

Bachelor of Social Work

Program Handbook



**BACHELOR OF
SOCIAL WORK**

Revised Summer 2026

Seattle University | Department of Social Work

Accredited by the Council on Social Work Education

Introduction

Program History

The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Program offers undergraduate students a vibrant and regionally respected education, preparing a new cohort each year for professional work and/or graduate school. The BSW Program is housed within the Social Work Department, along with SU's Master of Social Work (MSW) Program. Our programs educate students for social justice-focused and community-based social work practice. The Department is committed to respectful engagement and collaboration with community partners through scholarship, teaching, and service.

Dr. Madeline Lovell (1948 – 2016) launched SU's BSW Program in the fall of 2001, growing out of an applied Sociology major within the Department of Society, Justice and Culture. SU's first BSW cohort graduated in 2002.

The 2027 BSW cohort will be the 25th cohort of students to graduate with a BSW from Seattle University!

After candidacy, the BSW program was granted initial accreditation in February 2005 from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE reaffirmed the BSW program's accreditation in 2009, 2017, and 2024. Our next reaffirmation is scheduled for 2033.

BSW students join a cohort to learn and practice generalist social work competencies in small classes (under 25 students) with accessible professors. Our social justice informed curriculum prepares students for community-based social work through rigorous coursework and hands-on learning. In senior year, students complete a generalist practicum, supported by university and agency staff. Seniors also complete a research sequence and capstone project, where they learn to evaluate practice and present insights to community members. Agencies often report that our graduates become preferred candidates for employment opportunities.

Jesuit Catholic Tradition

Seattle University (SU) is one of 28 Jesuit Universities in the United States. SU's mission is centered on a Jesuit and Catholic vision of the person:

Seattle University is dedicated to educating the whole person, to professional formation, and to empowering leaders for a just and humane world.

—and six central values: care of students, academic excellence, celebration of diversity, faith, justice and leadership. SU's mission and values align with the Social Work Department in three ways.

First, **SU is committed to humanistic education**, with the majority of undergraduate students enrolled in professional programs. Through excellent teaching, high quality scholarship, and personalized attention to student learning, SU invites students to join an educational experience that develops competence, character, and leadership.

Second, **SU is committed to social justice**. The Jesuit educational tradition promotes independent critical thinkers, "empowering leaders for a just and humane world." SU argues that "what you do with the knowledge you gain is just as important as acquiring it." SU's commitment to social justice can be seen in the academic and campus life activities available to students.

Third, **SU is committed to moral and spiritual development**. Students are encouraged to explore their relationship with humanity, nature, and spirituality. While SU is a Catholic Jesuit university and as such is informed by the Catholic intellectual, cultural, and religious traditions, diverse points of view, traditions, and forms of spirituality are welcomed, honored, and taught. Members of all value or religious traditions, including those who do not identify with a religious or spiritual tradition, are considered vital members of the community.

Rooted in the Jesuit academic tradition, which is drawn from the vision of Ignatian spirituality and worldview, the BSW Program strives for academic excellence that actively engages students to prepare them for a profession in social work that places social justice at the heart of their work. SU's Jesuit ethos and liberal arts foundation support the Program in preparing students to analyze social inequities, oppression and discrimination, effectively advocate for social change, and practice competently with diverse populations.

BSW Program

Mission

Our mission is to prepare undergraduate students to become competent and effective entry-level, generalist social work professionals who value and respect diversity, anchor economic and social justice and human rights as central to their practice, and seek to use their knowledge based on scientific inquiry and skills to improve and community human well-being.

Values

The BSW Program's core values come from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy 1.0 for Program Mission: service; social justice; the dignity and worth of the person; the importance of human relationships; integrity; competence; human rights; scientific inquiry.

Goals

The BSW Program's goals for competent and effective entry-level generalist social work practice with varying client systems (i.e., individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities) are:

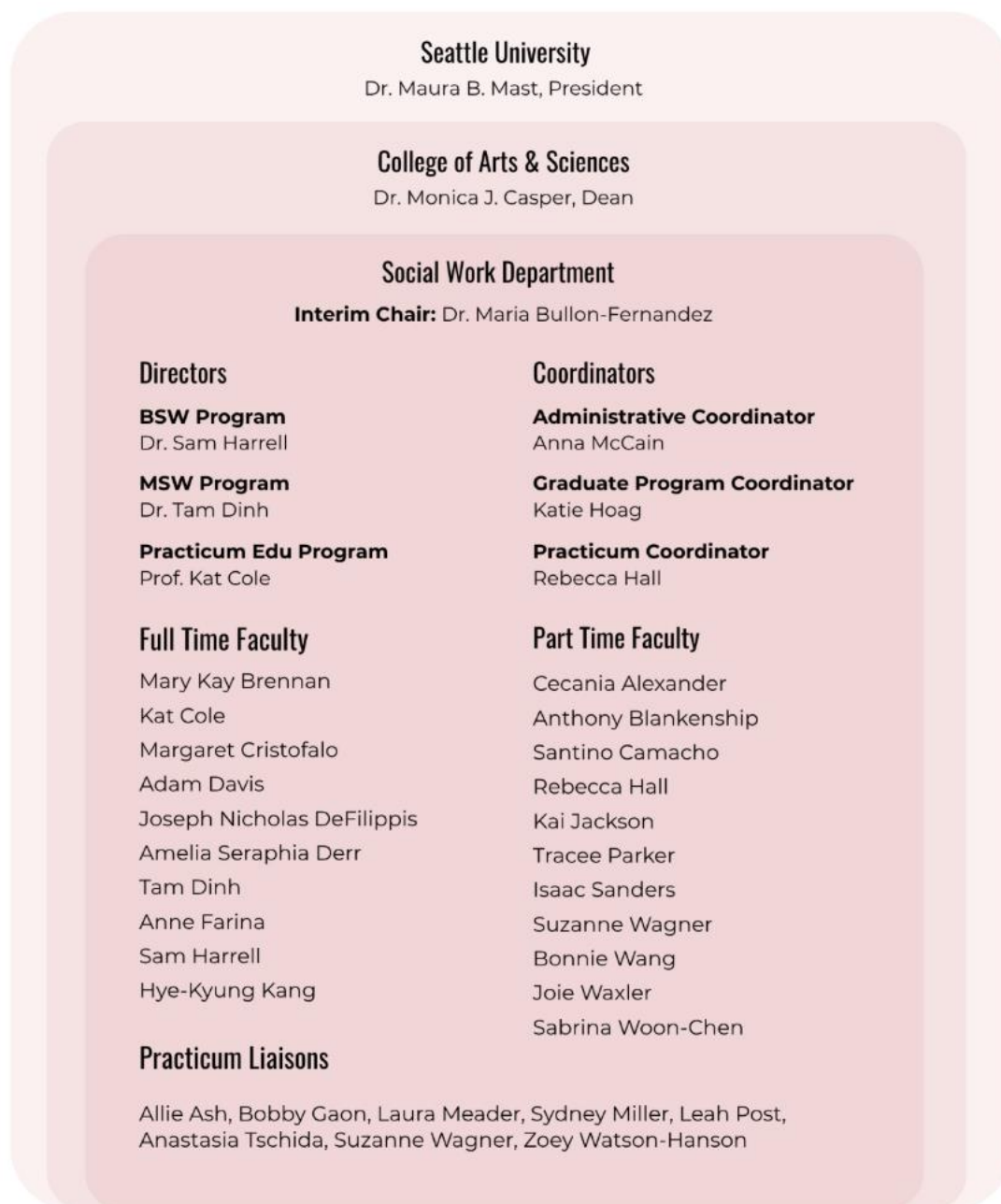
- to practice competently with diverse populations;
- to effectively promote and advocate for economic and social justice and human rights;
- to apply the values, ethics, and standards of the social work profession into generalist practice; and
- for service and leadership to improve human and community well-being in evolving contexts.

Social Justice Commitment

The BSW Program upholds the Social Work Department Statement of Commitment to Social Justice in Our Curriculum ("Social Justice Statement"). All courses in our curriculum, rather than one or two designated "diversity" courses, examine issues of social justice. The Department seeks to prepare competent and effective practitioners who restore, maintain, and enhance human and community well-being with unwavering attention to social and economic justice. As we do so, we integrate four central facets of social justice: An Equity Lens, Anti-Oppressive Analysis and Practice, Critical Pedagogy (including multiple critical theories), and a Decolonizing Framework. The Social Justice Statement is an evolving document that illustrates the Department's conceptualization of social justice and how it is applied to our curriculum. The Department adopted the current version of the statement in September 2020.

Administrative Structure

Seattle University is composed of different colleges. The Social Work Department is housed within the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), and contains three program areas: BSW, MSW, and Practicum. With the approval of Social Work faculty and staff, the CAS Dean appoints the BSW Program Director. The BSW Director has the responsibility for maintaining the vision and mission of the program, facilitating curriculum development, supporting faculty and staff, and insuring a coherent delivery of the overall program consistent with the CSWE EPAS.



Generalist Social Work

The **generalist social work practice**, as defined and adopted from the CSWE's 2022 EPAS Educational Policy 3.1 is as follows:

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice. (p. 17)

The SU BSW Program's conception of generalist practice involves the use of social work knowledge, professional values, and an array of skills that can be adapted to work with diverse client systems of all sizes in a variety of settings. Generalist practitioners are prepared to employ **critical thinking** to flexibly choose among practice skills and roles employed through a process of planned change to intervene with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations and a variety of social problems.

Students educated for generalist practice are prepared to assist people from an **ecological and systems perspective**, which locate the focus of work within the person in the environment interaction. Together, these perspectives influence and inform the elements of practice by situating the difficulties and remedies within the nested systems (i.e., micro, mezzo, and macro) and the interactions between the systems. This holistic view allows for comprehensive assessments and intervention plans that address all systems that are implicated. Within the macro system, students are prepared to understand the impact of the organizational realities in which they practice as it affects service-users, service-providers, and the helping relationship. In addition, global factors that influence international, national, and local social climates, and thereby the human condition, are also a part of the macro system knowledge. Overall, this framework prepares graduates to look broadly at the nature and context of the concerns and needs identified so that they may identify the full range of factors involved and all the levels at which intervention may be desirable.

Central to competent generalist practice are the Social Work profession's values as articulated by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW)'s [Code of Ethics](#). These values include **service to others, social justice, human dignity and self-worth, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence**. As students are prepared to work across settings with a variety of people who face an array of difficulties, values of the profession remain a common thread and point of orientation for practice. With our Jesuit Catholic tradition and resulting articulation of undergraduate education, social justice is at the heart of our program and preparation. Social justice focuses on social problems and contemporary policies and programs enacted to address them. Social work students therefore are heavily steeped in the understanding of inequities, poverty, oppression, and discrimination as well as strategies to pursue justice within the core liberal arts curriculum, social work curriculum, and campus life. In SU's preparation of generalist practitioners, students are taught and trained to engage in community, organizational, and civic efforts to enhance client system wellbeing through systemic change.

Social work skills for generalist practice are based on a **strength-based perspective and empowerment theory** within a process of planned change. Practice that incorporates empowerment theory views the client as possessing the capacity for change and as central to the process. It is a collaborative practice that engages and incorporates strengths when identifying areas for desired change and ways to improve well-being. The **process of planned change**—including engaging, assessing, contracting, intervening, terminating, and evaluating—is taught as a way to practice with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. Successful engagement for collaborative practice is informed by knowledge, respect and valuing of diverse populations and developed through strong communication skills. Identification of client strengths within their environment is a component of assessments. Contracting and intervention techniques use empowerment strategies to resolve areas of concern and unmet needs. In addition to a variety of skills, generalist practitioners may assume various roles including that of broker, educator, advocate, case manager, community organizer, or counselor depending on what is needed and the organizational setting and services.

Competencies

The BSW Program's generalist social work competencies and definitions are directly adopted from CSWE's 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Faculty have mapped the program's course curriculum content including readings and assignments across these competencies forming a matrix. The curriculum matrix ensures curriculum coherence, continuity, and coverage. Review the nine competencies on pages 9-12 of the [2022 EPAS guide](#).

Non-Academic Technical Standards

Social work practice is guided by the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) 2021 Code of Ethics. The Code states,

the primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human wellbeing and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.

Students must uphold this mission as they prepare to become social work practitioners through SU's Social Work program.

Social work education prepares undergraduate and graduate students for the practice of social work. **Practice** is defined as the process of doing the work of enhancing human well-being and meeting the basic needs of vulnerable, oppressed, and impoverished people within real-world agency settings. SU's Social Work Department (BSW and MSW programs) is guided by the NASW Code of Ethics and Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE adopted a **competency-based educational framework** that focuses on student learning outcomes. These outcomes require students to demonstrate social work competence by integrating and applying social work knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes in real-world practice situations (CSWE, 2022). CSWE (2022) defines cognitive and affective processes as the exercise of critical thinking, good judgment, and the capacity to manage affective reactions when engaging in social work practice. Critical thinking and judgment are essential skills for social work practice, and they require a willingness to integrate other sources of knowledge with one's own assumptions and personal biases when engaged in social work practice.

Learning integration involves a student's ability to conceptualize course content and integrate new knowledge into the practicum experience (Boitel & Fromm, 2014). We evaluate this integration using student learning outcomes from both coursework and the practicum experience. To achieve these learning outcomes, students must have the capacity to learn and apply a set of cognitive, behavioral, and social attributes necessary to demonstrate social work knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes in real world practice situations. Before deciding to join the social work major, applicants must consider their capacity to achieve these learning outcomes, with or without accommodations.

The Social Work Program has established a set of technical standards—or non-academic criteria students must meet to achieve BSW learning outcomes. These criteria cover communication skills, interpersonal skills, respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion, stress management, self-awareness, and academic and professional conduct standards. Violation of these standards may become grounds for dismissal from the BSW Program.

Accreditation

The BSW Program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Commission on Accreditation (COA). The last reaffirmation of accreditation, which occurs every eight years, was in 2024. The BSW program adheres to the CSWE [2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards](#).

Assessment & Improvement

The BSW Program is committed to evaluating the degree to which our program goals and outcomes for student learning are accomplished. By engaging in program assessment at regular intervals and gaining information from multiple sources and measures, continuous improvement in the program can be accomplished. These measures are more extensive than the University course evaluation forms that students are asked to rate the effectiveness of the instructor and the overall quality of the course. Our program evaluation methods include:

- Secondary analysis of student outcomes on embedded assignments across core classes
- Secondary analysis of student outcomes on Education Plan evaluations in practicum
- Mixed-method, anonymous, online surveys exploring student experiences with the implicit curriculum (e.g., advising, diversity, resources)
- Mixed-method, anonymous, online surveys exploring student experiences with practicum education
- Supplemental measures may include:
 - One or more focus groups with seniors exploring program strengths and weaknesses
 - Secondary analysis of university course evaluations where students rate and comment on topics such as quality, rigor, active learning, and professor effectiveness

Advancement in the Major

Starting AY26-27, the BSW Program is replacing an application process with an advancement process. Our Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Program aims to

prepare undergraduate students to become competent and effective entry-level, generalist social work professionals who value and respect diversity, anchor economic and social justice and human rights as central to their practice, and seek to use their knowledge based on scientific inquiry and skills to improve and community human well-being.

We are eager to welcome you into a community of social workers committed to advancing [social justice](#). Social work majors move through an Advancement Process, or series of steps to help:

- understand the BSW program's competency-based educational framework;
- monitor and adjust Plans of Study;
- understand professional and ethical standards;
- engage with the program's social justice mission;
- explore social work career pathways and compatibility;
- prepare for the generalist practicum experience;
- receive critical feedback and developmental support from program faculty and staff;
- access mentorship from faculty, staff, and community partners; and
- plan for post-graduate opportunities.

To successfully progress through the BSW program, students must:

- maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 (all classes) and a cumulative major GPA (social work courses) of 2.0 or higher
- complete all social work required courses, in sequence when applicable, with a grade of C (2.0) or higher
- apply, be placed, and complete a 400-hour practicum alongside corequisite courses
- meet SU's University Core requirements and the College's history and language requirements and complete the minimum required credits to graduate with an undergraduate degree at SU
- adhere to ethical, personal conduct, and academic standards of behavior as defined by:
 - [NASW Code of Ethics](#)
 - [SU Academic Integrity Policy](#)
 - [SU Code of Student Conduct](#)
 - [Non-Academic Technical Standards for Social Work Education](#)
 - [WA Regulations of Health Professions Uniform Disciplinary Act \(RCW18.130.180\)](#)

If a student's conduct is judged to be unsafe, unethical, illegal, or unprofessional by faculty guided by above standards, they may be prohibited from completing or passing a course, or completing the BSW program. The student may also be placed on academic probation or may be subject to academic dismissal or disciplinary sanctions (see [Program Policies](#) section).

Students should monitor their progress by auditing their degree in MySeattleU or WorkDay, and consult with academic advisors and faculty mentors for questions. Students should follow university instructions to apply to graduate and closely read any messages from the Registrar's Office and/or Academic Advisors about outstanding degree requirements. Students are responsible for checking messages and reporting issues with degree advancement as soon as possible.

Transfer Students: The Social Work Program welcomes transfer students. Transfer students must first apply and be accepted by SU. All transcripts are evaluated by the University Registrar to determine requirements already fulfilled by previous courses. Students should work with advisors and the BSW Program Director to ensure they are registered for the appropriate courses and on-track for their expected graduation date.

All majors will be added to a Canvas site. Students will be organized into "groups" based on projected cohorts. Students are expected to complete tasks as they move through the program by marking them "complete," completing modules, and uploading materials, as appropriate. The BSW Director, Practicum Director, Faculty Mentors, social work faculty, and the Administrative Coordinator will have access to the Canvas to help track student progress. Students who do not meet the advancement requirements may be subject to removal from the major (see [Program Policies](#) for more information on probation, suspension, and dismissal).

Below is a simplified overview of the BSW Advancement Process. As we transition calendars, students' specific tasks will vary based on their projected cohort. Students should follow due dates assigned to them in the Advancement & Advising Canvas Site.

Stage 1: Getting Started

Advancement Activities	4 Yr Students	2 Yr Students	Must complete by
• Declare social work as your major to access advising and program communications	Summer before starting SU	Summer before starting SU	Junior Fall
• Meet with BSW Director to learn about program requirements & expectations			
• Meet with your Academic Advisor to build a BSW-compatible plan of study	First Fall	Junior Fall	

Stage 2: Exploring the Major

Advancement Activities	4 Yr Students	2 Yr Students	Must complete by
• Complete SOCW1510 Intro to Social Work to understand the fundamental values, roles, and practice areas of generalist social work	First Fall or Winter	Junior Fall	Junior Fall
• Write & submit personal essay reflecting on your values, interests, and motivations in the social work discipline			
• Meet with Faculty Mentor to review committee feedback on your personal essay and discuss program expectations			
• Sign acknowledgement forms to affirm you understand program requirements and agree to uphold program expectations			
• Complete SOCW2010 Social Justice to understand key theories and ideas related to oppression, privilege, and liberation	First Fall or Spring		

Stage 3: Junior Coursework & Practicum Preparation

Advancement Activities	Must Complete By
• Complete junior major course sequence to learn key concepts and develop skills advancing social work theories of human behavior and development, social welfare history, policy advocacy, and practice with individuals and families	Junior Winter & Spring
• Complete practicum readiness modules to build essential skills (e.g., resume-building, interviewing, giving and receiving feedback, time-management) for practicum success	Junior Fall, Winter, & Spring
• Attend junior pre-practicum orientation to understand practicum expectations and how to complete the placement process	Junior Winter
• Secure practicum placement by following steps outlined by the Practicum Director to identify an agency match, apply, and secure a site (repeat, with permission and guidance from Practicum Director)	Junior Winter & Spring

Stage 4: Senior Coursework & Practicum

Advancement Activities	Must Complete By
• Complete senior major course sequence to learn key concepts and develop skills advancing social work research, practice with groups, and practice with organizations and communities	Senior Fall - Spring
• Complete practicum education to demonstrate mastery of generalist social work competencies through building a customized Education Plan, completing at least 400 hours of approved practice in your assigned agency, participating in weekly supervision with a qualified Practicum Instructor, participating in Site Visits each term, completing Education Plan evaluations each term, attending and passing the Practicum Seminar course each course, and receiving satisfactory ratings from Practicum Instructor and Liaison evaluations	
• Attend senior orientation to understand core expectations of the senior curriculum and practicum	Senior Fall
• Apply to AS-MSW program (if applicable) to be considered for admissions to a shortened graduate program, bypassing generalist curricula and practicums	
• Apply to graduate to verify that you are on-track and intending to graduate at the end of Spring term	Senior Winter
• Participate in evaluation activities (e.g., surveys, focus groups) to help the BSW program understand student experiences and improve the program	Senior Spring

Every Term

- **Attend quarterly cohort advising meetings** to review pacing of major coursework in your Plan of Study and to ask questions about the major
- **Complete planned UCOR, foreign language, history, general electives, and minor coursework (as applicable)** to ensure there is sufficient space in your junior and senior years to complete major coursework and practicum

Evaluation of Student Advancement

The BSW Program educates and prepares students for professional generalist social work practice. The academic preparation requires students to attain, integrate, and apply course content knowledge as well as practice and demonstrate competent intervention skills within the values and ethics of the profession. Students must therefore be capable of developing and demonstrating appropriate professional, behavioral, and social attributes for successful practice as outlined by the NASW Code of Ethics.

SU and the BSW Program have the responsibility to ensure that our students possess the knowledge, intelligence, judgment, ethics, integrity, and physical and emotional capacity necessary to intervene with clients in their senior practicum. When evaluating student advancement, SU and the BSW Program consider not only academic performance but the student's professional characteristics, conduct, and potential to serve effectively and ethically in the profession. The BSW Advancement requirements are designed to help assess student:

- academic performance;
- ethical conduct;
- ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, including sufficient English competency to understand course content and work effectively in practicum;
- capacity for self-awareness and willingness to examine own values, attitudes, and beliefs as it relates to social work practice;
- understanding, appreciation, and respect for diversity;
- social, emotional, and psychological maturity and stability to engage in social work practice;
- possession of values consistent with those of Social Work (i.e., service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence);
- ability to develop and maintain positive working relationships with faculty, fellow students, and clients, staff and supervisors from volunteer and work experiences; and
- capacity for professional behavior (i.e., ability to meet deadlines, punctual, dependable, initiative, follow through).

Career Discernment, Personal Development, & Professional Growth

Students are encouraged to continually assess their motivation, aptitude, and personal capacity for their “fit” with the field of social work. Within advising, students can explore various career paths in the social work profession (e.g. child welfare, juvenile legal system, aging services, mental health, case management, medical social work, school social work). All courses provide the opportunity for self-reflection and assessment through papers, readings, small group dialogue, surveys, and exploratory exercises. Students are regularly encouraged to examine their strengths, areas of growth, biases, privilege, and context to develop as a professional.

Courses prompt students to explore their own values and the values of the profession, seeking practice that is guided by professional ethics and standards. Students may take courses that require academic service learning, exposing students to various types of social service agencies, and the people they serve. Practice courses are designed to link theory with empirically based models and strategies of planned change for individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students are taped and observed, receiving feedback from peers and their professors. Finally, the senior year practicum experience requires an openness to challenge oneself, grow from feedback and self-assessment, and develop professional habits while learning to engage in social work generalist practice with diverse populations.

BSW Curriculum

SU is transitioning to a semester calendar in AY27-28. Below are curricular requirements for the quarter system, with semester change notes. Students with projected graduations in 2028, 2029, and 2030 should consult with the BSW Director and CAS Advising confirming their unique plan of study for transition calendars.

Core Requirements

Students should complete SU Core Curriculum **Module 1: Engaging Academic Inquiry**, prior to applying to Winter Quarter of Junior year:

- UCOR1100 Academic Writing Seminar (5 cr)
- UCOR1200 Quantitative Reasoning (5 cr)
- UCOR1300 Creative Expression and Interpretation (5 cr)
- UCOR1400 Inquiry Seminar in the Humanities (5 cr)
- UCOR1600 Inquiry Seminar in the Social Sciences (5 cr)
- UCOR1800-1810 Inquiry Seminar in the Natural Sciences (5 cr)

Students should complete most or all of **Module II: Engaging Jesuit Tradition**, prior to senior year:

- UCOR2100 Theological Explorations (5 cr)
- UCOR2500 Philosophy of the Human Person (5 cr)
- UCOR2900-2920 Ethical Reasoning (5 cr)

Students should complete all above courses and **Module III: Engaging the World**, prior to graduation:

- UCOR3100 Religion in a Global Context (5 cr)
- 2 Global Challenge Courses
- UCOR3400 Humanities & Global Challenges (5 cr)
- UCOR3600 Social Sciences and Global Challenges (5 cr)
- UCOR3800 Natural Sciences and Global Challenges (5 cr)

DTA-AA Transfers

Students transferring with 90 credits prior to first enrollment at SU, with a Direct Transfer Associate Degree (DTA) from Washington Community Colleges (or equivalent as defined in Transfer Policy 77-1) are waived from all of Module I, UCOR3100, and one Module III Global Challenges course. See University Core Curriculum Policy 2012-1 for more details.

College of Arts & Sciences Requirements

Language

All students with a major in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), including all social work majors, must demonstrate competency in a foreign language through one full academic year of study. Because these courses are a CAS requirement, no course in the sequence may be taken on a pass-fail, correspondence, or audit basis.

Placement into other than the beginning course of the sequence is achieved by acceptable performance on [Language Challenge Exams](#). It is strongly recommended that students fulfill this program requirement in their first year. Students educated to the age of 16 in a language other than English are presumed to have satisfied the goal of this requirement. Those wishing to document fluency in a language other than those tested on campus, including ASL, should contact the Chair of the Modern Languages and Cultures department to discuss options.

History

CAS also requires students pass one of the following history courses: HIST 1200, HIST 1210, or HIST 2310.

Transfer Students

Continuing SU students who wish to take additional work at another college must complete a [Transfer Verification Request](#) with the Office of the Registrar prior to attendance. Please read the Registrar's [policies](#) for the transferring of credits and/or course content only transfers.

Major Requirements

BSW majors are required to complete 70 credits in social work (this will shift for students who will start on the quarter system and end on the semester system — consult your individualized Plan of Study). Students may declare social work as their major at any point before junior year. Four-year students spend their first two years completing University Core and CAS requirements. We recommend enrolling in our foundation courses—SOCW1510 and SOCW2010 during this time.

Transfer students on a two-year timeline MUST take SOCW1510 in Fall or Winter, and SOCW2010 in Fall or Spring. These courses provide an overview of the profession's scope of practice, philosophy, methods, values, and ethics.

The Social Work Plan of Study is highly sequenced, one course building upon another and thus often being a prerequisite for the next course in the sequence. Most courses are offered just once per year. Students must be prepared to enroll in sequenced, major coursework their junior year to satisfy prerequisites for their senior practicum placement. Students must complete 8 credits of 3000-4000 level social work electives (typically two courses) before graduating. See the following 4-Year and 2-Year Plans of Study for an example of what our sequenced curriculum looks like. Students who started on the quarter system and will graduate on the semester system should consult their individualized Plan of Study.

Transfer Social Work Credit

The BSW Program Director can evaluate university accepted transfer courses for pre-requisite and social work foundation courses. Students may be asked to provide a copy of the course description and syllabus for this review. Only courses taken at an accredited social work program may be eligible for social work foundational course equivalency.

Digitized Resources

- [2-Year BSW Plans](#) (quarter and semester calendars)
- [4-Year BSW Plans](#) (quarter and semester calendars)
- [Degree Requirements & Course Descriptions](#) (2026-2027 Course Catalog)

Credit for Life Experience

SU's Social Work Program does not accept, nor offer credit for, life experience or any professional experience. This includes the Practicum. The Program requires 400 hours of practicum for all students regardless of past employment or experience.

4-Year Plan of Study (Quarter System)

This is a sample plan to illustrate sequencing. Social work courses starting Year 3 WQ must be taken in the year and quarter listed here. Last chance to complete SOCW1510 is Y3 WQ and SOCW2010 Y3 SQ.

Year 1

Fall	Winter	Spring
Language 1150 (5)	Language 1250 (5)	Language 1350 (5)
UCOR Stage I (5)	UCOR Stage I (5)	SOCW 1510 Intro to Social Work (5)
UCOR Stage I (5)	UCOR Stage I (5)	UCOR Stage I (5)

Year 2

Fall	Winter	Spring
SOCW 2010 Social Justice (5)	HIST 1210, 1210, or 2310 (5)	Social Work Elective (3 or 5)
UCOR Stage I (5)	General Elective (5)	General Elective (5)
UCOR Stage 2 (5)	UCOR Stage 2 (5)	UCOR Stage 2 (5)
		UCOR Stage 3 (5)

Year 3

Fall	Winter	Spring
Social Work Elective (3 or 5)	SOCW 3010 Hum Beh in Soc Env (3)	SOCW 3020 Human Develop (5)
General Elective (5)	SOCW 3040 US Soc Welf Policy (5)	SOCW 3050 Activism & Advoc (3)
UCOR Stage 3 (5)	General Elective (2)	SOCW Practice w/ Individ & Fam (5)
	UCOR Stage 3 (5)	General Elective (5)

Year 4

Fall	Winter	Spring
SOCW 4510 Practicum I (3)	SOCW 4520 Practicum II (3)	SOCW 4520 Practicum III (3)
SOCW 4610 Seminar I (1)	SOCW 4620 Seminar II (1)	SOCW 4620 Seminar III (1)
SOCW 4010 Critical Research Lit (5)	SOCW 4020 Research Methods (5)	SOCW 4030 Research Capstone (3)
SOCW 4110 Practice w/ Groups (3)	SOCW 4120 Pract w/ Orgs/Com (3)	General Elective (5)
General Elective (3)	General Elective (3)	

2-Year Plan of Study (Quarter System)

This is a sample plan to illustrate sequencing. This plan is designed for students transferring in as juniors (typically with approved AA-DTA). It does NOT include the college requirements for an academic year of foreign language study or an approved history course. Social work courses starting Year 3 WQ must be taken in the year and quarter listed here. Last chance to complete SOCW1510 is Y3 WQ and SOCW2010 Y3 SQ. All transfer students should consult with the BSW Director about their Plan of Study.

Year 1 (Junior)

Fall	Winter	Spring
SOCW 1510 Intro to Social Work (5)	SOCW 3010 Human Beh in Soc Env (3)	SOCW 3020 Human Develop (5)
SOCW 2010 Social Justice (5)	SOCW 3040 US Soc Welf Policy (5)	SOCW 3050 Activism & Advoc (3)
UCOR Stage 2 (5)	Social Work Elective (3 or 5)	SOCW Practice w/ Individ & Fam (5)
	UCOR Stage 2 (5)	UCOR Stage 2 (5)

Year 2 Senior)

Fall	Winter	Spring
SOCW 4510 Practicum I (3)	SOCW 4520 Practicum II (3)	SOCW 4520 Practicum III (3)
SOCW 4610 Seminar I (1)	SOCW 4620 Seminar II (1)	SOCW 4620 Seminar III (1)
SOCW 4010 Critical Research Lit (5)	SOCW 4020 Research Methods (5)	SOCW 4030 Research Capstone (3)
SOCW 4110 Practice w/ Groups (3)	SOCW 4120 Pract w/ Orgs/Com (3)	UCOR Stage 3 (5)
Social Work Elective (3 or 5)		

Practicum Education

Practicum education, the **signature pedagogy** of social work education, provides the student with the experiential opportunity to enhance and practice social work practice skills at a specifically selected social service agency through practicum. Practicum Education is comprised of two interdependent components taken during senior year: **Practicum** and **Seminar**. Together these two components provide the major culminating experience for social work majors, integrating and applying theory and practice.

The Practicum (SOCW 4510, 4520, & 4530) courses are 3 credits each. The student's practicum experience runs concurrently at the same site (organization) over Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters for a total of 400 hours. Each quarter the student is at their site for 134 hours, on average 6-7 hours per day, two days per week (typically Mondays and Wednesdays) for 10 weeks. Practicum is a Pass/No Pass course.

The Seminar (SOCW 4610, 4620, & 4630) courses are 1 credit each and provide the student with the opportunity to participate in a faculty-led, integrative seminar while in an agency placement each quarter. The seminar design and sequencing of delivered content strives to keep in mind the whole student and their process of growth. Seminar is an A-F graded course.

The Practicum is a critically important part of the Social Work Program. Graduates often describe their practicum placement as the most significant and influential experience of their undergraduate education. Students begin to apply the skills they have learned in the classroom and integrate the components of their education in working with real life agency-based situations.

The Practicum Director provides a **Practicum Manual** to students before entering their practicum. Students are accountable for reviewing all information in the manual.

During Practicum, the student is in contact with the public, usually in terms of working with agency clients. This contact with the public necessitates ethical practice in which the student discloses their student status to clients, works closely under supervision, and is careful to limit their level of practice to areas within their training and ability. The student must also be well versed in the expectations for ethical social work practice as described in the NASW Code of Ethics. Students who do not have the required skills, attitudes, and capacities will not be placed in an agency. In that event the student will not be able to complete the program. This is a very serious decision made only under conditions in which respect is given to due process and student rights.

In junior year, students participate in a practicum placement process, including a pre-practicum orientation, preparatory modules, a readiness assessment, a practicum application, a meeting with the Practicum Director or Coordinator, and site-matching. Students should respond to Practicum Director correspondence promptly and keep them updated on their placement success. Consult the Practicum Manual for more information.

Advising, Support, & Engagement

Academic Advising

The Social Work program has dual advising system for Social Work majors. Upon declaring a major in social work, students are assigned both a College of Arts and Sciences Academic Advisor as well as a Social Work faculty member. Given the prerequisites and sequenced nature of the curriculum, we highly encouraged students to see their advisor each quarter during Advising Week as a minimum. Each student will have a 2- or 4-year Plan of Study which they must follow to ensure they remain on track for timely completion of the Program. Any desired variations from the established typical plan of study must be approved by a student's advisor. If a student wishes to include an education abroad experience during their time at SU, it is wise to plan far ahead.

All first- and second-year students, as well as new transfers will be advised primarily by the College of Arts and Sciences Academic Advisors in the College's Advising Center. The Advising Center has flexible hours to accommodate student schedules. Social Work faculty are always available for professional or academic planning meetings. Any special situations, (i.e., questions about fitting in an education abroad, selecting a minor, course withdrawals, needing a petition to exception to policy) must also be discussed with and approved by Social Work faculty advisor. Juniors and seniors will primarily be advised by assigned Social Work faculty, though students may also gain assistance the College's Academic Advisors for registration assistance and final degree audits. All faculty maintain office hours in addition to being available for scheduled appointments.

Prior to Advising Week, an Advising Memo is emailed and distributed to social work majors. The memo details that quarters required social work course offerings. Students should go over the memo and plan their courses for registration. Then they should meet with their advisor to discuss any questions. After that meeting, the advisor will lift any holds that may be present which will enable students to register.

Students often focus on course selection for the following Quarter in advising sessions, and work with advisors to monitor their Plans of Study. That ensures all University and program requirements are met for graduation. In addition, advising can also assist students to:

- incorporate an Education Abroad experience
- identify a possible minor consistent with their interests
- select social work electives
- face challenges through discussion, problem solving, and/or referral to on-campus or off campus resources (i.e., Loyola Learning Center/Disabilities Services, the Writing Center, Counseling and Psychological Services, and Registrar's office)
- explore career and academic goals
- reflect on the personal "fit" with the social work field and profession of social work
- begin the process of discussing the practicum and areas of practice interest

In preparation for an academic advising appointment in advance of registration, students are encouraged to use the academic advising tools available through the Program and University.

Professional Advising

The Social Work Program values and recognizes that many students will be desirous of gaining social work experience whether paid or volunteer after graduation. Discernment about life after completion of the BSW degree is woven throughout a student's experience in the Social Work program. Faculty advising plays a particular role in assisting students. Students may choose to find work as a generalist practitioner, volunteer for a national or international service organization, or apply to graduate school.

Career advising for generalist practice upon completion of the BSW degree is a significant area of focus between students and their advisors. Our faculty has direct practice experience to draw from when discussing career options including: school-based social work, juvenile justice, public health, residential treatment, migration, domestic violence, housing and homelessness, and child welfare. Advising faculty are also able to connect students to other social work faculty and practicing social workers within the community depending on their interests for informational interviews and job shadowing. SU Social Work alumni are employed at numerous local human service organizations (i.e., Elderhealth Northwest, Child Haven, Atlantic Street Center, First Place) and are also resources for information. Graduates have gone on to volunteer for national and international organizations including: AmeriCorps, Peace Corp, Jesuit Volunteers, Teach for America, and Catholic Relief Services. In addition to professional advising, the program engages in a variety of sponsored and co-sponsored events to assist students in their discernment of post-graduate paths.

The Career Engagement Office is a great resource to draw upon. The Center hosts an annual Job Fair with excellent representation from local non-profit organizations. Staff in the Center is also available for individual appointments for one-to-one assistance. Many local non-profit organizations electronically post job listings as well through the Center. The numerous service organizations: AmeriCorps, Jesuit Volunteers, Peace Corps, Teach for America, Catholic Refugee Services, and Merci Corps also are frequently visiting campus and classrooms.

BSW students often consider graduate school at some point post-graduation. Numerous graduates have chosen to pursue a Master in Social Work at universities around the country and at SU. Most MSW programs have a degree option called Advanced Standing. This path of study acknowledges the BSW's academic work and practicum experience as equivalent to the first foundational year of graduate school. Advance standing programs do not exist at all universities and vary in their admittance requirements. Generally, however, you will need to get a 3.0 GPA and a B in all your social work courses to be eligible for advance standing in a MSW program.

Student Support

For a list of university resources available to support students at SU, review this Office of the Dean of Students [resource](#) such as mental health services, crisis intervention, disability services, food security resources, and healthcare.

Student Engagement

Social Work Club: The Social Work Club provides opportunities for students to learn more about the profession and engage in service activities. The Club has hosted a variety of well-supported events including community service opportunities, visits by graduate schools, speaker series, and advocacy events. Representatives from the Club serve on the Social Work Department's Community Advisory Council (CAC). Club members elect officers each spring to ensure continuity from year to year. A faculty member serves as the Club's advisor. The Club is a key source of student feedback to the Program about student issues and concerns. For information on joining the Club please contact the Social Work office for a list of the current officers.

Alumni Activities: The Social Work Department may reach out to alumni for professional gatherings, mentoring opportunities, graduate school resource contact and potential Program committee involvement.

Lambda Tau Chapter of Phi Alpha Honor Society: Phi Alpha Honor Society is national organization for social work students. Students can contact the Social Work Administrative Coordinator to learn more about eligibility requirements.

Washington Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-WA): The NASW-WA provides various opportunities for student members to become educated and involved in local issues, including sponsoring an annual Advocacy Day in Olympia, Washington, and holding a state conference each spring. Membership for students is available at a reduced rate. Learn more [here](#).

University wide opportunities for engagement are provided by:

- [Center for Student Involvement](#): clubs and organizations, leadership development opportunities, and campus events
- [MOSAIC Center](#): community-specific programming and events (e.g., adult learners, non-citizen students, commuter students, BIPOC students, LGBTQ+ students)
- [University Recreation](#): intramural sports, games, and classes
- [ConnectSU](#): campus events calendar
- [Student Government](#)
- Campus Ministry: programs and learning experiences promoting social justice, pastoral care and service, and personal and spiritual growth
- Center for Community Engagement: campus-community partnerships supporting community-based learning opportunities, events, and trips

Program Governance

Students can and do provide important feedback about the overall functioning of the program including for example: curriculum content and effectiveness of teaching; policies and procedures; level of support and engagement with students; connections to our community; and faculty hires. Student input helps shape and continually improve our program. In addition, students can be involved in College and University initiatives. To that end there are several avenues for formal and informal involvement including:

Community Advisory Committee (CAC): CAC is made up of social work faculty, agency representatives, Practicum Instructors, alumni, and current students. The Program Director appoints a student representative to serve on the CAC. The CAC provides input to the Program Director and faculty about a range of issues including contemporary issues in the profession and emerging trends, review of Program assessment summaries and plans for improvement, and support remaining engaged with our constituencies through collaborative efforts.

Practicum Advisory Board (PAB): PAB consists of the Practicum Director, social work faculty, Practicum Instructors, and social work students that are in practicum. The Board provides input to the Practicum Director on the functioning of practicum education; policies and procedures; and current issues and needs in the field. Student involvement and input is sought because their experience “on the ground” in the field provides valuable observations about the Practicum functioning.

Informal Program Meetings: The Department Chair, BSW Director, and/or faculty may invite social work majors to periodic informal/spaces meetings to discuss topical issues of interest and areas of involvement (i.e., international study, curriculum revisions, etc.). This method allows for free-flowing relaxed discussions on a range of issues and serves to keep faculty abreast of student concerns.

College of Arts and Sciences Student Executive Council (SEC): Chairs and Program Directors of each Major in the College of Arts and Sciences nominate a student to be on the Dean’s Student Executive Council (SEC). This Council works with and advises the Dean of the College on various tasks and topics. The SEC participates in the College of Arts and Sciences New Student Convocation as well as organizing the annual student nominated faculty awards and student academic awards.

Student Government of Seattle University (SGSU): The SGSU, SU’s undergraduate student government, organizes and leads services and programs geared to students.

Formulating & Modifying Social Work Program Policies: The BSW program recognizes, encourages, and supports students’ rights and responsibilities to participate with social work faculty and staff in the formulating and modifying of Social Work program academic and student affairs policies. The program also recognizes, encourages, and supports students’ rights and responsibilities to be engaged at the college and university level in the formulating and modifying of academic and student affairs policies.

Program Policies

Academic File

The BSW program maintains password-protected, two-factor authenticated SharePoint and some physical (locked) files on each student, which may include content such as university acceptance letters, transcripts, major advancement documents, and practicum forms and evaluations. All faculty and staff have been briefed in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and agree to abide by it. Social Work faculty and staff have access to student files. Files are often used for letters of recommendation. Students may review their own file.

Grading

Social Work majors must receive a C (2.) or better in all required social work courses, except practicum, where students must receive a Passing/Credit grade. The Program follows the University's policies on grading as outlined below contained in the Academic Regulations of the SU Undergraduate Catalog. Each letter grade has a quality point value assigned for the grade achieved. The quality point value is assigned to each letter grade as follows:

Letter	GPA	Interpretation
A	4.0	Superior performance
A-	3.7	
B+	3.3	
B	3.0	Good performance
B-	2.7	
C+	2.3	
C	2.0	Adequate performance
C-	1.7	
D+	1.3	
D	1.0	Poor performance
D-	0.7	
F	0.0	Failing

Probation, Repeating a Course, Suspension, or Dismissal from the Program

Social work is an applied discipline involving professional practice with defined standards and ethics of care. The social work curriculum encompasses course work within the traditional class setting, academic service learning, practice lab, and in the field. Practicum Education is comprised of the Seminar and Practicum. The Practicum is a 400-hour, credit bearing, supervised, evaluated, and graded experience in a social service agency with clients and colleagues. Students' performance in practicum encompasses professional values, knowledge and skills as articulated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Competencies and Practice Behaviors. Practicum Performance standards for social work students therefore involve academic as well as professional performance conduct and competencies. In addition, students receive and agree in writing to comply with the NASW Code of Ethics.

SU's Professional Conduct policy recognizes the responsibility of, in this case, the Social Work the program to protect the clients that students may work with in their practicum education practice settings and ensure students conform to Social Work professional codes of conduct. The policy states:

In preparation for their chosen professions, Seattle University students may work in direct contact with clients or patients as a part of their practice, clinical or practicum experiences. Due to the obligation to protect clients and patients, students in practice and other professional settings must demonstrate the requisite knowledge, skills, and judgment needed to be a competent practitioner. Additionally, students in practice and other professional settings must at all times conform to conduct that demonstrates the appropriate ethical, professional and social (behavioral) attributes expected of professionals in that practice. Professional conduct is, therefore, determined by the professional standards and codes of ethics of the profession for which the student is being prepared and educated. (p. 1)

Therefore, all faculty are responsible to report concerns to the Program Director or other relevant faculty members to ensure student academic integrity and ethical practice. Often, a faculty member will first address the situation with the student and, given the severity of the situation, may notify the student's faculty advisor. At times, other faculty within the program may be consulted and information disclosed in the spirit of gathering a full picture of the situation and potential responses. If the student is in the field, the Practicum Instructor (agency-based supervisor) may initiate contact with the program's Practicum Liaison or be contacted by the Practicum Liaison or Practicum Director. If a pattern of behavior or professional conduct is noted that is interfering with academic success or practice, a Plan for Improvement may be constructed and maintained by initiating faculty member. If the concern is practicum related, the Practicum Liaison will meet with the student and Practicum Instructor to construct a Plan of Improvement. A detailed procedure is outlined in the BSW Practicum Manual.

If the situation is not resolved by the informal process described above, or if the situation is of a more serious nature, all involved parties (i.e., student, involved faculty, Faculty Advisor, Program Director, Practicum Director) shall meet to discuss the academic and/or behavioral concerns.

Potential disciplinary action could include probation, suspension/removal from practicum, and dismissal from the program.

Following the meeting, a letter will be written by the Program Director documenting the determination of disciplinary action. If the decision results in probation, suspension, or removal from practicum, a clear description of the student required steps or actions necessary will be outlined as well as a timeline for completion and process of review. If the decision is to dismiss the student from the program, the student will be informed of the appeal process outlined in the Professional Conduct policy. A copy of the letter will be sent to the student's advisor and relevant Social Work faculty members. As with the procedures set forth in the Professional Conduct policy, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences will also be notified. Meeting notes shall be recorded and kept by the Program Director.

Probation

A student will be placed on probation for the following term for any of the following circumstances:

- The student's cumulative GPA falls below 2.0.
- The student's social work major GPA falls below 2.0.
- The student achieves a grade lower than C (2.00) in any social work required course.
- The student fails 10 credits of coursework in one quarter.
- The student's participation in the Practicum displays a pattern of behavior or professional conduct that significantly interferes with their performance and places them in danger of failing practicum.
- The student is found to have engaged in unsafe, unethical, illegal, or unprofessional conduct. Misconduct may warrant disciplinary dismissal rather than probation. See Dismissal from the Social Work Program below.

When a student is placed on probation, the Program Director, with recommendations as needed from the full-time faculty, establishes the terms and conditions for the student's continuing progression in the Social Work program. The student must comply with the conditions of probation to progress in the Social Work program.

Repeating a Course

A student who receives a grade lower than C (2.00), No Credit, or a W (withdrawal) in any social work required course must repeat that course. The student may repeat any social work course only once after receiving a grade lower than C, No Credit, or a W.

A student who fails or withdraws from the Practicum must also withdraw from co-requisite courses and repeat the entire sequence.

Suspension/Removal from Practicum

Practicum Instructors and the Practicum Director have the authority to suspend or remove a student from a Practicum site pending the investigation of possible unethical, illegal, behavior. They will not be replaced in the original agency or placed in another agency until the situation is resolved. The Practicum Manual should be consulted for detailed policy and procedure. From the Professional Conduct policy:

In instances where a student engages in behavior that violates the applicable Professional Conduct Policy and/or poses a risk of harm to clients, patients, other students, and/or themselves, the student may be removed immediately and temporarily from the practice setting by the responsible faculty member, program director, department chair or university official. ...The decision to remove the student immediately and temporarily from the practice setting is not reviewable or appealable. It is final. The student may also be removed from the site by an appropriate supervisor or administrator of the site according to the policies and procedures of the site. Such actions by site staff are not appealable under this policy. (p. 1)

Dismissal

Academic Dismissal from the program will result from any of the following:

- Achievement of a grade lower than a C (2.0) in a social work course being repeated
- Students who are on Academic Probation after two consecutive quarters
- Failing grade or withdrawal from two Social Work courses
- Violation of SU's Academic Integrity Policy

Disciplinary Dismissal will result from any professional conduct violations. The student has engaged in unsafe, unethical, or unprofessional conduct or behavior. A violation of ethics may include:

- Behavior judged to be in violation of the NASW Code of Ethics
- Behavior defined as unprofessional in the Regulations of Health Professions – Uniform Disciplinary Act in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW18.130.180)
- Documented evidence of criminal activity that is contrary to professional practice occurring during the course of study or which occurred prior to admission and only became known after admission.
- Violation of the SU's Code of Student Conduct.

Grievances & Appeals

The decision to dismiss a student or to place a student on academic probation due to a failing grade will be reviewed under the Academic Warning, Probation, Suspension, and Reinstatement Policy for Undergraduate Students Policy.

The decision to dismiss a student or to place a student on disciplinary probation because the student has engaged in unethical, illegal, unprofessional, or unsafe conduct or because the student has not demonstrated the requisite knowledge, skills, or judgment needed to be a competent practitioner will be reviewed under the SU Professional Conduct Policy.

An academic penalty that results from a violation of Section 2 of the SU Code of Student Conduct, such as cheating or plagiarism, will be reviewed under the procedures in the SU Academic Integrity Policy.

If students have a grievance defined as dissatisfaction about an academic situation that affects them unjustly or inequitably within a course, they are encouraged to:

- Discuss the concern with the faculty or staff member(s) involved
- Contact Dr. Sam Harrell, BSW Program Director, Professor Kat Cole, Practicum Director, or Dr. Maria Bullon-Fernandez, Department Chair to discuss the matter if students do not feel comfortable talking directly to the faculty/staff member or are dissatisfied with the outcome of that discussion
- Contact the Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences

Students who desire to appeal dismissal from the Social Work program due to violations of the programs professional standards of conduct should consult the procedures set out in SU's Professional Conduct Appeal Procedures policy.

Student Rights & Responsibilities

SU provides a variety of policies regarding student rights and responsibilities. See SU's Policies and Regulations page for a list and description of all university policies, including:

- Academic Integrity
- Accommodations
- Bias Harassment
- Code of Student Conduct
- Nondiscrimination
- Sexual Misconduct
- Student Complain Process