



Department of Social Work
BSW Student Handbook & Practicum Education Manual
2023-2024

The *BSW Student Handbook and Practicum Education Manual* is intended to provide general information and guidance only. The *Handbook* does not constitute a contract, either expressed or implied, and is subject to revision without prior notice at the discretion of the University or the Department of Social Work. Please consult the [Undergraduate Catalog](#), the BSW Program Coordinator, or the Practicum Education Director for further information.

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INTRODUCTION

[Southern Connecticut State University](#) provides exemplary graduate and undergraduate education in the liberal arts and professional disciplines. As an intentionally diverse and comprehensive University, Southern is committed to academic excellence, access, social justice, and service for the public good.

The [College of Health and Human Services](#) (CHHS) values interdisciplinary education, practice-based learning, and community-based participatory research practices. CHHS academic programs are attentive to the workforce needs of our state and region, and partner extensively with agencies and organizations in New Haven neighborhoods and throughout the state of Connecticut to address local health priorities and achieve equity.

The [Department of Social Work](#) is housed within CHHS. Social work promotes the personal and social development of people in their communities based on the values of social, economic, and environmental justice; civil and human rights; democracy; and full access to educational, social, economic, and political participation. The Department of Social Work educates social workers as competent and compassionate agents of change who, guided by professional knowledge, skills, and values, are prepared to practice ethically and effectively with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities; to translate research into practice; and to provide leadership in the profession and in their communities.

The Department of Social Work offers programs that span the social work career, including the [BSW program](#), which prepares social workers for generalist practice; the [MSW program](#), which prepares social workers for specialized practice; and the [DSW program](#), which prepare master's-level social workers for advanced clinical practice, university teaching, and leadership in agency and academic settings.

The BSW and MSW programs are accredited by the [Council on Social Work Education](#) (CSWE).

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES AND POLICIES

Southern Connecticut State University and the Department of Social Work have developed various resources and policies that apply to social work education, including those listed below. For additional resources, policies, and student services, please refer to the [SCSU Student Handbook](#) and the search box on the Southern [homepage](#).

Academic Honesty

The integrity of scholarship is the cornerstone of the academic and social structure of the University. It is the expressed policy of the University that every aspect of academic life shall be conducted in an absolutely and uncompromisingly honest manner. Academic honesty is further required by the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) and by the professional standards and behaviors of the Department of Social Work. Plagiarism and other [violations of academic honesty](#) may be grounds for a failing grade in a course and for dismissal from a practicum and from the social work program.

Academic Support Services

The [Center for Academic Success and Accessibility Services \(CASAS\)](#) provides academic support services, including tutoring and support with writing.

Accommodations for Disabilities

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Southern provides reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities on an individualized basis. The [Center for Academic Success and Accessibility Services \(CASAS\)](#) assists students with documented disabilities to determine appropriate accommodations. Before receiving accommodations in a class, students must schedule an appointment with CASAS and then meet with the instructor to plan or review approved accommodations.

Accommodations for Observance of Religious Holy Days

Students will be excused from class attendance or other requirements if the tenets of their religion forbid secular activity on the particular day or time of day of the class session. Students requesting a religious accommodation should consult with the instructor prior to the class session to arrange for the excused absence and make up missed work.

Assessment of Disabilities

Students who need documentation for accommodations or who are concerned about potential mental health issues, ADHD, or learning disabilities may receive low-cost psychological testing evaluations from the [SCSU Psychological Assessment Office](#).

Campus Map

Southern is located at 501 Crescent Street, New Haven, CT 06515. The Department of Social Work offices are located at Lang House, 101 Farnham Avenue (faculty offices, student lounge) and at Orlando House, 104 Farnham Avenue (offices of admissions, practicum education, and online learning). Social work students have classes in various buildings and enjoy the Buley Library, Adanti Student Center, and other facilities throughout [campus](#).

Childcare

The [COMPASS Drop-in Childcare and Family Resource Center](#) provides a reservable, short-term (maximum 3.5 hours per day) program for the children of Southern students and employees.

Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Southern is committed to identifying and addressing systemic barriers to equity, access, and success for all members of our community. We are also committed to constructive dialogues where we treat one another with dignity, respect, kindness, compassion, and civility as we share varying perspectives, with the goal of creating a culture of inclusion and belonging. The [Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) seeks to advance Southern towards a social justice-oriented and anti-racist University.

Email

Southern will communicate you via your Southern email address. Please use your Southern email in writing to us and check it frequently. For assistance in accessing your email account, contact the Help Desk at helpdesk@southernct.edu.

Financial Aid & Scholarships

Financial aid and scholarships are administered by the SCSU Office of Financial Aid and the Southern Foundation. For information about financial aid, please consult with the [Office of Financial Aid](#).

In awarding scholarships, a variety of factors are considered, including need and merit. All students are encouraged to apply for financial support. Students who are interested in being considered for financial aid and scholarships are encouraged to complete the following two steps:

- Submit a FAFSA application to the SCSU Office of Financial Aid. All scholarships and grants, even if they are not need-based, require that the student have a FAFSA on file with this office.
- Complete the Southern Foundation's scholarship application by March 31st.

For more information, please review the information on the [SCSU Scholarships website](#).

Identification Card

The multipurpose [ID card](#) (Hoot Loot) is the primary University identification card and is mandatory for all students. The Hoot Loot ID card functions as a library card and as a key to some buildings. The card also contains each student's unique eight-digit University identification number. Students may obtain the Southern Hoot Loot ID card by visiting the University Card Office, located in the Wintergreen Building.

Information Technology Help Desk

The [SCSU Information Technology Department](#) supports the campus community in the use of information and academic technologies, such as BannerWeb, e-mail accounts, library accounts, and classroom technologies. For assistance, please email helpdesk@SouthernCT.edu or call (203) 392-5123.

Library Resources

The [Buley Library](#) has extensive resources for social work research, including online databases and access to materials through interlibrary loan. Students may contact Lisa Bier, the designated social sciences reference librarian, for individualized assistance with capstones and other projects: BierL1@SouthernCT.edu or 203-392-5131.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Your physical and mental health are critical to your learning and success. Southern has a comprehensive range of supports available to enhance your holistic wellbeing, including the [Wellbeing Center](#), the Food Pantry, Counseling Services, Health Services, Recreation and Fitness, Alcohol and Drug Services and Recovery Services, and Violence Prevention, Victim Advocacy and Support (VPAS).

Nondiscrimination Policy

The Southern [nondiscrimination policy](#) specifies that Southern does not discriminate on the basis of age; ancestry; color; gender identity and expression; intellectual disability; learning disability; mental disorder; physical disability; marital status; national origin; race; religious creed; sex, including pregnancy; transgender status; sexual harassment and sexual assault; sexual orientation; veteran status; or any other status protected by federal or state laws.

Parking

To have a vehicle on campus, students, faculty, and staff must complete their [vehicle registration and parking permit application](#).

Policy Statement on Pluralism

The Southern [policy statement on pluralism](#) forbids acts of violence or harassment reflecting bias or intolerance based on an individual's race, religious creed, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and ethnic or cultural origin. The University has procedures for investigating complaints of acts of intolerance brought by students or staff.

Sexual Misconduct

Southern is concerned about the safety of all University community members. Sexual harassment and sexual violence (sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation) are not acceptable behaviors in our community and are violations of the law, University policies, and the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Southern is committed to providing prevention education and support services to survivors and holding perpetrators accountable. Visit the [Sexual Misconduct](#) webpage for resources and policies related to sexual misconduct, including policies, reporting procedures, and students' rights.

Support and Resource Team

The Southern [Support and Resource Team \(SART\)](#) provides a collaborative, victim-centered team response to sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation). Their mission is to provide services that ensure a transition from victim to survivor for every individual whose life is impacted by sexual misconduct. SART members can provide a survivor with many supportive options including counseling, medical attention, judicial services, advocacy, law enforcement, referrals, and general information regarding sexual violence.

Research Protection Program

Students who plan to involve human or animal subjects in their research must obtain approval or exemption in accordance with the [SCSU Research Protection Program](#). Students who plan to involve human subjects in a research study (for example, in interviews, surveys, or observations) must obtain approval or exemption from the Institutional Review Board or IRB. In addition, students who plan research with human subjects may need to obtain approval in accordance with the policies of a particular agency or organization, as applicable.

Student Code of Conduct

The SCSU [Student Code of Conduct](#) presents a statement of students' rights and responsibilities established by the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education. It defines prohibited conduct, the disciplinary process for violations, and potential consequences for violations.

Undocumented Student Support Team

Southern is committed to a mission of [social justice](#). That means we strive to ensure that all members of our community are treated with dignity, respect, kindness, compassion and civility. The [Undocumented Student Support Team](#) has three primary goals: 1) to identify and break down barriers faced by undocumented students and their families; 2) to engage and educate the community about the realities of being an immigrant in the United States; and 3) to advocate for policies that support our students on the campus, state, and national level.

University Police

The mission of the [Southern Police Department](#) is to provide exceptional police services in partnership with the Southern community, to protect and serve, to maintain a safe environment, to enhance the quality of life and learning, and to promote a culture of respect and trust. Students may request an on-campus [walking escort service](#) for their safety 24 hours a day.

Veterans Services

The [Office for Veterans, Military, and Adult Learner Services](#) provides counsel, academic advisement, GI Bill and Tuition Waiver Certifications, and liaison with state and federal agencies. You can obtain information about the GI Bill and laws that provide rehabilitation and educational assistance to disabled or war veterans and their dependents. You can also find out about medical entitlements, discharge upgrades, and other benefits available from the Veterans Administration. The Veterans' Center offers a lively meeting place with computers and comfortable furniture where you can meet other students, study, socialize, or relax between classes. The Veterans' Center is in Engleman Hall, Room A014 and is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE, SOCIAL WORK (BSW)

The Bachelor of Science in Social Work, or [BSW program](#), at Southern will provide you with a rigorous yet supportive learning environment with small classes, collaborative research opportunities, and expert social work faculty who are committed to your success.

Beyond the classroom, you will gain 400 hours of social work experience in a supervised practicum during your senior year. With hundreds of practicum sites throughout Connecticut—including public and private agencies, community-based programs, schools, hospitals, and more—the practicum education office will help you find a site that meets your educational and professional goals.

With your BSW degree, you will qualify for entry-level professional social work positions and for admission to an MSW Advanced Standing program, which allows you to accelerate completion of an MSW degree.

The BSW program is accredited by the [Council on Social Work Education](#) (CSWE). The BSW curriculum, including coursework and practicum education, prepares students to demonstrate social work competencies and related behaviors in generalist and specialist practice. These competencies are defined by [CSWE Educational and Accreditation Standards](#) (2022 EPAS) as follows:

- Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
- Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
- Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in practice.
- Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
- Engage in policy practice.
- Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organization, and communities.
- Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

BSW ADMISSION

Students interested in majoring in social work must complete a two-step admission process:

1. Students must be accepted to Southern CT State University by the SCSU Admissions Office.
2. Students must be accepted to the Social Work major by the BSW Program:
 - Application is made for admission to the BSW Program in the spring semester prior to the fall semester in which students anticipate enrolling in 300-level social work courses.
 - Students cannot register for social work courses at 300-level and above without applying and being accepted to the social work major.
 - Applications are available on the [department's BSW website](#).

Applications are accepted only once a year – during the spring semester.
The **priority admissions deadline** for the BSW Program is February 15.
Students can only begin the Social Work coursework in the fall semester (there is no spring start).

Application Eligibility Criteria

To apply to the program and earn permission to enroll in 300-level and above social work courses, these prerequisites must be completed by the end of the spring semester in which the application is submitted:

- Completion of 57 credits of university requirements and cognate courses.
- A minimum grade point average of 2.5 and good standing with the University.
- Successful completion of SWK 200, or its equivalent, with a minimum grade of B-.
- Successful completion of ENG 112 and the Quantitative Reasoning requirement of the LEP (e.g., Math 103, 104, or 107), or course equivalents.

Admission may be competitive. Meeting the eligibility criteria described above may not guarantee acceptance due to enrollment caps that are based on Department of Social Work resources.

GPA, as well as other pre-admission criteria, will be used as a way of evaluating students for acceptance into the social work program. These may include, but are not limited to: completion of prerequisite courses, a personal essay, and an evaluation of the student's program plan for completion of remaining university requirements. Consistent with SCSU admission requirements, preference is given to those candidates who, in the judgment of Department of Social Work faculty, present through academic and personal qualifications the greatest potential for program success. Those students who meet eligibility criteria at the time of the priority admissions deadline will be accepted provisionally so long as those criteria continue to be met at the end of the summer semester.

Transfer Student Admissions & Transfer Credit

Transfer students must be admitted to the university as well as to the Department of Social Work. To be clear, two separate applications are required:

- 1) Transfer Application to Southern CT State University.
- 2) Department of Social Work application, due by February 15.

Transfer students who plan to transfer to SCSU and be a social work major must apply to both SCSU and the BSW Program. Student applying for the fall semester may complete both admissions processes simultaneously in order to meet the BSW Program application deadline (February 15).

Students wishing to transfer to the BSW Program from other academic institutions are required to submit official transcripts of their previous college work to the SCSU Office of Admissions. After a review of transfer credits is completed by the Admissions Office, a separate review of previous college work is conducted by the BSW Coordinator for consideration of additional transfer credits within established BSW Program requirements. Transfer credits may be awarded for BSW courses for equivalent courses completed in other accredited BSW programs. Transfer credit is also awarded for courses that are equivalent to SWK 200 from community and technical colleges and four-year colleges and universities. Articulation agreements with Connecticut community colleges and universities reinforce this policy. In all cases, requests for transfer credits are evaluated on an individual basis. After transfer credits are awarded, the University Registrar is notified to enter the credits in the student's official academic record. A copy of the approval is also placed in the student's file.

The Department of Social Work welcomes transfer students from the community and technical colleges and four-year institutions. Pre-admission academic advisement is available to students interested in transferring into the BSW program via SCSU's [Transfer Support Services](#).

Conditional Admission

Students who are conditionally admitted to the BSW program must complete the requirements for program admission in their first semester in the program. Students who do not meet this condition will be referred to the Student Support and Evaluation Committee (SEC).

Admission Deferral Policy

Students who are accepted into the BSW program and decide to postpone enrolling in Social Work courses can choose to defer their acceptance for one year. This request to defer must be made, in writing, to the BSW Coordinator. Once this request is approved, the student will be accepted for the following academic year as long as he or she continues to meet the eligibility requirements. Students who defer must indicate intent to enroll in social work courses for the following Fall by contacting the BSW Coordinator by February 15.

Selection of Major

All SCSU students must use SCSU's [online Selection of Program system](#) to declare their major.

UNDERGRADUTE CURRICULUM

In order for students to graduate from SCSU with the Social Work major, the following requirements must be completed:

	Credits
SCSU LEP Requirements	45
Social Work Cognate Credits	18
Social Work Credits	45
Elective Credits	12
Total Credits	120

SCSU's Liberal Education Program (LEP)

The Liberal Education Program (LEP) at Southern CT State University is designed to help each student become an educated person in the contemporary world. It focuses on competencies and discussions of values. The LEP is a 45-credit sequence of courses in three tiers.

- Tier 1 (18 credits) emphasizes college-level competencies that form the foundation of a liberal education.
- Tier 2 (24 credits) explores nine areas of critical knowledge.
- Tier 3 (3 credits) Capstone Seminar emphasizes discussions of values in the context of LEP Areas of Knowledge and some related real-world issue.

See the current SCSU catalog for more details about these University requirements.

Social Work Cognate Credits

In the LEP, social work students complete **18 cognate credits**. To fulfill the 18 credits of cognate requirements in the Liberal Education Program, students can choose (in consultation with their advisor) to pursue any minor in the university OR select six (6) courses from the list below:

ANY Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology, Public Health, or Women's Studies courses,
AND/OR any of the following:

COM 150:	World of Communication	PHI 220:	Ethics: Know Thyself
COM 210:	Human Communication	PHI 242:	Death and the Meaning of Life
COM 225:	Interpersonal Communication	PHI 325:	Bio-Medical Ethics
COM 300:	Organizational Communication	PHI 327:	Moral Problems in the Law
COM 302:	Relational Communication	PHI 207:	Religious Dimensions of Human Experience
COM 370:	Interpersonal Conflict and Communication	PHI 310:	Women and Philosophy
COM 375:	Family Communication	PHI 355:	Philosophy of Religion
COM 387:	Communication Theory	PHI 375:	Phil. of Political & Social Change
COM 410:	Crisis and Communication	PSC 150:	Thinking about Politics
COM 440:	Cultural Influences on Communication	PSC 200:	Political Change and Conflict
ENG 317:	Cross-cultural Literatures & Contexts	PSC 214:	Everyday Politics of Speaking
ENG 383	American Women Writers	REC 311:	Introduction to Child Life Therapy
ENG 423:	Contemp. African-American Novelists	REC 312:	Therapeutic Play
ENG 462:	Gay and Lesbian Film and Literature	REC 307:	Disabilities in Society
EXC 380:	Sports Psychology	REC 390:	Grant Writing
GEO 200	Human Geography	SED 225:	Intro to Exceptionalities
GEO 305:	Environmental Economic Geography	SED 235:	Early Child Special Ed for the Exceptional Individual
GEO 405:	Environmental Justice	SED 481:	Teaching Exceptional Students (Elementary)
HON 494:	Honors Thesis Proposal	SED 482:	Teaching Exceptional Students (Secondary)
HON 495:	Honors Thesis	SED 498:	Global Studies in Special Ed (Guatemala)
JRN 240:	Race and the News	SHE 301:	Drug Education
LIT 382:	Contemp. Latin American Lit.	SHE 302:	Mental Health Education
MGT 418:	Negotiation and Conflict Resolution		

*****Note: Some cognates have pre-requisite requirements that need to be met prior to enrolling in the course.** Additional courses may be selected with the approval of the advisor.

*****Note:** DARC classes taken at CT Community College can be used to meet the Cognate requirements.

Social Work Courses

SWK 200 – Introduction to Social Work (3 credit course). This course must be completed by all social work majors prior to their acceptance into the BSW program, and **students must earn a grade of B- or above.** Transfer students from community colleges or other comparable institutions may be able to transfer credit for an equivalent course.

The social work curriculum is divided into five types of courses: Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE); Social Welfare Policy; Social Work Research; Social Work Practice; and Practicum Instruction. Once accepted into the BSW Program, the following courses must be completed in proper sequence. Exceptions to this sequence can be made, but these program changes may result in a delay of the student’s graduation.

JUNIOR YEAR	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
	SWK 320 Human Behavior in the Social Environment I	SWK 321W Human Behavior in the Social Environment II
	SWK 350 Social Work Research Methods	SWK 390 Social Work Interviewing Skills
	SWK 376 Introduction to Social Work Practice	SWK Field of Practice Elective (choose one): SWK 380, 381 or 382

SENIOR YEAR	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
	SWK 330W Social Welfare Institutions & Policies I	SWK 430 Social Welfare Institutions & Policies II
	SWK 377 Social Work Practice with Groups	SWK 378 Social Work Practice with Communities & Organizations
	SWK 490 (6 credits): <i>*Must earn “C” or better</i> Practicum Practice Seminar I	SWK 491 (6 credits): <i>*Must earn “C” or better</i> Practicum Practice Seminar II

SWK 490/491 Grade Requirement: C or Better

Please note that students must earn a C or better in both SWK 490 and SWK 491 in order to earn a degree in Social Work from SCSU. Students who earn below a C in SWK 490 will not be allowed to register for SWK 491.

Electives

All SCSU students must complete 120 credits in order to graduate. To reach this credit requirement, students may have to complete elective credits. Elective courses may be taken at any time. Students should consult with their advisor to monitor their credits and determine if elective credits are needed.

Honors Thesis

Juniors and seniors with exceptional motivation and potential may wish to pursue a rigorous path to graduation with departmental honors via the [SCSU Honors Thesis program](#). The production of a high-quality thesis completes the requirement for departmental honors. Students wishing to participate should contact the BSW Coordinator.

Independent Study

SWK 499 Independent Study and Research (one to three credits) allows students to study independently under the direction of a faculty sponsor. Each independent study course must be approved as an academically sound component of the student's planned program of study by the faculty sponsor, the BSW program coordinator, the chair of the social work department, and the dean of the College of Health and Human Services. The signed [Independent Study Application](#) form must be submitted to the dean of the College of Health and Human Services no later than the official first day of classes each semester.

Class Schedules

BSW classes are scheduled such that most students come to campus no more than twice per week. BSW courses are scheduled on Wednesdays for juniors and on Mondays for seniors. Some courses are taught in a hybrid format, which includes a 90-minute synchronous session each week, along with 60 meetings of assigned asynchronous work. Asynchronous work is in addition to assigned readings and course assignments. The BSW program currently is accredited by CSWE as a traditional, face-to-face program. Students therefore may take no more than 49% of online credits per semester (i.e., one online course out of three courses). Thus, limited online courses may be offered each semester.

Part-Time BSW Program Option

A program for part-time study may be available for students who are unable to complete the traditional course of study. Interested students should contact the BSW Coordinator for further information.

Advanced Standing MSW Program

Students who graduate from SCSU's BSW program may be eligible for an Advanced Standing MSW program. Advanced Standing MSW programs allow graduates of CSWE-accredited BSW programs to complete MSW coursework in an accelerated process. Click [here](#) to learn more about the SCSU Advanced Standing MSW Program.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor who serves as their academic navigator and guide throughout the BSW program. Consult your advisor when selecting your courses each semester, reviewing your degree evaluation, seeking academic support and other University services, making academic and professional plans, and/or if you are experiencing personal hardship that may jeopardize your academic success. Faculty advisors are most easily reached by email and will gladly meet with you in-person or online when you are preparing to register for courses and throughout the academic year. Faculty advisors will also provide you with the personal identification number (PIN) needed for registration. The purpose of academic advisement is to provide students with guidance regarding course registration, program planning, issues related to or affecting learning,

and career planning. During their first semester at SCSU, all BSW students are assigned to a faculty advisor in their selected major.

All BSW students are expected to develop a professional working relationship with their assigned faculty advisor. This is considered an essential component of professional social work development.

It is very important for students to meet with assigned faculty advisor at least once a semester.

- Students can find the name of their advisor in SSC Navigate and on their Degree Evaluation. Assigned advisors may be updated by October 1st each year.
- Students must meet with their advisors in order to register for classes because their advisors provide the PIN that is needed to register.
- Social Work students will receive an email from their advisor about one month prior to registration, asking the student to schedule an advising appointment via SSC Navigate. Students are encouraged to monitor their SCSU email closely and respond in a timely manner.

Responsibilities of the Advisor:

- Confer with students during the semester to review performance.
- Confer during the pre-registration period.
- Maintain a current profile of the student's academic progress.
- Work closely with advisee in the event of academic probation.
- Counsel advisee about academic, professional and career issues.
- Maintain regular office hours.
- Initiate meetings with advisee.

Responsibilities of Advisee:

- Inform advisor of academic progress and standing (includes course work and practicum work).
- Maintain current profile of progress towards degree completion.
- Initiate meetings with advisor in a timely fashion.
- Confer with advisor about program and course selection.
- Secure advisor approval and alternate PIN number in order to register for courses.
- Provide current information (address, phone numbers, name changes, etc.).

Items for Discussion with Faculty Advisor:

- Guidance on course selection
- Dropping or adding courses
- Career and academic goals
- Personal challenges that may be obstacles to academic success
- Educational planning and professional development including participation in professional activities.
- Academic or practicum work problems/issues
- Information about courses, practicum work, university life, student activities, and career options

- Initiate process for graduation
- Socialization in the program
- Time management

Advising & the BSW Admissions Process

- SCSU students are assigned a social work advisor in their second semester. SCSU students should consult with their social work advisor about the admissions process and to ensure that they register for classes they need to fulfill prerequisite and recommended university requirements. [SCSU Advising Specialists](#) are also available if additional support is needed.
- Students who are planning to transfer to SCSU should contact SCSU's [Transfer Support Services](#) for advising.

BSW SENIOR AWARDS

The Department of Social Work presents five BSW Senior Awards at the university's Honors Convocation. Full- and part-time faculty and students are all eligible to nominate students for awards. Students may self-nominate or nominate another student. Awards may not be given if qualified nominations are not received.

Michelle Wheeler Social Work Service Award

A student demonstrates two or more of the following criteria:

- Participated in BSW program activities
- Provided leadership for BSW students through one or more of the following: 1) Represented student interests at department meetings or activities; 2) Organized one or more activities for the Social Welfare Organization (SWO); or 3) Served as an elected SWO officer.
- Demonstrated an interest in enhancing the experiences of all BSW students.

Class Leadership Award

A student demonstrates criteria from at least one of the following two categories:

- Class project leadership: Demonstrated initiative in organizing a group of students for an assigned class project, and demonstrated a collaborative spirit when working with other students.
- Assumed responsibility for one's tasks and supported the efforts of others during group tasks.
- One's participation in one or more courses: 1) Consistently reflected preparation for each on-ground class; 2) Consistently reflected respect for other students' viewpoints; 3) Supported and encouraged the active participation of other students throughout the course(s); or 4) Enlivened the experience and learning of other students.

Senior Internship Award

A student demonstrates criteria from at least one of the following two categories:

- Creativity and innovation: 1) Created a client activity that has been adopted for use by other social workers; 2) Designed a group curriculum that has been adopted by the agency for future use; and/or 3) Created resources that are being used by other social workers.
- Initiative and collegiality: 1) Took the initiative to engage in relationships with other agency colleagues; 2) Took the initiative to seek out assignments that benefited the agency; and/or

3) Consistently contributed to the agency in relationship with other agency colleagues.

Social Justice Advocate Award

A student demonstrates two or more of the following criteria:

- Identified one or more social justice issue(s) at one's practicum placement or in one's community.
- Used several course assignments to learn more about the issue and social change options.
- Advocated for social change with those in positions of power to effect change.
- Led an initiative with other students to advocate for social justice at the local, state, or federal level.
- Organized an SWO project to advocate for social change regarding a specific social justice issue.

Social Work Writing Award

A student demonstrates the following criteria in one piece of writing from any social work course (the paper must be submitted with the nomination form):

- Creative and accurate development of social work concepts throughout the paper.
- Clarity and development of the key points of the paper.
- Evidence of critical thinking.
- Application of social work knowledge to a social issue or specific scenario.
- Accurate use of APA style throughout the paper.

SOCIAL WORK STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Social Work Student Organization (SWO)

The "Social Welfare Organization" (SWO) is a student-led organization recognized by the SCSU Office of Student Affairs with its own separate budget and operating procedures. Through SWO, undergraduate students have the opportunity to enhance their own educational opportunities by planning and implementing activities consistent with their interests and needs. Faculty advisors assist SWO in its on-going deliberations and activities. It is essential that SWO leaders work in collaboration with the Office of Student Activities and the broader University to ensure support and legitimacy by the larger university system. To learn more, please visit [Owl Connect](#).

Social Welfare Action Alliance, SCSU Chapter (SWAA-SCSU)

The Southern student chapter of the [Social Welfare Action Alliance](#) works with the national and statewide chapters to address issues of social and economic injustice. For further information, please contact Stephen Monroe Tomczak at tomczaks1@southernct.edu

Department Committees

The Department of Social Work adheres to the University policies related to student membership on department committees. BSW students hold membership through representation in faculty meetings of the Department of Social Work and the BSW Core. For further information, please contact the department chair or the BSW program coordinator.

SOCIAL WORK ACADEMIC POLICIES

ADEI (Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Acceptance, and Belonging)

Higher education has not been equally accessible or attainable for all. Some students have been historically excluded and are currently challenged by societal oppression outside the classroom and by traditional norms, communication patterns, unwritten rules, and biased expectations inside the classroom.

In social work classes, we try to decolonize social work education by deconstructing some privilege-dominant perspectives and practices and by studying some disenfranchised perspectives and practices. We strive for a willingness to learn through various approaches and to dismantle narratives that have silenced marginalized voices. Our commitment to anti-racism, diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and acceptance in the classroom is consistent with the principles, values, and standards of social work as defined by the [NASW Code of Ethics \(2021\)](#) and the [CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards \(2022\)](#). It is a commitment that calls for your input, critical thinking, and respectful and brave dialogue. We understand decolonizing conversations may be difficult. Please enter the classroom environment in a manner that is self-aware, self-loving, and considerate of others. Your role in your classes is to remain present and respectful and to engage in the difficult conversations that support your growth, development, and leadership. Social justice is a directive of action, and it is on every one of us to do our part.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Language that is generated by AI tools such as ChatGPT or other chatbots may be used in coursework or agency assignments only with the explicit permission of the course instructor, the practicum instructor, or the agency. AI-generated texts in assignments must be cited according to [APA guidelines](#). In addition, students must carefully and critically review AI-generated materials to assure that they are accurate and free from bias. Unattributed use of AI language is considered a violation of academic integrity and professional standards and may be grounds for a failing grade in the course, dismissal from the practicum, and dismissal from the Social Work program.

Change of Course Schedule or Program Plan

A student may drop a course by following the university procedures outlined by the Registrar. Prior to making any schedule changes, students are encouraged to meet with their advisor.

Class Attendance

Attendance and participation in social work classes are required professional responsibilities. Students are expected to attend every class session, to arrive on time, and to remain for the full class. Students ordinarily must attend and participate in at least 80% of class sessions to earn a passing grade in the class. In the case of a medical emergency, exigent circumstance, accommodation for a documented disability, or accommodation for religious observance, students are responsible for notifying the instructor of an anticipated absence *before the class session* and for arranging to make up work. Students must complete any makeup work that is assigned by the instructor in a timely fashion.

Students seeking reasonable accommodations for a documented disability must be registered with [Center for Academic Success and Academic Services](#).

Class Participation

Class participation involves an engaged and collaborative learning process that requires consistent punctuality and attendance in all class sessions; preparation; respectful attention; cultural humility and demonstration of anti-racist, anti-oppressive principles; thoughtful contributions to class discussions; participation in exercises and activities; adherence to class norms and/or Netiquette; appropriate use of technology in the classroom; and demonstration of social work professional standards and behaviors within and beyond the class. Additional expectations for class participation may be defined in the class syllabus.

Class Participation Online

Class participation online involves the same engaged and collaborative learning process as class participation in person. In addition, students in online classes are expected to abide by the following guidelines, which will be considered in grades for attendance, class participation, and the total course grade:

- Online classes take place in a virtual classroom (Zoom or Teams), and appropriate classroom behavior is expected.
- Respect the start and end times of the class.
- Log into your class from a distraction-free, quiet environment. Under no circumstances should you join the class session if you are driving a vehicle.
- Display your full name and pronouns.
- Take care of your personal needs (appropriate dress, basic hygiene, eating, talking to others in your home, etc.) prior to entering the virtual classroom.
- Turn your camera or video on with your full face viewable; be sure your camera and room lighting allow others to see your full face.
- Mute and pause your video when you step away from the camera.
- Use the Zoom functions to communicate as needed (chat, raise your hand, answer yes/no, etc.).
- Communicate with your instructor if you will be late or if you lose your connection during class.
- Pay attention! Maintain eye contact with the speaker on the screen.
- It is strongly recommended that you use a computer during your online class. If you do not have a computer, the University might have resources to support you.

Confidentiality and Privacy of Class Sessions

Consistent with the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#), the Department of Social Work respects the confidentiality of students' educational records and the privacy of their participation in class sessions. *Students may not record a class or post discussions or images from class sessions without the explicit permission of the instructor and all other students in the class.* Violations of this policy will be considered a violation of the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) and of social work professional standards and behaviors and may result in failing the course and dismissal from the Social Work program.

Department Communication

The Department of Social Work uses EMAIL as the primary form of communication. Students' University email addresses are used to communicate all information throughout the academic year. Students need to check their SCSU email on a regular basis.

The Department of Social Work also sends out a monthly BSW newsletter, entitled READ THIS!, with important dates and relevant information for our undergraduate students. Please add socialwork@southernct.edu to make sure you receive these emails.

Grade Appeal

According to University policy, students may submit a [Grade Appeal](#) only in instances in which a palpable injustice can be claimed. A palpable injustice occurs when a faculty member has been demonstrably inconsistent and unfair to the student. Grade appeals can only be submitted the semester after the grade is received. The grade appeal procedure consists of three levels: 1) discussion with the instructor; 2) mediation with the department chair; and 3) referral to the University Academic Standing Committee (UASC).

HIPAA Privacy Rule

In accordance with the [HIPAA Privacy Rule](#), social work students must protect the privacy of clients' health information and remove any identifying information in process recordings, academic assignments, and class discussions.

Incomplete Grades

Students may request that an instructor allow a 30-day extension for completing course requirements, provided that the request is made before the end of the semester. Instructors ordinarily will consider an Incomplete grade only when the student has satisfactorily completed most course requirements and has less than 30% of coursework remaining. If the instructor grants the student's request for an extension, then the student and the instructor complete an [Incomplete Grade Contract](#) and a temporary Incomplete ("I") grade is recorded.

Prior Learning

The BSW program does not grant course credit or course waivers for life experience or previous work experience. Social work courses taken at another CSWE-accredited university may be evaluated for transfer credit on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the [Transfer Admissions & Services Team](#) to learn more.

Withdrawals, Leave of Absence, & Readmission

- **Withdrawal from a Course:** Students may drop a course within the first seven days of the semester, or they may withdraw from a full-semester course during the first 12 weeks of the semester (see [Withdrawal Deadlines](#) for shorter terms). Such a [withdrawal](#) is recorded as a "W" on the transcript but does not impact the student's grade point average. Students may withdraw online through student BannerWeb services prior to the end of the withdrawal period. Before withdrawing from a course, students are encouraged to confer with their instructor and faculty adviser and with the Office of Financial Aid, if applicable.
- **Leave of Absence:** Students who need to take time off from their studies with the intention of returning within 12 months must submit a [Leave of Absence](#) form to the Registrar's Office. Students taking a leave of absence are strongly encouraged to meet with their faculty advisor, the Student Support and Evaluation Committee, and the financial aid office to discuss their plans for degree completion and to understand the impact of the leave of absence on their academic and financial statuses.

- **Withdrawal from the University:** Students who need to step away from their studies without the intention of returning within 12 months may [withdraw from the University](#). If withdrawing before the end of the semester, students should confer with their instructors, their faculty advisor, and/or the Student Support and Evaluation Committee to review their options for successful completion of the semester. Students who wish to resume their BSW program after having withdrawn from the University must apply for [readmission](#).
- **Readmission to the BSW Program (in addition to University procedures):** A student who leaves or withdraws from the BSW program after beginning social work courses at the 300 level or above may request to be readmitted to the BSW program. Requests to be readmitted should be submitted in writing to the BSW Coordinator.

Readmission will be based on the following:

1. No more than six years will have transpired between the end of the last semester of enrollment and the anticipated semester for return; and
2. The student meets the current criteria for admittance and continuation in the BSW program.

If more than six years have transpired and the student meets the current criteria for admittance, the student will be required to retake those social work courses already completed.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

“Social work educators are responsible for ensuring that students are prepared to practice safely, competently, and ethically with all clients, constituents, and the public,” as stated by the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (CSWE, 2022, p. 5).

To fulfill this responsibility, the Department of Social Work continuously evaluates students’ performance in relation to three sets of standards: 1) academic standards, 2) practicum education standards, and 3) professional standards and behaviors. Students’ admission to, and continuation in, the social work program is contingent upon ongoing positive evaluation of their performance in each area.

Academic Standards for Continuance and Graduation

Continuation in the undergraduate program is contingent upon positive ongoing faculty evaluation of the student on four distinct yet related areas:

1. Classroom achievement as reflected in an overall cumulative grade point average for university coursework AND a cumulative grade point average for social work coursework.
2. Professional standards and behavior for admission and continuance in the Department of Social Work.
3. Ethical, professional, and legal conduct as embodied in the NASW Code of Ethics, and University standards for student conduct.
4. Performance in practicum as reflected in ongoing faculty and supervisor evaluation, including a minimum grade of C in practicum seminar courses (SWK 490 and SWK

491).

Classroom Achievement

- Students must maintain an overall cumulative grade point average of 2.50 for university coursework.
- Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.75 in social work coursework.
- Students must earn a C or better in SWK 490 in order to progress to SWK 491.
- Students must earn a C or better in SWK 491 in order to graduate from the social work program.

Probationary Status and Procedures

If a student's overall grade point average drops below 2.50 and/or the social work coursework grade point average drops below 2.75, the student shall be placed on probationary status. The probationary period shall last one semester and shall begin the next full semester following the determination of the student's insufficient grade point average (not summer or winter sessions). The student's overall and social work grade point averages must both meet continuation requirements by the end of the probationary semester for the student to remain in the program. Students on academic probation will be referred to the Student Support and Evaluation Committee (SEC) for a review of the case.

Practicum Education Standards

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) identifies practicum education as the signature pedagogy for social work (2022 EPAS). Practicum education affords students the opportunities to develop and demonstrate professional knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes that contribute to specified social work competencies and behaviors in generalist and specialist social work practice.

Detailed expectations for students' performance in practicum education are specified in the Practicum Education section of this *Handbook*. These expectations include, but are not limited to: collaborating with the Practicum Education office in securing a practicum within the first four weeks of the fall semester; completing required practicum hours as scheduled with the agency; satisfactorily performing practicum responsibilities as assigned by the practicum instructor or specified on the practicum education contract; effectively engaging in the supervision process; and making satisfactory progress toward demonstrating social work competencies and behaviors as documented each semester by a grade of at least a C on the practicum evaluation from.

Professional Standards and Behaviors

The Department of Social Work identifies the following professional standards and behaviors as essential to students' professional development and to their development of social work competencies and behaviors as required by CSWE (2022 EPAS). Social work students are expected to demonstrate professional standards and behaviors throughout the social work program, including in their interactions in classes, practicum education, and activities in the University and the wider community. Failure to demonstrate professional standards and behaviors may be considered grounds for failing a course, dismissal from a practicum, and/or dismissal from the BSW program.

1. Professional and Ethical Commitment

Students' behavior must demonstrate their willingness and ability to uphold the principles values, and standards of the social work profession as specified by the [NASW Code of Ethics](#).

2. Diversity and Social Justice

Students' behavior must demonstrate their ability and willingness to appreciate, respect, and value human and cultural diversity in their communications and interactions with others.

3. Professional Use of Self

Students' behavior must demonstrate their willingness and ability to examine how their values, attitudes, beliefs, biases, emotions, and past experiences may affect their thinking, behaviors, and professional interactions and to adjust behaviors that may be inconsistent with professional values, ethics, and goals.

4. Empathy

Students' behavior must demonstrate their willingness and ability to seek knowledge and understanding of the experiences, perspectives, and values of others and to use such empathy as a basis for professional relationships.

5. Communication Skills

Students' behavior must demonstrate their willingness and ability to communicate effectively and respectfully in professional interactions, whether in person or online, including the ability to express ideas and feelings clearly, to listen to others, and to be aware of the possible impact that personal communications on social media may have in a professional setting. Students must demonstrate sufficient oral and written English-language proficiency to perform successfully in the program.

6. Interpersonal Skills

Students' behavior must demonstrate their ability and willingness to relate effectively in professional interactions, including behaviors that show compassion, altruism, integrity, and respect for and consideration of others.

7. Time and Energy

Students' behavior must demonstrate their ability and willingness to devote the time and energy necessary to meet expectations of the BSW program, including class attendance, class participation, timely completion of assignments, and practicum responsibilities.

8. Professional Demeanor

Students' behavior must demonstrate their ability and willingness to comport themselves as professionals, including their demonstration of punctuality, timeliness, responsiveness, reliability, and appropriate self-presentation in person, online, and on social media.

9. Scope of Practice

Students' behavior must demonstrate their ability and willingness to practice within the scope of their developing competencies, including identifying themselves as social work

students or interns, accurately assessing their level of professional competence, and using supervision and consultation to guide professional judgement and practice.

10. Knowledge Base for Social Work Practice

Students' behavior must demonstrate their ability and willingness to seek, apply, and translate professional knowledge and to pursue continuous learning and professional development as students and throughout their social work careers.

STUDENT SUPPORT & EVALUATION COMMITTEE (SEC)

The Student Support and Evaluation Committee (SEC) is a department committee that supports and evaluates students' performance in relation to academic standards, practicum education standards, and professional standards and behaviors. The purposes of the SEC evaluation are two-fold: 1) to collaborate with the student in assessing the student's performance from a strengths-based perspective, including specifying goals, identifying barriers, locating supportive resources and services, and planning for successful completion of their degree; and 2) to recommend to the department chair whether and how the student may continue or continue conditionally in the social work program.

Referrals to the SEC

Students who appear to be having difficulty in meeting academic standards, practicum education standards, or professional standards may be referred to the SEC chair. Referrals may be made by social work faculty members (including full time and part time faculty), the program coordinator, the practicum education director or assistant director, or other department staff. Students may also refer themselves to the SEC.

Referrals related to **professional standards** may be indicated when the student's behaviors in a class, a practicum, and/or in activities at Southern or in the wider community are inconsistent with the professional standards and behaviors as defined above.

Referrals related to **academic standards** may be indicated when the student:

- Has not earned a mid-term grade of C or P or is at risk of failing a social work course.
- Has not earned a final grade of C or P in a social work course.
- Has been placed on academic probation.
- Has requested or received two or more Incomplete grades (I) in a semester or one or more extended Incomplete grades (I+).
- Has requested a program change, course withdrawal, leave of absence, or University withdrawal.
- Other indications of difficulty in meeting academic standards.

Referrals related to **practicum education standards** may be indicated when the student:

- Has not secured a practicum by the fourth week of the fall semester.
- Has not secured a practicum after two agency interviews or two opportunities for agency interviews.
- Has not completed required practicum hours as scheduled with the agency.

- Has not satisfactorily performed practicum assignments as reported by the practicum instructor.
- Has not achieved a passing score on the practicum evaluation.
- Is at risk of dismissal or has been dismissed from the practicum by the agency.
- Has requested a change of practicum.
- Other indications of difficulty in meeting practicum education standards.

SEC Process

The SEC process is managed in as timely a fashion as possible while ensuring a fair, careful, and complete review of the student's performance.

Referrals to the SEC are made in writing to the SEC chair, who schedules the SEC meeting. The SEC chair notifies the student by email of the referral, the reasons for the referral, and the time and place of the SEC meeting, which may be held in person or online. The SEC chair may seek additional documentation related to the referral and may request information from the student's instructors about the student's performance in current classes. The student is encouraged to consult their faculty advisor or another support person of their choice prior to the SEC meeting and to bring that support person to the meeting. The student is asked to confirm receipt of the notice of the SEC meeting and to indicate whether they and their support person will attend.

Participants in the SEC meeting include the SEC chair; the relevant program coordinator; two faculty members; the practicum education director or assistant director, if relevant; the student; and the student's support person.

During the first part of the meeting, the SEC reviews information leading to the referral. The SEC chair introduces the committee members, reviews the reasons for the referral, and provides documentation or other pertinent information. The SEC then asks the student for their point of view. In conversation with the committee, the student may provide additional information; assess their progress toward demonstrating professional, academic, or practicum education standards; share their educational and professional goals; identify needed resources; express their preferred outcome for the meeting; and suggest a plan for moving forward.

During the second part of the meeting, the student leaves the meeting, and the SEC goes into executive session to consider a course of action. The committee evaluates the student's progress toward demonstrating professional, academic, and or practicum education standards; discusses the student's strengths, goals, challenges, and barriers; identifies possible supportive resources, services, and strategies; and recommends whether and how the student may continue or continue conditionally in the program.

The SEC votes on its findings and recommendations, which then are forwarded in writing by the SEC chair to the chair of the Department of Social Work. The department chair may accept, reverse, or modify the SEC findings and recommendations and/or take other actions. The department chair may seek additional information or ask to meet with the student before making a final decision.

Once the department chair has communicated a final decision to the SEC, the SEC chair sends a decision letter to the student by email, based on the department chair's decision. The decision letter reviews the reasons for the referral and presents the department chair's decision, which may include

a plan, a timeline, and the possibility of a follow-up SEC meeting to review the student's progress. The decision letter includes information about the appeal process. The student is asked to confirm receipt of the decision letter and to indicate whether they accept the decision.

SEC Appeal Process

After the student has received the decision letter, the student may appeal the department chair's decision by filing a written grievance to the dean of the College of Health and Human Services. The written grievance should explain why the student believes that the SEC process was unfair or based on erroneous information. *The student must have exhausted departmental remedies before filing a grievance with the dean.* The dean may deny the student's appeal, reverse or modify the department's decision, or take other action.

Please note that the [grade appeal procedure](#) is a separate process that is not considered by the SEC.

PRACTICUM EDUCATION

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) identifies practicum education as the signature pedagogy for social work. The BSW practicum education curriculum consists of two different practicums or internships that each extend through the fall and spring semesters of an academic year. Students are supervised onsite by an agency-based *practicum instructor*, who has been approved by the Practicum Education office.

Students' learning in the practicum is supported by practicum seminars (SWK 490 and SWK 491) that are taken concurrently with the practicum. Practicum seminars afford opportunities for students to integrate academic learning with their practicum experience, to assess their ongoing professional development, and to participate in peer supervision and mutual aid. The seminar instructor serves as *faculty liaison* with the agency-based practicum instructor or supervisor for students in the seminar class.

The Placement Process

The Practicum Education office maintains an extensive roster of approved practicum sites. Students are welcome to propose new agencies to the Practicum Education staff for consideration as a new practicum site, however *all practicums must be arranged and approved by the Practicum Education office.*

Practicum Applications

Students apply for their first or generalist practicum (SWK 490/491) by submitting an [application](#) and résumé to the Practicum Education office. The résumé is used to introduce students to prospective agencies. BSW students who will be entering a practicum submit their application in their junior year of the BSW program.

The Practicum Education staff meets individually with students during the spring or summer semester before the practicum will begin. The purpose of the meeting is to explore internship opportunities related to the student's educational and professional interests and goals.

Students are encouraged to disclose to the Practicum Education staff any anticipated needs for accommodations for documented disabilities as arranged with the [Center for Academic Success and Accessibility Services \(CASAS\)](#); any prior criminal history; and other particular circumstances. Although the Practicum Education office considers the student's geographical or scheduling preferences, educational goals are the primary reason for choosing a practicum site.

After the Practicum Education staff identifies a possible practicum opportunity, the student arranges an interview at the agency with the prospective practicum instructor or supervisor. If the student, practicum instructor, and agency agree that the practicum is suitable, then the Practicum Education staff sends a confirmation letter to the student and the agency. If the student and prospective practicum instructor do not accept the practicum, then the student is referred to another practicum opportunity. It is expected that the second practicum opportunity will be final.

Internship Start Date

Students must have a confirmed practicum by the start of the fall semester. Students who have not begun their practicum by the end of the fourth week of the fall semester may be required to

withdraw from the practicum seminar (SWK 490) and to enroll again in the fall semester of the following academic year.

Internship/Practicum Schedules

BSW students complete a minimum of 400 hours of generalist practice in their BSW practicum (14 hours per week). A minimum of 75% of the scheduled practicum hours must be completed in-person, on-site at the agency.

Practicum schedules necessarily accommodate the needs of agencies and their clients. *Students should therefore plan for practicums that are held during weekday hours.* Although some agencies offer clinical services during evenings and weekends, social work interns typically are assigned weekday responsibilities, such as participating in staff meetings, case conferences, and supervision.

Background Checks

Students who apply for a practicum are encouraged to disclose any criminal history (felony or misdemeanor convictions) to assist the Practicum Education office in identifying practicum opportunities. Students with criminal records may be admitted to the BSW program; however, previous convictions may limit students' practicum options and their eligibility to apply for social work licensure. Some practicum sites require prospective interns to be fingerprinted and to pass criminal and driving background checks, child welfare background checks, drug tests, and/or physical examinations.

Practicum Sites

An agency that is approved as a practicum site promotes the values and goals of the social work profession and provides programs and services that allow students to develop and demonstrate required social work competencies and behaviors as defined by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the Department of Social Work. The agency expresses a commitment to:

1. Support the mission and goals of the University and the Department of Social Work;
2. Foster a learning environment where the principles anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion are practiced and valued;
3. Abide by University and department policies and regulations, including those related to academic honesty; accessibility; FERPA; HIPPA; accommodations for religious holidays; nondiscrimination; pluralism; sexual harassment; research protection; and student conduct;
4. Provide one hour per week of scheduled social work supervision by an approved practicum instructor;
5. Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate social work competencies and behaviors;
6. Provide students with responsibilities for social work practice with client systems of various sizes and with a diversity of client populations;
7. Provide students with adequate resources and facilities for effective and safe social work practice;
8. Allow time for new practicum instructions to participate in the Seminar in (Field) Practicum Instruction (SIFI).

Practicum Instructors

Practicum instructors are agency-based social workers who are approved by the Practicum Education office to provide social work supervision to BSW students. Practicum instructors are approved who:

1. For generalist practicums, hold an accredited MSW degree, LMSW master's licensure preferred, and have at least two years of post-master's social work practice experience.
2. Are authorized to provide resources, to support student safety, to plan orientation, to negotiate practicum assignments, and to represent the agency in relation to the Practicum Education office.
3. Have access to client records and clinical observation as necessary for supervision.
4. Will provide at least one hour per week of scheduled social work supervision on-site at the agency.
5. Will be present at the agency for at least 25 percent of the student's practicum hours.

In exceptional circumstances, approved practicum instructors may be allied professionals who do not hold an MSW degree, provided that the agency offers opportunities for the student to demonstrate required social work competencies and behaviors and the BSW program offers supplementary social work supervision.

Responsibilities of Practicum Instructors

Practicum instructors provide social work supervision to students, including collaborating with students in developing assignments, assessing learning, and evaluating practice. They assume responsibilities to:

1. Support the values and goals of social work education and the professional development of students.
2. Provide orientation, access to resources, and supports for student safety.
3. Collaborate with the student in completing the practicum education contract.
4. Provide opportunities for the student to demonstrate required social work competencies and behaviors as per the practicum education contract.
5. Provide one hour per week of individualized social work supervision on site at the agency.
6. Support the student's learning by reviewing and responding to process recordings and other practicum seminar assignments.
7. Assess the student's progress and set goals for professional development as documented each semester in the practicum evaluation form.
8. For new practicum instructors, complete the Seminar in (Field) Practicum Instruction (SIFI).

Seminar for (Field) Practicum Instruction (SIFI)

Practicum instructors must have completed the Seminar in (Field) Practicum Instruction (SIFI) offered by Southern or another CSWE-accredited social work program. SIFI introduces practicum instructors to the BSW social work curriculum, the purpose of practicum education, and the types of educational experiences expected of students. Practicum instructors enrich their skills in social work supervision and educational assessment through a process of reciprocal learning and mutual support. The SIFI course at Southern is free of charge to practicum instructors who are supervising Southern students. SIFI instructors are eligible for up to 12 CEUs upon completion of the SIFI certificate.

Library Access for Practicum Instructors

Practicum instructors are offered full privileges at Buley Library, including in-person and online access to collections. Practicum instructors may apply for the multipurpose University [ID Card](#), which may be used for borrowing books in person and for online access to journals, databases, and other resources.

Students

Practicum students are expected to serve as representatives of Southern Connecticut State University; to promote the purposes, values, and ethics of the social work profession; and to demonstrate social work professional standards and behaviors, academic standards, and practicum education standards, as specified in this *Handbook*.

Students' practicum assignments will vary according to the needs of agencies and clients; the types of agencies and programs; and the student's preparation and skill for social work practice. The BSW generalist practicum consists of 400 hours or 14 hours per week that typically include engagement with clients via intake, assessment, group work, case management, or staff meetings.

Additional assignments include responsibilities for process recording and documentation, policy practice and research, staff meetings, training and professional development sessions, and social work supervision. All practicum assignments and responsibilities should relate to the social work competencies and behaviors as specified in the practicum educational contract.

Responsibilities of Students

Practicum students have responsibilities to:

1. Identify themselves as social work students or interns in interactions with clients and colleagues.
2. Respect professional boundaries in the use of electronic communications and social media, including refraining from personal use of cell phones on site.
3. Conform to agency policies and regulations, with particular attention to client confidentiality.
4. Collaborate with their practicum instructor in planning assignments related to social work competencies and behaviors and developing the practicum educational contract.
5. Complete process recordings and other documentation, as assigned.
6. Participate actively in the supervision process, including developing an agenda for weekly supervision.
7. Collaborate with the practicum instructor in formative and summative evaluations of practice, including preparation of the practicum evaluation form.

Practicum Attendance

Students are responsible for scheduling, completing, and documenting the required minimum hours for the practicum (400 for the BSW generalist practicum), and they should review the calendar with the practicum instructor at the beginning of each semester to schedule their hours. A minimum of 75% of the scheduled practicum hours must be completed in-person, on-site at the agency. Students must document completed hours on the practicum attendance form, which is submitted each month to the practicum seminar.

Students typically are not required to attend the practicum during agency or University holidays or during the University spring vacation. Should the agency be open on days when the University is closed, then students are expected at the practicum. During the winter intersession between fall and spring semesters, students may take up to two weeks' vacation from their practicum. Students and the practicum instructor determine the student's vacation schedule according to agency and client needs.

Students who must miss practicum days due to illness, a death in the family, or other emergency are responsible for notifying the practicum instructor and planning for clients. Students do not need to make up excused absences if they will meet the total number of required practicum hours by the end of the fall or spring semester.

Seminar Instructors

Students in a practicum are simultaneously enrolled in a practicum seminar (SWK 490 or 491). The social work faculty member who instructs the practicum seminar serves as the *faculty liaison* between the BSW program and the practicum site for the students in the seminar class.

Responsibilities of Seminar Instructors

In their role as faculty liaison, seminar instructors have responsibilities to:

1. Introduce themselves by email to practicum instructors at the beginning of the semester.
2. Conduct at least one site visit at the agency per semester with each student and practicum instructor and submit the [site visit form](#).
3. Support students and practicum instructors in completing the practicum education contract.
4. Monitor students' progress in the practicum by means of class discussions and seminar assignments.
5. Facilitate a mutual aid process of peer supervision in seminar and assist students in identifying issues to raise in supervision with the practicum instructor.
6. Maintain open communications with students and practicum instructors, including offering consultations outside of class times or regular office hours.
7. Determine students' grades based on their seminar assignments and the practicum evaluation form.
8. Consult with the Practicum Education office when a student is experiencing serious difficulties in the practicum or when the practicum instructor or agency is not providing the student with appropriate supervision and educational opportunities.

Site Visits

The practicum seminar instructor visits the student and practicum instructor at the agency at least twice during the academic year, once in the fall semester and once in the spring semester, with additional consultation as needed. Site visits may be conducted in person or online. Practicum instructors and students are welcome to reach out to the seminar instructor throughout the semester with any questions or concerns.

The agenda for the first semester site visit includes completing the student's practicum education contract, helping in planning practicum assignments in relation to social work competencies and behaviors, and responding to questions or concerns. The agenda for the second semester site visit includes reviewing the student's progress, updating the practicum educational contract, and setting

goals for further learning. Practicum seminar instructors are responsible for documenting their site visits each semester by submitting the [site visit form](#) to the Practicum Education office.

Grading

Students' performance in the practicum is evaluated at the end of each semester by the agency-based practicum instructor, who submits the practicum evaluation form. However, it is the responsibility of the seminar instructor to review the practicum evaluation and to determine the student's seminar grade. A grade of at least a C in the practicum seminar indicates that the student has satisfactorily completed all seminar assignments and requirements and has earned a passing score on their practicum evaluation form.

Employment-Based Practicums

Students who wish to use their place of employment as a practicum site must apply to the Practicum Education office for an employment-based practicum. An employment-based practicum may be approved for one of the student's two practicums. For advanced standing students, an employment-based practicum may be approved for either their BSW or MSW practicum. (For students planning to complete both an MSW and BSW degree, the employment-based practicum is only available for one of these programs.)

Employment-based practicum sites must meet criteria for approval as practicum sites, and practicum instructors or supervisors in employment-based practicums must meet criteria for approval as practicum instructors. Responsibilities of practicum instructors and students are the same in employment-based practicums as in nonemployment-based practicums. Employment-based practicums must afford students with opportunities to meet the nine social work competencies and related behaviors as defined by the Council on Social Work Education and the Department of Social Work.

Students in employment-based practicums must receive one hour of weekly scheduled supervision that is dedicated specifically to their practicum and to their demonstration of social work competencies and behaviors as specified on the practicum education contract. Supervision of the students' practicum must be separate from supervision of their employment. Agencies are encouraged to provide students with a different supervisor for their practicum than the supervisor for their employment, if possible. Evaluations of students' performance in the practicum must be separate from evaluations for purposes of employment. Practicum evaluations are based on the student's demonstration of social work competencies and behaviors as specified on the practicum evaluation form.

The generalist practicum consists of 400 hours or about 14 hours per week through the fall and spring semesters. The employer has the discretion to allow students to accomplish practicum hours during the student's regularly scheduled hours of employment or to require that some or all practicum hours be performed outside and in addition to the student's employment hours.

Students who are compensated by their employer for their practicum hours will not be eligible to apply for or receive federal work study funds for those same hours.

Challenges of Employment-Based Practicums

Employment-based practicums offer both benefits and risks for students as they balance full-time employment with their social work education. Employment-based practicums ease scheduling

challenges and assist students financially by allowing for paid practicum hours. At the same time, however, students in employment-based practicums assume the unique challenges of holding dual roles as students and employees.

Agencies that host employment-based practicums agree to separate the student's practicum responsibilities from their employment responsibilities, but employers may not always distinguish between the student's roles. Employment-based students may be assumed to have more experience or expertise than other student interns. Students in employment-based practicums who leave their employment may risk losing their practicum as well, and students who have difficulties in the practicum may jeopardize their employed position. Students who lose their employment-based practicum may be required to postpone completion of practicum hours until the following academic year.

It is therefore important for students in employment-based practicums to reach out to their practicum instructor, their seminar instructor, and/or the Practicum Education office if they anticipate or experience difficulties in managing their dual roles.