

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA[®]

School of
Social Work

Handbook for the DSW Program

This handbook was prepared to provide information and does not constitute a contract. Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this handbook, those who use it should note that policies and procedures change from time to time and the changes may not yet be reflected in this document. In addition, a document of this size cannot include all of the policies and information pertaining to students. More current or complete information may be obtained from your advisor, the program director, the associate dean, or other appropriate individuals in the School of Social Work or The University of Alabama.

Welcome to the University of Alabama DSW Program!

This DSW Student Guide provides an overview of the policies, procedures, and resources of the University of Alabama DSW Program. To successfully achieve the DSW, you should make sure that you read, understand, and follow these policies and procedures.

The new DSW program is an exciting endeavor for students and faculty alike. It represents the continued commitment of the School of Social Work to strive towards excellence in social work and to improve the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities, at the local and global levels. The curriculum developed for the DSW Program is designed to be rigorous, stimulating, and relevant for today's MSW-level social workers who want to become leaders and independent professionals in the field. By the time you complete the DSW Program, you will have the skills and knowledge needed to tackle some of the most challenging and complex social and health problems facing society today.

Throughout the program, you will receive ongoing support through faculty mentorship, and your fellow doctoral students. As the director, I will continuously be available to support you as you progress towards your degree. As the DSW Program is a distance program, the program structure and courses have been designed to maximize your engagement with your fellow classmates and faculty. Make sure you take all available opportunities to connect online and face-to-face with students and faculty for mutual support, mentorship, and further academic development. I also encourage you to become involved with the Doctoral Student Organization (DSO), which offers ways to connect with other students.

There are numerous advocates for the DSW Program, including, the Dr. Schnavia Hatcher, Dean of the School of Social Work, as will the Dean of the University's Graduate School, Dr. Susan Carvalho, and her staff. As the Director of the DSW Program, I'm available to answer your questions, through e-mail, phone, or video-conferencing. I also will offer regular opportunities to connect with students online in group settings so that you and other students can "check-in" and reach out for support, when needed.

I wish you the best of luck through this exciting professional and academic journey! Welcome to the University of Alabama School of Social Work and Roll Tide!

July 5, 2021



Nicole Ruggiano, PhD, MSW
Professor and DSW Program Director

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I. Purpose of This Guide

This guide has been designed to supplement the University of Alabama (UA) *Graduate Catalog* with details about the School of Social Work's DSW Program. The faculty and staff of the School of Social Work provide education, leadership, mentoring, and guidance to assist students in obtaining the maximum possible benefit from graduate education. For additional advice and/or clarification of policies and procedures, students should consult with their assigned academic advisor, the DSW Program Director, or staff in the Office of Educational Programs and Student Services. The Graduate Catalog is available [here](#).

II. The School of Social Work in the University Context

The University of Alabama

The state's oldest public university, UA is the senior comprehensive doctoral-level institution in Alabama. Established by constitutional provision, with subsequent statutory mandates and authorizations, the University's mission is to advance the intellectual and social condition of all the people of the state through quality programs of teaching, research, and service.

More about the University's mission, vision, and goals can be found [here](#).

The Graduate School

The Graduate School, through graduate offerings of the various schools and colleges, prepares students for careers in a wide range of teaching, research, and service activities. The Graduate School operates in cooperation with the other divisions of the University to foster the research and scholarly activities that are the hallmark of a graduate institution. Graduate study, especially at the doctoral level, aims at the development of independent scholarship, originality, and competence in research or competence in the various professional areas in which doctoral programs are offered.

See the *Graduate Catalog* for further information [here](#).

The School of Social Work

The University of Alabama's School of Social Work prepares scholar-practitioners and researchers committed to ending adverse social conditions and promoting societal well-being through teaching, research and service.

- **Teaching.** The School awards the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree, the Master of Social Work (MSW) degree, the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree, and Doctor of Social Work (DSW) degree. The School works to increase the number of competent social workers in the state and in the region.
- **Research.** The School develops research-based knowledge of social problems and their solutions.

- **Service.** The School provides resources and leadership by partnering with individuals, families, groups, community agencies, and organizations at all levels. In addition, the School improves the delivery of social services, with an emphasis on public social services contexts and underserved and disenfranchised populations.

As a diverse community of teachers, researchers, learners, and support persons with shared values and aspirations, the School promotes lifelong learning, research, and service initiatives to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. More about the School of Social Work can be found [here](#).

History of the University of Alabama School of Social Work

The University of Alabama, located in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, is a public co-educational institution that began admitting students in 1831. A detailed history of the School can be found [here](#).

The University of Alabama is the only university in the state that offers degrees at three levels of social work education: the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), the Master of Social Work (MSW), the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Social Work, and the Doctor of Social Work (DSW) degree.

BSW Program. The undergraduate program in social work was approved in 1969, placed in the School of Social Work in 1970, and was first accredited by CSWE in 1974. The [BSW Program](#) has been accredited continuously since 1974 and prepares graduates for generalist social work practice.

MSW Program. The MSW program has been accredited continuously since the first class received their master's degrees in 1969. The [MSW Program](#) prepares graduates for advanced social work practice.

PhD Program. The doctoral program began as a Doctor of Social Work (DSW) program in 1975 to prepare researchers and instructors for the social work profession. Since then, the faculty substantially revised the program and the school has conferred the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Social Work degree since 1992. The [PhD Program](#) is a member of the [Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education \(GADE\)](#) in social work and prepares graduates for careers in research, scholarship, and education.

DSW Program. The current DSW program was approved in November 2018, with the first cohort of DSW students beginning in Fall 2019. Given increased demand for advanced clinical and administrative social work education and training, the DSW was created as the state of Alabama's first practice-based doctorate degree in social work. Details on how the [DSW Program](#) differs from the PhD Program can be found [here](#).

III. The Doctor of Social Work (DSW) Program

Mission Statement of the DSW Program

The DSW Program at the University of Alabama is designed to increase specialization, independence, and leadership of social workers across systems and agencies in underserved communities. The program prepares advanced practitioners to lead efforts in promoting social and economic justice through service, advocacy, teaching, and research.

The Goals of the DSW Program

The DSW Program has several goals:

- To provide a rich, supportive environment that enables a diverse group of students to pursue and attain their academic, professional, clinical and/or leadership goals.
- To prepare students to integrate theory, evidence, and critical thought to develop innovative solutions for complex challenging issues experienced by agencies and populations at the local, regional, national, and/or global levels.
- To prepare graduates to be innovative and successful educators of future social workers.
- To prepare practitioners to use social work research methodologies to evaluate practice and translate evidence-based interventions into practice settings.
- To prepare advanced practitioner-scholars to incorporate theory, research, practice, and policy to contribute to existing knowledge on social work practice and advance social justice.
- To develop stewards of the social work profession within interprofessional settings who apply and enforce ethical standards and address ethical dilemmas in health and social service systems.
- To prepare advanced social workers to be effective and ethical managers within clinical, administrative, and/or community settings.
- To prepare students to communicate evidence-based social work knowledge through teaching, scholarship, and professional writing.

DSW Program Tracks

The DSW Program has two tracks that students may select from, based on their current and future social work interests. The **advanced clinical track** offers coursework on advanced clinical theory and interventions, as well as advanced clinical supervision. The **organizational leadership track** offers coursework on advanced administrative theory and interventions, as well as health and human service management. Students in both tracks will have coursework on: social justice and advocacy for individuals, groups and larger populations; social work

research and evaluation methodologies; policy related to health and human services; and social work education and pedagogy.

The DSW Program builds on a base of professional knowledge and practice in social work. Students are provided with in-depth study of practice, policy, and research methods; the design, development, and evaluation of interventions; data collection, management, and analysis; and writing for publication. In addition, students take substantive courses in theory and other topics and elective courses. As soon as students enter the program, they are assigned to a PhD/DSW faculty advisor for program planning and guidance.

Throughout the student's academic program, faculty members mentor students outside of the classroom setting, which may include research collaboration, co-authorship of manuscripts and conference presentations, networking at a variety of conferences. The UA DSW program is designed to fit the needs of social work practitioners from a variety of settings or field specialties.

Learning outcomes for the DSW Program:

Upon completing the DSW Program, graduates will be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced social work practice skills in assessment, intervention and supervision at the micro, mezzo, and/or macro levels.
- Play an independent/leadership role in integrating advanced knowledge and theory on the social, economic, political, and philosophical conditions into health and human service delivery.
- Integrate knowledge about research methodology with social work practice knowledge to develop and lead strategies for continued evidence-based practice, practice evaluation, and scientific knowledge-building.
- To disseminate complex information about social work evidence, practice skills, scholarship, and interventions clearly and creatively to professional and academic audiences in written and oral formats.
- Identify, evaluate, and implement innovative and cutting-edge strategies to address complex social and health conditions.
- Lead teams to develop and implement social work advocacy and policy practice strategies to advanced clinical practice or organizational leadership, especially within the context of services for vulnerable and underserved communities.
- Independently develop, implement, and evaluate innovative interventions into practice that are theoretically and evidence-based.

Advanced Clinical Track graduates will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge about new and advanced therapies and clinical assessment techniques with disadvantaged populations.
- Articulate the roles that institutional and societal discrimination have impacted clinical issues affecting disadvantaged populations.

Organizational Leadership Track graduates will be able to:

- Leverage evidence, human and organizational resources to design and implement new and innovative services for complex, disadvantaged client populations.
- Describe and implement ethical, effective, and innovative approaches to developing and managing community and organizational resources.

The DSW Program and Workforce Development

Some examples of careers for social workers with a DSW degree may include, but are not limited to:

- Upper-level or executive-level administrative positions in health and human service agencies.
- Leaders in social welfare and health policy at the local, state, or federal levels.
- Independent, private practice clinicians, especially for clients with complex therapeutic needs that extend beyond the MSW-level curriculum.
- Full-time social work educators and/or administrators in higher education involved with social work instruction or translational social work research.

Overview of DSW Program Requirements

The DSW degree is granted primarily on the basis of scholarly achievement. This achievement is demonstrated in the following ways:

1. Successful completion of all required coursework.
2. Participation in two summer residency programs.
3. Passing a comprehensive paper requiring application of social work knowledge;
4. Completion of an original, research and practice-based capstone project in the chosen area of concentration that the student submits as a written paper and oral presentation.

Through supervision of the students' substantive and elective course work and their comprehensive examinations, faculty ensure that the students are prepared to complete a capstone project that is both methodologically sound and has real-world implications.

More information about these requirements are outlined in the sections below.

IV. Course Requirements

The DSW program offers state-of-the-art coursework on social work and related theories, evidence-based social work practice, research, and policy. The DSW curriculum includes courses in advanced practice, advocacy, social welfare policy, research, and other substantive areas. Research courses are designed to prepare you for evaluating interventions in practice-base settings. Students are also required to complete a social work education course. This course focuses on the

multiple aspects of being a social work educator, including planning and delivering instruction and assessing student learning. Students may have opportunities to teach at least one BSW course as an instructor of record.

These represent minimal requirements; students may be required to take additional courses. Unless otherwise indicated, all are 3-hour courses. Concise course descriptions can be found in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Courses are taught by social work faculty and faculty in other divisions, when appropriate. The University operates on a semester basis and most courses at the doctoral level are 3-hour courses. The DSW Program requires 45 credit hours of course work. This total of 45 hours includes the 24 required capstone credit hours. When these are included, the program ordinarily involves the following:

DSW Program of Study:

Required courses

DSW Core Courses

Foundation courses (3 courses) 9 hours

Research courses (2 courses) 6 hours

Capstone Preparation Courses (2 courses) 3 hours

Capstone Project 9 hours

Core Total 27 hours

Specialization Courses

Specialization - Required (4 courses) 12 hours

Specialization - Electives (2 courses) 6 hours

Specialization Total 18 hours

DSW Program Total 45 hours

Examples of timelines for the course of study for the Advanced Clinical Track can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Examples of timelines for the course of study for the Organizational Leadership Track can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Core Courses

Advanced Clinical Track

- Advanced Theories on Oppression and Disparities (3credits; Fall Year 1)
- Neuroscience in Clinical Practice (3credits; Spring Year 1)
- Advanced Advocacy and Policy Practice (3credits; Summer Year 1)

Organizational Leadership Track

- Advanced Theories on Oppression and Disparities (3credits; Fall Year 1)
- Organizational Leadership Theory and Practice (3credits; Spring Year 1)
- Advanced Advocacy and Policy Practice (3credits; Summer Year 1)

Research Courses

- Research for Clinical and Community Practice I (3credits; Fall Year 1)
- Research for Clinical and Community Practice II (3credits; Spring Year 1)

Specialization Courses (Includes 6 Credits of Electives)

Clinical Track

- Teaching Clinical & Administrative Social Work (3credits; Summer Year 1)
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (3credits; Fall Year 2)
- Clinical Supervision and Ethics (3credits; Fall Year 2)
- Assessment and Diagnosis in Evidence Based Clinical Practice (3credits; Spring Year 2)
- Elective: Complementary and Alternative Therapies (3credits; Spring Year 2)
- Elective: Social Work and Emotional Trauma (3credits; Summer Year 2)

Organizational Leadership Track

- Teaching Clinical & Administrative Social Work (3credits; Summer Year 1)
- Leadership and Organizational Change (3credits; Fall Year 2)
- Leadership in Human Service Program Development (3credits; Fall Year 2)
- Ethics in Community and Organizational Leadership (3credits; Spring Year 2)
- Elective: Human Service Finance and Budgeting (3credits; Spring Year 2)
- Elective: Human Resources in Health & Social Services (3credits; Summer Year 2)

Capstone Courses

- Introduction to Capstone Project (1credit; Fall Year 2)
- Capstone Prep Independent Study Proposal (2credits; Summer Year 2)
- Capstone Project (9credits during Year 3)

Electives (Minimum 6 Hours)

Students must take 6 credits (2courses) of elective credit during their second year. Any Graduate-level (500 or above) course that is relevant to the student's course of study is acceptable. Elective courses can be Social Work courses or in other disciplines.

A petition may be presented to the DSW Program Director for permission to take the minor course work in another university or to receive credit for course work *already completed* at another institution prior to enrollment at UA. Regardless of the time frame, the petition must present a well-defined rationale for incorporating the courses along with course descriptions and UA course equivalents. The

student's advisor must approve the petition before it is sent to the DSW Program Director for approval.

V. Additional DSW Program Requirements

Each student's program of study and research is individualized, reflecting the student's research interests and academic needs. The DSW in Social Work can be earned in as little as three years of full-time study, although this may not be the case for every student. Planned part-time study is also possible.

Orientation

Students are required to attend an on-campus orientation during August before their first fall semester begins. This orientation will be a full 1-day event, so students should make travel arrangements appropriately. Travel costs associated with orientation are not covered by tuition and are the responsibility of the student. Orientation is mandatory and policies on attendance can be found in the [Policies and Procedures Section](#).

DSW On-campus Residencies

Due to the fact that the DSW program is strictly a distance program, there is not residency requirement for students enrolled in the program. However, during the summers in years 1 and 2, DSW students must attend on-campus residency programs. These residencies will last 4 days in year 1 and 5 days in year 2. The residencies will take place during the first 2 weeks of June each summer.

During residencies, students will travel to campus and attend workshops and trainings each day. The workshops will supplement the content learned in courses and also include opportunities to meet with faculty in-person for feedback on coursework and/or support in advancing through the DSW program.

Residencies are mandatory for graduation and policies on attendance can be found in the [Policies and Procedures Section](#). DSW students enrolled in the program **must** make arrangements to participate in the on-campus activities that are planned as part of the program, such as the on-campus orientation and annual retreats. Students **must** also participate in all synchronous activities required from their classes. Failure to do so may result in termination from the program.

Comprehensive Paper

Comprehensive Paper

To move forward to working on the Capstone Project, DSW you are required to successfully complete a Comprehensive Paper assignment. There are a number of purposes that the Comprehensive Paper serves:

1. It allows you to demonstrate the advanced social work knowledge and research/evaluation methods learned in your coursework and residencies.
2. It allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired the skills and knowledge needed to complete your Capstone Project.
3. Its format serves as the design for the final Capstone Project

You should strive to have your Comprehensive Paper approved by the end of the summer semester of your second year so you can start their Capstone Project at the beginning of your third year. However, you can submit your paper for review and approval at any time before this point if you feel that your Comprehensive Paper is ready for review. If more time is needed, you can submit your paper after your second summer, though this may delay the start of your Capstone project.

You may have to submit several drafts of the Comprehensive Paper, have multiple meetings with committee members, receive feedback from the committee, and incorporate requested edits to the paper before it is deemed successfully approved. When the members are prepared to approve the Comprehensive Paper, the student should meet with the committee for additional feedback and support in moving forward. You should submit drafts first to your chair before submitting them to the second member of your committee for review.

There are three options for the Comprehensive Paper. You must select one. You should select the option that best fits in with your educational, capstone, and career goals.

Recommended page limits listed are for double-spaced, 12 point font. These are only recommendations and your work may be longer, if needed.

OPTION 1. REVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE PAPER

For this option, you will select an aspect of social work practice that you will conduct a review of the evidence on. The topic of the review is open and could include a review of: (a) a clinical or macro intervention; (b) a condition or issue experienced by a population; or (c) an approach to assessment or measurement in social work practice. Some examples of such topics include systematic reviews of:

- Approaches to suicide prevention among LGBTQ youth.
- Measurement tools for food insecurity.
- Interventions for depression in older Latinx population.
- Studies on consensus organizing methods.

You are encouraged to talk with your advisor or other faculty members to determine an appropriate topic for your review.

You will have to select one of the three following approaches for your assignment, based on the existing literature on the topic and what is the best fit for your current social work placement:

- A. **Building on a Systematic Review.** For this option, you will have to identify an existing systematic review on a social work intervention and provide an updated analysis. Replicating the methodology reported by the original authors, you will complete a systematic review of related studies that have been completed after the original review was performed. Your final report should follow PRISMA guidelines, as appropriate.
- B. **Reviewing Systematic Reviews.** For topics where multiple systematic reviews have been conducted, you will perform a critical review of the available systematic reviews. Your final report should reflect AMSTAR guidelines, as appropriate (https://amstar.ca/Amstar_Checklist.php).
- C. **Original Systematic Review.** For topics where a systematic review has not been conducted, this option will require you to complete a systematic review of intervention studies. The review can focus on reviews of qualitative and/or quantitative research, reflect PRISMA (or similar) guidelines, as appropriate (<http://prisma-statement.org/prismastatement/Checklist.aspx>).

For each of these options, you will need to summarize the findings of the review and offer a discussion on how the findings of the review should inform social work practice, policy, and future research. Papers are expected to be of similar length to a publishable manuscript (20-30 pages, though may be longer).

You successfully pass the Comprehensive Paper when your advisor and a second committee member sign the Approval of Comprehensive Paper Form after determining that the Comprehensive Paper meets the requirements outlined below.

- Presents an important issue related to social work practice;
- Provides clear detail on the methodology used to identify and assess the literature;
- Makes a meaningful contribution to current knowledge on social work practice;
- Clearly describes the implications of findings on social work practice, policy, and future research; and
- Includes quality writing and content that indicates it is suitable for submission to a peer-review journal.

OPTION 2. THREE PAPER MODEL

For this option you will complete three papers, where each is shorter in length to that of option 1 and demonstrate knowledge about social work interventions, theory, and research methodology that will be used in your Capstone Project. Ideally, you can use option 2 as the basis for your final report of the Capstone project, which will be submitted for approval to complete your DSW requirements.

Paper 1. Social Work Practice Issue Paper (about 10 or more pages)

This first paper will include a literature review on a specific issue occurring in your social work practice area at the individual, family, organizational, community, government, or societal level. There is no limit to the topic of focus, but you are encouraged to consult with your advisor or other faculty members about the topic of focus.

While the social work issue presented should be discussed within the context of the your current social work area of expertise (e.g., issue experienced by your clients, organizational challenge to providing services), you should describe how the issue is related to larger, multifaceted social work issues (e.g., mental health, health disparities, housing, child welfare, discrimination, gerontological social work issues...). A successful paper should include:

- A clear definition of the issue and description of its relevance to social work practice.
- A presentation of the literature on the issue.
- Evidence (e.g., agency data, organizational reports, newspaper articles, Census data) of this issue affecting your agency or direct practice.
- Relevant historical, social, and political contexts for the issue.
- Theoretical perspective on why the issue exists.

You successfully pass this portion of the Comprehensive Paper when your advisor and a second committee member sign the Approval of Comprehensive Paper Form after determining that Paper 1 meets the following requirements:

- Meets all of the relevant requirements listed above.
- Be an appropriate topic to address in the Capstone Project.
- Cite relevant research to support arguments and consistently use APA style.

Paper 2. Intervention Paper (approximately 10-20 pages)

The second paper should provide a description and rationale for an intervention designed to address the topic highlighted in paper #1. After providing a summary introduction to the problem discussed in paper #1, you should identify an existing intervention approach that may be applied or modified and applied within the social work practice setting to address this issue. The intervention may be one that is implemented at the individual, family, group, community, organizational, and/or policy level. Some examples could include:

- Individual/Family Level:
 - Applying a therapy designed for one population for use with another population;
 - Adding a new component to an existing therapeutic strategy being used with a client population;
 - Using an available technology to administer an intervention approach that is normally administered through face-to-face.
- Community Level (community may be geographically defined or defined by shared identity):

- Implementing a community organizing technique within a community setting;
- Implementing a new service for communities experiencing a social concern (e.g., food deserts, persistent poverty, failing schools, climate change, gentrification, low/under employment, lack of affordable housing).
- Organizational Level:
 - New approach to evaluating outcomes for the organization;
 - Implementing a new policy advocacy strategy;
 - An intervention aimed at addressing a resource, personnel, or organizational structural issue.

In some cases, you may want to work on a topic that may not traditionally be thought of as an intervention (e.g., community organizing, course development). In such cases, you should work with your advisor on the topic.

After identifying the intervention for the issue, the you should provide (note that not all of these bullet points will relate to every intervention paper):

- The historical, social, and political contexts of the intervention, as appropriate.
- A review of the scientific literature on the efficacy of the intervention. You must demonstrate ability in selecting appropriate empirically-based articles, critically evaluating study findings, highlighting methodological flaws, synthesizing research findings and presenting a clear position about the problem area being reviewed.
- Theoretical perspectives on why the intervention will be effective or appropriate for your setting.
- Description of how the intervention should be applied in your practice setting. This may include tables and figures for support (e.g., logic models, client flow models).

You successfully pass this portion of the Comprehensive Paper when your advisor and a second committee member sign the Approval of Comprehensive Paper Form after determining that Paper 1 meets the following requirements:

- Meet all of the relevant requirements listed above.
- Demonstrate an extensive review of research and theory.
- Demonstrate critical thought about the scientific literature.
- Logical conclusions and recommendations, based on evidence presented.
- A clear description of an intervention that is supported by evidence and theory.
- Develop a clear and feasible plan for implementing the intervention.
- Cite relevant research to support arguments and consistently use APA style.

Paper 3. Practice Evaluation Plan (about 4-8 pages, not including references)

The third paper may be shorter in length than the first two. First, you will write a small summary of the problem and intervention described in papers 1 and 2. Secondly, you will outline an evaluation strategy that aims to assess the outcomes from implementing the intervention identified in paper 2. You should include details outlining/highlighting:

- The desired outcomes for the intervention that will be measured in the evaluation.
- How outcomes will be operationalized and measured in the evaluation.
- The approach to collecting and analysing data for the evaluation.
- How findings will inform continued implementation of the evaluation and for the field of social work practice overall.

You successfully pass this portion of the Comprehensive Paper when your advisor and a second committee member sign the Approval of Comprehensive Paper Form after determining that Paper 1 meets the following requirements:

- Meet all of the relevant requirements listed above.
- Present a feasible and logical evaluation approach.
- Justify methodology for your evaluation approach using academic literature.
- Demonstrate critical thought about the scientific literature.
- Cite relevant research to support arguments and consistently use APA style.

OPTION 3. SUBMITTED GRANT APPLICATION

The third option that you may take for your Comprehensive Paper is to submit a grant to fund a project related to your social work area of expertise. Typically, grant applications from private foundation and public sources require information that is highlighted in the other two Comprehensive Paper options, such as: (a) background of the problem and justification for the proposed project; (b) description of an intervention that will address the problem and how the intervention will be carried out; and (c) a plan for evaluating success of the project.

To select Option 3, you must submit to your advisor:

1. A copy of the grant description and instructions;
2. A copy of your grant application;
3. Evidence that the application has been submitted (e.g., confirmation email);
4. Signed statement from you that you were the person who completed the application (as opposed to it being a larger group effort at your organization); and
5. If the grant application does not require an evaluation plan or significant space dedicated to the description of the evaluation plan, you should also submit a written description of how you plan to evaluate your project.

You successfully pass the Comprehensive Paper when your advisor and a second committee member sign the Approval of Comprehensive Paper Form after determining that the Comprehensive Paper meets the following requirements:

- Meet all of the relevant requirements listed above.
- The application must follow the grant application instructions and requirements.
- The proposed project must be grounded in evidence.
- Present a feasible and logical evaluation approach.
- Cite relevant research to support arguments and consistently use APA style.
- If the grant maker provides information about how grants will be evaluated, those guidelines may be used for evaluation of the Paper.

Capstone Project

Students are required to complete a final Capstone Project in order to fulfill all of their requirements for obtaining the DSW Program at the University of Alabama. This Capstone Project may be initiated during the student's third year of the program and will require students to demonstrate advanced knowledge and/or skills (depending on the scope of the project) in evidence-based social work practice, theory, and research/evaluation.

The topics and scope of Capstone Projects will vary, due to the varying social work practice settings where DSW students currently practice within. In general, the Capstone Project is not designed to be a dissertation

Students are encouraged early in their DSW studies to discuss their ideas for the Capstone Project with faculty and the DSW director. Also, students should consider how the topics of their individual course assignments may focus on topics that can inform or contribute to their Capstone Project.

Students have three options for the Capstone Project and must choose

one. Note that none of these options should be compared to a PhD dissertation, where the primary goals and assessment focuses on advanced research methodologies. While DSW students must learn and demonstrate an understanding of research and evaluation methods, the Capstone Project reflects an intersection between advanced practice skills and research methodologies.

At the conclusion of their Capstone Project, students will have to submit a final written report and either complete an on-campus or virtual presentation of their project (all virtual presentations must comply with University Graduate School policy). The presentation may either be a poster or traditional PowerPoint format.

OPTION 1. INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

For the first option, students will (1) identify a social work issues in the practice setting and justify its need to be addressed via an intervention; (2) design an intervention for the issue; (3) implement the intervention; and (4) evaluate the intervention. There are no pre-set limits to the topic of the social work issue, intervention design, or evaluation approach for this project. Unlike a dissertation that typically would develop generalizable knowledge about a topic that may be relevant to the larger scholarly community, this project may be small in nature, involve small samples, and may be relevant to a more local or regional audience. Examples of different types of projects in different settings could include:

Clinical Practice with Individuals and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement and evaluate a new and evidence-supported therapeutic technique with individual or family clients.• Adding a non-clinical component to existing clinical treatment for clients to further improve outcomes.• Use a new assessment tool or comparing different assessment tools to measure client need, progress, or outcomes in clinical care.• Implement an existing in-person approach to direct practice using a technology platform.
Organizational/ Administrative Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement a program that promotes self-care for front-line workers and assessing outcomes.• Design and implement a program or organization-wide evaluation to evaluate client outcomes.• Develop and implement an evidence-based training for administration and/or front-line workers on a topic that reflects social work values and organizational need.• Implement and evaluate a new policy advocacy or social media campaign for the organization that promotes social justice.
Social Work Higher Education Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement and evaluate a program designed to promote success in disadvantaged student populations (e.g. first member of family to attend college, poverty, homeless, differently abled, etc.).• Implement a new teaching approach or field-based learning activity to enrich student learning in a particular topic area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and evaluate a training for field instructors on a topic of need.
Community-based Practice Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and evaluate a new community organizing approach. • Develop and evaluate a new service for community members, based on evidence of unmet need. • Develop and evaluate a coalition or campaign that brings varying community stakeholders together to address a complex local issue.

Students must receive a passing grade from their faculty advisor and second faculty member. To receive a passing grade for their Capstone Project, students must demonstrate the ability to:

- Identify, critically assess, and apply advanced knowledge in social work theory and evidence;
- Assess client, organizational, and/or community-based needs;
- Use the social work literature to support arguments;
- Inform intervention design and implementation with existing theory and evidence;
- Design a rigorous practice-based evaluation;
- Effectively communicate advanced practice knowledge through academic/professional written and verbal communication; and
- Consistent use of APA style, as well as academic and social work ethical behaviour.

OPTION 2. PRACTICE-FOCUSED THESIS

Oxford Dictionary defines a thesis as “a long essay or dissertation involving personal research.” In some cases, students may have interest in undertaking a practice-focused project that does not involve an evaluation, but works towards the development of a practice-based tool. Examples of such projects may include (but are not limited to):

- Development and initial validation (e.g. face validity) or testing of a new measure.
- Translating an existing measure into a different language and conduct an initial test for validity.
- Collecting and analysing data that is directly related to a social work practice issue (e.g., interviews from stakeholders about potential facilitators or barriers to implementing a new intervention; observational study assessing fidelity of an intervention across practitioners).
- A policy analysis that can inform a policy advocacy campaign.

**Note that for this option, students may be encouraged to take an additional statistical course as an elective if their project involves quantitative analysis. All papers under this option should provide reflect critical thought on how social work practice should change based on findings. Students must receive a passing grade from their faculty advisor and second faculty member. To receive a passing grade for their Capstone Project, students must demonstrate the ability to:

- Identify, critically assess, and apply advanced knowledge in social work theory and evidence;
- Use the social work literature to support arguments;
- Inform the development of a practice-based tool;
- Apply rigorous research and evaluation methodologies;
- Effectively communicate advanced practice knowledge through academic/professional written and verbal communication; and
- Consistent use of APA style, as well as academic and social work ethical behaviour.

OPTION 3. FIRST-AUTHORED PUBLISHED PAPER

For the third option students may elect to submit an original manuscript on a social work topic for publication in an academic journal. If the student successfully has the manuscript accepted as a first or sole author, this article may serve as the student's completed Capstone Project. In many cases, this paper may focus on topics that reflect options 1 or 2 above. However, by publishing a manuscript, the student does not have to complete a separate final report. Manuscripts for option 3 may also focus on broader topics of social work, such as a conceptual paper on an emerging or pressing social work issue, a statistical analysis of agency data from the student's social work practice setting, a policy analysis, or a systematic analysis.

For this option, it is advised that students consider the length of time it may take for a manuscript acceptance (often about six months to one year from submission). Hence, students should consider this option earlier on in their program of student and may consider a back-up project in the event that the manuscript is not accepted for publication before their desired graduation date. Students should regularly consult with one or more faculty members on the development of the manuscript. Students may choose to co-author with faculty or other students on the manuscript, though the student must be the first author for the manuscript to qualify as their Capstone Project.

To receive a passing grade for their Capstone Project, students must:

- Write a manuscript that has implications for social work practice;
- Have the manuscript accepted for publication in a social work journal or a journal in a closely-related field;
- Be the first or sole author on the manuscript;
- If there are multiple authors, students must submit a document that outlines the contribution of each author to the manuscript and sign the document;
- Students do not have to submit a separate written report, but must still present their work.

Approval of Comprehensive Paper and Capstone Project. To pass the comprehensive paper and capstone project, both the faculty advisor and second faculty committee member must approve these assignments. In the event that there is a disagreement between the advisor and second committee member that cannot be resolved, a third faculty member will be asked to mediate until an agreement can be reached.

DSW Program Timeline

Select Capstone Project Chair and Committee	By end of 2 nd year.
Pass Comprehensive Paper	Before beginning of 3 rd year.
Defend Capstone Project Proposal	By the beginning of 3 rd year.
Defend Capstone Project	By the end of the 3 rd year.
Complete all degree requirements	By the end of the 3 rd year.

VI. Social Work Doctoral Faculty and the DSW Program Committee

The faculty of the School guides the student’s progress in the DSW Program. Instructors of courses in the DSW Program and members of dissertation committees must be members of the Graduate Faculty of The University of Alabama. Capstone committee chairs must be full members of the Graduate Faculty and faculty members in the School of Social Work.

The faculty—whose expertise includes many substantive areas including children's services, aging, rural populations, school social work, criminal/juvenile justice, social work and health care, and clients’ use of services—conducts research that informs current and future social work practice and social welfare policies and services.

Full-time Faculty Who Can Serve as Capstone Committee Chairs¹

David L. Albright, PhD (Florida State), Professor & Hill Crest Endowed Chair
Tania Almeda-Lawson*, PhD (Florida International), Associate Professor
M. Daniel Bennett*, PhD (North Carolina), Assistant Professor
Daphne Cain, PhD (Tennessee), Associate Dean and Professor
Catherine Carlson, PhD (Columbia), Assistant Professor
Leah Cheatham*, PhD (Florida State), Assistant Professor
Kevin Corcoran, PhD, (Pittsburgh), Professor
Ellen L. Csikai, PhD (Pittsburgh), Professor
Curtis Davis*, PhD (Tulane), Assistant Professor
Schnavia Smith Hatcher (Kansas), Dean and Professor
Laura Hopson*, PhD (Texas-Austin), Associate Professor
Sebrena Jackson*, PhD (Clark Atlanta), MSW Program Director & Assistant Professor
Karen Johnson*, PhD (Columbia), Assistant Professor
Hee Lee, PhD (UCLA), Associate Dean for Research, Endowed Academic Chair in Social Work (Health), & Professor
Lewis Lee*, PhD (Pittsburgh), Assistant Professor
Tenesha Littleton (Georgia), Assistant Professor
Robert McKinney*, PhD (Alabama), Assistant Professor & Director of the University Medical Center Office of Case Management and Social Services
Debra M. Nelson-Gardell*, PhD (Florida State), PhD Program Director & Associate Professor
Hyunjin Noh, PhD (Wisconsin-Madison), Associate Professor
Avani Shah*, PhD (Alabama), Associate Professor
Nicole Ruggiano*, Ph.D. (Delaware), DSW Program Director and Professor
Cassandra E. Simon, PhD (Texas-Arlington), Associate Professor
Brenda D. Smith, PhD (Chicago), Professor
Karen Starks*, PhD (Clark Atlanta), Assistant Professor
Amy C. Traylor, PhD (Georgia), BSW Program Director and Associate Professor

Full-time Faculty Who Can Serve as Committee Members

Allison Curington, MSW (Valdosta State), Director of Field Education and Senior Instructor
Kimberly Gibson, MSW (Alabama), MSW Field Coordinator
Sha-Rhonda Green, PhD (Walden), Assistant Professor
Nancy Payne, MSW (Alabama) Instructor
Carroll Phelps, MSW (Alabama), Senior Instructor and Field Coordinator of the Washington, D.C. Internship Programs for MSW and BSW students
Shayla Smith, MSW (Alabama), Chief Diversity Officer & BSW Field Coordinator
Peggy Swails, MSW (Iowa), Continuing Education Coordinator and Instructor
Carrie Turner, MSW (Alabama), MSW Field Coordinator

¹ An * indicates that the faculty member teaches in the DSW Program. Please also note that there are part-time instructors who also teach in the DSW Program.

Kathleen Welker, MSW (Alabama), Instructor and Coordinator of Instructional Technology

Faculty profiles can be found at: <https://socialwork.ua.edu/blog/people/faculty/>

Advisors and Committee Members

Upon entering the DSW Program, students are assigned an academic advisor to help them plan course work. Students should have regular interactions with their advisors for guidance in progressing through the project. Students will be assigned an advisor at the start of the program in Year 1. However, if the student finds that another faculty member may be doing work more related to their area of practice, advisor assignments may change. Usually, though not always, this advisor will become the student's Capstone Project Advisor or second committee member. When the student begins work on the capstone project proposal, the advisor will take primary responsibility, along with second committee member, for further technical and professional assistance and guidance. The same faculty member may serve as advisor and committee member throughout the DSW Program Committee doctoral program of study. To serve as Advisor, the faculty member must be a Full or Affiliate Member of the Graduate Faculty.

Part-time instructors, and instructors/practitioners outside of the School of Social Work and University of Alabama are also eligible to serve on Capstone Committees. In such cases, the Director must submit a request that they be accepted as members to the University Graduate Faculty. To do so, please send the Director a copy of the individual's CV and a statement on why their expertise will be supportive in the Capstone Project process.

The DSW Program Committee

The DSW Program Committee oversees the DSW Program. This committee, which includes DSW student representation, provides on-going assessment, guidance, and decision-making, and establishes and recommends changes to admissions and curriculum policies, which are reviewed by the faculty of the School of Social Work. The faculty members of this committee review all applications for admission to the DSW Program and make recommendations to the DSW Program Director.

VII. DSW Program Policies and Procedures

Below lists policies and procedures that are related to the DSW Program. Please note that while this list is intended to be comprehensive, there may be policies and procedures set by the School of Social Work, University Graduate School, and the University of Alabama that apply to the DSW Program, but are not listed here.

Attendance for On-Campus and Synchronous Activities

Excused absences for on-campus requirements will only be granted in extreme circumstances. Such cases include:

- Significant medical condition experienced by the student and/or immediate family member.
- Death of an immediate family member.
- Required military service.

Note that documentation will be required for an excused absence. In some cases, students may be asked to make-up assignments that was missed during the on-campus content.

University Graduate School Scholastic Requirements

The University Graduate School has several policies related to Scholastic Requirements of graduate students. These policies pertain to the topics of:

- Grades and Grade Points.
- Grade Point Average.
- Transfer of Credits.
- Repeating a Course.
- Academic Standing.
- Conditional Admission.
- Unconditional Admission.
- Grades of “I” and “N.”
- Academic Warning.
- Readmission.
- Reinstatement.
- Clinical Components and Dismissal.
- Graduation Requirements.

Details about these policies can be found [here](#).

Transfer Credit Policies

Students who have completed doctoral coursework at other universities may request that a portion of their previously-earned credits be transferred towards their completion of the DSW degree at UA. Evaluation of credit for transfer will not officially be determined until the student is enrolled in the UA Graduate School and the UA School of Social Work. Acceptance of credits requires the approval of the DSW Director and the Dean of the UA Graduate School.

As per Graduate School policy, students are capped at transferring up to 50% of the required number of coursework hours (18 credits for our program). Each request will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the following guidelines:

- Credits should be from another doctoral degree program (PhD, EDD, DSW).
- Coursework that does not overlap with or duplicate courses required in the DSW Program may generally be accepted as transfer credits for electives.

- The Graduate School requires that transferred credits must be no more than six years old and the student must have achieved a “B” average or higher.
- Requests to transfer credits that would take the place of DSW required courses would receive more scrutiny to make sure they align appropriately with required courses.
- Since the DSW Program allows students to take up to one MSW-level course as an elective, up to 3 credits of master's level coursework will be considered as long as they are not credits earned for the MSW degree that students are required to have to be eligible for the DSW Program. It must be coursework that was taken in addition to your required master's degree.

The process for the review of transfer credits:

- The student needs to complete the transfer request form - <https://graduate.ua.edu/current-students/forms-students/>
- The student needs to submit the syllabus for each course transfer request directly to the DSW Program Director for review.
- The DSW Program Director will approve transfer credits that clearly follow these guidelines. Any request that is unclear whether it meets these guidelines will be discussed by the DSW Program Committee.
- The Graduate School reviews the student’s initial request and forwards the request to the DSW Program Director if it meets the Graduate School’s requirements.
- The DSW Program Director for review of the request based on the DSW Program requirements. Transfer credits that meet the DSW Program guidelines for replacing elective courses will be approved by the DSW Program Director, with consultation of the DSW Program Committee, as needed. Requests for transfer credits that would replace required courses for the program will be reviewed and approved by the DSW Program Committee.
- The DSW Program Director or program assistant will initiate the final approval form.

Students are cautioned that the DSW Program curriculum is designed so that the work completed in its courses contribute to their Comprehensive Paper and Capstone Project. Therefore, transferring credits to replace DSW courses could possibly delay student progress on those requirements. Students are strongly recommended to discuss transferring credits with their advisor or the DSW Program Director.

Advancement to Candidacy, and Continuous Enrollment

Following the successful completion of the Comprehensive Paper, the student is eligible to be admitted to Doctoral Candidacy and becomes eligible to take SW699, Capstone Project. A student who begins taking Capstone Project credits must maintain continuous registration until obtaining the degree, including the summer semesters. The Application for Admission to Candidacy can be found [here](#).

I-20 Visas for International Students

The DSW Program is a distance program and therefore international students will only come to campus for orientation, the residencies, and the final Capstone presentation. The University of Alabama is certified as a Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) school, meaning that a Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status," can be issued to international students in the DSW Program.

The on-campus activities for the DSW Program are short-term: 1-day for orientation and final Capstone Presentation and 4-5 Days for the summer residencies. The University of Alabama can only issue an I-20 Visa that is valid for the duration of the on-campus event, plus travel time before and after these activities. Hence, international students are not able to remain in the United States between these events under the I-20 and/or F-1 Visa.

The I-20 Form requires a \$200 SEVIS I-901 fee that must be paid prior to each residency, as each different residency will require a new I-20 Form (i.e. 2 residencies = 2 I-20 Forms). Once an I-20 has been issued, students must apply for an F-1 student visa at their home country's U.S. embassy or consulate. Visas can be issued up to 120 days in advance of the residency. When entering the U.S., students will need to have a passport, F-1 student visa, I-20, and receipt of SEVIS I-901 fee payment.

Additional information for International Students can be found on the website for the International Student & Scholar Services [here](#).

The website for U.S. Homeland Security that discusses the purpose, requirements, and process for obtaining the I-20 Visa can be found [here](#).

Policy on Response to Student Grievances

Students who have concerns about issues that are having a negative impact on student learning or barrier to student achievement may report these concerns to the DSW Program Director. The DSW Program director will consult with the Associate Dean for Student Services for consensus in how to address the issue.

When reported concerns regard quality of instruction, the DSW Program Director will:

- consider the number of students being impacted and the context of the issue (e.g., Title IX complaint, quality of course content) when formulating a response;
- encourage students to discuss the issue with the instructor directly, if deemed appropriate for students to do so;
- follow-up with the instructor to discuss the course;
- discuss the matter with School of Social Work and university departments, as deemed appropriate; and

- follow-up with the student(s) afterwards to see if the issue has been resolved.

Students who do not believe that the issue has been resolved may file a subsequent grievance with School of Social Work committees or university offices, as deemed appropriate.

Students should be aware that full-time university faculty typically instruct their courses under the shared assumption of academic freedom. As a result, there are significant limits on instructional changes that the administration can require a faculty member to make at the request of administration. Therefore, it is strongly encouraged that students document issues they report in writing and also emphasize feedback in the Student Opinions of Instruction (SOIs). Student feedback and SOI reports will be reviewed by the DSW Program Director as well as the Associate Dean for Student Services and Dean of the School of Social Work (when appropriate) to determine if issues reported should be used in future decisions about DSW course instruction. Students should understand that a number of factors are considered in making course instruction decisions and students' complaints are only one of these factors. Students should also understand that complaints about individual course instructors will not be discussed or handled by the DSW Program Committee.

VIII. Support Available to Students

The University of Alabama has numerous offices, centers, and programs to help graduate students as they complete their degree. Below is a list of centers and programs that students may find helpful as they complete their DSW degree.

Please note: If you are a student who is experiencing a challenge that may impede on educational progress, but does not seem to be covered by any resources listed below, please reach out to Dr. Ruggiano to discuss what additional support may be available.

Resources for New Students	
Help with initial steps as a new student at UA	UA Graduate School <i>Getting Started</i> Website
Support for Completing Graduate School Requirements	
Graduate Student Deadlines	UA Graduate School: Student Deadlines
Graduate Student Forms	UA Graduate School: Forms
Graduate School Catalog	UA Graduate School: Catalog
Support with School-Life Balance	
Student Care and Well-Being	https://bamacares.sa.ua.edu/
Support for Disability Issues	Office of Disability Services

Support for Veteran and Military-Connected Students	Division of Student Life Veteran and Military Affairs
Resources for Graduate Students Who Are Parents (most resources are on-campus)	Graduate Parent Support
Academic Support	
Academic Support	Capstone Center for Student Success
Support with Writing for Graduate Students	UA Writing Center
Research Support	UA Libraries
Advocacy for Graduate Students	
Graduate Student Association	GSA
Professional and Career Support	
Career Support	Division of Student Life Career Center
Mentoring for Doctoral Students from Underrepresented Groups	Tide Together Project

APPENDICIES

Appendix A. Typical Course of Study for Advanced Clinical Track

DSW PROGRAM OF STUDY- CLINICAL TRACK							
Year	Fall		Spring		Summer		Credits
	Course	Credit Hours	Course	Credit Hours	Course	Credit Hours	
Foundation	Advanced Theories on Oppression & Disparities	3	Neuroscience in Clinical Practice	3	Advanced Advocacy and Policy Practice	3	
	Research for Clinical and Community Practice I	3	Research for Clinical and Community Practice II	3	Teaching Clinical & Administrative Social Work	3	
TOTAL CREDITS		6		6		6	18
Specialization Year	Clinical Supervision and Ethics	3	Assessment and Diagnosis in Evidence Based Clinical Practice	3	Capstone Prep Independent Study Proposal	2	
	Introduction to Capstone Project	1	Elective: Complementary and Alternative Therapies	3	Elective: Social Work and Emotional Trauma	3	
	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	3					
TOTAL CREDITS		7		6		5	18
Capstone Year	Capstone Project	3	Capstone Project	3	Capstone Project	3	
TOTAL CREDITS							9
PROGRAM TOTAL							45

Appendix B. Typical Course of Study for Organizational Leadership Track

DSW PROGRAM OF STUDY- ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP TRACK							
Year	Fall		Spring		Summer		Credits
	Course	Credit Hours	Course	Credit Hours	Course	Credit Hours	
Foundation	Advanced Theories on Oppression and Disparities	3	Organizational Leadership Theory and Practice	3	Advanced Advocacy and Policy Practice	3	
	Research for Clinical and Community Practice I	3	Research for Clinical and Community Practice II	3	Teaching Clinical & Administrative Social Work	3	
TOTAL CREDITS		6		6		6	18
Specialization Year	Leadership in Human Service Program Development	3	Ethics in Community and Organizational Leadership	3	Capstone Prep Independent Study Proposal	2	
	Introduction to Capstone Project	1	Elective: Human Service Finance and Budgeting	3	Elective: Human Resources in Health & Social Services	3	
	Leadership and Organizational Change	3					
TOTAL CREDITS		7		6		5	18
Capstone Year	Capstone Project	3	Capstone Project	3	Capstone Project	3	
TOTAL CREDITS							9
PROGRAM TOTAL							45

Appendix C. Application and Admission Requirements

Below is a summary of the application and admissions requirements for the DSW Program. **Due Date for each year is March 1st at 11:59pm.**

Application Materials Required by the School of Social Work:	
An MSW Degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must have an MSW from a CSWE accredited program to be considered. Master degrees from other disciplines will not be considered for admission.
3 Years of Post-MSW Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please note that there are no exceptions to this requirement. To be considered as three years of post-MSW experience, applicants must have received their MSW degree in August, three years prior to their first semester in the DSW program (e.g. For the fall 2020 cohort, the MSW must have been received during or before August of 2017).
Current Social Work Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must have a paid or voluntary social work placement where you can apply assignments and your capstone project for the DSW.
Potential Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants may be asked to have a phone interview with a member of the DSW program committee.
Application Materials Required by the University Graduate School (UGS):	
Application Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduate School Application plus fee (\$65 U.S Residents & \$80 International Students). Some applicants may be eligible for a waiver of the application fee. Information about waivers can be found here.
Letters of Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three letters of recommendation are required for all applicants. At least two of these letters should come from professional sources (preferably from social workers, but not necessarily). One may be an academic source (e.g. former professor or department head). Applicants may choose to have all three references come from professional sources if an academic reference is not available. All references are due/uploaded by the deadline (March 1st at 11:59pm) for your application to be complete and considered.
Transcripts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the application, only unofficial transcripts are required. It is not advised to request official transcripts from their institution at the time of applying to avoid delays in their transcripts being received, which may

<p>International Transcripts</p>	<p>result in an incomplete application that will not be considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload an <u>unofficial transcript</u> for any institution of higher education at which you have completed 15 or more credit hours. • If you attended a community college where you completed 15 or more credit hours and later transferred to a different institution to complete your undergraduate degree, the graduate school requires that you also include unofficial transcripts from the community college. • All unofficial transcripts must be uploaded by the deadline (March 1st at 11:59pm) for your application to be complete and considered. • International applicants: please make sure that your transcript includes a grading schemes. All others: please include a grading scheme if your university does not use a letter-based (e.g. A, A-, B) grading scheme. • For international applicants from countries other than Canada, you will be required to have your transcripts undergo the <u>International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service by the Council on Social Work Education</u>. This must be completed before the deadline of March 1st at 11:59pm.
<p>Grade Point Average</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (overall) in your MSW program.
<p>Resume/CV</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A resume is required for the DSW application. Applicants who are currently working in academic settings may submit an academic CV in place of a traditional business resume.
<p>Statement of Purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UGS requires a Statement of Purpose. However, the UGS general guidelines for writing the Statement of Purpose is different from the School of Social Work's instructions. • Instructions for the DSW Statement of Purpose can be found <u>here</u>.
<p>International Applicants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please note that the University Graduate School has additional requirements for international applicants. These requirements can be found <u>here</u>.
<p>What is NOT Required: A GRE Score; A writing sample separate from the Statement of Purpose.</p>	