MSW STUDENT HANDBOOK
& FIELD EDUCATION MANUAL

2020 – 2021

Department of Social Work

https://www.southernct.edu/academics/social-work/programs
July 13, 2020

Dear MSW Students:

As we welcome you to the MSW program, the Covid-19 pandemic is affecting our families and communities, our field placement agencies, and the practice of social work throughout the world. The University and the Department of Social Work are adapting the policies, procedures, resources, and field opportunities described in this Handbook in response to emerging public health needs.

A few changes to Field Education policies are as follows:

- Required hours of field practice have been reduced to:
  - 450 hours for first year (about 14 hours per week)
  - 510 hours for second year and advanced standing (about 15 hours per week)
- Some supplemental field activities will be assigned in your field seminar
- For those in employed field placements, some hours of employment may be counted

We'll provide details about these and other policy changes as they emerge. So keep an eye on your Southern email and feel free to reach out to your advisor, your faculty members, and to any of us with any questions or concerns:

- Lorrie G. Gardella, MSW Program Coordinator, gardellal2@southernct.edu
- Todd Rofuth, Department Chairperson, rofuth1@southernct.edu
- Diane Michaelsen, Field Education Director, michaelsend1@southernct.edu
- Stephen Monroe Tomczak, Assistant Department Chairperson, tomczaks1@southernct.edu

Social work has never been more essential or more challenging than during these extraordinary times. Thank you for being here! We are committed to supporting and encouraging you as agents of hope, health, social justice, and social change.

With gratitude and appreciation,

Lorrie G. Gardella

Lorrie Greenhouse Gardella, JD, LMSW, ACSW
Professor and MSW Program Coordinator
Department of Social Work
The *MSW Student Handbook and Field 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 *Graduate Catalog*, the MSW Program Coordinator, or the Field Education Director for further information.

## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Mission</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Health and Human Services</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND REGULATIONS</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Honesty</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification Cards</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nondiscrimination Policy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking and Traffic Regulations</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Statement on Pluralism</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Protection Program (RPP)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Misconduct</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco-Free and Vape-Free Campus</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT SERVICES AND FACILITIES</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Calendar</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alert Notification System</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BannerWeb</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Resource Center (DRC)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Accounts</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student Affairs Committee (GSAC)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology Help Desk</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Services</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undocumented Student Support Team</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Police</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Services</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MSW PROGRAM .......................................................................................................................... 14
MSW Curriculum (60 Credits) ................................................................................................. 15
Advanced Standing Program (39 Credits) ........................................................................... 15
COD Cohort Program (60 Credits) ......................................................................................... 15
ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ..................................................................... 16
Accommodations for Disabilities .......................................................................................... 16
Accommodation for Observance of Religious Holy Days ...................................................... 16
Advising Guides ....................................................................................................................... 16
Attendance Policy .................................................................................................................. 16
Capstone Experience ............................................................................................................. 16
Class Schedules ....................................................................................................................... 17
Directed Independent Study .................................................................................................. 17
Graduation ................................................................................................................................. 17
HIPAA Privacy Rule ............................................................................................................... 18
Incomplete Course ................................................................................................................ 18
Leave of Absence .................................................................................................................. 18
Prior Learning ........................................................................................................................ 18
Time Limitation to Complete Program .............................................................................. 18
Transfer Credit ........................................................................................................................ 18
Withdrawal from a Course ..................................................................................................... 19
Withdrawal from the University ............................................................................................ 19
EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE ................................................................ 19
Professional Standards: Essential Abilities and Attributes .................................................. 19
Academic Standards ............................................................................................................. 20
Academic Probation and Dismissal ....................................................................................... 21
Student Review Committee (SRC) ....................................................................................... 21
SRC Decision-Making Process ............................................................................................. 22
SRC Student-Requested Review ............................................................................................ 23
Appeal of a Grade .................................................................................................................. 23
Appeal of an SRC Decision .................................................................................................. 23
Appeal of Dismissal/Student Grievances ............................................................................. 23
STUDENT ACTIVITIES ........................................................................................................ 24
Beta Rho Chapter, Phi Alpha National Social Work Honor Society ..................................... 24
Department Committees ....................................................................................................... 24
Graduate Social Work Organization (GSWO) ...................................................................... 24
LANG HOUSE

The Pauline R Lang Social Work Center

Lang House is home to the Department of Social Work at 101 Farnham Avenue, New Haven, CT 06515
SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSTIY

Southern Connecticut State University, a comprehensive, metropolitan, public University, was founded in 1893 as the New Haven Normal School. Today, Southern is a fully accredited institution of higher education authorized by the Connecticut General Assembly to offer courses and programs leading to bachelor's and master's degrees in the arts and sciences and in various professional fields. Southern also offers a sixth-year diploma in several specialized areas and three professional doctorates, including the Doctor of Social Work (D.S.W.)

Located in New Haven, Southern functions first as a regional institution involved in the economic and social development of the southern part of the state, offering quality academic offerings, public service efforts, continuing education programs, research and grant projects, and cooperative community projects.

Southern Connecticut State University is one of 17 Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) governed by the Board of Regents for Higher Education. CSCU is comprised of the four Connecticut State Universities, the 12 Connecticut Community Colleges, and Charter Oak State College.

Southern Connecticut State University is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

University Mission

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. For further information, please visit:

http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/general-information/university-information.html

College of Health and Human Services

The College of Health and Human Services values interdisciplinary education, practice-based learning, and community-based participatory research practices. Each field of study is attentive to the workforce needs of our state and region, and partners extensively with agencies and organizations in New Haven neighborhoods and throughout the state of Connecticut to address health priorities and achieve equity.

The College is comprised of 15 distinct disciplines housed within departments, centers, clinics, and institutes. For further information, please visit: https://www.southernct.edu/health-human-services.
UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Southern Connecticut State University provides an equal opportunity for higher education for all qualified students. The University affirms the basic right of all members of the University community to free inquiry, responsible discussion, and the uninterrupted pursuit of all activities normally associated with the operation of Southern Connecticut State University.

It is the responsibility of the student to become familiar with and keep informed about the policies and regulations of the University and the School of Graduate and Professional Studies, as well as the requirements of the MSW Program. While the faculty and administration of Southern will assist a student whenever possible, regulations will not be waived nor exceptions granted because a student is ignorant of regulations or claims that information was not provided by an adviser. Southern Connecticut State University, through its offices and/or appropriate committees, may suspend or dismiss any student from the University for reasons of scholarship, aptitude, conduct, or health. It is also the responsibility of the student to determine the requirements of state and federal government agencies for professional certifications.

The Connecticut State University System has certain self-defining institutional values. Principal among these is respect for the dignity, rights, and individuality of each member of our University community. All members of our University community are expected to govern their social and academic interactions with tolerance and mutual respect.

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 graduate academic life, related in whatever fashion to the University, shall be conducted in an absolutely and uncompromisingly honest manner. Violations of academic honesty are grounds for a failing grade and may result in dismissal from the MSW Program and the School of Graduate and Professional Studies. For further information, please visit: http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/general-information/academic-standards.html

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. For further information, please visit: https://inside.southernct.edu/student-conduct/ferpa

Identification Cards
The Southern Hoot Loot ID card is the primary University identification card, mandatory for all students. In addition, the Hoot Loot ID card functions as a library card. The card also contains each student’s unique eight-digit University identification number. Students currently registered may obtain the Southern Hoot Loot ID card by visiting the University Card Office, located in the Wintergreen Building. For further information, please visit: https://hootloot.southernct.edu/
Nondiscrimination Policy
Southern Connecticut State University 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. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Paula Rice, Director/Title IX Coordinator, Office of Diversity & Equity Programs, 501 Crescent Street, BU 240, New Haven, CT 06515, (203)392-5568, ricep1@southernct.edu. For further information, please visit: https://inside.southernct.edu/diversity

Parking and Traffic Regulations
All students who desire to park on campus must properly display a campus parking decal on their vehicle. Limited campus parking facilities require strict compliance with assigned areas. Vehicles parked in violation of the Traffic and Parking Regulations are subject to a fine and/or a State motor vehicle infraction and towing at the owner's expense. In order to facilitate better use of existing parking areas and to enhance personal safety, the University offers a shuttle service during day and evening hours. For further information, please visit “Campus Safety”: http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/general-information/university-information.html

Policy Statement on Pluralism
Southern Connecticut State University adopted a policy statement on pluralism which 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 also adopted procedures for investigating complaints of acts of intolerance brought by students or staff. For further information, please visit: https://inside.southernct.edu/diversity/policy-statement-pluralism

Research Protection Program (RPP)
The University requires moral and ethical behavior and integrity in all research performed by its faculty, students and staff. The RPP is accountable for assuring conformity with both federal and University research protection policies and procedures. The following RPP divisions promote and maintain appropriate management and oversight of SCSU research activities according to federal codes and institutional requirements. For further information, please visit: https://inside.southernct.edu/rpp

The Office of Research Integrity (ORI) advances and monitors the responsible conduct of research for all SCSU research projects. The office acts on substantive allegations of research misconduct and serves as the Office of the Research Integrity Officer (RIO).

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) safeguards the rights and welfare of human participants in research. Investigators engaging in human participant research must submit a project proposal which will be examined for requisite compliance and assigned a disposition. Recruitment of human participants for research cannot proceed without IRB approval or exemption.

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) is responsible for tending to the
care and welfare of vertebrate animals used in research. Investigators engaging in vertebrate animal research must submit a project proposal which will be examined for requisite compliance and assigned a disposition. Animal research may not be initiated without IACUC approval.

**The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program** provides members of the Southern community with free training in human subjects or animal research, responsible conduct of research, research administration, conflicts of interest and other topics. Modules are available for both initial and retraining purposes.

**Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy**

All members of the University community shall conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with concern, dignity, and respect for others. The University community includes students, employees, and non-employees when they conduct business on University property.

Sexual harassment may occur between employee and employee, employee and student, or student and student. Complaints of sexual harassment within the University will be taken seriously and investigated. Any member of the University community who violates this policy is subject to the full range of disciplinary action. Sexual harassment in some instances need not be intentional to violate this policy. In the event of a charge of sexual harassment, a defense based upon consent when the facts establish an employee/student or supervisor/employee relationship existed will be given little weight. Since any significant power differential between members of the University community makes voluntary consent questionable, members of the faculty and staff are expected to be aware of their professional responsibilities and avoid apparent or actual conflict of interest.

An individual with a complaint concerning sexual harassment has a right to be heard. By means of these procedures, the university provides an opportunity for an individual (Complainant), without fear of retaliation, to express a complaint and to seek a prompt and equitable resolution while protecting the rights of the person against whom the complaint has been filed (Respondent). These procedures shall be available to any person who, at the time of the act complained of, was an employee, student, or applicant for employment or admission to the University. For further information, please visit: [https://inside.southernct.edu/diversity/policy-procedures-governing-sexual-harassment](https://inside.southernct.edu/diversity/policy-procedures-governing-sexual-harassment)

**Student Misconduct**

All students are expected to maintain acceptable standards of conduct while on the University campus, on property controlled by the University or University affiliates, and in connection with off-campus University activities.

Southern Connecticut State University defines student misconduct as behavior that is in violation of regulations established by the Board of Regents for Higher Education, of University regulations, and of rules governing residence on University property. Graduate students, as citizens, are subject to all federal and state laws, in addition to all University regulations governing student conduct and responsibility. A student may be suspended or dismissed from the School of Graduate and Professional Studies for violating laws, rules, or regulations. In the event of alleged academic misconduct, the incident will be handled as outlined in the *Southern Connecticut State University Student Handbook*. For
Tobacco-Free and Vape-Free Campus
Smoking, tobacco use, and vaping are prohibited in all facilities and areas of the Southern Connecticut State University campus with no exception. This includes, but is not limited to, all indoor and outdoor areas and properties. This policy applies to any individual on campus property and is applicable twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. For further information, please visit: www.southernct.edu/tobaccofree/policy.

STUDENT SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Academic Calendar
The current academic calendar may be found at: https://inside.southernct.edu/onestop/calendar

Alert Notification System
When a decision is made to delay opening the University, to cancel classes, or to close the University due to inclement weather or other campus emergencies, a text message and/or email message will be sent to those registered for the Southern Alert Notification System: https://inside.southernct.edu/southernalert

BannerWeb
BannerWeb offers students access to their academic records, registration, student accounts, and financial aid. To access information, log into: MySCSU.SouthernCT.edu and click on BannerWeb. For assistance with logging in, contact the Help Desk at helpdesk@southernct.edu or (203) 392-5123.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)
Southern is committed to the full inclusion and equal educational opportunity for all persons with disabilities. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides services and support that promote educational equity for students with disabilities. Assistance includes arranging accommodations and auxiliary aids necessary for students with disabilities to pursue their academic careers, both in and outside of the classroom.

The DRC serves all students with documented disabilities that substantially impact them in educational settings. Students with documented disabilities, visible or hidden, qualify to apply for services. Categories of disabilities include, but are not limited to the following: mobility/orthopedic disabilities; learning disabilities; attention deficit disorders; visual, deaf and hard of hearing; acquired head injuries; psychological disabilities; autism spectrum disorders; and chronic health-related disabilities.

DRC services include: arrangement of course and testing accommodations; accessibility information; provision of sign language interpreters, readers and/or note-takers; help with recruitment of personal assistants; development of compensatory skills, such as time management, organization and study skills; access to assistive technology, alternate text formats; self-advocacy skills. For further information,
please visit: https://inside.southernct.edu/drc

Email Accounts
Graduate students at Southern Connecticut State University have access to the University's student e-mail system and can access emails at: https://outlook.office.com. The School of Graduate and Professional Studies uses emails as well as written correspondence as an official method of communication with graduate students. For assistance with logging in, contact the Help Desk at: helpdesk@southernct.edu or (203) 392-5123.

Graduate Student Affairs Committee (GSAC)
The Graduate Student Affairs Committee (GSAC) is a student committee comprised of students from the various programs within the School of Graduate and Professional Studies. All graduate students are welcome at meetings and are encouraged to participate. The Graduate Student Affairs Committee is dedicated to enhancing the experience of graduate students. Our goal is to promote individual academic endeavors, as well as collective cultural and social experiences at SCSU. On your behalf, GSAC also acts as an advocacy group to better serve the needs of the graduate student body as a whole. For further information, please visit: https://inside.southernct.edu/drc

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 contact helpdesk@southernct.edu or call (203) 392-5123.

Library Services
Hilton C. Buley Library serves the academic and research needs of the Southern community. Here you’ll find quiet rooms available for individual or group study and reference librarians who specialize in one or more areas of study. The reference librarian for the Social Work Department is Lisa Bier, who is available by appointment at: bier1@southernct.edu or (203) 392-5131.

The library maintains more than 100 databases and electronic collections, and houses more than half a million items including books, serials and serial back files, microforms, maps, government documents, rare books, video media, and more. The library is home to two computer labs, the Learning Resources Center, Information Technology offices, the Department of Information and Library Science, and a library instruction classroom, and the Owls Perch coffee shop. For further information, please visit: https://www.southernct.edu/about/library

Undocumented Student Support Team
We at Southern are 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.

We understand DREAMers may have unique questions about attending Southern including issues related to admissions requirements, financial aid eligibility, and confidentiality. Our support team of faculty, staff, and students -- the DREAMers Action Alliance -- has three primary goals: 1) Identify and break down
barriers faced by undocumented students and their families: 2) Engage the campus community in conversations about immigration issues, and to educate the community about the realities of being an immigrant in the United States; and 3) Advocate for policies that support our students on the campus, state, and national level. For further information, please visit: https://www.southernct.edu/undocumented-students/support-team

University Police
The University Police Department, located on Wintergreen Avenue in Granoff Hall, is open 24 hours a day. University Police officers are responsible for the safety and protection of the campus and its personnel as well as for enforcing parking regulations and conducting investigations. To seek assistance or to report a crime or other incidents, please call the University Police at 203) 392-5375. Information may also be reported anonymously online by visiting “Silent Witness” at https://inside.southernct.edu/university-police

The University Police Department provides a shuttle bus service and a 24-hour walking escort service to accompany students, faculty, and staff to parking lots, residence halls, and other on-campus locations. Blue light emergency telephones are strategically located at various campus sites and may be activated by simply pushing the red button. The dispatcher will take the necessary information and quickly. For further information, please visit: https://inside.southernct.edu/university-police

Student Services
In addition to the services and facilities listed above, Southern provides:

1. Academic Success Center
2. Alcohol and Drug Services
3. Breast-Feeding Friendly Campus
4. Career and Professional Development
5. Center for Educational and Assistive Technology
6. Center for Communications Disorders
7. Childcare Partial Reimbursement Program
8. Computer Labs and Services
9. Counseling Services
10. Fitness Center
11. Housing and Residence Life
12. Language Laboratory
13. Marriage and Family Therapy Clinic
14. Multicultural Center
15. Literacy Lab
16. Office of International Education
17. Sexual and Gender Equality (SAGE) Center
18. Student Accident Insurance
19. Student Enrollment Service Center
20. Student Health Services
21. Support and Resource Team (SART)
22. University Bookstore
23. Veterans and Military Services
24. Violence Prevention, Victim Advocacy and Support (VPAS) Center
25. Wellness Center
26. Writing Center

For further information, please visit: http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/general-information/student-services.html

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

Building on a tradition of access and excellence in social work education, Southern is the only university in Connecticut to offer the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), the Master of Social Work (MSW), and the Doctor of Social Work (DSW) degrees. The BSW program prepares students for entry-level professional social work positions and for advancement to graduate social work education. The MSW program prepares students for specialized clinical and community practice. The Doctor of Social Work is a professional doctorate that prepares master’s-level social workers for leadership in agency or academic settings.

The BSW and MSW Programs are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). For further information, please visit: https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation

Mission

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 Social Work Department educates students to become competent and compassionate agents of change who, guided by professional knowledge, skills, and values, are prepared to practice ethically 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 Social Work Department promotes the social welfare by participating with students, social service providers and users, and communities in building an inclusive and just society where individuals, families, and communities thrive.

MSW PROGRAM

The Master of Social Work (MSW) program prepares social workers in Clinical Practice and in Community Practice: Community Organization, Policy, and Leadership. The MSW curriculum is designed to encourage innovative responses to human and social needs. MSW graduates are qualified for professional social work positions in public and private agencies at the local, state, and national levels and for applying for the State of Connecticut LMSW Licensure Examination shortly after graduation.

MSW graduates achieve social work competencies that include the ability to:

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice
5. Engage in policy practice
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organization, and communities
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

**MSW Curriculum (60 Credits)**

The MSW Program is a 60-credit program with concentrations in Clinical Practice and in Community Practice: Community Organization, Policy, and Leadership. The MSW Program may be completed in two or three years of full-time study, including 1,100 hours of field practice. Employed students are encouraged to choose the three-year program plan.

During the first part of the MSW Program, students develop generalist knowledge and skills, and they complete 500 hours of field practice (about 20 hours per week) in the fall and spring semesters of an academic year. During their second part of the program, students develop specialized knowledge and skills, and they complete 600 hours of field practice (about 22 hours per week) in their clinical field of practice (Children and Families; Elders and Families; Mental Health and Substance Use: Co-occurring Disorders; or Social Work in School Settings) or in community practice: community organization, policy and leadership. For specific MSW degree requirements and course descriptions, please visit: [http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/](http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/).

**Advanced Standing Program (39 Credits)**

Qualified graduates of a CSWE-accredited BSW program may apply for admission with advanced standing. Students who are admitted with advanced standing have demonstrated competencies in generalist social work (equivalent to 21 credits) through exemplary performance in their BSW program. In addition, they have shown professional maturity through voluntary or employed experience in human services.

Advanced standing students complete 39 credits, including a field placement of 700 hours (about 24 hours per week) in their clinical field of practice or in community practice. The advanced standing program may be completed in one calendar year of full-time study (summer, fall, and spring semesters) or in two academic years of full-time study (two fall semesters and two spring semesters). Employed students are encouraged to select the two-year plan.

**COD Cohort Program (60 Credits)**

The Cohort Program in Mental Health and Substance Use: Co-Occurring Disorders (COD) is designed to support students who are maintaining their employment while they pursue their MSW degree. COD cohort students take classes for three days per month (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) over three calendar years. Most classes are delivered in a hybrid format (on campus and online). The COD cohort program emphasizes an adult learning paradigm in which courses are taken sequentially, a supportive learning community is created, and self-discipline and self-directed learning are key skills for success.
ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Accommodations for Disabilities
Southern Connecticut State University provides reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, for students with documented disabilities on an individualized basis. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) assists students with documented disabilities to determine appropriate accommodations. Before receiving accommodations in a given class, students must schedule an appointment with the DRC. Students should then meet with the instructor to plan or review approved accommodations and other concerns, such as medical emergencies or arrangements in case the building must be evacuated. For further information, please visit: https://inside.southernct.edu/drc

Accommodation 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 to arrange for the excused absence and for making up missed work.

Advising Guides
Upon admission to the MSW Program, students are provided with advising guides that specify the courses to be taken in each semester for two-year, three-year, advanced standing, and dual degree program plans. Students who take courses out of sequence risk delaying their anticipated date of graduation. Therefore, students are responsible for following their advising guide and for consulting with their faculty advisor before making any changes in their program plans.

Attendance Policy
Class attendance and class participation are required professional responsibilities for MSW students. By enrolling in a social work course, students agree to the attendance policy that is specified in the course syllabus. Social work courses typically involve experiential learning -- such as role plays, simulations, small group activities, peer supervision, and mutual aid -- that cannot be replicated outside of the class session. Students who anticipate difficulties in meeting a course attendance policy are advised not to register for the course or to withdraw from the course and to retake it in another semester.

Capstone Experience
All graduate programs at Southern are required to include a capstone experience. The capstone is defined as a culminating experience of rigorous academic achievement that integrates knowledge from one’s discipline(s), applies specific knowledge, demonstrates knowledge and expertise to the appropriate disciplinary community; and illustrates readiness for transition into more advanced professional or academic pursuits.

Students in the MSW Program have the option of completing either a thesis or a special project.
The capstone thesis offers evidence of the student's original research and the results of that research. MSW students may write either an investigative thesis, which involves collecting and analyzing qualitative or quantitative data; or an analytical thesis, which involves a systematic literature review.

The capstone special project is an academically rigorous project that contributes in some meaningful way to the student's discipline and professional community. The special project involves the integration and application of discipline-specific knowledge, concepts, theory and skills in the development of a tangible product (a.k.a., deliverable), accompanied by a written report describing the process and results of the product's development.

Students propose and complete their capstone thesis or special project during the final year of the MSW program in SWK 572 Practicum III and Capstone Proposal and SWK 573 Practicum IV and Capstone. The capstone experience typically is related to their field practice. For further information, please visit “Capstone Experiences” at: https://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/general-information/academic-standards.html

**Class Schedules**

MSW students may plan to take classes during one weekday per week, on evenings, or on weekends. Some courses are delivered in hybrid formats (partly on campus and partly online) or online. All courses in the Children and Families field of practice are available on weekends, as well as at other times. Students should be aware however that field practice hours typically are held during weekdays according to agency needs.

**Directed Independent Study**

*SWK 600 Independent Study and Research* (1 to 3 credits) allows students to study independently under the direction of a faculty member with the consent of the Social Work Department Chair. The directed independent study is characterized by a reduction in formal instruction and an increase in the individual student's responsibility and initiative in the learning process. Students apply for a directed independent study in order to pursue a well-defined course of study or research project on a topic that is not covered by other available courses. MSW students who are eligible for SWK 600 are matriculated students who have completed at least nine credits of graduate work with a minimal grade point average of "B" (3.0). Only one directed independent study may be applied toward the MSW degree. The directed independent study application form, which outlines policies and guidelines, is available online. For further information, please visit: http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/general-information/academic-standards.html

**Graduation**

The University requires a minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 to be eligible to graduate from the MSW program. Degrees are awarded at the end of the fall, winter, spring, or summer term in which all degree requirements have been met. Diplomas are mailed approximately two months after the degree has been awarded. Graduation is not automatic, students must apply online to graduate from their program at: https://inside.southernct.edu/onestop/academics/apply-to-graduate
HIPAA Privacy Rule
MSW students are expected to protect the privacy of clients’ health information and to remove any identifying information in process recordings, academic assignments, and class discussions, in accordance with the HIPAA Privacy Rule. For further information, please visit: https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/privacy/index.html

Incomplete Course
A temporary grade of Incomplete (I) is recorded when the instructor has determined that a student has a valid reason for not meeting a requirement in a course prior to the end of the semester. The student must request an Incomplete grade from the instructor, and if granted, the Incomplete must be removed no more than 30 days after the next semester begins. If the student fails to complete the work within this time frame, the grade automatically becomes a failure (F). If the instructor is providing the student longer than the 30-day period to complete coursework, then the instructor must file a grade change with the Registrar’s Office to "Incomplete Extension" (I+) with a revised deadline. Students should be aware that a grade of Incomplete may impact financial aid. For further information, please visit: http://catalog.southernc.edu/graduate/general-information/academic-standards.html

MSW students with two or more Incompletes may be advised to complete those courses before continuing in the program. Students with two or more Incompletes that have extended beyond two semesters will be advised to take a leave of absence until the Incompletes have been resolved.

Leave of Absence
Students who need to take time off from their studies with the intention of returning 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 to discuss plans for degree completion. Students who leave without filing a leave of absence form will be withdrawn automatically from the University. They will need to reapply for admission to the MSW Program should they wish to return.

For further information and for the Leave of Absence form, please visit: https://inside.southernc.edu/sites/default/files/a/inside-southern/onstop/Registrar/Leave-of-Absence-Graduate.pdf

Prior Learning
The MSW Program does not grant course credit or course waivers for life experience or previous work experience.

Time Limitation to Complete Program
All requirements for a graduate degree at Southern must be completed within a period of six years, which includes any leaves of absence. Graduate courses more than six years old at the time of graduation do not count toward meeting degree requirements. For further information, please visit: http://catalog.southernc.edu/graduate/general-information/academic-standards.html

Transfer Credit
Up to fifteen credits of graduate work may be transferred to the MSW Program from another CSWE-
accredited MSW Program. Courses from graduate programs other than social work may be evaluated for transfer by the MSW Program Coordinator. For further information, please visit:  
http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/general-information/academic-standards.html

Withdrawal from a Course

Students may withdraw from a full-semester course prior to the 10th week of classes, and from an eight-week course prior to the fourth week of classes. Such a withdrawal is recorded as a "W" on the transcript record. Students may withdraw online through student BannerWeb services prior to the end of the withdrawal period. Before withdrawing from a course, students should confer with their instructor and faculty adviser and with the Office of Financial Aid (if applicable). For further information, please visit: http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/general-information/academic-standards.html

Withdrawal from the University

Matriculated students who wish to withdraw from the MSW Program must submit a Graduate Student Withdrawal Form to the registrar’s office. The University Withdrawal form may be found here: https://inside.southernct.edu/sites/default/files/a/inside-southern/onestop/registrar/Withdrawal-from-University.pdf.

The student’s status is then changed to that of a non-matriculated student immediately or at the end of the semester, as requested by the student. If students who have withdrawn wish to resume graduate study, they must reapply to the School of Graduate and Professional Studies. The process of withdrawal from the MSW Program is separate from the process of withdrawal from courses in a given semester. For further information, please visit: http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/general-information/academic-standards.html

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

According to University policy, graduate education requires continuous evaluation of students. This evaluation includes not only formal evaluations such as grades, performance in field practice, and acceptance of the capstone thesis or project, but also continuous appraisal by the faculty of students’ progress and potential. Students’ continuation in the MSW Program is contingent upon positive faculty evaluation of their performance in relation to three sets of standards: 1) professional standards: essential abilities and attributes; 2) academic standards; and 3) field practice standards.

Professional Standards: Essential Abilities and Attributes

The following professional standards, as distinguished from academic standards, describe those abilities and attributes that are essential to professional development as a social worker. Attention to these standards is included in the evaluation of students’ performance in all areas of the MSW Program, including classes, field practice, professional activities, and participation in the University community. Failure to demonstrate essential attributes and abilities may lead to students’ dismissal from the MSW Program:

1. Professional and Ethical Commitment
   Students must demonstrate their commitment to the values, ethics, goals, and standards of the social work profession as specified by the NASW Code of Ethics.
2. **Diversity and Social Justice**
   Students must demonstrate an appreciation for the value of human diversity and the ability and willingness to promote social justice principles of equity and inclusion in all aspects of their professional interactions.

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

4. **Empathy**
   Students must demonstrate the 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 must demonstrate the willingness and ability to communicate effectively and respectfully in all 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 communication on social media may have in a professional setting. Students must have sufficient proficiency in oral and written English to perform successfully in the program.

6. **Interpersonal Skills**
   Students must demonstrate the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively in professional interactions. Interpersonal skills are based on the willingness and ability to show compassion, altruism, integrity, and respect for and consideration of others.

7. **Energy**
   Students must demonstrate the energy and stamina to fulfill academic and professional requirements of the MSW Program, including class attendance, class participation, academic coursework, and field practice responsibilities.

8. **Professional Behavior**
   Students must comport themselves as professionals, demonstrating timeliness, responsiveness, punctuality, reliability, and appropriate self-presentation in person, electronically, and in social media.

9. **Scope of Practice**
   Students must demonstrate the willingness and capacity to practice within the scope of their developing competencies, to analyze their level of competence, and to make use of feedback from supervisors and other relevant sources.

10. **Knowledge Base for Social Work Practice**
    Students must be guided in their professional activities by the application of relevant biological, psychological, and social knowledge and research, including but not limited to knowledge related to forming relationships, gathering data, assessing persons and situations, intervening, evaluating practice, and engaging in diversity and difference in practice. Students must demonstrate willingness and ability to pursue continuous learning and professional development throughout their social work careers.

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**Academic Standards**

MSW students must satisfactorily complete the number of graduate credit hours required on their
planned program with a "B" (3.0) or higher grade point average (GPA). All courses completed for credit toward a planned program must be completed with a minimum grade of "C" (2.0). SWK 570, 571, 572, and 573 are graded on a Pass/Fail basis. MSW students must earn passing grades in SWK 570, 571, 572, and 573 in order to continue in or graduate from the MSW Program.

**Academic Probation and Dismissal**

Students who attempt nine or more credits that result in an overall grade point average of less than 3.0 are automatically placed on probation. If, after attempting an additional nine credits, their GPA is still below 3.0, the students will be dismissed from the School of Graduate and Professional Studies.

Students whose overall GPA falls below 3.0 during the last semester of coursework will be placed on probation and given one semester to raise the GPA to the 3.0 level required for graduation. If, after completing an additional semester of work, the GPA is still below 3.0, the student will be dismissed.

Students who are dismissed may apply for readmission to the MSW program after the lapse of one semester. To be readmitted, students must submit a new application and application fee as well as a petition to the MSW Program Coordinator describing why they will be successful if readmitted. The MSW Program Coordinator will return the petition with reasons for disapproval or will forward it to the Social Work Department Chair and the Dean of Graduate Studies with a recommendation for approval. For further information, please visit: [http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/general-information/academic-standards.html](http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/general-information/academic-standards.html)

**Student Review Committee (SRC)**

The MSW faculty continuously evaluates students’ potential and performance in relation to three sets of standards: 1) professional standards: essential abilities and attributes; 2) academic standards; and 3) field practice standards. Faculty members may request that the Student Review Committee (SRC) participate in the evaluation process in cases where students may be having difficulty in any of these areas.

The SRC is comprised of the MSW Program Coordinator, who convenes and chairs the meetings, the Field Education Director, and three MSW faculty members. An alternate SRC faculty member is available to serve as needed.

Any faculty member may request a **consultative SRC meeting** or a **decision-making SRC meeting** by submitting a written request to the MSW Program Coordinator. The written request specifies the faculty member’s concerns about the student’s performance in relation to professional, academic, or field practice standards. The MSW Program Coordinator convenes the meeting and invites the student’s faculty advisor to attend.

The **consultative SRC meeting** is an *advisory* meeting that provides faculty members with an opportunity to collaborate in identifying and supporting students who are experiencing difficulty in the MSW Program. The consultative SRC meeting may suggest resources or strategies for helping students improve performance, or it may recommend that a decision-making SRC meeting be held. The consultative SRC meeting provides an opportunity for informal, confidential conversation among faculty and may be convened without notice to students. Consultative SRC meetings typically do not require voting.
The **decision-making SRC meeting** is an *evaluative* meeting that determines whether a student is failing or at risk of failing to meet professional standards, academic standards, or field practice standards and whether or under what conditions the student may continue in the MSW Program.

A decision-making SRC meeting that is concerned specifically with a student’s field practice performance is called an **SRC field status review**. A field seminar instructor (instructor of SWK 570/571 or SWK 572/573) or the Field Education Director may request a field status review when the student has significant difficulty in applying for a field placement or in meeting professional or field practice standards. A field status review may be indicated in circumstances such as, but not limited to:

1. The student has interviewed but not been accepted for field placement by two agencies
2. The student has been offered and refused two field placement opportunities
3. The student has been dismissed from the field placement by the agency.

**SRC Decision-Making Process**

Upon a faculty member’s written request, the MSW Program Coordinator schedules the decision-making SRC meeting at least one week in advance, with notice to the student, the SRC members, and the student’s faculty advisor. All participants receive copies of the written referral. The student’s faculty advisor ordinarily serves as the student’s advocate during the SRC review process. When a student’s faculty advisor is also an SRC member, then an SRC alternate member is asked to attend.

During the decision-making SRC meeting, the student and faculty advisor are afforded opportunities to respond to concerns raised in the faculty member’s written referral. The SRC then moves into executive session to consider whether the student may continue in the MSW Program, may continue conditionally, or will be dismissed.

SRC voting members consist of three faculty members and the Field Education Director. The MSW Program Coordinator ordinarily serves as a non-voting SRC member; however, the MSW Program Coordinator votes in the case of a tie. When the student’s faculty advisor is also an SRC member, then the advisor will participate in the executive session, but will refrain from voting, and the SRC alternate member will vote in the advisor’s place.

If the SRC determines that the student may continue or continue conditionally, then the MSW Program Coordinator forwards a written decision to the student and the faculty advisor and a copy is placed in the student’s academic file. Conditional continuance decisions specify the conditions that students must satisfy in order to continue in the MSW Program, the timeframe for meeting those conditions, and the faculty member who will be responsible for monitoring the student’s progress.

If the SRC determines that the student will be dismissed, then the MSW Program Coordinator forwards a written decision to the student, the faculty advisor, and the Social Work Department Chair. The Department Chair sends a letter of dismissal to the student with copies to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services and the Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies. Students who are dismissed from the MSW Program may be subject to dismissal from the University, from applying for admission to other academic programs, and from further course registration.
SRC Student-Requested Review
Students are dismissed automatically (without an SRC meeting) from the MSW Program if they earn a failing grade in SWK 570, 571, 572, or 573. Students may request that the SRC review an automatic dismissal by submitting a written request to the MSW Coordinator. The request should explain any extraordinary circumstances that led to the student's unsatisfactory performance and how those circumstances have changed. The MSW Coordinator responds to the SRC student-requested review by convening a decision-making SRC meeting, as detailed above. Students who request an SRC Review are advised not to register for courses during the review period.

Appeal of a Grade
Please note that SRC will not review or recommend changes to a grade. According to University policy, the awarding of grades is the responsibility of the instructor. A student who believes that an instructor has made an error concerning a grade for a course must follow the grade appeal procedure as outlined in the Graduate Catalog: http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/general-information/academic-standards.html

Appeal of an SRC Decision

Appeal to Department Chair
Students may appeal an SRC decision to the Social Work Department Chair by filing a written request for appeal within one week of notification of the SRC decision. The written request should explain why the student believes that the SRC decision-making process was unfair. For example, the student might allege that policies or procedures were not followed; that standards were applied incorrectly; or that the decision was based on incomplete or mistaken information.

Upon receiving the written appeal, the Social Work Department Chair will consult with the student, the SRC members, the faculty advisor, and/or other pertinent sources. The Department Chair may find that the SRC process was fair and dismiss the appeal, or the Department Chair may refer the case back to the SRC to correct possible procedural irregularities or to consider additional information.

If the case is referred for reconsideration, then the MSW Coordinator will schedule a second SRC meeting as soon as possible, usually within one week of the Department Chair’s request. Upon reconsideration the SRC may affirm, modify, or reverse its original decision.

Appeal to the Dean, College of Health and Human Services
Students may appeal the Department Chair’s finding or the decision of the second SRC meeting 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 Department Chair’s finding and/or the SRC decision-making process was made unfairly or in error. 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.

Appeal of Dismissal/Student Grievances
Students who have been dismissed from the MSW Program and who have exhausted appeals within the
Social Work Department and the College of Health and Human Services may appeal the dismissal or file a student grievance as outlined in the Graduate Catalog: [http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/general-information/academic-standards.html](http://catalog.southernct.edu/graduate/general-information/academic-standards.html)

**STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

**Beta Rho Chapter, Phi Alpha National Social Work Honor Society**
The Beta Rho Chapter of the Phi Alpha National Social Work Honor Society was chartered at Southern Connecticut State University in 1989. In January of each year, the Beta Rho Chapter extends a call for new members. Students are encouraged to apply who have completed at least 45 credits toward their MSW degree, who are in good academic standing, and who have achieved a minimum grade point average of 3.75. For further information, please contact the chapter advisor, Stephen Monroe Tomczak at tomczaks1@southernct.edu.

**Department Committees**
The Social Work Department adheres to the University policies related to student membership on Department committees. MSW students hold membership through representation in faculty meetings of the Social Work Department and the MSW Core. For further information, please contact the Social Work Department Chair or the MSW Program Coordinator.

**Graduate Social Work Organization (GSWO)**
The Graduate Social Work Organization is a student-led organization and that is open to all MSW students. The GSWO has the purpose of responding to the academic and collegial needs of students as defined by the students. GSWO activities include participation in orienting new students, providing community service and professional development programs, and planning social events. For further information, please contact the GWSO Coordinator, Mark Cameron at camersonm3@southernct.edu.

**Rapid Response Team (RRT)**
The Social Work Rapid Response Team brings together students, faculty, and staff to explore and take action on current and emerging issues and community needs. For further information, please contact the RRT Coordinators, Mark Cameron at cameronm3@southernct.edu or Stephen Monroe Tomczak at tomczaks1@southernct.edu.
FIELD EDUCATION

The Council on Social Work Education identifies field education as the signature pedagogy for social work. As defined in the 2015 Educational Policy and Curricular Standards (EPAS):

The intent of field education is to integrate 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 (Policy 2.2).

Field Education Curriculum

The MSW field education curriculum consists of two different field placements or internships that each extend through the fall and spring semesters of an academic year. Students are supervised onsite by an agency-based field instructor, who has been approved by the Field Education Office.

Students’ field placements are supported by field practicum seminars (SWK 570, 571, 572, 573) that are taken concurrently with the field placement. Field practicum seminars afford opportunities for students to explore issues related to their field practice, to assess their ongoing professional development, and to participate in peer supervision and mutual aid. The instructor of the field seminar serves as faculty liaison between the MSW Program and the field placement site.

APPLICATIONS FOR FIELD PRACTICE

Application Process

Students apply for their first-year or generalist field placement (SWK 570/571) by submitting a field practice application and a résumé to the Field Education Office. The résumé is used to introduce students to prospective agencies. Newly admitted two-year MSW students and one-year advanced standing students submit their field practice application upon their admission to the MSW Program. Three-year MSW students and two-year advanced standing students apply for their first field placement by February 15th.

Field Selection Process

The Field Education Director seeks field placement opportunities that meet students’ educational and professional goals. Although consideration is given to students’ geographical preferences, educational goals are the primary reasons for choosing a field placement site.

After the Field Education Director identifies a possible field placement opportunity, the student arranges an interview with the prospective field instructor. If the student, field instructor, and agency agree that the field placement is suitable, then the Field Education Office sends a confirmation letter to the student and the agency. If the student and prospective field instructor do not accept the field placement, then the student is referred to another field placement opportunity. It is expected that the second field placement opportunity will be final.
Students preparing for their second-year or specialist field placement (SWK 572/573) submit an updated field practice application and résumé to the Field Education Office by January 30th of the preceding academic year. Students are encouraged to meet with the Field Education Director to identify possible field placements in their specialized field of practice.

**Background Checks**

Students who apply for field practice are encouraged to disclose any criminal history (felony or misdemeanor convictions) in order to assist the field office in identifying appropriate field placements. Students with criminal records may be admitted to the MSW Program; however, previous convictions may limit students’ field practice options and their eligibility to apply for social work licensure. Some field placement 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.

**Employed Field Placements**

Students who wish to use their place of employment as a field placement site must apply to the Field Education Director for an employed field placement. An employed field placement may be approved for one of the student’s two field placements. *Students who are admitted with advanced standing may not use their place of employment as their field placement site.*

Employed field placements may be approved for students who are employed with good standing. Students may not apply for employed field placements who are probationary employees or who are subjects of disciplinary action by the agency.

Employed field placements must meet criteria for approval as field practice site, and field instructors must meet criteria for approval as field instructors, including registration in or completion of the Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI). The student’s field instructor must be different from the person who supervises the student’s employment.

Employed field placements must afford students with opportunities to meet the social work competencies as specified in the MSW curriculum. Field practice assignments must be separate and distinct from the student’s responsibilities as an employee. Evaluations of field practice must be consistent with academic standards and distinct from evaluations of employment responsibilities.

For first-year or generalist field placements, field practice assignments must consist of at least 20 hours per week, totaling a minimum of 500 hours. For second-year or specialist field placements, field practice must consist of at least 22 hours per week (24 hours for advanced standing students) totaling a minimum of 600 hours (700 hours for advanced standing). Field practice hours typically are scheduled in addition to students’ hours of employment. Students may use University vacations for field activities.

**Field Placement Schedules**

MSW students complete a total of 1,100 hours of field practice, including a minimum of 500 hours of generalist practice in their first-year field placement (20 hours per week) and 600 hours of specialized practice in their second-year field placement (22 hours per week).
MSW students who are admitted with advanced standing (who have already satisfied 400 hours of
generalist field practice in an accredited BSW program) must complete 700 hours of specialized field
practice (24 hours per week).

Field placement schedules necessarily accommodate the needs of agencies and their clients. *Students
therefore should plan for field placements 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. Students who
are not able to commit to weekday field practice hours may be asked to withdraw from the field
placement and from the MSW Program.

**Field Placement Start Date**

Students must have confirmed field placements by the fourth week of the fall semester. Students who
have not begun their field placement by the end of the fourth week of the fall semester will be required
to withdraw from the field practice seminar and the concurrent practice course(s) (SWK 570/SWK 532 or
SWK 572) and to enroll again in the fall semester of the following academic year. Failing to meet the
field placement deadline will therefore delay the student’s anticipated graduation date by a full
academic year.

**FIELD AGENCIES**

The Field Education Office maintains an extensive roster of approved field agencies. Students are welcome
to propose new agencies to the Field Education Director for consideration as a new field placement site,
however *the field placement must be arranged and approved by the Field Education Office.*

**Approval of Field Agencies**

An agency that is approved for field placement provides programs and services consistent with the values
and goals of social work education and expresses a commitment to:

1. Support the mission and goals of the University and the Social Work Department
2. Abide by University policies and regulations, such as those related to academic honesty,
   prevention of discrimination and sexual harassment, full inclusion and equal educational
   opportunity for persons with disabilities, and the research protection program
3. Provide clinical supervision by an approved social work field instructor
4. Assign students with opportunities to develop and to demonstrate required social work
   competencies
5. Afford students responsibilities for social work practice with client systems of various sizes and
   with a diversity of client populations
6. Provide students with adequate resources and facilities for field practice and for safety in the
   field
7. Allow time for the field instructor to provide at least one hour per week of clinical supervision
   and to participate in the Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI) for new field instructors.
FIELD INSTRUCTORS
Field instructors are agency-based social workers approved by the Field Education Office to provide clinical supervision to MSW students. Field instructors are approved who:

1. For first-year field placements, hold an accredited MSW degree and have at least three years of post-master’s social work practice experience
2. For second-year field placements, hold an accredited MSW degree, clinical licensure preferred, and post-master’s social work practice in the student’s area of specialization
3. Are authorized to provide resources, to support student safety, to plan orientation, to negotiate field assignments, and to represent the agency in relation to the Field Education Office
4. Have access to client records and clinical observation as necessary for supervision
5. Are prepared to offer at least one hour per week of scheduled clinical supervision on site at the agency
6. Will be present at the agency for at least twenty-five percent of the student’s field placement hours.

In exceptional circumstances, approved field instructors may be allied professionals who do not hold an MSW degree, provided that the agency offers appropriate educational opportunities and the MSW Program can provide supplementary social work supervision.

Responsibilities of Field Instructors
As clinical supervisors for MSW students, field instructors collaborate 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 their students
2. Provide orientation, access to resources, and supports for student safety
3. Plan opportunities for students to demonstrate required social work competencies as documented in the field educational contract
4. Assess the student’s progress and set goals for the next semester as documented by the field evaluation form
5. Provide at least one hour per week of individualized clinical supervision on site at the agency
6. Submit field education contracts, evaluations, and other documentation to the Field Education Office (field evaluations are submitted via TK20)
7. Complete the Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI) for new field instructors.

Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI)
New field instructors must attend the Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI) offered by Southern or another CSWE accredited social work program. SIFI introduces field instructors to the MSW social work curriculum, the purpose of field education, and the types of educational experiences expected of students. Field instructors enrich their skills in clinical supervision and educational assessment through a process of reciprocal learning and mutual support.
Library Privileges
Social work field instructors are afforded full privileges to the Buley Library, including access to collections in-person online. In order to receive a library card, field instructors should bring a valid picture identification to the University Card Office in the Wintergreen Office Building. The Card Office will issue a Hoot Loot ID Card, the University’s multipurpose identification card, with an identification number that may be used for borrowing books in person and for online access to journals, databases, and other resources.

Professional Development Opportunities
Field instructors are invited to workshops and professional development events that are sponsored by the Social Work Department, the College of Health and Human Services, and the School of Graduate and Professional Studies. These include the annual Aavo Rakfeldt Memorial Lecture, the Beto Rho Honor Society Induction Ceremony, and the annual Graduate Research and Creative Activity Conference, where MSW students present their capstone research.

STUDENTS
Students are expected to demonstrate professional standards, including the essential abilities and attributes for social workers; academic standards, including requirements in the field seminar syllabus; and field practice standards, including the social work competencies and behaviors as specified in the educational contract with the field agency.

Responsibilities of Students
Students’ assignments in field practice vary according to the needs of agencies and clients; types of agencies and programs; and students’ preparation and skill for clinical practice. The first-year of field practice consists of 500 hours or 20 hours per week that typically include up to eight direct clinical contact hours. The second-year of field practice consists of 600 hours (700 hours for advanced standing students) or 20 to 24 hours per week that typically include up to 12 direct clinical contact hours.

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

Beyond their particular field practice assignments, students are expected to serve as representatives of Southern Connecticut State University and to promote the purposes, values and ethics of the social work profession, including responsibilities to:

1. Identify themselves as social work 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. Consult with the field instructor in developing the educational contract, planning assignments related to social work competencies and behaviors, and setting educational goals
5. Prepare process recordings and other documentation as assigned (typically two process recordings per week until the final semester of field practice)

6. Engage actively in supervision, including developing the agenda for weekly supervision at the agency and participating in a peer supervision process in field seminar

7. Collaborate with the field instructor in formative and summative evaluations of practice, including preparation of the field evaluation form.

**Attendance**

Students are responsible for scheduling, completing, and documenting the required minimum hours for the field placement (500 for first-year; 600 for second-year; 700 for advanced standing), and they should review the calendar with the field instructor at the beginning of each semester to schedule their hours and plan how to document completed hours.

Students typically are not required to attend field practice 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 field placement. During the winter intersession between fall and spring semesters, students may take up to two weeks’ vacation from the field agency. Students and the field instructor determine the student’s vacation schedule in light of agency and client needs.

Students who must miss days from field practice due to illness, a death in the family, or other emergency are responsible for notifying the field instructor and planning for clients. Students do not need to make up excused absences provided that they will meet the total number of required field hours.

**FACULTY LIAISONS**

Students in field placements are simultaneously enrolled in a field seminar (SWK 570, 571, 572, or 573). The social work faculty member who instructs the field seminar serves as faculty liaison between the MSW Program and the field agency. The faculty liaison visits the student and field instructor at the agency twice during the academic year, once in the fall semester and once in the spring semester, with additional consultation as needed. Field instructors and students are welcome to call upon the faculty liaison with any questions or concerns.

**Site Visits**

Faculty liaisons visit the student and field instructor at the agency twice during the academic year, once during the fall semester and once during the spring semester. The agenda for the first semester site visit includes developing the student’s field education contract, offering assistance in planning student responsibilities 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 educational contract, and setting goals for further learning.

Faculty liaisons are responsible for documenting their site visits each semester by submitting site visit forms to the Field Education Office.
EVALUATIONS OF FIELD PRACTICE

Evaluations of Students
Field instructors evaluate students’ performance at the end of each semester by means of the field evaluation form. The field evaluation form is completed collaboratively with the student and the field instructor. Ratings on the field evaluation influence but do not determine students’ field seminar grades. Field evaluation forms are submitted to the University via a database called TK20. Evaluations in TK20 allow the University to aggregate data for purposes of evaluating the MSW Program.

Grades
It is the responsibility of the faculty liaison to grade the field seminar (SWK 570, 571, 572, 573), including students’ performance in field practice. Students are graded on a pass/fail basis. Students must earn a passing grade in order to continue in or graduate from the MSW Program.

Evaluations of Field Agencies
At the end of the academic year, students complete evaluations of field instructors and agencies in order to assist the Field Education Director in strengthening the field education program.
## APPENDIX A: SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES AND BEHAVIORS

MSW graduates demonstrate the following competencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency 1: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generalist Behaviors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of</td>
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<tr>
<td>the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations,</td>
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<tr>
<td>models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of</td>
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<tr>
<td>research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td>to context</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Identify and reflect on the intersectionality of one’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s personal beliefs and social identities within the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social context of one’s practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3 Use reflection and self-regulation to align one’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>practice actions with the profession’s values</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4 Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior;</td>
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<tr>
<td>appearance; and oral, written, and electronic</td>
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<tr>
<td>communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5 Use technology ethically and appropriately to</td>
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<tr>
<td>facilitate practice outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.6 Identify and assess one’s professional strengths,</td>
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<tr>
<td>limitations, and challenges; and use supervision and</td>
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<tr>
<td>consultation to guide professional growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialist Behaviors</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In one’s specialized field of practice:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.7 Demonstrate ethical decision-making with appreciation</td>
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<tr>
<td>for the complexity and diversity of practice situations</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Identify and practice within laws, regulations, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>policies while upholding ethical obligations to clients</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Competency 2: Engage diversity and difference in practice

#### Generalist Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1</th>
<th>Identify how the intersection of diversity and power impacts individual and social well-being and social justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Develop and apply cultural humility by presenting oneself as a learner and engaging clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to address personal biases and values that are inconsistent with values of the profession</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Specialist Behaviors

In one’s specialized field of practice:

<p>| 2.5 | Develop and apply cultural humility and understanding (as in the history, traditions, values, beliefs, family systems, artistic expressions, spiritual practices, and community resources) as related to practice with diverse populations |
| 2.6 | Communicate effectively with various client populations with attention to language access, literacy levels, and preferred styles of communication |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency 3: Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generalist Behaviors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Apply understanding of the historical and current contexts associated with social, economic, and environmental injustice to advocate for human rights at the individual level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Apply understanding of the historical and current contexts associated with social, economic, and environmental injustice to identify patterns of injustice and engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice at organization and community levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specialist Behaviors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In one’s specialized field of practice:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Protect the rights and self-determination of persons who are legally incompetent, undocumented, or otherwise disenfranchised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency 4: Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Generalist Behaviors</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Specialist Behaviors</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>in one’s specialized field of practice:</td>
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<td>4.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Competency 5: Engage in policy practice

#### Generalist Behaviors

5.1 Identify the ways that social policy at the local, state, and federal level differentially impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services

5.2 Assess how social welfare and economic policies differentially impact the delivery of and access to social services for clients

5.3 Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice

#### Specialist Behaviors

In one’s specialized field of practice:

5.4 Identify the disparate impact of agency policies on diverse client populations or staff populations

5.5 Join with professional and community groups in advocating for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice
### Competency 6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

#### Generalist Behaviors

| 6.1 | Recognize how one’s positionality impacts engagement with diverse clients and constituencies |
| 6.2 | Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, diversity and oppression, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies |
| 6.3 | Use empathy, reflection, cultural humility, and interpersonal skills to engage diverse clients and constituencies |

#### Specialist Behaviors

| In one’s specialized field of practice: |
| 6.4 | Communicate effectively for purposes of engagement |
| 6.5 | In social work with groups, attend to members’ engagement with the group and one another |
### Competency 7: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

#### Generalist Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, diversity and oppression, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to determine what data is required from clients and other participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, diversity and oppression, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to assess data from clients and constituencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Select appropriate intervention strategies with clients and other participants based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Specialist Behaviors

- In one’s specialized field of practice:
- Critically select, apply, and adapt assessment tools and approaches to particular client systems and circumstances.
### Competency 8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

#### Generalist Behaviors

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Using cultural humility, critically select and implement interventions in collaboration with clients and other participants to achieve practice goals and to enhance capacities of clients and constituencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, diversity and oppression, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>Using cultural humility, negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals</td>
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#### Specialist Behaviors

In one’s specialized field of practice:

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<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>Prepare written reports and documentation that are clear, concise, well-organized, and comprehensive in accordance with agency protocols and needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>Apply knowledge and understanding of group processes and relationships when facilitating curriculum-based groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>Critically select and apply current literature and empirically supported prevention strategies, including formal research methodologies, in promoting health and positive development among individuals, families, and communities</td>
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</table>
### Competency 9: Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

#### Generalist Behaviors

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>In collaboration with clients and other participants, select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, diversity and oppression, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>Apply evaluation of findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo and macro levels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Specialist Behaviors

In one’s specialized field of practice:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Collaborate with evaluators and other researchers to assess the effectiveness of programs and services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Technical Standards
Master of Social Work Program (MSW)

The MSW Student Handbook and Field Practice Manual and the SCSU Graduate Catalog present the expectations and degree requirements of the MSW Program. The following discussion of technical standards highlights some information in these documents, but is not intended to replace them as whole.

Overview
Southern prepares social workers as agents of change who practice ethically, translate research into practice, and provide leadership in the profession and in their communities. The MSW Program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and guided by the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (2015). The MSW curriculum consists of academic courses and field practice experiences in which students develop and demonstrate professional knowledge skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes that contribute to specified competencies in social work practice. Students’ admission to and continuation in the MSW Program is contingent upon positive ongoing faculty evaluation of their potential, progress, and performance in relation to three sets of standards: 1) professional standards: essential abilities and attributes; 2) academic standards; and 3) field practice standards.

Professional Standards: Essential Abilities and Attributes
The following professional standards describe those abilities and attributes that are essential to professional development as a social worker. Attention to these standards is included in the evaluation of students’ performance in all areas of the MSW Program, including classes, field practice, professional activities, and participation in the University community. Failure to demonstrate essential attributes and abilities may lead to students’ dismissal from the MSW Program:

1. Professional and Ethical Commitment
   Students must demonstrate their commitment to the values, ethics, goals, and standards of the social work profession as specified by the NASW Code of Ethics.

2. Diversity and Social Justice
   Students must demonstrate an appreciation for the value of human diversity and the ability and willingness to promote social justice principles of equity and inclusion in all aspects of their professional interactions.
3. **Self-Awareness**
   Students must demonstrate the willingness and ability to examine how their values, attitudes, beliefs, biases, emotions, and past experiences may affect their thinking, behavior, and professional interactions and to adjust behaviors that may be inconsistent with professional values, ethics, and goals.

4. **Empathy**
   Students must demonstrate the 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 must demonstrate the willingness and ability to communicate effectively and respectfully in all 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 communication on social media may have in a professional setting. Students must have sufficient proficiency in oral and written English to perform successfully in the program.

6. **Interpersonal Skills**
   Students must demonstrate the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively in professional interactions. Interpersonal skills are based on the willingness and ability to show compassion, altruism, integrity, and respect for and consideration of others.

7. **Energy**
   Students must demonstrate the energy and stamina to fulfill academic and professional requirements of the MSW Program, including class attendance, class participation, academic coursework, and field practice responsibilities.

8. **Professional Behavior**
   Students must comport themselves as professionals, including demonstration of timeliness, responsiveness, punctuality, reliability, and appropriate self-presentation in person, electronically, and in social media.

9. **Scope of Practice**
   Students must demonstrate the willingness and capacity to practice within the scope of their developing competencies, to analyze their level of competence, and to make use of feedback from supervisors and other relevant sources.

10. **Knowledge Base for Social Work Practice**
    Students must be guided in their professional activities by the application of relevant biological, psychological, and social knowledge and research, including but not limited to knowledge related to forming relationships, gathering data, assessing persons and situations, intervening, evaluating practice, and engaging in diversity and difference in practice. Students must demonstrate willingness and ability to pursue continuous learning and professional development as social workers.
Academic Performance
MSW students must have the time, commitment, and physical and emotional stamina to complete a two-year or three-year program plan of full-time graduate study. Students follow advising guides that specify course requirements and the sequence in which courses are taken, including 9 to 15 credits of course work in each fall and spring semester and 1,100 hours of supervised field practice that are completed simultaneously with course work in two academic years.

Students must satisfactorily complete the number of graduate credit hours required on their planned program with a minimum grade point average of "B" (3.0). All courses completed for credit toward a planned program must be passed with a minimum grade of "C" (2.0). Courses completed with a grade of less than "C" will not be counted toward degree requirements but the grade will be calculated in the program and cumulative grade point average.

Field Practice Performance
The MSW field education curriculum consists of two different field placements or internships that each extend through the fall and spring semesters of an academic year. Field practice requirements consist of a minimum of 500 hours of generalist practice in the first-year field placement (20 hours per week) and 600 hours of specialized clinical practice in the second-year field placement (20 hours per week); or 700 hours of specialized field practice for advanced standing students (24 hours). Specific hourly requirements may be adjusted during Covid-19 pandemic as specified by the Field Education office.

Field placement schedules necessarily accommodate the needs of agencies and their clients and typically require field practice during weekday hours. Students who are not able to perform field practice for the required number of hours per week, including weekday field practice hours, will be asked to withdraw from the field placement and from the MSW Program.

Students apply for field placements according to the policies, procedures, and schedules that are presented in the MSW Student Handbook and Field Education Manual. Students who have not begun their field placements by the end of the fourth week of the fall semester will be required to withdraw from the field practice seminar and concurrent practice course (SWK 570/SWK 532 or SWK 572) and to enroll again in the fall semester of the following academic year. Failing to meet the field placement deadline will therefore delay the anticipated graduation date by a full academic year.

Students who apply for field practice are encouraged to disclose any criminal history (felony or misdemeanor convictions) in order to assist the field office in identifying appropriate field placements. Students with criminal records may be admitted to the MSW Program, however previous convictions may limit students’ field practice options and their eligibility to apply for social work licensure. Some field placement 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.

Students’ field placements are supported by field practicum seminars (SWK 570, 571, 572, 573) that are taken concurrently with the field placement. MSW students must earn passing grades in the field practicum seminars in order to continue in or graduate from the MSW Program.
Commitment to Non-Discrimination
Southern Connecticut State University is committed to equality of educational opportunity. The University does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Students with a diagnosed physical, mental, or emotional disability, or a psychiatric disorder may participate in the MSW Program so long as the condition is managed sufficiently with or without reasonable accommodation to permit the student to satisfy the requirements of the MSW Program, including these Technical Standards. Admitted students have a continuing obligation to notify the MSW Program of any changes to their condition that may affect their ability to satisfy MSW Program requirements, including these Technical Standards. Students who may no longer be able to satisfy requirements of the MSW Program with or without reasonable accommodations are required to meet with the MSW Program Coordinator in order to review their status in the program.

Students who seek reasonable accommodations for disabilities must contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC). The Disability Resource Center will determine a student’s eligibility for and recommend appropriate accommodations and services. The DRC and the MSW Program will coordinate in providing reasonable accommodations to the student. For further information, please visit: http://www.southernct.edu/student-life/support/drc/contact.html.

Agreement to Technical Standards
I, the undersigned student, have reviewed the above Technical Standards. I have also reviewed the MSW Student Handbook and Field Education Manual. I understand and agree that my admission to and continuation in the MSW Program is contingent upon my ability to meet the terms of the Technical Standards and those of the MSW Student Handbook and Field Education Manual.

Student’s Name (Please print): ________________________________

Student’s Signature: ______________________________________ Date: ______________________