



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  

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**COMMERCE**

***Master of Social Work  
(MSW)***

***Student Handbook***

Revised February 2024

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## WELCOME LETTER

Dear Students,

Welcome to the Master of Social Work Program at Texas A&M University-Commerce!

It is my great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to each of you as you embark on this transformative journey in the field of social work. Your decision to pursue a Master of Social Work degree reflects your commitment to advancing your knowledge and skills to make a meaningful impact on the lives of individuals, families, and communities, and we are honored to have you join our program.

The Master of Social Work Program at Texas A&M University-Commerce is designed to provide you with a rigorous and comprehensive education that will prepare you for a variety of practice settings. Throughout your time with us, you will have the opportunity to engage in advanced coursework and hands-on field experiences that will equip you with the knowledge and skills necessary to address the complex social challenges in our society.

Our faculty members are committed to providing you with a supportive and enriching learning environment, where you will be challenged to think critically, engage in evidence-based practice, and uphold the values of social justice. We are committed to fostering a culture where all perspectives are valued and respected.

As you begin this exciting journey, I encourage you to take full advantage of the resources available to you, both within our department and across the university. Whether you need academic support, mentorship, or professional development opportunities, we are here to help you succeed.

Once again, welcome to the Master of Social Work Program at Texas A&M University-Commerce. We are honored to have you in our program, and we look forward to supporting you as you pursue your goals and aspirations in the field of social work.

Sincerely,

*Marcella Smith*

Marcella Smith, PhD, MSW  
Department Head  
School of Social Work  
Texas A&M University-Commerce

## ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is the major reference guide to the Texas A&M University-Commerce's (TAMU-C) Master of Social Work (MSW) program. This resource is intended as a supplement to the [Graduate Catalog](#) including the program's curriculum and the [TAMU-C's student rules and responsibilities](#) and related policies governing our graduate degree. It is important for MSW students to be aware of and understand the policies and procedures at the School of Social Work and the University. The MSW student handbook, together with the [School of Social Work](#) website provides students with a comprehensive guide to thrive during their graduate studies.

Students are encouraged to contact the MSW Program Director that serves as the advisor should they have any questions. You are viewing the current 2023-24 edition of this handbook. You can download or print a PDF copy from the [MSW Student Handbook 2023-2024](#).

*Note: The [MSW Field Education Manual](#) serves as the policy and procedure document for TAMU-C's School of Social Work Field Practicum Program. The information contained is appropriate for all MSW students across all TAMU-C campuses.*

# TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-COMMERCE

## Our History

Texas A&M University-Commerce began as East Texas Normal College in 1889 when founder William Leonidas Mayo opened the doors to a one-building campus in Cooper. After the original campus was destroyed by fire in 1894, Professor Mayo moved the college 16 miles to Commerce, Texas to take advantage of westward railroad lines to Dallas and other parts of the state. His creed, which continues today, was “*ceaseless industry, fearless investigation, unfettered thought and unselfish service to others.*” The State of Texas took over the campus in 1917 and the name was changed to East Texas State Normal College. In 1923, the school was renamed East Texas State Teachers College. The graduate program was added in 1935, and in 1957 the Legislature, recognizing that the purpose of the institution had broadened from teacher education, changed the name to East Texas State College. Following the inauguration of the first doctoral program in 1962, the name was changed once more to East Texas State University. The name change to Texas A&M University-Commerce occurred in 1996 when the university joined The Texas A&M University System. Today, the University meets the undergraduate, graduate, and professional needs of the citizens of Northeast Texas and beyond through its main campus in Commerce, various off-campus instructional sites, and state-of-the-art distance learning. Its mission is achieved through teaching, scholarship, and service activities on its campuses, and in the community and region.

For the past 20 years, the University has grown in both stature and student population, expanding its foundations to include agriculture, engineering, music, nursing, and competency-based education programs. Learn more about the [history of A&M-Commerce](#).

## Our Vision

Texas A&M University-Commerce strives to:

**TRANSFORM LIVES** by providing an excellent, relevant and personalized education to diverse learners

**ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE** and pursue impactful research

**SERVE AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY** where all are valued

**FOSTER COLLABORATION** to solve contemporary problems

## Our Mission

Educate. Discover. Achieve.

## REGULATORY INSTITUTIONS

### Education

#### Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)

Founded in 1952, the [Council on Social Work Education \(CSWE\)](#) is the national association representing social work education in the United States. Its members include over 800 accredited baccalaureate and master's degree social work programs, as well as individual social work educators, practitioners, and agencies dedicated to advancing quality social work education. Through its many initiatives, activities, and centers, CSWE supports quality social work education and provides opportunities for leadership and professional development, so that social workers play a central role in achieving the profession's goals of social and economic justice. CSWE's Commission on Accreditation is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as the sole accrediting agency for social work education in the United States and its territories.

#### Accreditation

Both the BSW and MSW programs are fully accredited by The Council on Social Work Education. The BSW was fully accredited in 1978 and the MSW program was accredited in 2001. In accordance with the requirements of CSWE's recognition body, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the CSWE Office of Social Work Accreditation (ASWA) administers a multistep accreditation process that involves program self-studies, site visits and COA review.

#### The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)

#### [The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges \(SACSCOC\)](#)

is the body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. It serves as the common denominator of shared values and practices primarily among the diverse institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Latin America and certain other international sites approved by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees that award associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degrees.

The mission of the SACSCOC is to assure educational quality and improve the effectiveness of its member institutions. To gain or maintain accreditation with the Commission on Colleges, an institution must comply with the standards contained in the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement and with the policies and procedures of the Commission on Colleges. The Commission on Colleges applies the requirements of its Principles to all applicant, candidate, and member institutions, regardless of type of institution (public, private for-profit, private not-for-profit).



## Profession

### Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners

The Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners (TSBSWE) is a part of the Council. The Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council (“Council”) was created by the 86th Legislature in 2019 following consecutive reviews of its member boards by the Sunset Advisory Commission. The Council plays a central role in regulating behavioral health services and social work practices in the state of Texas.

The Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners licenses and regulates Social Workers in Texas. To know more about the Social Workers including licensing requirements and FAQs about the practice of social work in Texas, visit

<https://www.bhec.texas.gov/texas-state-board-of-social-worker-examiners/index.html>.

#### Licensure

The Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council (BHEC) sets the standards for social work licensure and practice. It offers three levels of social work licensure: LBSW, LMSW, and LCSW.

If you have an LBSW or an LMSW, you can practice generalist social work at the macro and mezzo levels. You need an LCSW to practice clinical social work at the micro level, which includes the diagnosis and treatment of mental health conditions. The BHEC requires you to pass the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) exam and complete your degree before you apply for your license.

#### Exam Pre-approval

Exam preapproval is the first step in applying for licensure to the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council. ASWB will verify the eligibility of the students to take the exam. This exam preapproval process does not completely replace the application for licensure to the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council, but ASWB will verify a student's eligibility to take the exam.

To aid the process for pre-approval, students are required to request the BSW/ MSW Program Director’s licensure letter after clearing the comprehensive exam and before they graduate.

***After graduation and final grades are posted, students are required to contact the Graduate School about a final conferred transcript and request a certified electronic transcript directly from TAMU-C to [texas@aswb.org](mailto:texas@aswb.org).***

### National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

The [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\)](#) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and

development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards for social workers, and to advance sound social policies.

The [NASW Code of Ethics](#) is a set of standards that guide the professional conduct of social workers. All social workers should abide by this Code of Ethics, including TAMU-C social work students according to the School of Social Work's [Student Conduct](#) policy.

# SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

## History

The Social Work program at Texas A&M University-Commerce began in 1978 when the BSW program was accredited. In response to years of expressed need, the MSW program was initiated in 2001 and was accredited in 2005. In 2012, TAMU-C's administration granted the Department of Social Work the status of School of Social Work. The MSW Program has been offered fully online since 2018. The BSW cohorts meet at the Commerce and Dallas Campus. These programs were previously offered at Mesquite, Pittsburg, McKinney and Frisco Texas.

## Values and Principles

The School of Social Work adheres to the values and principles expressed in the [National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics \(NASW, 2021\)](#).

### **Service**

- Ethical Principle: Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems

### **Social Justice**

- Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice

### **Dignity and Worth of the Person**

- Ethical Principle: Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person

### **Importance of Human Relationships**

- Ethical Principle: Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships

### **Integrity**

- Ethical Principle: Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner

### **Competence**

- Ethical Principle: Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise

*The School of Social Work at TAMU-C embraces diversity and does not discriminate based on race, creed, national origin, age, disability status, sexual orientation or gender identity.*

# MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK (MSW) PROGRAM

## Mission

A&M School of Social Work educates professional advanced practitioners to lead, innovate, and transform.

## Goals

- Apply ethical reasoning to advance equality, justice or social change
- Promote leadership in service that enhances well-being and equality of life for all persons
- Create a learning environment that honors unfretted thoughts

## Programs and Curriculum

### Foundation Generalist Practice Track

The Foundation Generalist Practice track (FGP) consists of 24 credit hours which include 3 credit hours of a foundation internship/practicum. You will take the foundation practicum during the final semester of your FGP track. Students can complete the 24 credit hours in three semesters when registered full-time. Students also have the option to register part-time and complete the credit hours between four and six semesters. The FGP track provides students with the foundation for generalist practice (micro, mezzo, and macro). After a successful completion of the FGP track, students progress to the Advanced Generalist Practice/Concentration track (AGP) consisting of 33 hours. Thus, Students admitted to the FGP track complete 57 credit hours to graduate with an MSW degree. Foundation Generalist Practice track students can complete the MSW program in six semesters if registered full-time and between 10 and 12 part-time semesters.

### Competencies and Behaviors

#### Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

##### Behavior:

- Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

<b>Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice</b>
<b>Behavior:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;</li><li>• Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and</li><li>• Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.</li></ul>
<b>Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice</b>
<b>Behavior:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and</li><li>• Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.</li></ul>
<b>Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice</b>
<b>Behavior:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;</li><li>• Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and</li><li>• Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.</li></ul>
<b>Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice</b>
<b>Behavior:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;</li><li>• Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;</li><li>• Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.</li></ul>
<b>Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</b>
<b>Behavior:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and</li><li>• Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.</li></ul>

**Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities****Behavior:**

- Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

**Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities****Behavior:**

- Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

**Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities****Behavior:**

- Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

**Curriculum**

<b>MSW (Online-Full or Part-time) 57 Credit Hours</b>	
<b>Foundation Generalist Practice Courses (24 credit hours)</b>	
<b>SWK 501</b> Generalist Practice with Individuals, Families, and Small Groups	<b>SWK 503</b> Generalist Practice with Groups, Organizations, and Communities
<b>SWK 511</b> Human Behavior in the Social Environment I	<b>SWK 513</b> Human Behavior in the Social Environment II
<b>SWK 521</b> Foundation of Social Welfare Policy	<b>SWK 531</b> Research for Practice
<b>SWK 541</b> Social Justice for Oppressed Populations	<b>SWK 553</b> Field Foundations Practicum (300 hours)

**Field Foundations Practicum**

Through the Field Practicum, students are prepared and equipped with the knowledge of professional practices, strategies, and programs required to address an extensive range of contemporary societal issues. Thus, Field Practicum ensures that the students are well-prepared for professional practice as master’s-level social workers within their chosen specialization area(s) upon completion. Field Education connects the theoretical and conceptual contributions of all prior courses with practice experience in the field.

The MSW program ensures that the Field Practicum captures the full scope of both generalist and specialized practice. The program provides generalist practice opportunities for students to demonstrate social work competencies with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The MSW program also provides specialized practice opportunities for students to demonstrate social work competencies within an area of specialized practice.

Students in the *Foundation track* must complete all foundation courses (SWK 501, SWK 503, SWK 511, SWK 513, SWK 521, SWK 531, and SWK 541) or be concurrently enrolled in remaining foundation courses to enroll in Field Foundations Practicum (SWK 553). These Students are required to complete 300 contact hours during a single semester to then enroll in AGP Field Practicum. In addition, students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 throughout their Field Foundations Practicum. Students also participate in a weekly field seminar under the instruction of the MSW Field Liaison designed to assist students to process their field experience.. For more information on field practicums, refer to the [MSW Field Education Manual](#).

*Foundation Generalist Practice Student Assessment*

Foundation students are required to complete the Foundation Generalist Practice Student Assessment as a part of their Field Foundations Practicum (SWK 553). The assessment is composed of 45 questions (five questions related to each competency) valued as 20% of the overall grade for the course. A physical copy of the study guide is available at no cost at the TAMU-C's Waters Library. Students may access the study guide digitally at [Mometrix eLibrary](#).

**Advanced Generalist Practice Track**

The Advanced Generalist Practice track is designed for students who completed a BSW from a CSWE accredited program within the last 6 years. The 33 credit hours may be completed in one (full-time) or two years (part-time). Students will complete 6 hours of advanced internship/practicum through one of our partner agencies or at an agency of their choice. In this case the agency will need to submit the [Field Education Agency Application](#) to set up an agreement.

**Competencies and Behaviors****Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior****Behavior:**

- Make ethical decisions by applying the standard of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to both rural and urban contexts and at the intersection of the two.
- Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations within both rural and urban settings.
- Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and oral, written, and electronic communication within the context of both urban and rural community settings individually and interactively.
- Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate advanced practice outcomes in urban and rural settings.
- Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior within the context of both/either urban or rural settings and at the intersection of the two environments.
- Actively participate in professional social work organizations/associations aimed at practice within urban and rural communities.
- Design and engage in effective self-care strategies to reduce the likelihood of compassion fatigue and burnout.

**Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice****Behavior:**



- Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels within both urban and rural settings.
- Present themselves as lifelong learners and engage all clients (those in both rural and urban settings) and constituencies as experts of their own experiences.
- Utilize self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies recognizing the complex and chaotic environment cross over of rural and urban settings; and
- Analyze the holistic and systemic nature of problems in rural/urban settings taking care to attend to the special factors found within each unique environment such as dual relationships, inadequate transportation, extreme poverty, difficult access to health care, and disenfranchisement from political processes.

### **Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic and Environmental Justice**

#### **Behavior:**

- Engage in practices which demonstrate critical analysis of the intersections of social, economic, and environmental justice within rural contexts and urban contexts and the crossover of these two settings: and
- Advocate for appropriate resources and equal access to political, economic, and social power for all clients within rural and urban settings.

### **Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice**

#### **Behavior:**

- Use practice experience and theoretical underpinning of evidence-based practice models to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- Apply advanced level critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- Integrate and adapt research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy and service delivery across the rural/urban landscape.

### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

#### **Behavior:**

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services within rural/urban settings
- Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services in both rural and urban areas, and how these impact across the environments
- Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice across the rural/urban landscape.

**Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities****Behavior:**

- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies across urban and rural settings and at the complex intersection of these two
- Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills at an advanced level to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies across the rural/urban environment and at the intersection of the two ensuring informed consent.
- Discern the most appropriate engagement strategy according to each practice context.

**Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities****Behavior:**

- Collect and organize client-driven data, and skillfully apply critical thinking to interpret information from both rural and urban clients and constituencies; and those who are at the intersection of the two environments.
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from both rural and urban clients and constituencies; and those who are at the intersection of the two environments.
- Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies reflective of their environment whether rural, urban or at the intersection of both.
- Modify appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences for clients and constituencies reflective of their environment whether rural, urban or at the intersection of both
- Consider aspects intrinsic in rural and urban settings considering how the intersection of the two environments impact assessment such as connections with church communities, neighbors, extended family, fictive kin, and other formal and/or informal resources.

**Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities****Behavior:**

- Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities for clients and constituencies in both urban and rural environments and at the intersection of the two.
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies in both urban and rural environments and at the intersection of the two

- Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes in both urban and rural environments and at the intersection of the two
- Provide leadership in program development, administration and evaluation; clinical and organizational supervision; research development and utilization; and policy creation, reform and implementation to impact outcomes for those in both urban and rural environments and the intersection of both.
- Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies in both urban and rural environments and the intersection of both.
- Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually developed goals for clients in both urban and rural environments and the intersection of both.

### **Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities**

#### **Behavior:**

- Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes whether primarily in a rural or urban environment or at the intersection of the two.
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes for clients in both urban and rural environments and the intersection of both.
- Critically analyze, appraise, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes in both urban and rural environments and the intersection of both.
- Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels across the landscape of rural/urban and at the intersection of the two environments.

**Curriculum**

<b>Advanced Generalist Practice (Specialization) Courses</b> (30 credit hours)	
<b>SWK 505</b> Advanced Generalist Practice with Individuals	<b>SWK 506</b> Advanced Generalist Practice with Families
<b>SWK 507</b> Organizations, Communities, and Social Policy	<b>SWK 508</b> Social Work Supervision and Administration
<b>SWK 509</b> Advanced Generalist Practice with Small Groups	<b>SWK 510</b> Clinical Practice in Mental Health
<b>SWK 554</b> Advanced Generalist Practice Field Practicum (500/600 hours)	<b>SWK 590</b> Research Methods in Advanced Social Work Practice
<b>SWK 595</b> Research Literature and Techniques	
<b>Elective</b> (3 credit hours)	
<b>SWK 512</b> Business Practices	<b>SWK 514</b> Social Work and the Law
<b>SWK 592</b> Study Abroad	<b>SWK 597</b> Special Topics

**Social Work Elective**

A three (3) credit hours elective course is required for the MSW Program. Transfer Students may fulfill the elective requirement with a course approved by the MSW Program Director when enrolling.

*SWK 597 - 3 Credits - Special Topics*

Special Topics. Three semester hours. Topics vary and have included the following: Rural Social Work with the Elderly, Progressive Practices in Developmental Disabilities, Spirituality and Social Work, Child Welfare and Issues in Addiction.

**Students may also take any of the following to substitute SWK 597.**

*SWK 512 - 3 Credits - Business Practices*

This course is the capstone course for The Business of Social Work Graduate certificate. This course is designed to provide students with instruction, resources, and skill building in a variety of business practices to promote the successful creation of a non-profit, private practice or leading a non-profit agency.

*SWK 514 - 3 Credits - Social Work & the Law*

This elective introduces students to the intricacies of the United States legal system. Course content will delve into the connection between social work and the legal system, including constitutional rights, rights granted by law and other protections within administrative proceedings, civil proceedings, and the criminal justice system at the local, state and federal levels of government. Special attention will be paid to the rights of community members under the U.S. Constitution, U.S. code and other laws that grant protections against violation of a person's rights.

*SWK 592 - 3 Credits - Study Abroad*

The course explores the evolution and current development of social work practice in other countries through building knowledge links between political processes, economic constraints and the actual implementation of public policies. Focusing on how modern and evolving bureaucracies along with cultural and institutional frameworks of a given political system dictate the way in which governments work and interact with the public/private sector. As a requirement of this course students engage in an organized travel abroad opportunity with faculty instructors. In addition students may be required to engage in online activities including discussion groups and/or assignment preparation before and after the study abroad component.

**AGP Practicum**

The master's program in social work prepares students for specialized practice. The program identifies the specialized knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors that extend and enhance the nine Social Work Competencies and prepare students for practice in the area of specialization.

Specialized practice builds on generalist practice, adapting and extending the Social Work Competencies for practice with a specific population, problem area, method of intervention, perspective or approach to practice. Specialized practice augments and extends social work knowledge, values, and skills to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate within an area of specialization. Specialized practitioners advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies in their areas of specialized practice. Specialized practitioners synthesize and employ a broad range of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge and skills based on scientific inquiry and best practices and consistent with social work values. Specialized practitioners engage in and conduct research to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery. A grade of "B" or better is required for SWK 554.

Students who entered the MSW program through the *Foundation Generalist Practice track* must complete all foundation courses and Field Foundations Practicum (SWK 553) and be in good academic standing to enroll in Advanced Generalist Practice Field Practicum (SWK 554). Students entering the MSW Program through the *Advanced*

*Generalist Practice track* are required to complete at least 9 credit hours and be in good academic standing to enroll in Advanced Generalist Practice Field Practicum (SWK 554). Students entering the MSW program in the **Foundation track** are required to complete a total of 600 Contact Hours within two semesters in AGP Field Practicum for a total of 900 contact hours of internship. Students entering the MSW program in the **AGP track** are required to complete a total of 500 Contact Hours within two semesters in AGP Field Practicum (SWK 554) for a minimum of 900 practicum hours between the BSW and MSW. For more information refer to the [MSW Field Education Manual](#).

### **MSW Comprehensive Exam**

The comprehensive examination for the MSW degree program ensures the acquisition of the required knowledge, behavior skills, values and cognitive and affective processes based on the competencies delineated. The examination tests the student's knowledge and understanding of their specific field of study. Graduate School requires all students to satisfactorily pass a comprehensive examination covering all the work within their master's degree program as mentioned in the [Examinations for Graduate Degrees policy 11.99.99.R0.13](#).

- MSW students take the comprehensive exam proctored by the MSW Program Director during the semester they are scheduled for graduation.
- There are two dates scheduled each semester for comp exam administration.
- The comprehensive exam consists of 90 objective questions from [Volume 2 of the Social Work Examination Services Comprehensive Study Guide & Practice Questions: Comprehensive Study Guide \(Masters, Clinical, Adv. Generalist\) Version 9.0 covering CSWE competencies](#).
- Exam study guides are available in the Water's Library on [Reserve](#).
- Students must obtain a score of 70 to pass the comprehensive exam.
- Students have two chances to take and successfully complete the exam.
- Should the candidate fail the examination upon the second attempt, a third and final attempt may be taken only with the recommendation of the Department Head/(Associate) Director and approval of the Dean of Graduate School.
- The candidate who fails the examination for a third and final attempt is ineligible to receive a master's in Social Work from TAMU-C.

# ADMISSION TO THE MSW PROGRAM

## Admission Evaluation

### MSW Program Applications

Prospective applicants initiate their admission process to the TAMU-C graduate program through [ApplyTexas](#) and subsequently complete the [Master of Social Work \(MSW\) Program Application Package](#), inclusive of all requisite documentation per track. Students are eligible to apply to one of the following MSW program tracks by submitting the corresponding documents listed :

- **Advanced Generalist Practice Track** (Application Package including Application, Academic and Professional Statements, Resume, Reference Waiver, Acknowledgements and Syllabi if transferring credits; Official Transcripts; and 3 references)
- **Foundation Generalist Practice Track** (Application Package including Application, Academic and Professional Statements, Resume, Reference Waiver and Acknowledgements; Official Transcripts; and 3 references)

### Advanced Generalist Practice Eligibility

Applicants with **all of the following** are eligible to apply directly to the Advanced Generalist Practice track:

1. Bachelor of Social Work degree from a program **accredited** by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)
2. Bachelor of Social Work degree **NOT** older than six years of anticipated start date

### Foundation Generalist Practice Eligibility

Applicants with **the following** are eligible to apply to the Foundation Generalist Practice track:

1. Bachelors in **ANY** major other than social work
2. Bachelors in Social Work **MORE** than six years of anticipated start date
3. Bachelors in Social Work from a program **NOT** accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)

## Evaluation Process

Admission into the Master of Social Work Program **mandates a minimum GPA of 2.0**. The MSW Coordinator is the Liaison between the Graduate School and the School of Social Work. The MSW Coordinator is responsible for managing the evaluation of candidates.

Advanced track applicants with a GPA less than 3.0 and all foundation track applicants are referred to the admissions committee for review.

**Fast-Track**

Students with a CSWE accredited BSW degree (not older than 6 years of anticipated start date) with a GPA greater than 3.0 are considered as Fast-track applicants to the Advanced Generalist Practice Track. Fast-track applicants are required to only complete the Application and Acknowledgement tabs of the Admission Package and submit academic transcripts and are referred directly to the Program Director for application review and admission decision. The Program Director will review the application and transcript to make sure the applicant completed a BSW from an accredited program within the last 6 years, and has earned at least a B to make sure students are accepted to the corresponding program to avoid repetition of undergraduate achievements. The Program Director further completes the [MSW Program Student Admission Review](#) with the admission decision for the applicant.

**Admission Committee**

The MSW Coordinator sends the applicant's digital file and the link for the MSW Applicant Rating Form to the MSW Admissions Committee for review. The Admissions Committee, composed of two committee members, evaluates the applicant and recommends their admission decision based on the score the applicant obtains. In the event there is a discrepancy in the range of scores between the two evaluators, a third reviewer assesses the documents and completes the form with the admission recommendation.

The department Admissions Committee reviews all applications for evidence of capacity to complete graduate-level work and the ability to become an effective social worker. Transcripts of students who do not have a BSW degree and are applying for the Foundation track must demonstrate a liberal arts background, which is required for admission. The Admissions Committee utilizes a rubric to assess each student's completed admission file for admission readiness into the program.

For applicants applying to the AGP track, the rubric determines scores of the following 3 categories:

- (1) Conditional Admit (score of 70 or above);
- (2) Recommend to meet with the admissions committee (score of 65-69); or
- (3) Deny (score below 65).

For applicants applying to the Foundation track, the rubric determines scores of the following 4 categories:

- (1) Admit (score of 70 or above with GPA 3.0+);
- (2) Conditional Admit (score of 70 or above with GPA less than 3.0);
- (3) Recommend to meet with admissions committee (score of 65-69); or
- (4) Deny (score below 65).

In the event there is a discrepancy in the range of scores between the two reviewers, a third reviewer assesses the documents and completes the rubric. Based upon the rubric score and recommendation of the admissions committee, a student admits with full or



conditional admission. Conditional admission requires the student to complete 12 hours with a 3.0 overall GPA in order to continue in the social work program; and adhere to university standards of performance and the School Of Social Work's Code Of Conduct.

The Program Director will review the Admissions Committee evaluations, and transcripts and complete the MSW Program Student Admission Review. The Program Director then recommends the admission decision for the applicant to the Graduate School - admittance, conditional admittance less than 3.0 GPA, or other conditions suggested by the Admissions Committee or Program Director) or denied admission.

### **Transfer of credits**

Applicants can transfer a **maximum of 12 credits** to the MSW Program. Applicants are encouraged to upload the syllabi of the courses they wish to transfer within the application package. This ensures that applicants receive proper academic advising from the Program Director before course registration.

**Note:** Work/ Life Experience will not substitute Social Work Course Credit

## **Admission Notification**

The MSW Program Director certifies the admission decision based on the evaluation of the applicants through the fast-track or the Admissions Committee review routes. The MSW Coordinator notifies the Graduate School of the department's decision through an internal form. Thus, the School of Social Work admits students to the MSW program and recommends admission to the institution (TAMU-C) through the Graduate School.

Notification of the admission decision is conveyed to students by the Graduate School through the applicant's TAMU-C email previously assigned. Following this, the MSW Director sends a welcome email to those fully or conditionally admitted. The Welcome letter includes any contingent conditions associated with the admission, link to select [degree plan](#) options including the orientation video, full-time or part-time registration, and link to the [MSW Program Student Orientation and Acknowledgement Package](#) to sign acknowledgments on receiving Program Orientation, Code of Conduct including the NASW Code of Ethics, Email Communication, Academic Integrity, and MSW Comprehensive Exam. The MSW coordinator receives all the documents and further sends permits and the registration process of the students admitted into the program.

## ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISING

### Academic Advising for Foundation and Advanced Generalist Tracks

The MSW Program Director is responsible for providing academic advising to all the students in the program. All students admitted to the MSW Program are initially advised on academic and professional matters through an orientation video in [MSW Program Student Orientation and Acknowledgement Package](#) as part of their onboarding. Students acknowledge watching the video information including contact information, steps to select and complete the degree plan, course registration, good academic standing, MSW comprehensive exam, graduation requirements, academic dishonesty policy, financial aid resources, student disability and other support services, etc.

The MSW Program Director reviews the orientation acknowledgements signed by each student and approves their degree plan (student's academic roadmap detailing course sequencing, semester-by-semester including semesters for field enrollment) before registration permits are sent to students. The director will offer individual advisement to students coming in with conditional admission, unclear degree plans or struggling academically. Post registration advising is offered as needed and available upon request. Students needing to amend the degree plan must request the change in the [corresponding form](#) and meet with the Program Director for advice.

The MSW Field Education Director collaborates with the MSW Program Director in advising. The MSW Field Education Director offers a field orientation to students entering the field each semester. The orientation includes: use of *TK20* (application and expectations), field foundations practicum, agp field practicum, hours of field instruction, field placement requirements, finding a field placement, other frequently asked questions including - what happens if i am fired, employment at field placement, remote field activity, change of field placement). Field Liaison contributes with this task throughout the semester. This director also advises individually as needed on specific field instruction opportunities in the community of their interest, identifying a field instructor and task supervisor as needed.

### Professional Advising for Foundation and Advanced Generalist Tracks

The MSW Program and the MSW Field Education Directors are responsible for providing professional advisement and activities with the collaboration of Field Liaisons to prepare students for the professional arena. MSW licensing, professional behavior, ethical dilemmas, self-care, searching for employment, and areas of practice are some of the workshops offered through the Foundation and Advanced Field Practicum seminar. Both directors also advise students individually upon request.

# ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE

## Academic Performance

All MSW students receive information regarding academic performance standards in the orientation video prior to registration. To remain in good standing, social work students maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Students must obtain a minimum of a B (3.0) in Foundation and Advanced field practicums to pass. If obtaining a C or lower, students must repeat the corresponding field practicum. All other course grade of C or above will be considered towards completion of the MSW degree. To graduate with an MSW, students must complete all course work averaging 3.0 or above and pass the MSW Comprehensive Exam with 70% or higher.

A student who fails to meet or maintain the 3.0 GPA requirements shall be placed on probation or suspension from the MSW program according to the Texas A&M University-Commerce Graduate Catalog. Refer to the [Graduate Academic Probation, Retention, and Suspension policy 13.99.99.R0.39](#) for further details.

### Course Work

The required academic performance criteria are in the syllabi. Each course syllabus contains explicit criteria for evaluating student performance and assigning grades. In the syllabi, assignments and examinations are described and assigned a value. All major assignments have a grading rubric to assess students' performance.

### Student Appeals of Instructor Evaluation (Academic Grievance)

The final grades awarded by instructors are their expert judgment concerning student performance. Students challenging a final grade must show that the instructor's judgment was unfair based on: some basis other than performance; standards different from those applied to other students in the same course section; or a substantial, unreasonable, and/or unannounced departure from previously articulated standards or the syllabus. Students may not use this process to appeal grades for individual assignments.

The [Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation 13.99.99.R0.05](#) procedure outlines the final grade appeal process to be initiated by students challenging their final grades. The procedures for Directors and Associate Directors apply to schools that do not have the Dean and/or Department Head reporting structure.

### Procedure for Student Complaint and Grievance Policy

1. The student shall discuss it with the faculty member in question within 10 business days following the beginning of the next regular semester.

2. If the complaint remains unresolved or if the student is not satisfied with the outcome of this meeting, the student shall file a written appeal to the Department Head with supporting documents within 10 business days.
3. In all levels of this process, it is the students' responsibility to demonstrate evidence of unfair academic evaluation.
4. The Department Head notifies the instructor of the appeal within 10 days of receiving it and shall determine the appropriate course of action.
5. The Department Head will issue a decision in writing to the student and the instructor within 20 business days of the filing of the appeal.
6. The student may submit a written appeal of the Department Head's decision to the Dean of the College in which the course is offered within 10 business days of the decision. See [Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation 13.99.99.R0.05](#) for detailed procedure.

### Incomplete

An [incomplete](#) can be given to a student in alignment with [university policy](#). Students with a passing grade in a course experiencing extreme personal circumstances may be considered for an incomplete in the course with the approval of the instructor. The student must request the incomplete by email as soon as the precipitating event occurs. The Faculty will post the grade of incomplete (X) and submit a [Plan for Completion](#) signed by the student to the Department Head. The grade of X must be removed within a year.

### Comprehensive Exam

The student who fails the comprehensive examination(s) may retake the exam when the Department Head or equivalent deems appropriate. Should the student fail the examination(s) upon the second attempt, a third and final attempt may be taken only with the recommendation of the Department Head or equivalent and approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. See detailed information in [University Procedure 11.99.99.R0.13 Examinations for Graduate Degrees](#).

### Procedure on Confidentiality of Student Academic Records and Test Scores

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that maintenance of student academic records has become a major concern in all institutions of higher education. Procedure [13.99.99.R0.02](#) provides guidance for compliance with The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Students have the primary right to inspect and review educational records and the right to request that a school correct educational records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading.

Students requesting transcripts of their academic records from the Registrar's Office must present proper identification before the transcript can be released. Transcripts may be requested by mail, fax, or online form, but **may not be requested by email**.

Transcripts are mailed by the Registrar's Office only on written authorization from the individual.

## Email Communication

Electronic mail is the [official means of communication](#) for all students (@leomail.tamuc.edu), faculty and staff (@tamuc.edu). The student email address will remain active throughout their academic career at this institution. Students are encouraged to monitor the official email daily. Students should avoid sending course assignments to faculty email unless otherwise advised.

The confidentiality of email cannot be guaranteed, as access may compromise confidentiality due to applicable laws or policies, unintended redistribution, or inadequate technologies. Therefore, extreme caution should be exercised when using email for confidential or sensitive matters, as it may not be private or confidential.

Examples of such information include, but are not limited to: driver's license numbers, credit card numbers, social security numbers, grades, academic history, medical information, criminal history, and financial details other than gross pay.

## Professional Performance

Professional Performance constitutes competencies in skills associated with the social work profession, citizenship in and out of the classroom, adherence to the Department Code of Conduct composed of TAMU-C Student Code of Conduct and National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. The Department Code of Conduct is reflective of professional and academic expectations. While poor professional performance is reflected in academic standing and comes to fruition through inability to maintain good standing academically, students may have strong academic skills without demonstrating professional behaviors expected of emerging social workers.

Students are expected to demonstrate maturity and utilize good communication and problem solving-skills when encountering challenges in the classroom or field placement. A student who does not demonstrate appropriate behaviors will not be appropriate for social work practice in the social work profession. Students who violate these Codes will be referred to the Academic and Professional Issues Committee.

All incoming students are required to take the Sexual Violence Prevention Training resulting in a hold in their account for non-compliance. Students must also sign an acknowledgement form indicating they read and agree to abide by the *NASW Code of Ethics* and the Student Code of Conduct as they are accepted in the program. Students are advised on the expected professional behaviors in the program, classroom and [field practicum](#). Every syllabi details information on course engagement, Department Code of Conduct *and policy on academic Integrity*.

## Department Student Code of Conduct

Social Work students are expected to adhere to ethical and professional standards. Compliance with the profession's ethical guidelines is crucial for maintaining public trust. Therefore, it is essential for students to demonstrate competency and ethical conduct in both academic and practicum settings, aligning with the ethical principles of the profession. Student conduct is to reflect the tenets of TAMU-C's codes of conduct and integrity and the NASW Code of Ethics.

## National Association of Social Work Code of Ethics

The School of Social Work expects all social work faculty members, staff, and students to conduct themselves in an ethical, professional manner, consistent with the [NASW Code of Ethics](#).

## University Code of Conduct

To become aware of university policies related to student academic and behavioral expectations for students refer to the [Student Guidebook](#).

## Academic Integrity

Graduate students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

- University Procedure [13.99.99.R0.10](#) Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty
  - Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty referral [Form](#)

### Use of Artificial Intelligence

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, Chatbots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

## TERMINATION

Termination from the program is the last and most adverse action the School of Social Work can take. Besides not meeting academic expectations, termination may occur due to professional performance misconduct, in accordance with specific professional standards unique to the field of social work, beyond those outlined in TAMU-C's policies and procedures. Thus, the School of Social Work reserves the right to dismiss from the program students who will not meet the professional expectations of the social work field.

Students may be terminated from the MSW Program due to not meeting the academic expectation to successfully complete the program and for engaging in ethical or professional misconduct that jeopardizes the well-being of self or others, including faculty, clients served, and/or agency personnel. Academic, professional or ethical performance cases will be referred to the School of Social Work's Professional Issues Committee (API)

### Professional Issues Committee (API)

The School of Social Work's Academic and Professional Issues Committee (API) addresses academic and professional performance and ethical issues with students. The API hearing is the formal path of due process for a student in regards to the academic or professional concerns being addressed.

The student will be referred to the [School of Social Work's Academic and Professional Issues Committee \(API\)](#) by faculty or faculty field liaisons when a concern arises regarding academic, student conduct and/or professional standards. When "a student who fails to meet the professional expectation of the field for which he/she is preparing may be suspended from further study in that program by the department administering that program" as demonstrated through ethical and/or legal violations or other concerns as determined by the Academic and Professional Issues Committee. The detailed procedure, timelines, and the committee members are described in the link above.

The School of Social Work also considers to rule probation, suspension, reinstatement or termination of a student following criteria outlined in the TAMU-C [Graduate Academic Probation, Retention, and Suspension](#) policy, [Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty policy](#) and TAMUC's [Student Code of Conduct](#).

### Academic Performance:

- Students with full admission status who fail to achieve and maintain an overall grade point average of 3.00 after the completion of twelve semester hours of graduate enrollment will be placed on academic probation. A student who fails to achieve a 3.00 overall grade point average by the end of the next semester of enrollment will be placed on academic suspension for a period of two semesters. (Two summer terms count as one semester.)

- Students with conditional admission status who fail to achieve a 3.00 grade point average after the completion of twelve semester hours will be suspended and will not be allowed to pursue further graduate study in a degree program for one year.
- Students on academic suspension may, after the suspension period, be reinstated and allowed to enroll only upon recommendation of the MSW Field Director, MSW Program Director and the Department Head with the approval of the Graduate Dean.

## Academic Dishonesty

Faculty and staff are required to promote and uphold student integrity and honesty by fostering an environment conducive to academic honesty. Academic dishonesty encompasses actions that breach widely accepted standards of academic integrity such as:

- **Cheating:** Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices or materials in any academic exercise. Unauthorized materials may include anything or anyone that gives a student assistance, and has not been specifically approved in advance by the instructor.
- **Complicity:** Intentionally or knowingly helping, or attempting to help, another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.
- **Abuse And Misuse Of Access And Unauthorized Access:** Students may not abuse or misuse computer access or gain unauthorized access to information in any academic exercise.
- **Fabrication:** Making up data or results, and recording or reporting them; submitting fabricated documents.
- **Falsification:** Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.
- **Forgery:** Making a fictitious document, or altering an existing document, with the intent to deceive or gain advantage.
- **Multiple Submissions:** Submitting substantial portions of the same work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without authorization from the instructor of the class for which the student submits the work.
- **Plagiarism:** The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit. Note: If someone in a group commits academic misconduct, the entire group could be held responsible for it as well. It is important to document clearly who contributes what parts to the joint project, to know what group members are doing, and how they are acquiring the material they provide.
- **Rules On Research:** Students involved in conducting research and/or scholarly activities at Texas A&M University-Commerce must also adhere to standards set forth in 15.99.03.R1 Ethics in Research and Scholarship.



- **Violation Of Departmental Or College Rules:** Students may not violate any departmental or college rule relating to academic matters.

To hold students accountable for academic dishonesty, the School of Social Work follows the [Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty policy](#). Access this policy to review the levels of dishonesty charge, hearing and disciplinary appeals procedures.

## Professional Behavior

To create and preserve a learning environment that optimizes teaching and learning, the School of Social Work expects students to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that does not disrupt teaching or learning. Students are expected at all times to recognize constituted authority, to conform to the ordinary rules of good conduct, to be truthful, to respect the rights of others, to protect private and public property, and to make the best use of their time toward an education according to TAMUC's disciplinary procedures and sanctions indicated in the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

The following conduct standards at the University are listed to provide students with general notice of prohibited behaviors. Violations of the following conduct standards can result in dismissal from the MSW program and the University.

- Abuse of the Student Conduct Process
- Alcohol
- Animal Cruelty
- Complicity
- Damage to Property
- Damage to Fire Safety Equipment
- Dating Violence
- Discrimination
- Disorderly Conduct/Disruptive Activity
- Domestic Violence
- Drugs
- Expressive Activity
- Failure to Comply
- False Information/Fraud/Misrepresentation
- Harassment (Harassment; Racial Harassment; Bias)
- Harm to Person(s)
- Hazing
- Misuse of Computing Resources
- Misuse of Keys/Access Cards
- Recurring Misconduct
- Retaliation
- Theft
- Unauthorized Presence In or Use of University Facilities
- Violation of Federal, State or Local Law
- Violation of University Policies

- Smoke, Vapor and Tobacco
- Weapons
- Sex-based Misconduct

Besides the Student Code of Conduct the, the School of Social Work follows the tenets of the [Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty policy](#) which states regarding professional behavior *"A student who fails to meet the professional expectation of the field for which he/she is preparing may be suspended from further study in that program by the department administering that program."*

## **STUDENT RIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN DECISION MAKING**

Social work students have the right and opportunity to participate and propose in the formulation and amendments of academic and student affairs policies through a variety of institutional and departmental forums.

### **Advisory Board**

Students have the right to a representative in the Social Work Advisory Board. This advisory body is constituted by two faculty members who co-coordinate and facilitate the forums, the Department Head, a former student (alumni), community leaders, representatives from field agencies and field instructors, and a student representative from the BSW and MSW programs.

The Advisory Board meets in the Fall and Spring semesters with the goal to advise the School of Social Work on knowledge and skills students must develop to respond to the community and service organizations' trending needs, thus fostering a high standard of excellence to future social workers. Students interested in representing peers of their program must email their Program Director or Department Head.

### **Town Hall Meetings**

The Department Head will convene two student town hall meetings every academic year. MSW students will participate in one of the forums electronically and the BSWs' face-to-face. Online access will be available for undergraduate students that cannot make it in person.

The president of TAMU-C calls the student body to attend town hall meetings throughout the year on policies, issues and unforeseen events that have or may impact them. All students may attend the forums to glean information and express concerns or make suggestions on the matter at hand.

### **Department Head Communication**

BSW and MSW students will receive an email at the beginning of each semester from the Department Head informing of the open door policy. Students may visit in person, online or communicate via email to express concerns and recommendations related to schedules, course content, delivery of the curriculum, class dynamics and other relevant issues. Students are also encouraged to bring forth issues that impact their academic or professional performance and offer their feedback on how to better serve their needs to their instructor and Program Director.

### **Mid-term Course Assessments**

MSW and BSW students have the opportunity to assess their courses at mid-term with the objective to confirm or suggest strategies that help them learn both in a face-to-face or online learning environment. Faculty will administer a survey in each course at mid-term and will make needed and viable adjustments to the remaining semester.

## **End of Semester Course Evaluations**

All students have the right and responsibility in completing a course evaluation administered by TAMU-C. Students may use this vehicle to express the issues faced during the semester and present recommendations for the School, program or course. This evaluation is confidential and both the faculty and the Department Head have access to it several weeks after the grades are posted.

## **Departmental Committees**

Students have the right to participate in departmental committees regarding curriculum and multicultural competency development. The Department Head will email all BSW and MSW students about the opportunity to serve in the committees at the beginning of each academic year. Students interested in representing their peers must email the Department Head to be considered. A student from each program will be appointed to a one-academic year term.

# STUDENT ORGANIZATION OPPORTUNITIES

## Phi Alpha Honor Society

The purpose of the Phi Alpha Honor Society is to promote humanitarian goals and ideas while strengthening the bond among students, faculty, staff and community at large. Phi Alpha fosters high education standards and invites membership for those who have achieved academic excellence in social work. The Delta Kappa Rho Chapter of Phi Alpha Honor Society at Texas A&M University-Commerce aims to strengthen communities through service projects and produce scholarly research by addressing societal issues and seeking innovative social work practices. Students are encouraged to aspire to and apply for membership in the national honor society, Phi Alpha.

### Eligibility

A graduate student is eligible for membership after achieving the following national and local chapter (Delta Kappa Rho) requirements:

1. have been admitted to the social work program;
2. have successfully completed 9 credits of graduate Social Work courses (3 classes);
3. have a 4.0 or higher Institutional Grade Point Average (IGPA);
4. be in good standing with the university and School of Social Work.

For more details, contact Advisors:

- Prof. Tammy Sung ([tammy.sung@tamuc.edu](mailto:tammy.sung@tamuc.edu))
- Dr. Ahfiya Howard ([ahfiya.howard@tamuc.edu](mailto:ahfiya.howard@tamuc.edu))

## NASW-Texas Social Work Advocacy Day

Students have the opportunity to attend the Social Work Advocacy Day at the Texas Capital. The School of Social Work and the University will provide financial support when resources are available. Students may self-nominate to receive the Andrew Marks Student Advocacy Award during the event. An MSW and BSW student will receive this award for advocacy efforts undertaken to make a change at the local, state, or national level.

## NASW-Texas Annual Conference

Students may attend the NASW-Texas Annual Conference and participate as volunteers. The School of Social Work and the University will provide financial support when resources are available.

# SCHOLARSHIPS

## Title IV-E

The Title IV-E program is a joint initiative between the federal government and the TAMU-C Social Work Program. Its goal is to educate and train future social workers within the Texas Department of Family Services System (DFPS) or a designated Community-Based Care (CBC) agency. Qualified individuals, both BSW and MSW students, receive a stipend to train and work in the child welfare system. Upon graduation, the students will be provided a position with benefits and work eight months in that position for each stipend received. Title IV-E covers the cost of books and tuition for MSW students who are already working within the DFPS system in a qualified position seeking a master's in social work.

Eligible students must complete an interview process with the regional DFPS representatives at the end of the field placement semester, be eligible for graduation with a BSW degree, and pass a variety of background tests, including criminal history, TDFPS, Child Abuse Registry, driving record checks, and any pre-employment assessments from either the DFPS or CBC agency. For additional information, please contact the Title IV-E Coordinator.

## Study Abroad Scholarships

Students registered at Texas A&M University-Commerce (TAMU-C) are eligible to apply for study abroad scholarships through the International Programs Office. The University makes such funds available to assist students and to make study abroad opportunities more affordable. Summer programs scholarships are up to \$1,000 and for programs of longer duration \$1,500. All participants in the same program receive the same amount of scholarship support and funds are disbursed directly into student accounts via the Scholarship Office. For more information visit [here](#).

## Founder's Master of Social Work Scholarship Endowment

The Founder's Master of Social Work Scholarship Endowment Scholarship is for students who are fully admitted to the MSW program and have completed one full semester of graduate social work. For more information visit [here](#).

## Amy Mallett Social Work Endowment

The Amy Mallett Social Work Endowment is for all students pursuing the Social Work major. For further details visit [here](#).

## Hogg Foundation for Mental Health Scholarship

The Hogg Foundation awards Ima Hogg Scholarships to students pursuing a Masters in Social Work committed to joining the mental health workforce. Students must be nominated by the heads of their social work programs. For more information visit [here](#).

# STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

## Academic Support Services

### Student Disability Services

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

#### Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Room 162

Phone: (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax: (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

## Other Academic Support Services

<p><b>Financial Aid, Grants and Loans</b>  <a href="mailto:FAO.Web@tamuc.edu">FAO.Web@tamuc.edu</a>                  903.886.5096                  Website:  <a href="https://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/cost-and-aid/financial-aid/">https://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/cost-and-aid/financial-aid/</a>                  For students to make appointments with FAO:  <a href="https://calendly.com/fao-web/fao-30-minute-meeting">https://calendly.com/fao-web/fao-30-minute-meeting</a></p>	<p><b>Scholarships</b>  <a href="mailto:Scholarships@tamuc.edu">Scholarships@tamuc.edu</a>                  Website:  <a href="https://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/cost-and-aid/scholarships/">https://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/cost-and-aid/scholarships/</a></p>
<p><b>Veterans and Military Services</b>  <a href="mailto:VeteransServices@tamuc.edu">VeteransServices@tamuc.edu</a>                  903.886.5123                  903.886.5214                  Website:  <a href="https://www.tamuc.edu/veterans-and-military-services/">https://www.tamuc.edu/veterans-and-military-services/</a></p>	<p><b>Office of the Registrar</b>  <a href="mailto:RegOfc@tamuc.edu">RegOfc@tamuc.edu</a>                  903.886.5068                  Website: <a href="https://www.tamuc.edu/registrar/">https://www.tamuc.edu/registrar/</a></p>
<p><b>Library</b>  <a href="mailto:ask@tamuc.libanswers.com">ask@tamuc.libanswers.com</a>                  Website: <a href="https://www.tamuc.edu/library/">https://www.tamuc.edu/library/</a></p>	<p><b>Graduate School</b>  <a href="mailto:Graduate.School@tamuc.edu">Graduate.School@tamuc.edu</a></p>



	903.886.5163 Website: <a href="https://www.tamuc.edu/graduate-school/">https://www.tamuc.edu/graduate-school/</a>
<b>Writing Center</b> <a href="https://www.tamuc.edu/writing-center/">https://www.tamuc.edu/writing-center/</a>	<b>Student Disability Services</b> <a href="mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu">StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu</a> 903.886.5150 Website: <a href="https://www.tamuc.edu/student-disability-services/">https://www.tamuc.edu/student-disability-services/</a>

## Social, Emotional and Mental Health

### Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities at federally funded institutions. [Title IX](#) protects students, faculty, staff and visitors to our campus from all forms of sex discrimination. The Office of University Ethics and Compliance is responsible for the investigation and resolution of alleged violations of A&M-Commerce’s civil rights policies, including Title IX. Reach out to the Title IX Coordinator at any time with questions about civil rights/Title IX at [TitleIX@tamuc.edu](mailto:TitleIX@tamuc.edu) or 903.886.5991.

According to the University Procedure [08.01.01.R2.03 Student Pregnancy and Parenting Support](#), students can request for academic accommodations due to pregnancy, childbirth, and/or related health care. Furthermore, this procedure addresses a student’s or instructor’s request for risk-reduction modification of programs/classes that may involve exposure to chemicals, radiation, or other circumstances that could harm an unborn child.

*To obtain accommodations regarding pregnancy, students must inform the instructor and request accommodations to the Title IX Coordinator via email to [TitleIX@tamuc.edu](mailto:TitleIX@tamuc.edu).*

### Counseling Center

The [Counseling Center](#) at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connections to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center’s crisis assessment services by calling 903.886.5145. For emergency resources visit: <https://www.tamuc.edu/counseling-center/emergency-resources/>

### Student Advocacy & Support Services

Students work together with supportive staff to discover solutions to the challenges they face as a student. The staff uses a case management approach to assist students in navigating on-campus and off-campus resources. The assistance offered includes:

- Individual meetings to assess concerns of students in distress or crisis
- Referrals to campus and/or community resources

- Consultations with faculty, staff and the community on a variety of issues
- Assist students who need assistance but are unsure which office to contact

For further information, visit the [Student Advocacy and Support](https://www.tamuc.edu/student-advocacy-support/) webpage at <https://www.tamuc.edu/student-advocacy-support/>

<p>Nikki Barnett  <a href="mailto:Nikki.Barnett@tamuc.edu">Nikki.Barnett@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Director</b>  <b>Student Advocacy &amp; Support Services</b></p>	<p>Jaci Fulton  <a href="mailto:Jaci.Fulton@tamuc.edu">Jaci.Fulton@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Assistant Director</b>  <b>Student Advocacy &amp; Support Services</b></p>
<p>Elisabeth Dillard  <a href="mailto:Elisabeth.Dillard@tamuc.edu">Elisabeth.Dillard@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Coordinator and Victim Advocate</b>  <b>Student Advocacy &amp; Support Services</b></p>	<p>Maxine Mendoza-Welch  <a href="mailto:Maxine.Mmendo@tamuc.edu">Maxine.Mmendo@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Director</b>  <b>Student Health Services</b></p>
<p>Amanda Berry  <a href="mailto:Amanda.Berry@tamuc.edu">Amanda.Berry@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Title IX Coordinator</b>  <b>Civil Rights Administrator</b></p>	<p>Carrie Williams  <a href="mailto:Carrie.Williams@tamuc.edu">Carrie.Williams@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Director</b>  <b>Student Disability Services</b></p>
<p>Marcy Louis  <a href="mailto:Marcy.Louis@tamuc.edu">Marcy.Louis@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Director</b>  <b>Student Rights &amp; Responsibilities</b></p>	<p>Jason Douglas  <a href="mailto:Jayson.Douglas@tamuc.edu">Jayson.Douglas@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Executive Director</b>  <b>Student Access &amp; Success</b></p>
<p><b>Counseling Center</b>                  903.886.5145                  Website:  <a href="https://www.tamuc.edu/counseling-center/">https://www.tamuc.edu/counseling-center/</a></p>	

## Technical Support

<p><b>TK20</b>                  Jill Woodruff (Manager Data Systems and Accountability for the COEHS)  <a href="mailto:Jill.Woodruff@tamuc.edu">Jill.Woodruff@tamuc.edu</a>                  903.886.5886  <i>(For technical issues regarding sign-in issues, missing binders of students and field instructors, etc.)</i></p>	
<p><b>Center for IT Excellence Help Desk</b>  <a href="mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu">helpdesk@tamuc.edu</a>                  903.468.6000  <i>(For difficulties accessing myLeo Portal, to reset passwords, access forgotten CWID, etc)</i></p>	<p><b>myLeo Online Brightspace (D2L)</b>  <a href="https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/">https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/</a>                  877.325.7778  <i>(For questions regarding difficulty with on-line Classes on D2L)</i></p>

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK DIRECTORY

### Faculty and Staff

<p>Gracie Brownell  <a href="mailto:Gracie.Brownell@tamuc.edu">Gracie.Brownell@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>MSW Program Director</b>  <b>Associate Professor</b></p>	<p>Brian Brumley  <a href="mailto:Brian.Brumley@tamuc.edu">Brian.Brumley@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>BSW Field Director</b>  <b>Clinical Instructor</b></p>
<p>Leanne Farquhar  <a href="mailto:Leanne.Farquhar@tamuc.edu">Leanne.Farquhar@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>MSW Administrative Coordinator II</b></p>	<p>Ahfiya Howard  <a href="mailto:Ahfiya.Howard@tamuc.edu">Ahfiya.Howard@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Assistant Professor</b></p>
<p>Rebecca Judd  <a href="mailto:Rebecca.Judd@tamuc.edu">Rebecca.Judd@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Associate Professor</b></p>	<p>Avril Knox  <a href="mailto:Avril.Knox@tamuc.edu">Avril.Knox@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>MSW Field Director</b>  <b>Assistant Professor</b></p>
<p>Benjamin May  <a href="mailto:Benjamin.May@tamuc.edu">Benjamin.May@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Associate Professor</b></p>	<p>Marta A. Mercado-Sierra  <a href="mailto:Marta.Mercado-Sierra@tamuc.edu">Marta.Mercado-Sierra@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Assistant Department Head</b>  <b>Associate Professor</b></p>
<p>Brenda Moore  <a href="mailto:Brenda.Moore@tamuc.edu">Brenda.Moore@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>BSW Program Director</b>  <b>Assistant Professor</b></p>	<p>Dawn Nelson  <a href="mailto:Dawn.Nelson@tamuc.edu">Dawn.Nelson@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Clinical Instructor</b></p>
<p>Lyndsey Norris  <a href="mailto:Lyndsey.Norris@tamuc.edu">Lyndsey.Norris@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Clinical Instructor</b></p>	<p>Wendy Nutt  <a href="mailto:Wendy.Nutt@tamuc.edu">Wendy.Nutt@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>BSW Administrative Associate II</b></p>
<p>Marcella Smith  <a href="mailto:Marcella.Smith@tamuc.edu">Marcella.Smith@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Department Head</b>  <b>Associate Professor</b>  <b>Title IV-E PI</b></p>	<p>Tammy Sung  <a href="mailto:Tammy.Sung@tamuc.edu">Tammy.Sung@tamuc.edu</a>  <b>Clinical Instructor</b>  <b>Title IV-E Coordinator</b></p>