

Required qualifications for admission:

1. *Prior Degree*: Applicants must hold or be near completion of a bachelor’s degree in Social Work (BSW, BSSW) or other bachelor’s degree (BS or BA) with a major in social work from a CSWE accredited program.
  - a. *Note*: International applicants with a bachelor’s in social work must have their degree recognized by [CSWE’s International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service](#) to be considered for the Advanced Standing program.
2. *Transcripts*: Applicants should submit an unofficial transcript from every university or college attended.
  - a. *Note*: International applicants must submit an English translated copy of their transcript. *Note*: Current and former TCU students will not need to complete this step. Copies from the Registrar’s Office will be obtained for all TCU graduates.
3. *GPA*: Applicants should have strong academic preparation as demonstrated by an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) in the last 60 hours of BSW coursework. Advanced Standing applicants should also demonstrate mastery of generalist

social work practice, as evidenced by an earned grade of a B or better in their BSW field placements. (For split BSW field placements, students should demonstrate mastery of generalist social work practice with an average of a B or better across both semesters of the split placement.) Prospective students who do not meet these GPA and field grade requirements should apply for the Traditional program instead of the Advanced Standing program.

4. *Course Prerequisites:* Applicants must have one college-level course in statistics prior to registering for the first semester in the MSW program.
5. *References:* Applicants must submit three letters of recommendation from individuals who can address the applicant's academic abilities and interpersonal skills, potential for graduate education and potential for professional social work practice. It is required that at least one reference be an academic reference from an academic advisor or instructor, and that one of reference be from a field instructor.
6. *Resume:* Applicants will submit a current resume or vitae with their application.
7. *Professional Statement:* Applicants must submit a well-written professional statement (750 to 1500-word max) that addresses the following:
  - a. What motivated you to decide to pursue an MSW?
  - b. How do personal values connect with the values of the social work profession?
  - c. What are strengths and weaknesses that will impact the student as a social worker?
  - d. Describe any experiences and leadership opportunities that will contribute to success in this graduate program?
  - e. Discuss any significant volunteer and/or work experiences related to social work.
  - f. What are your professional goals and plans in social work?
  - g. Please share two TCU Department of Social Work faculty members you would be interested in engaging with during your time in the TCU MSW program. Please visit the Department of Social Work website for more information about social work faculty.
  - h. If you are offered admission to the program you may have an opportunity to work closely with a faculty member as a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) or Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA), or within the Department as administrative support. Describe your research and/or teaching interests, and how you would like to build upon these interests to further your development as a social worker. If you are able, please connect your research and teaching interests to your answer in section G (faculty member interests).

Optional framing for personal statement: We value diversity, equity, and inclusion in the TCU MSW program and will use this information to better serve our students in the MSW program, but it will not be used to make admissions decisions. If you'd like to share a perspective you bring or experiences you've had to help us understand you better—perhaps related to a community you belong to, your sexual orientation or gender identity, or your family or cultural background—we encourage you to do so.

## **COURSE CURRICULUM**

### **Foundation Curriculum**

The foundation curriculum provides students with the basic knowledge, skills and values

necessary for generalist social work practice and for progression into advanced generalist work. In order to achieve its objective, the foundation curriculum provides instruction in values and ethics, diversity, populations-at-risk and social and economic justice, human behavior and the social environment, social work practice, research, and field education.

In their field placement, students are placed in social service agencies under the supervision of Masters-level social workers, where they learn generalist practice methods used with a variety of client systems. Students complete 400 hours in the foundation field placement, with approximately two full days each week (16 hours) spent in the placement.

The foundation curriculum will provide students with the knowledge and skills consistent with the values of a generalist social work perspective, and provide a foundation for advanced practice. In addition, the student’s knowledge of and identification with the social work profession is developed: knowing about and appreciating social work’s historical development and evolution, the range of modes of professional intervention characteristics of contemporary practice, ethical issues and concerns now confronting practitioners, and the organizational contexts of practice.

**Foundation Curriculum Courses**

<b>MSW Foundation</b>	
<u>Fall</u> SOWO 61803- Professional Foundation SOWO 61813-Research Methods in Social Work SOWO 61873-Micro Practice SOWO 61843- HBSE 1 SOWO 61883-Field 1	<u>Spring</u> SOWO 61823-Diversity & Social Justice SOWO 61833-Macro Practice SOWO 61863-Social Welfare Policies & Services SOWO 61853-HBSE 2 SOWO 61893-Field 2

**Advanced Curriculum**

The advanced curriculum builds on the foundation curriculum and has an advanced generalist focus with the expectation that graduates can assume practice, supervisory, and administrative roles in organizations at the advanced level. The advanced curriculum is also structured to allow students to choose electives in the areas of children and families, and health and mental health.

All students complete a full year of advanced practice courses, including one course each in administration and management, applied evaluation research, mental health practice, and advanced practice. In addition to these required courses, students in the advanced curriculum must take two electives which will enhance their knowledge and skills in one area of specialization (children and families or health and mental health).

The advanced field education courses allow students to apply their knowledge and skills to one area of specialization noted above through placement in an agency that reflects the specialization of the student's choice. In their field placement, students are placed in social service agencies under the supervision of Masters-level social workers, where they learn advanced practice methods used with client systems of interest to the student. Students complete 500 hours in the advanced field placement, with approximately two to three full days each week (20-24 hours)

spent in the placement.

**Advanced Curriculum Courses**

The MSW advanced curriculum chart below serves as a guide for both Traditional 60-hour students as well as Advanced Standing students who are entering the program after completion of an accredited BSW program. Traditional students will complete the advanced curriculum in their second year of the program. Advanced Standing students will complete the advanced curriculum in year one of the program.

<b>MSW Advanced</b>	
<u>Fall</u> SOWO 65833- Perspectives on Mental Health Practice SOWO 65873-Advanced Practice SOWO 65813-Evaluation Research SOWO 65883-Field Education 3 SOWO 65823-Field Seminar 3	<u>Spring</u> SOWO 65803-Administration & Management SOWO 65893-Field Education 4 SOWO 65863-Field Seminar 4 Elective Elective

**NO REPEAT OF GENERALIST CONTENT**

Advanced Standing students who have successfully completed their undergraduate social work degree from a CSWE-accredited baccalaureate social work program will not repeat generalist content at the Master’s level that has been achieved at the baccalaureate level. Advanced Standing students are admitted to the Advanced Standing program option by displaying strong academic preparation as demonstrated by an undergraduate GPA of at least a 3.00 on a 4.00 scale, as well as an earned grade of B or better in their BSW placements. Advanced Standing students who have a minimum of a 3.00 GPA in their last 60 hours of BSW coursework and a B or better in their BSW placements will not have to repeat generalist content because our program understands that they have achieved this content via the 3.00 GPA and B or better grade in field; students who do not meet these criteria are understood to have not achieved this content and will only be considered for admission to the Traditional program option.

**COURSE LOAD REQUIREMENTS**

Students in the MSW program are expected to be enrolled for the prescribed fifteen semester hours during each long-session semester. Students may take courses on an extended basis with approval from the MSW Program Director, which may prolong their time in the program to up to four years.

**LIFE EXPERIENCE**

Students may not receive academic credit for life experience or previous volunteer or work experience in social work.

**DIRECTED STUDY COURSES**

Directed study courses provide students with an opportunity to study special topics of interest to members of the social work profession. Directed study courses in the MSW program can only be taken in the advanced year, as an elective. Core courses cannot be taken as a directed study

course.

In all respects, directed study courses should meet the standards of other courses offered in the program. Supervised practicum experience as well as research experience may be used as a component of a directed study course, but all courses must contain substantial reading and writing components as well as regularly scheduled meetings with the instructor to assist in the integration of course material. Employment cannot be counted as directed study course credit.

### **To Register for a Directed Study Course**

Each student must secure the cooperation of a faculty member of the Department of Social Work or other department who is willing to be the instructor for the course, as well as permission from the MSW Program Director for the Directed Study course. The student, in collaboration with the faculty member, must submit an outline for the directed study course that contains specific information about course content and objectives. Students may not register for course without the completed course outline, including the faculty member's signature. The completed outline should be returned to the student's academic advisor, prior to the registration period. A copy of the outline will be placed in the student's file.

### **ELECTIVES**

To satisfy elective requirements, students may take elective course work within the Department or with approval from the Curriculum Committee, in other University departments.

### **Taking Electives Outside of the Department of Social Work**

In order to take an elective course outside of the Department and receive proper credit toward the MSW degree, the student must submit a course description of the elective being considered along with the student's current career objectives to their academic advisor. Pre-approvals for registration may be required from other departments. A copy of the completed form along with a syllabus of the course taken outside of the Department of Social Work must be kept in the student's academic file for graduation certification.

Because some University departments may place restrictions on enrollment, students should begin the approval process prior to the official University advising period each semester. Consult the Course Schedule and your academic advisor for listings of courses offered in other departments and any prerequisites they may carry.

### **Field Hour Credit (Advanced Standing MSW Students Only)**

Students entering the MSW program as Advanced Standing students will have 400 hours of undergraduate field work recognized toward the total of 900 hours needed for graduation from the MSW program at TCU, regardless of the number of hours completed in a CSWE accredited BSW program over 400. If in the undergraduate field placement, a student did not receive a B or higher, the MSW program may require the student to retake the foundation year field placement.

If granted 400 hours toward completion of MSW field hours, students are then required to complete 500 hours in the advanced field placement during the MSW program.

## **Grading Policy**

Course grades, both classroom and field, provide a measure of student performance in the course. Quality of performance is evaluated with respect to course objectives. While these objectives are collectively determined, it is the singular responsibility of the instructor to evaluate student performance in respect to these standards and thus to determine the grade.

In the Department, course credit is given for the grades A, B, and C. No credit is given for any grade below a C. If a student earns below a C, they will be terminated from the MSW program. In the computation of the grade-point average, all grades of C or less will be included, but no more than two C grades may be utilized in satisfying degree requirements. For MSW students, a grade point average of at least 3.0 in all graduate courses in the major and supporting work must be maintained to completion of the program.

Grades from other institutions are not included in the grade point average. Only upper-division and graduate-level courses taken in graduate status for a letter grade are counted in the average. Students must satisfy all prerequisite incompletes before starting final year coursework and the final field placement. Conditionally admitted students may not take a grade of I, as part of the criteria for achieving “good academic standing” after admission. Candidates for graduation should not take a grade of I in their final semester, or graduation will be delayed and additional course work in a future semester of graduation will be required.

## **Graduation**

To graduate, students must be enrolled in the MSW program during the semester in which they will graduate and have successfully completed all required coursework toward the MSW or dual degree. Additionally, students must have no incompletes (Is) and have a 3.0 cumulative graduate GPA or better in all courses. MSW students must also take the Texas Jurisprudence and Master’s Level Social Work Licensure Exams.

MSW students must follow these steps to register to graduate:

1. Register and complete courses for the final semester. Be sure that all “I” grades are completed and all official transcripts from other universities are in the Registrar’s office.
2. File an Intent-to-Graduate in the academic dean’s office early in the last semester or in the next-to-last semester of study.
3. Correct your Current Address and your Permanent Address online at my.tcu.edu. This address is important for receiving mailing from the Registrar’s office concerning graduation.
4. Ensure all financial obligations, including graduation fees and thesis/dissertation fees have been satisfied in the Financial Services office.
5. Order your diploma and cap and gown online at my.tcu.edu.

## **Leave of Absence**

Students who anticipate being on leave in a long semester (fall or spring) must:

1. Complete the Program Confirmation of Leave of Absence form.
2. Obtain authorization from the Department Chair.
3. Failure to secure a leave of absence in advance of the semester of which a student will be on leave will result in a non-guarantee of readmission.



### **Licensure Exam**

All students must take the applicable licensure exam prior to graduation. Any student who does not take the licensure exam prior to graduation is no longer eligible to graduate during the current semester.

### **Medical Withdrawal/Course Reduction/Retroactive Withdrawal**

Significant medical or mental health problems can affect a student's ability to attend classes or perform academically. In these cases, a student may apply for a course load reduction, a current semester withdrawal, or a retroactive withdrawal for the previous long semester. Students must meet with their academic advisor to discuss this course of action. Decisions will be made based on University and Department policies.

Students must be "continuously registered" for all long semesters (fall and spring) until completion of the degree. Students are required to secure a leave of absence for semesters in which they will be on leave. If a student has not taken courses for one long semester or more, application for readmission must be completed and students must have departmental approval to return. TCU requires that students seeking readmission pay a \$40 readmission fee to the Registrar's Office.

### **Pass/No-Credit Grading Option**

Graduate students may not elect the Pass/No-Credit grading option for their coursework.

### **Student Participation in Program Policy**

Student participation in the Social Work department is encouraged formally and informally. Students provide an important perspective to assist in the formation of the implicit and explicit curriculum. Ongoing mechanisms that support equitable and inclusive student involvement in the implicit and explicit curriculum include: end-of-semester course evaluations, program evaluation surveys, field evaluation surveys, student exit questionnaires, and personal feedback to faculty and advisors about the program environment, program policies, faculty, and staff. Evaluations, surveys, and questionnaires are sent to every student in the program to ensure that student participation in the implicit and explicit curriculum is equitable and inclusive.

Furthermore, students participate in faculty searches by providing reactions to formal class presentations by candidates and having separate group interviews with candidates, after which they offer summary evaluations. The Student Association of Social Work (SASW) also provides written feedback to faculty and recommends changes and opportunities for enhancement of the implicit curriculum.

### **TERMINATION FROM THE MSW PROGRAM**

Criteria for dismissal from the major includes academic performance and nonacademic criteria. A student will be dismissed from the program for earning two or more "C" grades or below in courses and/or failing to maintain an overall GPA of 3.0. Nonacademic criteria related to professionalism and ethical behavior is considered part of the academic arena of a professional program. As such, a student could be dismissed from the program for failing to uphold the ethical guidelines of the profession and for personal issues that affect professional performance.

Therefore, students can be eliminated from the program for academic or professional reasons. These gatekeeping efforts, counseling students in or out of the program, are supported by the university and by the judicial system.

### **Time Limits for Completion**

The Council on Social Work Education's standard for completing the MSW degree is four years. Based on the CSWE standard, the Department of Social Work requires all students to complete the degree in a timely fashion. Continuation beyond four years is approved only in rare and extenuating circumstances. In all cases, all requirements for a master's degree must be completed within one six-year period. Work over six years old can be reinstated only with the permission of the Department Chair, upon recommendation of the MSW Admissions Committee.

### **Transferring Courses**

The MSW Program may accept up to 10 transfer credits from a CSWE accredited MSW Program for foundation year courses or advanced year elective courses. No transfer credit will be awarded for practice courses, required advanced year courses, or for field education.

In addition, requests for transfer course credit must meet the following criteria:

1. The student requesting credit for graduate coursework must be admitted to the MSW program prior to approval of a request for transfer credit. However, admission to the MSW Program does not guarantee approval of transfer credits.
2. Upon admission, the student may request a review of graduate course(s) taken to determine whether the course(s) may be transferred for credit.
3. A minimum course grade of "B" must have been earned in each course by the student requesting transfer credit.
4. All requests for transfer credit must meet the requirements of the Office of Graduate Studies at TCU.
5. When requesting consideration for transfer credit, a student must submit a letter of request to the MSW Admissions Coordinator who identifies the course(s) for which transfer credit is requested, a copy of the official catalog of the university where the course was taken, a copy of the course syllabus, and an official transcript showing the grade earned.

The MSW Admissions Coordinator, in consultation with the MSW Admissions Committee, will:

1. Review the request for transfer credit based on a review of each comparable course syllabus to ensure that the course meets the objectives of the MSW Program foundation or elective course and has comparable content, readings, and assignments;
2. Confirm a grade of "B" or better was received; and
3. When warranted, consult with the university where the course(s) was previously taken. Students will be informed in writing of the MSW Program's decision. Students may appeal the decision to the MSW Program Chair. Each course for which transfer credit is requested will be reviewed independently and in a timely fashion.

Students may not receive academic credit for life experience or previous volunteer or work experience in social work.

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## *Section II: Other Resources*

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### **HARRIS COLLEGE ACADEMIC RESOURCE CENTER**

The Harris College Academic Resource Center (HARC) is designed to support students and faculty in Harris College of Nursing & Health Sciences. The Center's goal is to enhance the overall student experience to prepare graduates for a lifelong career in health sciences.

The Academic Resource Center provides:

- Academic advising
- Educational workshops
- Career services such as resume critiques, mock interviews, and career exploration
- Information about study abroad and student research opportunities
- Information about graduate programs
- Leadership development within the health professions

### **TCU Center for Career & Professional Development**

Assigned Liaison to Harris College

817-257-2222

### **HARC Information**

Annie Richardson Bass Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

[HARC@tcu.edu](mailto:HARC@tcu.edu)

817.257.6112

### **THE WILLIAM L. ADAMS CENTER FOR WRITING**

The William L. Adams Center for Writing serves the entire TCU community – faculty and staff as well as undergraduate and graduate students. This is a resource provided by the university to assist you. Staffed by writing specialists and peer tutors, the Center offers one-on-one instruction. A tutorial may focus on a specific piece of writing or on a selected writing skill (e.g., usage, punctuation, essay exams, documentation, etc.). The Center is a non-threatening and supportive place where you can talk openly and confidentially about your writing with someone who is informed but nonjudgmental.

#### **Main Center:**

Reed Hall, Room 419

Monday - Friday

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

[writingctr@tcu.edu](mailto:writingctr@tcu.edu)

817.257.7221

#### **Tom Brown Annex:**

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Commons

Sunday - Thursday

6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

To schedule an appointment with a writing specialist, call (817) 257-7221 or visit the [Center for](#)

[Writing's](#) graduate web site for additional information on making virtual appointments.

### **TCU LIBRARY**

Students and faculty have access to over 1.5 million books and audio-visual materials and over 79,000 current journals, electronically and in paper. In addition, the library provides access to over [300 databases](#), many of which include the full text of journal articles, from the library website. The Library has been a depository for federal documents since 1916 and participated in the Texas depository library program for more than 60 years. Portions of the U.S. documents collection date as far back as the eighteenth century. Harris College of Nursing and Health Sciences has a research librarian assigned to the College to specifically assist students enrolled in a program in Harris College. Visit the library's website for contact information. The TCU Library is available to students, faculty, adjunct faculty, and field instructors, as a benefit of being part of the University community.

### **DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES**

Texas Christian University provides reasonable accommodations for each student who has a physical, medical psychological or learning disability. If you have a disability and have not submitted information concerning that disability to the university, please contact the office of the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities during orientation or as soon as possible. The Coordinator is eager to get to know you and assist you in determining appropriate university services. It is to your advantage to file all medical or assessment reports and met with the Coordinator before the semester begins. For more information regarding disabilities services, contact:

Center for Academic Services  
Texas Christian University  
TCU Box 297710  
Fort Worth, Texas 76129  
(817) 257-7486

### **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

1. In all written assignments, follow APA format for citing references for your work.
2. Be sure to cite any used article or book in the body of paper and reference page.
3. Anytime the information could not have been known without reading it in a source, the source needs to be cited.
4. Direct quotes are rarely used in APA. Only use them if the effect is lost by paraphrasing.
5. If using direct quotes, frame that text within quotation marks and also cite the page number of the direct quote.
6. All assignments should have a right-justified running head with your name.

The APA website is located at: <https://apastyle.apa.org/>

Sections of the Paper

## 1. THE TITLE PAGE

- Center the information in the middle of the paper.
- Double-space the entries.
- Include the following information:
  - Project Name
  - Student Name
  - “Professional Project for Master of Science Degree in Nursing”
  - “Texas Christian University”
  - “Harris School of Nursing”
  - Date in Month and Year

## 2. BODY OF THE PAPER

- Do not hyphenate words at the end of lines.
- Do not leave one line of a paragraph hanging by itself on the top of a page. Bring another line over so there are at least two lines of a paragraph at the top of a page.
- Do not leave one line of a paragraph hanging by itself on the bottom of a page. If you cannot fit at least two lines of the paragraph on the bottom.
- Use one and a half inch margins all around paper.
- Number pages in the top right-hand corner.
- A running head is part of APA format but not required for the project.
- Use subheadings.
- If emphasis is needed for content or words, use bold type or italics instead of quotation marks.
- Numbers below the number 10 are written out, numbers 10 or above are written in numeral form.
- Use author's name, not editor's name, in text and reference list.
- Use quotation marks around direct quotes.
- Cite a page number for direct quotes.
- Proof for errors in syntax, "typos," and semantics.
- Use headings and subheadings when paper becomes lengthy or complex.
- Avoid use of flowery words, jargon, and derogatory words.
- Avoid use of wording that shows prejudice toward age, race, sex, or ethnic background.
- Use "think" or "believe" instead of "feel" in most cases.
- Write out words for initials used the first time (e.g. HCFA)
- Avoid long rambling sentences.
- Make sure subject and verb agree in number.
- Use "their" if want to have a personal possessive; use "there" for directional message.
- Capitalize proper nouns such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.
- Use contractions appropriately (e.g. don't).
- Use possessives to show ownership (e.g. person's boat).

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## *Section III: Appendix*

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[MSW Program Requirements](#)

[NASW Code of Ethics](#)

[Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners](#)

[NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice](#)

[TCU Student Handbook](#)