



**BSW Student Handbook  
2011-2012**

Bachelor of Social Work Program  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock  
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## **HISTORY, MISSION AND GOALS OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

The School of Social Work, established in 1965 as part of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, became part of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 1975. The School began as a graduate program, and at the time, was the only MSW program in the state. Our BSW program began in 1998 and is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

### **School mission:**

“The mission of the UALR School of Social Work is to prepare ethical graduates who accept and appreciate diversity, who empower people and communities to meet the challenges of poverty and social and economic injustice, and who serve oppressed and vulnerable populations at the local, state, national, and international levels.”

The School pursues this mission through providing undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education, through the engagement of faculty and students in community service, and through adding to the practice knowledge of the profession.

In support of our mission, we see the School, its faculty, and its students as an important resource to the communities where we offer our program and to the state as a whole. Impelled by our profession's commitment to make social institutions more humane, we seek opportunities to collaborate with public human and community service systems.

The School of Social Work, part of the College of Professional Studies at UALR, has a Community Advisory Board comprised of a broad range of practicing social workers along with leaders in social service agencies and systems. The Advisory Board helps keep us in touch with the changing needs of the clients and deliverers of social services, and with what's required of social workers in the workplace.

### **School Goals:**

1. To prepare generalist and advanced practitioners for careers in social work.
2. To add to the practice knowledge base of the social work profession through the provision of critical thinking skills, scientific inquiry, faculty research and applied scholarship.
3. To build and maintain collaborative relationships with community health and social welfare organizations and community groups in promoting effective and efficient service delivery, and the development of resources to meet the needs of client populations.
4. To advocate for and encourage the dignity and worth of the person and the empowerment of oppressed and vulnerable client populations.
5. To ensure graduates are knowledgeable of the profession's missions, values, principles, and standards, and will seek the well-being of the client population in a consistently ethical manner.

School organizational goals:

1. To reach and maintain levels of diversity within our faculty and our student body that reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.
2. To share, develop, and verify social work knowledge with various local, state, and national constituents.
3. To respond to the needs of at-risk, underserved and marginalized populations through partnerships with community agencies and social work educational programs.

*(from the MSW Student Handbook, 2010)*

### **SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The Director of the School of Social Work (SSW) is appointed by the Dean of the College of Professional Studies on the recommendation of the faculty and is responsible for administrative functions and for the implementation of policies by the university and by the department faculty. The Director is administratively responsible to the Dean of the College of Professional Studies.

The director oversees four programs within the School of Social Work: the Master of Social Work Program (MSW), the Bachelor of Social Work program (BSW), the Master of Gerontology Program (GERO) and the MidSouth Training Academy. The BSW program is administered by the Program Coordinator, Dr. Shannon Collier-Tenison, who is administratively responsible to the Director of the SSW. The BSW Field Coordinator, Mr. Jay Williams, is administratively responsible to the Program Coordinator. Both positions serve as full-time faculty. The program has three additional full time faculty members: Dr. Catherine Crisp, Dr. Mark Krain, and Johanna Thomas, ABD. Faculty from the MSW program and adjunct faculty from the community serve as support staff and faculty to fulfill teaching and field liaison roles. The curriculum committee, consisting of the BSW Program Coordinator, the BSW Field Coordinator, full-time BSW faculty, and a student representative from the Bachelor of Social Work Student Organization make policies affecting course design and accreditation decisions.

### **BSW MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Bachelor of Social Work Program at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock is unique: We are the only undergraduate social work program in the state that is located in a metropolitan university as well as in the state's Capitol. We are committed to the values of diversity, human rights, and social justice. With this value base, we educate our students in the knowledge, values, and skills necessary for generalist practice within our diverse population and prepare students for graduate and life long learning. (Revised April 2010)

### **The UALR BSW program prepares students to:**

1. Engage in generalist practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

This goal is consistent with our mission of educating students for generalist practice and specifies our intent to equip practitioners to practice at the three different levels of practice.

2. Engage in culturally affirming practice with diverse populations.

This goal is consistent with our goal of educating practitioners to work with diverse populations. This goal is particularly important as we are the only BSW Program located in a metropolitan university in the state of Arkansas and thus serve a diverse group of students and clients.

3. Engage in practice that is consistent with the Code of Ethics.

This goal is consistent with our intent to educate students about the values necessary for generalist practice and indicates our intent to prepare students to engage in practice that is consistent with the Code of Ethics. These values are derived directly from the Code of Ethics and include service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence.

4. Evaluate individual, group, and community practice.

This goal is consistent with our intent to educate students to engage in generalist practice. In order to do this, students must be able to evaluate their practice at the three different levels.

5. Identify client strengths and challenges.

This goal is consistent with our intent to equip students to work with diverse populations. In order to do this, students must be able to identify clients' strengths and challenges.

6. Utilize the knowledge of human development in a social environment to guide assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

This goal is consistent with our intent to educate practitioners for generalist practice. In order to do this, students must have knowledge about human development and understand how to use it in assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

7. Advocate and promote social justice.

This goal is consistent with our commitment to social justice. Inherent in this value is the belief that students must learn to advocate and promote social justice.

8. Advocate on behalf of policy change.

This goal is also consistent with our commitment to social justice. Students must understand how to advocate on behalf of policy change so that they can affect social justice on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

9. Contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

This goal is also consistent with our belief that becoming a generalist practitioner entails learning skills in scientific inquiry enabling one to give back to the profession by adding to the knowledge base for generalist practitioners.

10. Engage in life long learning, including the pursuit of graduate study.

This goal is also consistent with our belief that in order to be an effective practitioner, one must engage in life long learning, whether through continuing education workshops, informal methods of learning, or through the pursuit of graduate study.

**COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION COMPETENCIES:**

The BSW Program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Students are expected to demonstrate mastery of 10 social work competencies as operationalized by 41 practice behaviors by the time they graduate:

**1: Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.**

Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession's history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth.

Social workers:

- a) advocate for client access to the services of social work;
- b) practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;
- c) attend to professional roles and boundaries;
- d) demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;
- e) engage in career-long learning; and,
- f) use supervision and consultation.

**2: Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.**

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law.

Social workers:

- a) recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;
- b) make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work Statement of Principles;
- c) tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts; and,
- d) apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

**3: Apply critical thinking to inform & communicate professional judgments.**

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information.

Social workers:

- a) distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom;
- b) analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and,
- c) demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals,

families, groups, organizations, and communities.

#### **4: Engage diversity and difference in practice.**

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate 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:

- a) recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may opposes, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;
- b) gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;
- c) recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences; and,
- d) view themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.

#### **5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice.**

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnectedness of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social workers incorporate social justice practices I organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice.

Social workers:

- a) understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;
- b) advocate for human rights and social and economic justice; and
- c) engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

#### **6: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.**

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge.

Social workers:

- a) use practice experiences to inform scientific inquiry; and
- b) use research evidence to inform practice.

#### **7: Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.**

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter [people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development.

Social workers:

- a) utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and,
- b) critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

**8: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.**

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they engage actively in policy practice. Social workers know the history of current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development.

Social workers:

- a) analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being; and
- b) collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

**9: Respond to contexts that shape practice.**

Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively.

Social workers:

- a) continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services; and,
- b) provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.

**10: Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.**

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

**10(a) – Engagement**

Social workers:

- a) substantively & affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
- b) use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and develop mutually agreed-upon focus of work & desired outcomes.

**10(b) – Assessment**

Social workers:

- a) collect, organize, and interpret client data;
- b) assess client strengths and limitations;
- c) develop mutually agreed-upon intervention goals & objectives; and
- d) select appropriate intervention strategies.

### **10(c) – Intervention**

Social workers:

- a) initiate actions to achieve organizational goals;
- b) implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;
- c) help clients resolve problems;
- d) negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients; and
- e) facilitate transitions and endings.

### **10(d) – Evaluation**

Social workers critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

## **STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Bachelor of Social Work Student Organization (BSWSO)**

The BSWSO is dedicated to promoting social work values and ethics among students, solidarity and mutual support among BSW students, promoting communication between BSW students and BSW faculty, creating volunteer opportunities, participating in community events, and opening doors to job opportunities through networking and mentoring.

BSWSO events include luncheon meetings, evening potlucks and barbecues, community involvement, special events and study groups. Annual dues are \$10. For information on joining the BSWSO, announcements for meetings will be posted on the bulletin board outside the BSW office in Larson Hall, Room 209 and on the East wall of the Social Work Student Lounge.

The BSW program's policy is to provide a faculty sponsor to guide and facilitate BSWSO officers in leading and planning activities. The program recognizes the right of BSW students to have representation at (1) regular monthly BSW faculty meetings, (2) regular monthly School of Social Work faculty meetings, and (3) meetings that focus on specific matters such as curriculum design, course content, scheduling of courses, admissions policy, and disciplinary policy such as that dealing with plagiarism, and other ethical violations. In conformance with confidentiality policies, student representation at such meetings is barred at any time that specific students or faculty members are being discussed. The representation is by student membership in the Bachelor of Social Work Student Organization (BSWSO). The organization's by-laws designate officers to participate in the meetings and specify that although these officers do not vote they are often asked for student points of view on various matters of policy that faculty members are working on. In regular monthly faculty meetings, the student representative prepares a brief summary of matters that students are concerned about and a general summary of student activities in the past month. The program will make known to all BSW students this information on the rights of the students to be represented in matters of decisions on academic and student affairs.

### **Phi Alpha Honor Society**

"The Purpose of Phi Alpha Honor Society is to provide a closer bond among students of social work and promote humanitarian goals and ideals. Phi Alpha fosters high standards of education for social workers and invites into membership those who have attained excellence in scholarship and achievement in social work" (Phi Alpha Honor Society, 2010). At UALR, the Nu Delta Chapter of Phi Alpha Honor Society promotes excellence in both scholarship and service. Our chapter is open to both BSW and MSW students who have excelled in both areas. In 2009, Nu Delta won a National Chapter Service Award from Phi Alpha.

### **National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW)**

The National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) was and is a group founded in the midst of struggles for people of African descent to be self determining. NABSW's mission is committed to enhancing the quality of life and empowering people of African descent through advocacy, human services delivery, and research. Like NABSW, the UALR student chapter will advocate for social change, justice and human development of African Americans on campus, in our community, and Arkansas. The student members will coordinate with the local, regional, national NABSW chapters to obtain knowledge and education on the latest techniques for African Americans to improve services to those we serve.

### **CAREER OPPORTUNITIES**

Bachelor level social workers have more opportunities than ever before as central Arkansas grows in population and in service oriented agencies. The Arkansas Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is the largest organization in the state that hires bachelor level social workers, and they are continually upgrading their standards to achieve a professional staff of service workers—both in direct service roles and in supervisory roles. Agencies working in conjunction with the health care field, whether they are inpatient/outpatient, physical/mental health or resource development, are hiring BSW graduates to fill these positions. Welfare reform has created a need for more in-depth assessments of individuals and families, job training, and referral services, all with which the bachelor level social worker is prepared to work. Agencies working with youth services, aging issues, veterans, or addictions have a place for the BSW practitioner.

### **BEGINNING THE PROGRAM**

Students in the social work program are responsible for becoming familiar with the campus policies and regulations outlined in the [UALR Undergraduate Catalog](#) and for complying with them. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with attendance policies, grading guidelines, and expectations for each course. Absences from class will result in failure to be informed about grade or assignment adjustments, schedule changes, educational content, or other pertinent information. Absences of more than 20% may be cause for failure of a class. It is the student's responsibility to learn of any information that has been disseminated during class time.

Syllabi are distributed for each course at the beginning of the semester. The course syllabus will contain educational objectives, departmental policies, grading guidelines, assignments, and schedules. The course syllabus is considered a contract between the student and professor; however, minor adjustments may be made during the semester to accommodate instructor or student needs or unexpected circumstances such as inclement weather, illness, or power outages.

## LIFE EXPERIENCE

The BSW Program does not give academic credit in the field internship or in any of the courses in the required social work professional core for life experience or for previous work experience.

## ONGOING ADVISING

After declaration of the social work major, students are assigned a social work faculty advisor. Social work majors are required to meet with a faculty advisor at least one time each semester for the purpose of academic and professional planning. Appropriate planning of social work courses is especially important because these courses are sequenced and most require the completion of prior course work to proceed to the next required steps. It is critical that students understand that academic planning is a shared activity, one that demands the active participation of both advisor and student. A list of advisors assigned to students, along with forms used in the advising process, online at <http://ualr.edu/bsw/index.php/home/advising/>. Students are encouraged to meet with an advisor, either individually or in a group advising session, early in the semester and to come to the meeting with a copy of their current transcript, their proposed schedule for the upcoming semester, and any questions they have about their course work and progress towards graduation. All students should make a plan to be advised during the official advising period that occurs in the weeks preceding registration. Many faculty are on 9 month contracts and will not be available for advising during the summer months.

Remember the three R's of Academic Advising:

### Responsibility

- Schedule regular visits.
- Take ownership.
- Be prepared.
- Follow through.

### Resources

- Learn policies, procedures, and requirements.
- Take advantage of opportunities.
- Use academic tools—Undergraduate Catalog, major check sheets, websites, etc.
- Read your e-mail and academic notices.

### Relationship

- Foster open communication.
- Clarify your values, abilities, interests, and goals.
- Build a connection.
- Remember, advising is a two-way street.

Source: <http://www2.ku.edu/~distinction/cgi-bin/assets/files/UndergradCatalog2010.pdf>

## SCHOLASTIC STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

Formally admitted social work majors are expected to maintain a high standard of academic performance, as noted below:

- Students must maintain an **overall GPA of 2.5 in all social work courses** and an **overall GPA of 2.5**.

- Students whose grade point in all social work courses is below the 2.5 minimum will be placed on probation. Twelve additional hours in social work are allowed to bring the GPA up to the required minimum. Students who fail to raise their GPA to at least a 2.5 GPA will be dismissed from the BSW Program.
- Students who receive a grade of D or F in any social work class must retake the class.
- Students can only retake a social work class one time. Failure to successfully complete the class with a grade of C or higher after two attempts will result in dismissal from the program.
- Learning in a professional social work program is based in large part on the interaction that occurs between the instructor and the students as well as among students through collaboration and team building. Therefore, regular attendance in class is an expected professional responsibility of the student. Absences of greater than 20% of total class time can constitute grounds for grade reduction or course failure. Excessive tardiness may be considered to constitute absences.
- Students may be dismissed from the program if they violate the [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\) Code of Ethics](#), the University's rules and regulations on academic integrity and discipline, state or federal laws, and/or the Standards of Conduct explicated in this handbook. Students also may be immediately suspended from the program and/or their field placement, pending the appeals process, for violations of the above.

Students who fail to meet the academic standards noted above will be dismissed from the BSW Program. The student will be notified of this decision in writing by the BSW Program Coordinator. Standards for appeal are described below.

Please note that the BSW Program follows the university's policy regarding the transfer of courses credit, as stated in the Undergraduate Catalog, except in the case of core social work courses for which a grade requirement exists. In these instances, the program's policy on grade requirements will supersede university policy. For social work courses, the transcript of every student who transfers from another CSWE accredited BSW program is reviewed by the BSW Program Coordinator who, in consultation with the BSW curriculum committee, makes decisions regarding the transferability of credit for previously completed core social work courses. In cases where questions regarding content covered in courses exist, students are asked to provide a copy of the course description and the course syllabus. If this information is not sufficient, the BSW Program Coordinator contacts the originating BSW Program to obtain more information about the course. Students wishing to transfer social work courses must also provide a letter of good standing from their previous program.

### **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

Standards of conduct for students in the BSW program are consistent with university policies as well as the ethical standards and values of the social work profession. See the [UALR Student Handbook](#) for a listing of behaviors specifically discussed.

The [NASW Code of Ethics](#) explains the social work values that are emphasized in the social work program. Students should become familiar with the code and are expected to exemplify these standards whenever they are fulfilling their role as a social worker.

### **Honor code.**

The social work faculty is committed to maintaining an atmosphere of academic excellence and integrity in the Program. Because of this commitment, students are expected to refrain from any act of dishonesty. The Honor Code is an essential aspect of the BSW program and is a commitment on the part of each student to maintain an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. An understanding of this commitment ensures that, as a student of the BSW program, one thereby affirms his/her own personal commitment to honor and integrity. Any confirmed violation of the Honor Code could result in a failing grade.

### **Plagiarism.**

Plagiarism is taken very seriously and will be addressed in accordance with university policies as specified in the [UALR Student Handbook](#). UALR defines plagiarism as “To adopt and reproduce as one’s own, to appropriate for one’s own use and incorporate in one’s own work without acknowledgment, the ideas of others or passages from their writings and works” (UALR, 2008; see <http://ualr.edu/deanofstudents/index.php/home/academic-offenses/> for more info re: plagiarism and other academic offenses). If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, consult with your course instructor and/or faculty advisor. Additional information regarding plagiarism can be found at [UALR Copyright Central](#).

### **SOCIAL WORK FIELD EXPERIENCE**

Fieldwork is the primary ingredient, the “signature pedagogy,” in social work education. It is the culmination of academic preparation and serves to focus the student toward applying the knowledge, values, and skills learned in the core social work courses. Once the student leaves the classroom, he/she is grounded in a conceptual framework on which rests changed attitudes, newfound skills, and confidence in the system of change. To maintain high expectations and an eager spirit, the field practicum must be as rewarding as it is challenging. Such is the stage when the agency joins the School of Social Work to partner in educating future social workers.

The Council on Social Work accreditation policy 2.3 in the educational standards of the BSW explicit curriculum states “Signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which the profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner. Professionals have pedagogical norms with which they connect and integrate theory and practice. In social work, the signature pedagogy is field education. The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies.”

The field experience or practicum occurs within an agency setting that engages in the practice of social work and agrees to provide a supervisor for the student in applying learned skills and a theoretical perspective with clients. The practicum is 240 hours per semester of direct practice

experience provided to the student in exchange for the opportunity to observe, learn, and participate in designated areas of the agency over the course of the senior year. An agency field instructor will be the student's main source of leadership and will act as a role model for the student to practice professional competencies. The Field Instructor will assist the student in designing the student's own learning contract, in addition to setting the work schedule with the student, providing weekly supervision, and evaluating student work. The learning contract designates how course objectives will be addressed and how each will be assessed (See the BSW Field Manual for more details.)

The Field Experience will be overseen by a UALR Faculty Liaison from the School of Social Work who will work closely with the Field Instructor at the agency to assist the student in the application of classroom theory and application skills. The Faculty Liaison is also the student's seminar instructor, bringing together interns in a seminar class which meets once weekly for two hours.

Students who have successfully completed core social work courses are eligible to apply for Field Experience in the spring semester of the junior year. Successful completion means that all prerequisite courses are completed with a GPA of 2.5 in all social work courses and a 2.5 GPA overall. Applications will be turned into the Field Coordinator and placements will be assigned before the fall semester of the senior year. Student interests and geographic location are factors in determining placement. However, learning needs of each student will be primary in placement assignment. Students are encouraged to meet with the Field Coordinator to discuss any concerns they may have regarding the Field Experience.

More detailed information regarding the Field Experience, including when and how to apply, time requirements, and student roles, is included in the BSW Program Field Experience Manual, which can be found on-line on the BSW webpage. **All students are encouraged to read the Field Manual prior to applying for your field experience.**

## **FORMAL REVIEW PROCESS**

### **Performance reviews and grade appeals.**

The School has established two formal review processes to encourage assessment and problem solving for students having problems with the academic or professional expectations of the BSW program. In addition to this common purpose, the two processes share these characteristics:

- When a problem arises for a student in connection with academic or professional expectations or a course grade, the student must first attempt to resolve the matter with the professor or professors involved, such as a classroom teacher, internship instructor, or faculty liaison. Likewise, a faculty member who has concerns about a student's performance must first share those concerns with the student and seek solutions there before calling for a performance review.
- Failing resolution at that level, a performance review or a grade appeal may be initiated by either students or faculty members, as appropriate.
- The student's academic advisor can be an important supportive resource, helping the student think through options and prepare for his or her attempt to resolve the problem. If

the problem is with an internship, the internship coordinator may also be a helpful resource.

- Both processes convene a group consisting of the student and several faculty members with experience relevant to the situation. Such a group is intended to increase the likelihood of a satisfactory outcome by adding additional perspectives to assessment and problem solving.
- Should the outcome of either process, performance review or grade appeal, detailed below, be deemed unsatisfactory to the student, the student has the right to pursue appeal at the University level.

### **Performance Review Process**

The purpose of the performance review is to help students who are having problems with the academic or professional expectations of the school. Performance review may be initiated by the student or by any faculty member through a request in writing to the student's academic advisor to convene a performance review. The advisor will assemble the performance review committee, schedule and facilitate the meeting, and write up and distribute the results of the meeting to the appropriate people. If for any reason the student prefers not to have the performance review convened and facilitated by the advisor, another faculty member may be recruited to serve in that role.

The performance review committee will typically comprise the student, the advisor, and each professor teaching the student during the semester in which the review is called. As appropriate, the internship coordinator, field instructor, and field liaison may be included. Exceptions to the normal composition of the performance review committee will be determined by the advisor in consultation with the student.

Once the process has been initiated, the following procedures will apply:

- The advisor will provide written notification to the student, the members of the committee, the degree-program coordinator, and the director of the School of Social Work. Timely action is often of great importance, and in no ordinary instance should the meeting of the committee occur more than two weeks after the initiation of the performance review.
- The committee reviews the student's progress and discusses the issues that prompted the review. The committee's task is to assess the situation, using a problem-solving approach, and come to some recommendations for what should happen to resolve the problem or problems. The committee will seek consensus, and if it is unreachable, may decide by majority vote.
- The advisor will make a written record of the committee's assessment and recommendations. This document, to be completed within a week of the meeting, will go to the student, the degree-program coordinator, and the director of the School of Social Work. The student, with the support of the academic advisor, unless otherwise noted by the committee in their report, is responsible for the implementation of the recommendations.
- A student who disagrees with the recommendations of the performance review committee may petition the director of the School of Social Work to reverse or otherwise modify the

recommendations. The student's petition must be in writing and initiated within one week of receipt of the committee's recommendations.

- o The director of the School of Social Work will render in writing a decision in response to the student's petition within two weeks of its receipt.
- o If the student wishes to appeal the director's decision, the student may do so, following the policy set out in UALR Student Handbook (<http://ualr.edu/deanofstudents/>).

The performance review process is utilized for students with behavioral, professional or ethical challenges in the field as well. Because the performance review is a departmental process, the following levels of appeal are less structured; however, there are clear avenues of appeal. If a student wishes to appeal the results of a performance review resulting in dismissal from the program, or to file a grievance, and are not satisfied with the director's decision, the student may next appeal to the Dean of the College of Professional Studies, then to the Provost and finally to the Chancellor.

### **Grade Appeal Process for the School of Social Work.**

A student who is unsatisfied with the grade received for a course or internship must follow the procedure described in the following document. The School of Social Work's procedure constitutes steps one and two of the University procedure for grade appeals. Students are reminded that, per University policy, **only** the course instructor and the Provost of the University have the authority to alter a course grade.

The explicit goal of steps one and two of the University procedure for grade appeals is resolution of the problem through communication between the student and course instructor. When necessary, the School of Social Work supplements this process through a grade conference. The School has a tradition of effectively resolving grading problems through this process.

#### **Step 1: Student - Faculty Meeting**

A student who is unsatisfied with the final course grade received should first attempt to resolve the matter with the course instructor who assigned the grade. During this meeting the student and faculty member should endeavor to clearly, specifically, and respectfully articulate the reasoning for disagreeing with the grade received and reasons for the grade assigned, respectively. Both parties should seek to identify errors in computation of the grades and scores, attendance records, times and dates of course work submission, and similar factual issues. If the course instructor and student are agreeable to doing so, they may negotiate a resolution including, but not limited to, additional assignments, completion of outstanding course work, and revision of submitted course work.

This notification must take place within 20 class days of the assignment of the course grade. The course instructor may not delay this meeting without reasonable cause. The course grade may be changed by the faculty member during, or following, Step 1. The student may confer with the student government president or designee at any time during this process. It is also recommended the student consult with his or her adviser, or the director of the School of Social Work if the course instructor is also the student's adviser

## Step 2: Meeting with the Appeals Committee

If Step 1 did not resolve the problem, then the student shall inform his/her adviser of his/her desire to continue the grade appeal process. Notification of the student's adviser must take place within five class days of the meeting with the faculty member to discuss the grade. The adviser will inform the director of the School of Social Work (or the dean of the College of Professional Studies, if the instructor is the director) and the appropriate program coordinator by 10AM the next class day. Should the course instructor who assigned the grade be the student's adviser, then the student may select another willing faculty member to act as their adviser during the grade appeal process. If the program coordinator is the student's course instructor, the other program coordinator will assume responsibilities for the grade conference (as outlined below). The director has ten (10) class days to meet with the course instructor and student to attempt to resolve the difference. The following procedure shall be completed within that time frame.

Once a student has chosen to continue to the appeal process, the following procedures apply:

1. The adviser notifies the program coordinator in writing by 10 am of the next class day that a request for a grade conference has been made. The memo shall identify the parties involved and briefly state the reasons the requesting party provided.
2. The student's adviser will act as advocate and support for the student during the grade conference. The student is also free to choose another willing faculty member other than the adviser to act in this role.
3. The program coordinator selects three faculty members as an *ad hoc* committee with a charge to hear the parties' perspectives and identify potential solutions. The program coordinator arranges a time and location for the meeting to take place that is agreeable to all participants. This should not take more than three (3) class days. When possible, the group should be composed of faculty members who have taught the student or taught in the course sequence of the course involved.
4. Participants will include the student, the student's adviser (or person otherwise designated by the student), the course instructor who assigned the grade, the committee members, and the program coordinator, who chairs the meeting. The course instructor and student provide their perspectives. The committee members ask questions, provide suggestions, and otherwise attempt to identify a solution agreeable to the course instructor and the student.
5. If an agreement is reached, then the committee will document the agreement and submit it to the director, the student, and the course instructor within two (2) academic days.

## Step 3: Meeting with Director

1. If an agreement is not reached, the committee will write a report outlining the parties' position and solutions considered and rejected. Individual committee members and the program coordinator, as chair of the committee, may append their opinions, if they desire.

The report shall be submitted to the director, the student, and the course instructor within two (2) academic days. The student, course instructor, and director will hold a meeting to resolve the conflict within the original ten day time period prescribed by University policy.

2. Regardless of the outcome of the meeting with the director and Grade Conference, the student and the faculty member will complete and sign the Grade Appeal Complaint Form. A copy will be provided to the student and the director shall retain the original.

If the student is not satisfied with the results of steps one and two, the student may appeal at the University level, following the policy set out in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Behavior in the UALR Student Handbook, beginning at step 3 under “Grade Appeals: Steps toward Redress for Grade Appeals.” (*Policy revised May 2009*)

### **POLICY STATEMENTS**

The BSW Program believes students have the right to be treated in a non-discriminatory manner. Faculty are committed to treating students with dignity and respect. Students who believe they are being treated unfairly should talk their faculty advisor or the BSW Program Coordinator about their concerns. Students should also be familiar with their rights with regard to the below issues as defined by university policy and taken directly from the UALR [2010 -2011 Undergraduate Catalog \(Introduction\)](#) at <http://ualr.edu/academics/uploads/2008/06/Intro2.pdf>

#### **Sexual harassment policy.**

It is the policy of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to prohibit sexual harassment of its students, faculty, and staff.

Incidents of sexual harassment are demeaning to all persons involved and impair the ability of the institution to perform its educational functions.

Sexual harassment of employees is prohibited under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and sexual harassment of students may constitute discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Sexual harassment of employees is defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct which takes place when: submission to the conduct is either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment; submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting that individual; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment of students includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other verbal or physical conduct which take place when: submission to the conduct is either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s academic status or advancement; submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that individual; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or

offensive learning environment. Employees and students who believe that they have been subjected to sexual harassment are encouraged to report the problem.

University grievance procedures are available to individuals who wish to pursue complaints of sexual harassment. Informal complaints should be made to an ombudsman\* for sexual harassment. The goal of the informal process is to resolve problems. No disciplinary action will be taken as a result of the informal complaint procedure. Formal complaints against faculty, staff and administration should be submitted to the Office of Human Relations. Both formal and informal complaints should be made within 30 calendar days of the most recent alleged discriminatory act.

\*The ombudsman can be contacted in the Dean of Student's office at (501) 569-3328.

### **Sexual assault policy.**

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock explicitly condemns sexual assault as a violation of an individual's human rights and dignity. Sexual assault is generally defined as attempted or actual unwanted sexual activity. The policy of UALR is that members of the University community neither commit nor condone sexual assault in any form. This prohibition applies equally to male and female staff, faculty and students, to all other persons on premises subject to University control, and to those engaged to further the interests of the University.

Sexual assault is unlawful and may subject those who engage in it to civil and criminal penalties. A student or employee of UALR charged with sexual assault can be prosecuted under Arkansas criminal statutes and/or disciplined by the University. Even if criminal prosecution is not pursued, the University can pursue disciplinary action. Where there is probable cause to believe that the campus regulations prohibiting sexual assault have been violated, the campus will pursue strong disciplinary action through its own internal judicial channels. This discipline includes, but is not limited to, the possibility of termination, expulsion, suspension, disciplinary probation, counseling, mediation, educational sanctions, or a combination of these. Any conduct that constitutes a sexual offense under Arkansas law is also subject to disciplinary sanctions under this policy.

Victims of sexual assault have the right to file criminal charges with local law enforcement authorities and, upon request, are entitled to assistance from the University in notifying those authorities. Victims also have the right to file a complaint with the University to have a sexual assault allegation investigated by the University, and the right to participate in any disciplinary proceedings regarding the sexual assault complaint.

Because of the traumatic nature of sexual assault, victims are strongly encouraged to seek professional help. On campus, free and confidential counseling services and referrals are available at Counseling and Career Planning Services in Ross Hall 417.

Due to the nature and value of evidence, it is important that any sexual assault be reported as soon as possible. A complaint should be filed with the University within 30 days of the incident. The initial complaint may be filed with any of these University offices:

- The Department of Public Safety
- The Office of Campus Life

- The Office of Human Relations

UALR's complete policy on sexual assault appears in the [UALR Student Handbook](#).

### **Smoke-free campus policy statement.**

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock is a smoke-free campus. This policy originated in recommendations from the Student Government Association and the University Assembly. This policy applies to all locations of the University, including the main campus, the William H. Bowen School of Law, and the UALR Benton Center. All individuals are expected to comply with this policy. Persons who fail to comply are subject to disciplinary action. (Chancellor's Office, 8/16/09)

### **UALR policy statement on nondiscrimination.**

UALR adheres to a policy that enables all individuals, regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, veteran's status, or disability to work and study in an environment unfettered by discriminatory behavior or acts. Harassment of an individual or group will not be condoned and any person – student, faculty, or staff member – who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

Any person who believes they have been discriminated against should contact the Human Relations Officer to obtain assistance and information concerning the filing of complaints.

Harassment which is considered discriminatory includes actions or conduct (verbal, graphic, gestural, or written) directed against any person or group with the intent to demean or create a hostile or threatening environment.

It is not the intent of this policy to infringe upon or limit educational, scholarly, or artistic expression. At the same time the University prohibits discriminatory practices, it promotes equal opportunity through affirmative action. Nondiscriminatory affirmative action equal opportunity policies apply to: recruitment, hiring, job classification and placement, work conditions, promotional opportunities, demotions/transfers, terminations, training, compensation, choice of contractors and suppliers of goods and services, educational opportunities, disciplinary action, recreational and social activities, use of facilities, housing, and University sponsored programs.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

It is the policy of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or to accurate assessment of achievement—such as time-limited exams, inaccessible web content, or the use of non-captioned videos—please notify the instructor as soon as possible. Students are also welcome to contact the Disability Resource Center, telephone 501-569-3143 (v/tty). For more information, visit the DRC website at <http://ualr.edu/disability/>.

Any student with a disability who needs an accommodation for the field experience should inform the field coordinator prior to the placement decision. Students with disabilities who may

not be satisfied with the response of the school are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Support Services, which is located in the Donaghey Student Center, Room 103, telephone 569-3143.

Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example in seating placement or in arrangements for examinations, should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. The chair of the department offering this course also is available to assist with accommodations.