



Samford University

School of Public Health

Social Work

**Master of Social Work Program
Student Handbook**

Table of Contents

Welcome from the Chair	1
Section I: Background Info	2
History of Samford University.....	2
History of the MSW Program.....	2
MSW Program Mission.....	2
MSW Program Goals.....	3
CSWE Core Competencies.....	3
MSW Program Overview.....	7
Section II: Policies	8
Samford University Non-Discrimination Policy.....	8
Students with Disabilities.....	8
Department of Social Work Affirmative Action Policy.....	8
Admission Criteria.....	9
Non-Repetition of BSW Program Content.....	11
Advanced Standing.....	11
Transfer Policy.....	11
No Credit for Life Experience or Work Experience.....	12
Grading Policies.....	12
Grievance Procedure.....	13
Termination for Reasons of Academic or Professional Performance.....	14
Academic Advising.....	18
Substance Abuse Policy and Procedures.....	19
Background Check.....	23
Health Data and Immunization Requirements.....	23
Liability Insurance.....	24
Progression Policy.....	24
Withdrawal Policy.....	25
Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).....	25
Sexual Harassment Policy.....	26
Readmission Policy.....	26
Format for Written Work.....	26
Full-time and Part-time Status.....	26
Independent Study.....	26
Graduation and Commencement.....	27
Student Participation/Representation in MSW Program Policy Development.....	27
Student Organization.....	28
Section III: Campus Services and Information	29
Books and Supplies.....	29
Campus Safety.....	29
Inclement Weather.....	29
Emergency Notification.....	29
Smoking Policy.....	30
Computer Labs.....	30
Samford University Email Account.....	30

Samford University Campus Portal.....	30
Library Services.....	30
Mailing Address and Name Changes.....	31
Parking.....	31
University Health Services.....	31
Professional Liability Insurance.....	31
Course Evaluations.....	32
Section IV: Releases and Permissions	33
Substance Abuse Policy Release Form.....	34
Samford University MSW Program Confidentiality Statement.....	35
Receipt of Student Handbook.....	35
Permission to Provide References.....	35
Permission to Display/Present Work.....	36

Welcome from the Chair

Dear Students,

Welcome to the Samford University MSW Program. On behalf of the faculty and staff, I want to say that we are delighted that you've chosen to pursue the MSW degree at Samford and excited to get to know you better and be a part of this next step in your journey.

As our mission statement says, we strive to be a distinctively Christian learning community that prepares students for lives of service as social workers. As such we believe that education happens best where people are committed to learning and growing together. We also believe that our faith leads to special opportunities for the development of community and for personal and professional growth. We also recognize that people are at different points in their faith journey, therefore people from all faith backgrounds (or none at all) are welcome.

Social work is a distinct discipline that intervenes on multiple levels in the emotional, behavioral and spiritual lives of people through work with individuals, families, groups and communities, especially those who are marginalized, oppressed or vulnerable. Social work is more than simply a career, and whether you believe that your pursuit of social work is a call from God, or simply a desire to serve others, the MSW program at Samford is committed to engaging students in an educational experience that will prepare you for competent practice.

I am hopeful that you will find an environment at Samford that allows you to pursue your passion and call to service. There are many opportunities to be involved not only in the program, but also throughout the campus and community. We look forward to being with you on this part of your journey and hope that your time in the MSW program is both challenging and enriching.

I welcome you to reach out to me if you have questions, concerns or suggestions along the way, or if you simply want to stop by and say hi! May God bless you as you learn and grow at Samford.

Warmest thoughts,

Lisa Baker

Lisa Baker, Ph.D., L.I.C.S.W.

Department Chair/Professor

Section I: Background Information

History of Samford University

Samford University, the 87th oldest university in the United States, was founded as Howard College on January 3, 1842 in Marion, Alabama. The campus was moved to Birmingham, Alabama in 1887 and the name was changed to Samford University in 1965. Samford University is accredited by the [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges](#) (SACS-COC) to award bachelors, masters, educational specialists, and doctoral degrees. The most recent reaffirmation of accreditation action was taken by SACS-COC in 2007. In addition to SACS-COC accreditation, professional schools at Samford University are accredited by such organizations as the American Bar Association, American Council on Pharmaceutical Education, National Association of Schools of Music, Association of Theological Schools, Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs, Council for Interior Design Accreditation, National Association of Schools of Music, and Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

History of the MSW Program

On December 3, 2013, the Samford University Board of Trustees approved the development of a new Department of Social Work, to be housed in the School of Public Health and the College of Health Sciences. The Trustees also approved the MSW Program as the first academic program to be developed by the new Department of Social Work.

The addition of a Department of Social Work and an MSW Program was a logical extension of Samford University's mission and its long history of service to humanity. Samford's mission *is to nurture persons in their development of intellect, creativity, faith, and personhood. As a Christian university, the community fosters academic, career, and ethical competency while encouraging social and civic responsibility and service to others.* The university was originally founded in 1841 as Howard College, named in honor of John Howard, an Eighteenth-century, English social reformer whose Christian faith led him to devote his life to visiting, and advocating for, individuals who were being held in inhumane prison conditions. Over its nearly two hundred years of existence, Samford has sought to emulate Howard's commitment to serve humanity in the name of Christ. The MSW Program affords the Samford community an additional avenue to pursue its mission of providing service to humanity in the name of Christ.

MSW Program Mission

The mission of the Samford University Master of Social Work (MSW) Program is to be a distinctively Christian learning community that prepares graduates for lives of service as advanced social workers who promote healing, wholeness, and reconciliation. In order to prepare its graduates for ethical and competent service, the MSW Program:

- Is academically rigorous and emphasizes mastery of the core knowledge, values, and skills of the social work profession; application of the person and environment construct; and integration of research and practice.
- Emphasizes promotion of human rights and social and economic justice, as a reflection of God’s desire for justice and love for all of humanity.
- Promotes interdisciplinary collaboration, in order to address the complex and multifaceted nature of human needs and concerns.
- Understands human diversity as a reflection of God’s creativity and imagination and prepares advanced social work practitioners who value diversity and practice with cultural sensitivity.

The MSW Program equips students for professional service through a concentration in advanced clinical practice working with individuals, families and small groups. Its course work emphasizes the use of evidence-informed interventions, while recognizing the need for practitioner flexibility and client self-determination. Students will develop skills in assessing, diagnosis and intervening with diverse populations. They will learn how to develop client strengths to address complex mental, health and behavioral health issues and improve client functioning. The program’s unique context, location, and mission combine to offer students opportunities to develop advanced social work skills in rural, urban, and international practice settings in both faith-based and secular organizations.

MSW Program Goals

The Samford University Master of Social Work Program will:

1. Prepare ethical and competent social work practitioners who integrate practice and research, promote human rights and social justice, practice with cultural sensitivity, and display a commitment to service.
2. Create opportunities for interdisciplinary and interprofessional collaboration and learning.
3. Prepare graduates to ethically integrate faith and social work practice.
4. Maintain a global perspective that balances sensitivity to local issues and concerns with opportunities for national and international service, collaboration, and learning.

CSWE Core Competencies

As an accredited program the Department of Social Work implements the Core Competencies as outlined by the CSWE 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. We also include an extra competency (Competency #10) that reflects our faith-based mission.

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by

principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (A DEI) in Practice

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility

and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

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

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects well-being, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights-based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings.

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

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

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

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making.

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

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

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

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Competency 10: Utilize knowledge of spirituality and religion in social work practice and ethically integrate personal faith with professional social work practice.

MSW Program Overview

The MSW Program consists of two sequences of courses: the initial Foundation Sequence, which emphasizes the development advanced generalist social work knowledge, values, and skills, and the Concentration Sequence, which emphasizes the development of additional advanced social work knowledge, values, and skills related to a specific area of concentration. The program

currently offers one concentration in advanced clinical practice. Completion of the curriculum requires two years of full-time study. Part-time study options allow students to complete the MSW curriculum in three or four years. An advanced standing option, which allows the MSW curriculum to be completed in one year of full-time study (or two years of part-time study), is available for students who have earned a baccalaureate degree in social work and met additional eligibility criteria.

Section II: Policies

Samford University Non-Discrimination Policy

Samford University complies with applicable laws prohibiting discrimination, including applicable provisions of and amendments to Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Executive Order 11246, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or services. Inquiries and concerns regarding this policy may be directed to the vice president for business affairs or general counsel, Office of Business and Financial Affairs, 200 Samford Hall, Birmingham, AL 35229, 205-726-2811. This notice is available in alternative formats upon request.

Students with Disabilities

The MSW Program endorses the university's commitment to students with disabilities. The MSW Program will provide accessible programs, services, and activities and reasonable accommodations for any student with a disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

To be eligible for program accommodation, students must self-identify to the Office of Disability Resources (DR), who will determine eligibility for services. Once eligibility for accommodations is determined by DR, it is the students' responsibility to request appropriate accommodations.

Social work is a practice discipline with cognitive, sensory, affective, and psychomotor performance requirements. Qualified individuals are those who satisfy admission requirements and who can practice in compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics, as well as applicable state and national ethics codes. If a student is unable to practice within the parameters established by such ethical codes, the faculty reserves the right to withdraw the student from field placement courses.

Department of Social Work Affirmative Action Policy

As an outgrowth of its Christian orientation and professional social work values base, the Samford University Department of Social Work affirms the importance of diversity among its faculty, staff, and students. The Department of Social Work is committed to recruiting and retaining faculty, staff, and students from under-represented groups. In order to do so, the Department of Social Work will identify and remove barriers that negatively affect members of under-represented groups and develop policies and practices that respect the dignity and worth of all people consistent with the university's policies on nondiscrimination.

Admission Criteria

Individuals who do not possess a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work must meet the following criteria:

- Applicants must hold an earned bachelor's degree from a college or university accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association. Please note: A completed bachelor's degree, as evidenced by an official college/university transcript, is required prior to enrollment in the MSW Program. Applicants may receive conditional acceptance into the MSW Program by submitting a transcript that demonstrates that they are enrolled in their final semester of undergraduate coursework. The conditional status is removed upon receipt of an official transcript demonstrating that the baccalaureate degree has been completed.
- Applicants must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00 on a 4.0 scale or a minimum of a 3.2 GPA during their last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework. Applicants who have a GPA of at least 2.8 may submit an application for consideration with an MAT or GRE score. Potential applicants who have a GPA lower than 2.8 may be granted an exception to the GPA requirement. All exceptions will be reviewed by the admission committee. GRE or MAT scores and additional supporting documentation of the applicant's potential for success as a graduate student may be requested for an exception to the GPA requirement.
- The GRE or MAT is not required; however, an applicant who does not meet the GPA requirement may submit an acceptable GRE or MAT score for admission consideration. Acceptable scores are as follows:
 - MAT: 402
 - GRE: Verbal: 153; Quantitative: 144; Analytical: 4.0
- Candidates who do not meet the GPA requirement (i.e., a 3.0 cumulative GPA or a 3.2 GPA for the final 60 hours of undergraduate coursework) are admitted conditionally and must earn a grade of B- or higher in their first semester of MSW Program courses in order to move from conditional status to full acceptance status. Students who earn a grade lower than a B- in any of their first semester MSW Program courses will be terminated from the social work program. Students who are terminated from conditional admission status may follow the grievance procedure outlined in the student handbook to appeal their termination.

Individuals who have earned a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and are applying for Advanced Standing status must meet the following criteria:

- Applicants must hold a baccalaureate social work degree from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), recognized through CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service, or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors. Please note: A completed bachelor's degree in social work, as evidenced by an official college/university transcript, is required prior to enrollment. Applicants may receive conditional acceptance into the MSW Program by submitting a transcript that demonstrates that they are enrolled in their final semester of undergraduate coursework. The conditional status is removed upon receipt of an official transcript demonstrating that the baccalaureate degree has been completed.

- Applicants must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00 on a 4.0 scale or a minimum of a 3.2 GPA during their last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework.
- Applicants must have received a grade of B- or higher in all required undergraduate social work courses. Please note: Applicants with a grade lower than B- in no more than two social work courses may apply for Advanced Standing. If accepted, these students will be required to complete analogous courses in the Samford University MSW Program with a grade of B- or higher. These courses will be required in addition to all courses required for Advanced Standing and may not be substituted for required MSW courses or for required MSW Program electives. Applicants who have more than two courses with grades lower than B- are not eligible for Advanced Standing, but may apply for admission to the full MSW Program if they meet the admission criteria.

All applicants must:

- Submit three letters of reference through the online portal. The three required reference letters should be from a current or previous professor, a work supervisor and a professional colleague.
- Have completed an undergraduate level statistics class with a grade of C or higher. Applicants who have not completed a statistics course may receive conditional acceptance. Such applicants will be required to submit evidence of completion of a statistics course prior to enrollment in the program.
- Academic Writing Sample: Please upload an academic paper that you have written in the past. If possible, submit a research paper in which you have cited books or journal articles. The paper you upload should demonstrate your ability to collect information from multiple sources and synthesize it into a coherent product. If you do not have access to an academic paper you have written in the past, please write and submit a 3-5 page paper about a topic of your choice related to the social work field. Please be sure to cite academic sources in the paper.
- Personal Statement: Please write a personal statement (3-5 double-spaced pages) that discusses your interest in the social work profession and your reasons for pursuing the MSW degree. Please address the following points in your statement:
 - The reasons you are pursuing the MSW degree at this time
 - Your field of career interest within social work and the ways that you envision the MSW degree preparing you to work effectively in that field
 - Your career goals following graduation
 - Your reasons for choosing Samford's MSW program

Advanced Standing Applicants must also submit:

- Field Evaluation: Please submit the final evaluation from your undergraduate social work field placement experience. This evaluation should be completed by the social worker who supervised your field placement and/or the faculty member who oversaw the field placement. If you don't have a copy of your field evaluation, please have your field supervisor write a letter that discusses the nature and quality of the work that you performed during the field placement, then upload that letter.

English Proficiency Requirement

International applicants or American citizens who learned English as a second language must score at least 550 (paper), 213 (computer), or 80 (internet) on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

Non-Repetition of BSW Program Content

The Samford University MSW Program avoids having BSW graduates repeat content that has been mastered in their undergraduate programs by awarding advanced standing status to qualified individuals.

Advanced Standing

The criteria for advanced standing are as follows:

- Applicants must hold a baccalaureate social work degree from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), recognized through CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service, or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors. Please note: A completed bachelor's degree in social work, as evidenced by an official college/university transcript, is required prior to enrollment. Applicants may receive conditional acceptance into the MSW Program by submitting a transcript that demonstrates that they are enrolled in their final semester of undergraduate coursework. The conditional status is removed upon receipt of an official transcript demonstrating that the baccalaureate degree has been completed.
- Applicants must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00 on a 4.0 scale or a minimum of a 3.2 GPA during their last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework.
- Applicants must have received a grade of B- or higher in all required undergraduate social work courses. Please note: Applicants with a grade lower than B- in no more than two social work courses may apply for Advanced Standing. If accepted, these students will be required to complete analogous courses in the Samford University MSW Program with a grade of B- or higher. These courses will be required in addition to all courses required for Advanced Standing and may not be substituted for required MSW courses or for required MSW Program electives. Applicants who have more than two courses with grades lower than B- are not eligible for Advanced Standing, but may apply for admission to the full MSW Program if they meet the admission criteria.

Transfer Policy

The MSW Program policy regarding the transfer of credits is as follows:

External Transfer of Credits: Students may transfer up to 12 credits of Foundation Sequence coursework from another CSWE-accredited MSW program. Students must submit the course syllabus for the actual course they completed (a syllabus from the same course offered in a different term or format is not acceptable). The course syllabus and request for transfer credit will be reviewed by the instructor of the analogous Samford MSW Program course and by the MSW Program Director, who will make the final decision regarding awarding transfer credit. Students who are requesting transfer credit may make this request during the application process or immediately after they are admitted to the program. Transfer credit may be requested for any

course in the Foundation Sequence. In special circumstances the MSW Program Director may grant an exception to the 12 credit hour policy to allow additional credit hours. This will occur to avoid placing undue hardship on students who have already completed MSW courses at another institution, and to avoid duplication of content per CSWE accreditation guidelines. Students must complete at least 30 credit hours at Samford to receive a degree from Samford University.

Internal Transfer of Credits: Students who are enrolled in the final year of an undergraduate program of study at Samford University may be permitted to complete courses from the Foundation Sequence of the MSW Program in place of undergraduate elective courses and/or in lieu of similar courses required by their undergraduate program of study. Such students retain their undergraduate status and are not admitted to the MSW Program, nor are they guaranteed admission to the MSW Program in the future. These students may apply for entry into the Samford University MSW Program by following the standard application procedure required of all prospective students. After their undergraduate degree has been awarded, qualified students may be admitted into the MSW program. These students may be permitted to transfer up to 30 Foundation Sequence MSW course credits completed during the final year of undergraduate studies into the MSW Program. In order to be eligible for this internal transfer program, students must have received a grade of “B-” or higher for each course they wish to transfer. Students must be pre-approved by the directors of both their undergraduate program of study and the MSW Program prior to enrolling in graduate-level courses. The pre-approval of both directors is necessary in order to ensure that students who participate in this program have the academic ability and background necessary to succeed in the courses.

No Credit for Life Experience or Work Experience

The Samford University MSW Program does not award academic credit for life experience or previous work experience.

Grading Policies

MSW Program students are evaluated using the following grading scale:

A 93-100%	B+ 87-89.9%	C+ 77-79.9%	D+ 67-69.9%	F 59.9% and below
A- 90-92.9%	B 83-86.9%	C 73-76.9%	D 63-66.9%	
	B- 80-82.9%	C- 70-72.9%	D- 60-62.9%	

Grading policies for field placement:

MSW Program students are assigned a grade from the grading scale (see above) for each Field Placement course. The grade includes both assignments graded by the field instructor, as well as a grade for Field Placement Performance. The Field Placement Performance Grade is based on the following criteria:

- a. Professionalism in communication, dress, appearance, and behavior
- b. Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics and other applicable ethical codes

- c. Effectiveness in performing assigned professional tasks
- d. Completion of Student Learning Contract Goals
- e. Progress toward mastery of the 11 Competencies and attendant practice behaviors as specified in the Student Learning Contract

At the end of the semester, the Field Instructor (the agency-based staff person who provides on-site supervision for the field student) recommends a Field Placement Performance Grade for the student. The final Field Placement Performance Grade is determined by the Field Liaison (the Samford University faculty member who oversees the field placement experience).

Students are expected to behave in an appropriate and professional manner at all times. This expectation requires students to dress modestly and professionally, to use professional language, to show appropriate respect for administrators, faculty, staff, students, and clients, to abide by all policies of Samford University, the MSW Program, and the field agency, and to be punctual. Inappropriate behavior will be addressed by the Field Instructor, who will discuss the behavior with the student and report it to the Field Liaison. If the behavior continues despite this informal intervention, or if the behavior is extremely inappropriate, a formal remediation process will be utilized. This process requires the student, the Field Instructor, and the Field Liaison to develop a written behavioral contract that specifies the behavioral changes that the student must make, as well as the consequences that will occur if the changes are not made. Consequences may include termination of the field placement or a grade reduction. All behavioral contracts must be reviewed and signed by the Director of Field Education and the MSW Program Director. The student retains the right to utilize the Grievance Procedure if he/she is dissatisfied with the outcome of the process outlined above.

Grievance Procedure

Samford University is a community that respects individuals and their rights. The campus judiciary process is designed to afford fundamental fairness to students involved in violations of campus rules and regulations. The values violation process is well defined and is followed as a means of assuring fairness.

Issues occasionally arise outside the areas governed by the campus judiciary process. In the spirit of community, individuals should discuss candidly with those most directly involved their complaints, disagreements, or misunderstandings, since those most directly involved deal best with most issues. It is a fact of group life that no individual can have his or her way in all circumstances. In cases where matters seem difficult to resolve, students may resort to this official student complaint process.

If a student has a complaint about an academic matter, the student should confer with the professor(s) or individual(s) involved. Should the concern persist, the student should speak with the chair or supervisor of the department. If a resolution is not found, the student should confer with the dean of the school or college involved. If the issue cannot be resolved at the levels mentioned above, the student may take the concern to the Office of the Provost. If the issue remains unsettled, the student may present the concern in writing to the president of the university.

If a student has a complaint about a nonacademic matter, the student should confer with the individual(s) involved. If resolution is not found, the student should speak with the supervisor of the office or unit involved. If the issue cannot be resolved at the levels mentioned above, the student may appeal to the vice president who is responsible for oversight of the area at issue. If the issue remains unsettled, the student may present the concern in writing to the president of the university.

Termination for Reasons of Academic and/or Professional Performance

MSW Program students are required to abide by the Samford University Academic Integrity Policy (<https://www.samford.edu/files/Student-Handbook.pdf>), the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, and the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners Standards of Professional Conduct and Ethics. Students who are completing field placement assignments in other states or countries are required to abide by the ethical codes of the jurisdictions in which they are practicing.

Samford University Academic Integrity Policies

A degree from Samford University is evidence of achievement in scholarship and citizenship. Activities and attitudes should be consistent with high academic standards and Christian commitment and should be in keeping with the philosophy and mission of the University. At Samford, academic integrity is expected of every community member in all endeavors and includes a commitment to honesty, fairness, trustworthiness, and respect.

The University Statement on Academic Dishonesty is as follows: students, upon enrollment, enter into a voluntary association with Samford University. They must be willing to observe high standards of intellectual integrity, respect knowledge, and practice academic honesty. Those who cheat on an examination or class assignment are not only academically dishonest, but also are deficient in the scholarly maturity necessary for college study. Any act to obtain an unfair academic advantage is considered dishonest.

Academic integrity violations are acts of academic misconduct. The term academic integrity violation includes, but is not limited to, the following acts:

- (1) Offering for course credit as one's own work, in whole or in part, the work of another.
- (2) Plagiarism, that is, incorporating into one's work offered for course credit passages taken either word for word or in substance from a work of another, unless the student credits the original author and identifies the original author's work with quotation marks, footnotes, or another appropriate written explanation.
- (3) Offering for course credit one's own work, but work that one has previously offered for course credit in another course, unless one secures permission to do so prior to submission from the instructor in whose course the work is being offered.
- (4) Obtaining an unauthorized copy of a test or assignment in advance of its scheduled administration.
- (5) Taking an examination for another student or knowingly permitting another person to take an examination for oneself.
- (6) Giving, receiving, or obtaining information pertaining to an examination during an examination period, unless such action is authorized by the instructor giving the examination.

- (7) Divulging the contents of an essay or objective examination to a student who has not taken the exam.
- (8) Taking, keeping, misplacing, or tampering with the property of Samford University, a faculty member, or another student, if one knows or should reasonably know that one would, by such conduct, obtain an unfair academic advantage. This section is intended to include, but not be limited to, material in a university library.
- (9) Failing to follow the instructions of a professor in completing an assignment or examination, if one knows or should reasonably know that one would, by such conduct, obtain an unfair academic advantage.
- (10) Witnessing conduct which one knows or should reasonably know is dishonorable and failing to report it.
- (11) Altering or falsifying academic or student record documents such as transcripts, change of grade forms, University excuses, and add/drop forms.
- (12) Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on an examination, assignment, project, or other academic assignment.
- (13) Making a false report of academic dishonesty.
- (14) Fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data, results, analyses, or other studies, presenting the results of research or studies not actually performed, or manipulating or altering data to achieve a desired result, including the failure to report or suppression of conflicting or unwanted data.

In addition, the MSW program includes the use of artificial intelligence tools (AI) without approval or correct citation.

Students may be sanctioned by the MSW Program for violations of the academic integrity policy and violations of professional ethical standards (including the NASW Code of Ethics, the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners Standards of Professional Conduct and Ethics, and other relevant policies established by regulatory agencies). MSW Program faculty have the right and the duty to impose sanctions for academic integrity policy violations. In most cases, academic integrity policy violations result in the student being assigned a grade of “F” for the course and being administratively withdrawn from the course. The MSW Program reserves the right to impose other sanctions based on the specific details of each situation. The MSW Program reserves the right to terminate a student’s enrollment in the program for multiple (i.e., more than one) violations of the academic integrity policy. Students who are terminated from the program due to academic integrity policy violations have the right to appeal their termination by following the grievance procedure outlined in the MSW Program Student Handbook.

Students may not receive any grades lower than B- for social work courses or electives. Social work courses with grades lower than B- may be re-taken one time. Electives may be re-taken or replaced or satisfied with another elective. Students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher and may not re-take more than 2 courses during their MSW studies. When a course is retaken, both grades remain on the transcript and both are used in calculating the student’s Grade Point Average (GPA). Students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Students whose GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation and will be able to take no more than 3 courses. Students who remain on academic probation for more than two semesters and students who receive a grade lower than B- in more than two courses will be terminated from the MSW program. Students retain the right to appeal termination decisions via the grievance procedure outlined in the MSW Program Student Handbook.

Students may also be terminated from the program for violating professional ethical standards as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics, the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners Standards of Professional Conduct and Ethics. Students are also required to obey relevant ethical codes and laws, including those of other states or countries in which they may be practicing during the course of a Field Placement experience or similar practice experience.

If a student is accused of a professional ethics code violation, the following process will be followed:

1. The Director of Field Education (or other member of the social work faculty, as designated by the MSW Program Director) will meet with the individual who has lodged the accusation. The purpose of this meeting will be to document the nature of the alleged violation and to gather the information necessary to begin an investigation of the accusation.
2. The Director of Field Education (or designee) will meet with the student, in order to give the student an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
3. The Director of Field Education (or designee) will collect additional information as needed to make a recommendation as to the disposition of the complaint.
4. The Director of Field Education (or designee) will recommend a resolution to the MSW Program Director. Whenever possible and appropriate, the resolution will allow the student a chance to remediate the situation. However, some types of severe misconduct allegations, if substantiated, will result in immediate termination from the program.
5. The Director of Field Education (or designee) and the MSW Program Director will meet with the student and will present the decision. If the decision is to terminate the student's involvement in the MSW Program, the student will receive written notice of the decision and the reasons for it. If the decision involves remediation of the problem, a written remediation plan will be developed with the student and will be signed by the student, the MSW Program Director, and the Director of Field Education (or designee).
6. The student retains the right to follow the grievance procedure outlined in the Samford University Student Handbook.

In addition to programmatic sanctions, the MSW Program Director, MSW Program Faculty and Staff, and/or the MSW Field Instructor may be required by law to report certain types of ethical violations to the proper authorities.

Students may also be terminated from the program if they test non-negative for the use of illegal substances or abuse of legal substances, as determined by random drug testing procedures. Failure to comply with drug testing protocols and procedures will also result in sanctions, which may include termination from the program. The student retains the right to appeal the termination decision via the grievance procedure outlined in the MSW Program Student Handbook.

Students who Experience Impairment

Section 4.05 of the NASW Code of Ethics (2008) requires social workers to be diligent in addressing impairment that may have a negative effect on their clients. Section 4.05 states:

- (a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their

professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.

(b) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

An MSW Program student who believes that s/he is experiencing an impairment that has the potential to disrupt the treatment of clients, the job performance of field placement staff, and/or the education of fellow students has an obligation to take appropriate remedial steps. Such students should contact their advisor, the Director of Field Education, or the MSW Program Director to discuss their concerns. The MSW Program will help the student to develop a plan to resolve or manage the impairment. The MSW Program will also help the student to come to a decision about the appropriateness of continued participation in the MSW Program. The MSW Program strongly urges students to be proactive in dealing with issues of impairment. Presenting impairment as a reason for an ethical violation after the fact does not relieve the student of responsibility for the violation.

Of course, professional impairment may be recognized by someone other than the student him/herself; for example, faculty, field instructors, and/or field agency staff may notice or come to believe that a student is dealing with an impairment that prevents him/her from performing at the requisite level of professionalism. The following procedure will be utilized when addressing such concerns:

- a. Concerns will be reported to a Samford University MSW Program Faculty member. Concerns related to field placement performance will be reported to the student's faculty field liaison. Concerns observed in an academic setting will be reported to the student's academic advisor.
- b. The faculty member who is the initial contact will document the concern in writing and submit the documentation to the MSW Program Director.
- c. The MSW Program Director will convene a meeting with the faculty member who documented the concern and additional faculty members who may be involved in working with the student (for example, the student's advisor, field liaison, and/or the Director of Field Education). At the meeting, the faculty will develop a plan for addressing the concern.
- d. The MSW Program Director and other faculty members as designated by the Program Director will meet with the student to inform him/her of the nature of the concerns and the proposed plan. When possible and appropriate, the proposed plan will involve an opportunity for the student to remediate the concern that has been raised. However, in some situations of extreme impairment and/or inability of the student to perform within expected professional standards, the plan may involve termination from field placement and/or termination from the MSW Program. In such cases, the procedures describes above related to termination from the program for ethical violations will be followed.
- e. If the plan involves remediation, the student is given an opportunity to give input into the plan and the final plan is then signed by the student, the Program Director, and other faculty as applicable. The original plan is retained in the records of the Program Director, with a copy provided to the student. Copies are

also provided to other faculty members on an as-needed basis. The Program Director or his designee are responsible for monitoring the student's compliance with the plan.

Academic Advising

The Samford University MSW Program provides both academic and professional advising for its students through multiple mechanisms. Faculty advising consists of consultation provided to students related to their courses and elective options. Faculty advising also includes professional advising in the form of consultation and guidance regarding professional development, career planning, identification of appropriate employment opportunities, application for employment, and other issues related to a student's professional career or employability.

MSW Program students are assigned a full-time MSW Program faculty member as a Faculty Advisor upon admission to the program. Advisors are available to meet with their advisees on an as-needed basis throughout the academic year. Meetings can take place in person or via telephone or other virtual communication technologies. The MSW Program strongly recommends that students schedule at least one meeting per semester with their advisors. It is the responsibility of the student to seek academic and professional advising as necessary.

In addition to the faculty advisor students are assigned an Academic Advisor through the College of Health Sciences/School of Public Health. All course registration, course of study planning and scheduling are handled by the Director of Graduate Student Services in the School of Public Health. Unless previous arrangements are made, students will be enrolled in the courses necessary for them to remain on schedule with their chosen plan of study (e.g., Full Program, Full-time; Full Program, Part-Time; Advanced Standing Full-Time; or Advanced Standing, Part-Time). Questions about the technical aspects of course registration should be directed to the Director of Graduate Student Services in the School of Public Health. When students are scheduled to enroll in elective courses, a staff member from the office of the Director of Graduate Student Services will contact them to obtain instructions regarding which elective course(s) the student plans to select.

Although Faculty advisors are assigned by the MSW program administration, students may request to be transferred to a different advisor. Such requests must be made in writing and addressed to the MSW Program director.

Faculty and Academic Advisors who have concerns about a student's progress and/or fitness to continue in the program are able to address these concerns with the MSW Program Director, in order to develop a plan for remediation with the student.

Substance Abuse Policies and Procedures

Drug Screen

The MSW Program strictly prohibits the illicit use, possession, sale, conveyance, distribution and manufacture of illegal drugs, intoxicants, or controlled substances in any amount or in any manner and the abuse of non-prescription and prescription drugs. Any student who tests non-negative for illegal, controlled, or abuse-potential substances and who cannot produce a valid and current prescription for the drug is at risk of being in violation of the NASW Code of Ethics

and Alabama law. Furthermore, the NASW Code of Ethics requires social workers to take action if they have reason to believe that another social worker is engaging in impaired practice, including practicing while using illegal drugs and/or abusing legal substances. An MSW Program student who is aware that another MSW Program student is using or is in possession of illegal drugs, intoxicants, or controlled substances is obligated to report this information to an MSW Program faculty member.

Substance Abuse Policy and Procedure

Statement of Purpose

The intent of the Substance Abuse Policy is twofold; 1), to identify students who are chemically impaired and 2), help them to return to a competent and safe level of practice. Emphasis is on deterrence, education, and reintegration. All aspects of the policy are conducted in good faith and with compassion, dignity, and confidentiality.

Testing Procedures

When. The Samford Social Work department requires the student to submit to drug testing under any or all of the following circumstances:

- Random testing as required by the field education sites for the Samford MSW program
- For cause (see Testing for Cause Statement); and
- Part of a substance abuse recovery program.

Failure to comply. Failure to comply with random drug testing at the specified time without administrative permission will result in suspension from field education attendance until testing is complete.

Cost. The cost for random testing is included in the student's program fee. If the student is tested for cause, the student will be responsible for paying the cost for the urine drug screen at the time the test is administered.

Facility. The Samford MSW program will utilize a compliant testing facility for collection of specimens. This facility will perform testing, utilizing the laboratory's policies.

Sample Collection. The collection techniques will adhere to the guidelines in accordance with U.S. Department of Transportation 49 CFR Part 40 following chain of custody protocol. The testing facility will collect urine samples at the discretion of the Samford MSW program director. The process and procedure for sample collection will adhere to the contract between the School of Public Health and the company handling drug screening and compliance.

Substances. Substance-related disorders are listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition, (DSM-5). Substances of abuse are grouped into ten classes: alcohol, caffeine, cannabis, hallucinogens, inhalants, opioids, sedatives, stimulants, tobacco, and other (unknown). Testing may include any of these drug categories. The Department of Social Work shall have the authority to change the panel of tests without notice to include other substances as suggested by local and national reports or circumstances.

Non-negative Results. If a non-negative result is obtained, the urine sample will be sent to a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) certified laboratory. If the specimen results are non-negative after the screening process at the laboratory, the urine samples will be sent for Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry (GCMS) confirmation. All positive results will be reported to the Medical Review Officer (MRO). After review by the (MRO), positive results will then be reported to the Field Director and Program Director. All non-negative urine samples will be frozen in a secure and locked freezer compartment at the (SAMHSA) laboratory.

Testing for Cause

Any social work student suspected of abuse related to the use of drugs, including but not limited to alcohol, may be subjected to testing. The decision to drug test for cause will be drawn from those facts in light of the experience of the observers and may be based on, but not limited to:

- Observable phenomena such as direct observation of drug use and/or physical symptoms or manifestations of being under the influence of a drug.
- Erratic behavior, slurred speech, staggered gait, flushed face, dilated/pinpoint pupils, wide mood swings, absenteeism, tardiness, and deterioration of work performance.
- A report of drug use provided by reliable and credible sources which have been independently corroborated.
- Information that a student has caused or contributed to an accident that resulted in injury requiring treatment by a licensed healthcare professional.
- Evidence of involvement in the use, possession, sale, solicitation or transfer of drugs while on a field site premise.
- Conviction by a court, or being found guilty of a drug, alcohol or controlled substance in another legitimate jurisdiction.

Testing for cause will be conducted using the following procedure:

1. The faculty member or designated field instructor will have another healthcare provider confirm the suspicious behavior.
2. The student will be asked to leave the area and go with a faculty member or individual designated by the faculty and a witness to discuss the situation in a location ensuring privacy and confidentiality. The discussion will be documented, and the decision to drug test will be made after conferring with the Field Director, Department Chair and/or Dean.
3. If warranted, the student will submit appropriate laboratory specimens in accordance with the Substance Abuse Policy and field site policies.
4. The student will be suspended from all field education activities until the case has been reviewed by the appropriate personnel or committee designated by the dean of the School of Public Health.
5. If the lab test is negative for substances classified in the current Diagnostic and/or Clinical Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the student will be allowed to return to class and field education activities without penalty. Arrangements to make up missed work must be initiated by the student on the first day back to class.
6. If any part of the lab test is non-negative for substances classified in the current Diagnostic and/or Clinical Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the student is in violation of the Department of Social Work Substance Abuse Policy and the Samford University Drug and Alcohol Policy. As provided in this policy in the section entitled,

“Non-negative Drug Screen, Sanctions, Treatment, Referral, Re-application, Opportunity for a Re-Test”, violations will result in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions up to and including expulsion of the student (Samford University Student Handbook).

7. Confidentiality will be maintained.
8. Failure to comply with “for cause” drug testing will result in immediate administrative withdrawal and a course grade of “F”.

Confidentiality

All testing information, interviews, reports, statements and test results specifically related to the individual are confidential. Drug test results will be sent to the Field Director in the Department of Social Work. Records will be maintained electronically in a secured location. While the issues of testing are confidential within the University community, the information regarding substance abuse and rehabilitation may be shared with a parent or legal guardian as provided in the following paragraph. Pursuant to the Family Educational Responsibility and Privacy Act (20 USC 1232g) Samford University may disclose, to a parent or legal guardian of a student, information regarding any violation of a Federal, State or local law, or of any rule or policy of the institution, governing the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance, regardless of whether that information is contained in the student’s education records, if (A) the student is under the age of 21; and (B) the institution determines that the student has committed a disciplinary violation with respect to such use or abuse.

Non-Negative Drug Screen, Sanctions, Treatment, Referral and Re-application, Opportunity for a Re-Test

A non-negative drug screen will result in three different actions.

1. *The Samford Department of Social Work*
Field education sites cannot afford to compromise on client safety, health and welfare. The Department of Social Work utilizes the Drug and Alcohol Policy as printed in the Samford University Handbook (<https://www.samford.edu/files/Student-Handbook.pdf>). Violations of the Samford University Drug and Alcohol Policy will result in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions by the Samford Department of Social Work up to and including expulsion of the student. In order to assure client safety at clinical sites, a positive drug screen will be considered evidence of drug use/abuse by the student. A non-negative drug screen of any of the following substances will result in immediate dismissal: amphetamines or similarly acting sympathomimetic, cannabis, cocaine, hallucinogens, inhalants, phencyclidine (PCP) or similarly acting arylcyclohexylamines. Action taken under the Drug and Alcohol Policy will be independent of action taken, if any, through the Student Values Process.
2. *Samford University*
Violations of the Samford University Code of Conduct will result in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions up to and including expulsion of the student, (Samford University Student Handbook, <https://www.samford.edu/files/Student-Handbook.pdf>). Action taken through the Samford University process will be independent of action taken, if any, under the Substance Abuse Policy of the Department of Social Work.
3. *Referral to a Substance Abuse Treatment Program.*
A student with a non-negative drug screen will be referred to a Substance Abuse Treatment Program.

Opportunity to Request a Re-Test

If a test result is non-negative, the student may request a re-test of the original urine sample. A student who desires to have the original sample re-tested must file a written request with the MSW Program Director within three (3) business days following notification of a positive drug test result. The student will be responsible for all costs of the re-test. If the re-test is negative the student will be reinstated.

Incidence of Recurrence

If a non-negative test for substance abuse is found once a student is re-admitted to the MSW program, the student will be dismissed from the program and will be ineligible to return. Furthermore, the student will be ineligible to receive a letter of good standing from the social work program.

Student Release Form

As a condition of progression, each student will sign the following “Substance Abuse Policy Release Form” agreeing to adhere to the terms and conditions of the Substance Abuse Policy and Procedure.

Some field placement sites will require students to repeat screening measures such as an additional drug screen and background check or to meet additional requirements. In some cases, the student will be responsible for the costs of additional screenings. A list of sites that require additional screenings will be provided to students. A non-negative result on a drug screen that cannot be resolved will be communicated to the Director of Field Education.

Background Check

The Samford University MSW Program requires background checks for all MSW students. Students selected for admission to the Samford University MSW Program are admitted pending the results of a background check. Each student is required to have a background check, and submit to, as requested, any additional checks once enrolled in the MSW program. The Samford University MSW Program must certify to all field placement sites that each student has had an acceptable background check. Students are required to follow the procedures established by the Samford University MSW Program.

Students must report any arrests or legal convictions that occur prior to or during their education. Reportable offenses include, but are not limited to, misdemeanors, felonies, sexual offender convictions or governmental sanctions. The Samford University MSW Program reserves the right to release information regarding the student’s criminal history to appropriate field placement organization representatives. Failure to report arrests or legal convictions will result in dismissal from the MSW Program. A student’s admission may be withdrawn or the student may be dismissed from the MSW Program due to findings from the background check. Even if a student with a criminal history is admitted to the MSW program, field sites reserve the right to deny field placements to such students. Students dismissed will be considered for readmission on a case-by-case basis depending on the particular situation.

Background check forms are sent to each student. The student is responsible for the cost of the background check. For additional information on policies related to background checks, consult the Master of Social Work Program Student Handbook

Health Data and Immunization Requirements

MSW students are responsible for maintaining health requirements. The student must have a complete Samford University Health Form and evidence of having met the health requirements, which include:

- Mantoux Tuberculin skin test or annual TB chest x-ray, completed within the last year
- Completed Hepatitis B Vaccination series
- Chicken Pox immunization (either year of disease or evidence of Vaccination series), and
- MMR and TdP

Upon acceptance to the Samford MSW program, the student should submit one completed copy of the Health Form to Student Health Services and a second completed form to the Department of Social Work.

Field placement sites may place additional health requirements for students affiliating with that agency. The student must have completed and submitted all necessary health documentation required by the University and the Department before registering for practice courses. Students in the MSW program are responsible for keeping current all immunizations as stated in our Affiliation Agreement with field placement agencies (requirements listed above). The student shall turn in a copy of each immunization/vaccine. The student shall keep original documentation for his/her personal records for future use. The Department will not provide copies of file contents for employers, etc.

Before registration in November and April, the student must be certain the required health information is on file and current to the end of the term in which you plan to enroll.

Liability Insurance

Personal liability insurance for field education practice is required for all graduate students. Samford University has coverage for liability arising from the rendering or failure to render professional social work services. Faculty and students are covered while working within the scope of their duties as faculty or as currently enrolled students. The policy is on a “claims made” form that means any claims must occur and be recorded while the policy is in force. If the coverage is discontinued, the University may arrange an extended reporting endorsement.

Progression Policy

In order to progress in the MSW Program, the student must:

- Have a completed Health Data Record (with all required immunizations) updated annually and on file in University Health Services and the Department of Social Work.

- Carry health insurance while enrolled at Samford. MSW students are required to provide proof of current personal health insurance coverage. Each semester, MSW students are automatically enrolled in the University sponsored student health insurance plan. There is a charge for this coverage. To have the charge removed from his/her Samford account, a student must provide proof of insurance by completing the insurance waiver at <http://www.studentinsurance.com/Schools/AL/SU/?CollegeID=217>

International Students: Based upon federal regulations and University policy, all F and J visa holders are required to carry insurance that meets certain coverage requirements. Information about specific policy carriers, minimum coverage, and premium costs is available from the International Studies Office at (205) 726-4334.

- Adhere to the Code of Ethical/Professional Conduct as specified in the Samford University Catalog.
- Submit to background check and random drug testing
- Earn a grade of “B-” or better in each required or prescribed course in the MSW program. NOTE: a grade of “C,” “D,” or “F” constitutes a failure in any prescribed or required course in the MSW program.
- Maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA and may not earn a grade below B- in any course to progress in the curriculum.

Withdrawal Policy

The decision to withdraw and the process of withdrawal from any course is the responsibility of the student. A student desiring to withdraw from the University must complete an official withdrawal form with the Office of Student Records (205-726-2911). This policy applies to all terms, including summer. See the current Samford University Catalog for more information on course withdrawal.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, commonly known as “FERPA,” was enacted by Congress to give students access to and some measure of control over their respective education records. In general terms, FERPA (1) grants confidentiality to student education records, (2) allows students control over certain disclosure of their education records, (3) permits students to review their own education records, and (4) provides a process by which students may request that their education records be amended. These rights are personal to each student.

Samford may disclose certain education records without the consent of the student in a number of circumstances. For example, Samford may disclose education records without student consent in the following circumstances: (1) to Samford officials who have an educational purpose to receive the information; (2) to other schools if the student is transferring from Samford; (3) to a student’s parents if the student is considered a dependent of the parents for federal income tax purposes; (4) in response to a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena; (5) to parents of a student under 21 regarding a violation of drug or alcohol policies; (6) to persons who need to know in connection with a health or safety emergency; (7) in connection with a student's application for financial aid; and (8) to accrediting organizations. Samford may also disclose "directory information" of a student unless the student takes appropriate steps to opt out of the sharing of directory information. Directory information consists of information that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Examples of directory information are a student's name, address, telephone listing, e-mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade level, enrollment status, dates of attendance, participation in officially recognized sports and activities, degrees, honors and awards received. Students who do not want their directory information to be disclosed by Samford without their prior written consent must notify the Registrar no later than the last day to drop or add courses without financial penalty in a particular academic semester or term. The information that Samford considers to be directory information, and the student's opportunity to opt out of the disclosure of his or her directory information, may be accessed at <http://www.samford.edu/departments/registrar/ferpa/> .

The University’s FERPA is Policy 7.1 of the University Policy Manual. A student who believes that his or her education records are inaccurate, misleading or include information that violates the privacy rights of the student, may request that such education records be amended as permitted under the FERPA Policy. A decision on any such request will be made within a reasonable period after it is received by the Registrar. If the request is denied, the student will be advised of his or her right to a hearing.

Sexual Harrassment Policy

As a Christian institution of higher education, Samford University has a moral commitment to the worth and dignity of all individuals. Consequently, sexual harassment is deemed unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Samford's policy of opposition to sexual harassment is not only a legal responsibility and practical utility, but stems from the university's profound commitment to Christian and moral values as expressed in its mission and purpose.

The Department of Social Work follows the Sexual Harassment policy outlined in the Samford University Student Handbook. (<https://www.samford.edu/files/Student-Handbook.pdf>). Inquiries or complaints about Title IX, Sexual Harassment, or other forms of Sexual Misconduct should be directed to the University's Title IX Coordinator.

Readmission Policy

A student who has been dismissed from the MSW Program may apply through the office of Graduate Student Services for readmission after an intervening period of not less than one semester. The appropriate graduate admission committee will consider such requests for readmission on presentation of substantial evidence of a responsible and successful period of work or study during the intervening period. There is no guarantee, however, that a student will be readmitted. The decision regarding readmission rests with the MSW Program Director and is based upon the faculty's evaluation of the likelihood of the applicant's successful performance in graduate coursework.

Format for Written Work

The Department of Social Work uses the latest version of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

Full-time and Part-time Status

For Financial Aid purposes, students must register for a minimum of six credits to be considered full-time. Four credits is full time for summer term. Students who enroll in fewer than six credits spring or fall, or four credits in the summer will be considered part-time. Please note that assignment of students to full-time or part-time status for financial aid purposes does not affect rates of program completion. Because the MSW program requires 60 credits of coursework, even part-time students often complete six or nine credits per semester. Thus, a student could be considered to be a full-time MSW student for financial aid purposes, even if he or she is enrolled in the part-time study program. If a student fails to register for one semester, that student will be considered inactive.

Independent Study

Guidelines for graduate students' independent study are available online. Independent study should be discussed with the faculty advisor and a written contract completed in advance of enrollment. Student's registering for an Independent Study must submit an Independent Study Contract to the faculty member overseeing the independent study.

Graduation and Commencement

Commencement Exercises are held at the end of the Fall Semester and at the end of the Spring Semester. A student is required to meet all requirements for graduation as set forth in MSW Program Handbook and the Samford University Catalog in effect at the time of entrance into the program, assuming there is no interruption in enrollment of a year or more. Later changes in the requirements for graduation are not applicable to students who proceed without interruption through their chosen program of studies.

It is the MSW Program's responsibility to notify Student Records of the candidates for graduation each term. The candidate will then receive information regarding graduation via email directly from the MSW Program. It is the responsibility of the graduate student to see that all requirements for graduation are met. Students must have a 3.0 GPA to graduate.

Student Participation/Representation in MSW Program Policy Development

As an inclusive Christian learning community, the MSW Program seeks to integrate students into nearly all aspects of the program, including encouraging student participation in the formulation and modification of academic and student affairs policies. Student participation in policy formulation and modification can occur via informal or formal processes. Informally, students are welcome to approach faculty members and administrators with suggestions regarding MSW Program policies and practices. In order to encourage such informal participation, the faculty spend a significant amount of time during the program orientation discussing the program's desire to be a Christian learning community. Openness to input and opportunities for consensus and shared decision-making are discussed as defining features of such a community and students are encouraged to give feedback and share ideas with faculty and staff.

In addition to informal participation in policy-related decisions, students also have the right and responsibility of formal involvement in policy formulation and modification. Formal involvement occurs in the following manners:

- The President and Vice-President of the Graduate Social Work Student Organization (GSWSO) may meet each month with the MSW Program Director. During this meeting, the President and Vice-President are able to present student concerns to the Director and to discuss whether policy formulation and/or modification is necessary. The President and Vice-President are elected by their peers and serve as representatives of the MSW Program student body. These officers may relay concerns that have been addressed to them by other students. They may also relay concerns that they have noticed personally and/or in their roles as student leaders.
- The GSWSO President and Vice-President are also invited to attend monthly meetings of MSW Program faculty, in order to present the student point of view on policies and issues being addressed by the faculty. The President and Vice-President attend only the first part of each meeting, in order to allow the faculty time to address sensitive issues outside the purview of the GSWSO (for example, issues related to confidential student information or disciplinary actions).
- When appropriate, GSWSO is also invited to appoint a student representative to ad hoc committees that have been formed to address specific issues related to the MSW Program.

Student Organization

The MSW Program encourages and provides opportunities for student organization by sponsoring the Graduate Social Work Student Organization (GSWSO). The GSWSO represents the student body in official interactions with the faculty and administration of the MSW Program. GSWSO officers, including a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, are elected during the first two weeks of the fall semester. The President, with the assistance of the Vice-President, leads regular meetings of the GSWSO officers, as well as open meetings. The President and Vice-President also attend monthly meetings with the MSW Program Director and with the MSW Program faculty, in order to represent the student body and to participate in policy formulation and modification. The GSWSO Secretary is responsible for communicating with the student body about the work of the GSWSO officers and about GSWSO events. The MSW Program provides meeting space for GSWSO open meetings and officer's meetings and also provides a small budget for the GSWSO. The GSWSO is also free to assume additional functions and roles, such as planning educational and social events for students, organizing around political, social, and/or community issues of interest to social workers, and raising funds (for the organization itself and/or for charitable causes). The faculty encourage the GSWSO to be actively involved in the life of the program and to be creative in developing new opportunities for MSW students.

Section III: Campus Services and Information

Books and Supplies

All books and supplies are available online or at the Samford University Bookstore. Required books are identified on a shelf card listing the course name, number and professor's name. Used books are sometimes available. Students can view a list of required textbooks and materials prior to each term at [The Samford Shop](#).

Campus Safety

The Department of Public Safety is staffed 24 hours a day, providing immediate availability for emergency response, performance of security patrols, monitoring of persons on campus, lockouts, dead batteries, and providing other services to the campus community. Information about campus safety can be found at <https://www.samford.edu/departments/public-safety/>.

Inclement Weather

Announcements of the closing of the University campus are recorded on the University switchboard, 726-3673 (SAM-FORD) and through the RAVE system.

Emergency Notification

RAVE is the primary method of communication used by Samford University during a campus emergency. If you have not registered for RAVE alerts, please use the link provided below and go to the My Contact Information box on your Portal homepage to update your RAVE Emergency Alert Information. <https://connect.samford.edu/group/mycampus/student>

Samford University utilizes Alert Samford for desktop, laptop, tablet, and mobile devices to provide students with information, procedures, and links about what to do in the event of a variety of emergency situations that could occur on our campus. If you do not already have the Alert Samford app on your mobile device, laptop, desktop, or tablet, please click on this link <https://connect.samford.edu/group/mycampus/student> and go to the Emergency Information box on your Portal homepage for instructions on downloading the App. Once you have downloaded the App, please take time to review the information provided. It is important that you know what to do in the case of a campus emergency.

Fire Alarm: When a fire alarm is activated, evacuation is mandatory.

All-Hazards Warning Bells: When the All-Hazards Warning Bells are activated, shelter in place.

E-mail: Emergency-related e-mails are sent to everyone with a samford.edu address.

Residence Life: University Residences have specific procedures for alerting people in individual halls via Resident Assistants, phones, and signage.

Local Media: The University works with the news media (radio, TV, newspapers, and Internet) to help spread the word.

Samford Cable Television: The Bulldog Cinema Channel (30) and the Information Channel (36) may broadcast emergency information.

Samford Homepage: Emergency updates are posted on www.samford.edu.

Smoking Policy

To protect and promote the health and welfare of its faculty, staff, and students, Samford University is committed to promoting an environment conducive to health promotion by limiting smoking areas on its campus. In so doing, the following guideline applies to all university owned, leased, and operated facilities and vehicles. Samford University has designated “Smoking Areas” outside University facilities. Smoking is prohibited in all other interior and exterior areas of campus.

Students violating the smoking policy will be subject to disciplinary action as stipulated in the Student Handbook.

Computer Labs

Academic buildings at Samford house general access computer laboratories for student use. Popular software titles in areas such as word processing, spreadsheet analysis and presentation preparation are provided in these laboratories. Information about the location and hours of the labs is available from the Computing Laboratories Manager or on Samford’s Web page at <http://www.samford.edu/labs/>. The Computer Lab Manager, Davis Library, (205) 726-2106, schedules use of these labs, and a schedule of open times is published each term.

Samford Email Account

Every Samford student is assigned an email account. Students are required to read their Samford email every day. The School does not use personal email accounts to communicate with enrolled students. For information on how to forward your Samford Bulldog email account to your personal email account, contact Technology Services. (www.samford.edu/ts)

Samford University Campus Portal

Students are encouraged to take advantage of all the services offered through the campus portal. By clicking on the Banner button, students may obtain important information such as: transcripts, grades, class schedules, and financial aid information.

Library Services

Samford offers a wealth of library resources featuring extensive print and electronic collections, as well as multimedia resources that include microfilm, music scores, and audio and video recordings. The online catalog and other full-text electronic resources are available to students 24/7 via the Internet. Other libraries in the Birmingham area cooperate with Samford on a reciprocal basis, increasing the variety of resources directly available to the Samford community.

The Samford University Library is the primary library for all students, faculty, and staff. In addition to books, ebooks, periodicals, unique collections, and full-text electronic resources, the library houses a large government documents collection—serving as an official repository. Individualized and group instruction in the use of library resources is provided on a regular basis by librarians. A computer laboratory, computer classroom, individual and group study rooms, multimedia viewing and listening rooms, meeting rooms with advanced presentation and conferencing capabilities, and a lounge area are available for use.

For more information about the library, see the Library Web page at <http://library.samford.edu/> and for more information about specific library resources just for nursing students see the Nursing Research Guide at <http://samford.libguides.com/nursing>. For assistance with any research endeavors, just ASK US! <http://samford.libanswers.com/index.php>.

Mailing Address and Name Changes

Students must notify Samford should their address and/ or name change. In the event that a student does not change their address, important information may not be received. Changes are the student's responsibility and should be made via the Samford Portal. Change of name requires a copy of the marriage certificate or other legal document and must be completed by the Financial Aid Office. It is also the student's responsibility to notify the Department of Social Work of any changes.

Parking

Vehicles must display a Samford University parking decal if parked on campus. Decals may be obtained for a nominal fee from Transportation Services. Students should visit the web page at <https://www.samford.edu/departments/transportation/> for more information.

University Health Services

Samford University is pleased to provide healthcare services to our students both on campus and in several locations throughout Birmingham. To find more information about services provided visit the University Health Services web page at <https://www.samford.edu/departments/health-services/>.

Professional Liability Insurance

Personal liability insurance for clinical practice is required for all graduate students. Samford University has coverage for liability arising from the rendering or failure to render professional social work services. Faculty and students are covered while working within the scope of their duties as faculty or as currently enrolled students. The policy is on a "claims made" form that means any claims must occur and be recorded while the policy is in force. If the coverage is discontinued, the University may arrange an extended reporting endorsement.

Course Evaluations

Formal evaluation forms are available online near the end of each course to all graduate students. The purposes of these evaluations are to foster student contributions to the planning and revising of curriculum and to indicate areas of change that would enhance the learning environment. These evaluations provide a mechanism for direct communication with administration regarding the curriculum. After completion, evaluations are submitted on-line. In the past, input from these evaluations has made it possible for the faculty to document changes that are requested by students.

Additionally, faculty responsible for a course may administer informal course evaluations. Students are encouraged to thoughtfully complete these forms. The course faculty utilize student input in the ongoing development and refinement of courses.

Section IV: Releases and Permissions

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY RELEASE FORM

I, _____, have read the Samford University MSW Program Substance Abuse Policy and agree as an MSW Program student to comply with all aspects of the policy as written including urine testing.

I agree that _____, a compliant drug testing facility, is authorized by me to provide the results of this test to the MSW Program Director (or the Director’s designee) for use in enforcing the Substance Abuse Policy and Procedure.

I agree to indemnify and hold the facility and its directors, officers, employees and agents harmless from and against any and all liabilities or judgments arising out of any claim related to 1) compliance of Samford University with federal and state law and 2) Samford University’s interpretation, use and confidentiality of the test results, except when the testing facility is found to have acted negligently with respect to such matters.

I agree to indemnify and hold Samford University and its trustees, officers, employees and agents harmless from and against any and all liabilities or judgments arising out of any claim related to 1) compliance of the testing facility with federal and state law and 2) the testing facility’s interpretation, use and confidentiality of the test results.

I further understand, acknowledge and agree that my failure to adhere to the conditions specified in this policy will result in my dismissal from the Samford University MSW Program.

Furthermore, I agree to abide by the provisions for determining dismissal and to follow the conditions of re-acceptance as outlined.

I acknowledge that under the Family Education Responsibility and Privacy Act, 20 USC Section 1232g, Samford University may disclose, to a parent or legal guardian of a student, information regarding any violation of any Federal, State or local law, or of any rule or policy of the institution, governing the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance, regardless of whether that information is contained in the student’s education record, if (A) the student is under the age of 21; and (B) the institution determines that the student has committed a disciplinary violation with respect to such use or possession. I agree that a positive drug screen will be considered a determination by Samford University that I have committed a disciplinary violation with respect to such use or possession and if I am under the age of 21 years Samford University may disclose such information to my parent(s) or legal guardian.

I represent and certify that as of the date of my execution of this document I am _____ years of age. Failure to comply with random drug testing at the specified time without administrative permission will result in suspension from clinical attendance until testing is complete. Failure to comply with random drug testing at the specified times without administrative permission will result in suspension from clinical attendance until testing is complete. Failure to comply with “for cause” drug testing will result in immediate administrative withdrawal and a course grade of “F”.

Student printed name/signature/date _____

Witness signature/date _____

Substance Abuse Policy and Procedure
Modified from: Burris, R. 2002. Arkansas Tech University. SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing (CCEN).

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY MSW PROGRAM CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

I hereby agree to hold in confidence any information that I am made aware of pertaining to patients and/or their families during all of my clinical experiences while I am a student in the Samford University MSW Program. I recognize that client records and information are confidential and private and that I will share information only with those authorized to have the information as necessary to care for the client. I will not disclose any information to any unauthorized person, or permit any person to examine or make copies of any report or document prepared by me, coming into my possession or to which I have access. I will not use client names or other identifying information on assignments that I submit to fulfill course requirements. I further agree never to use any information for my advantage or personal gain. I realize that the unauthorized disclosure of information by me may violate state or federal laws, and that unauthorized release of information may result in my dismissal from school and legal action against me. I have read this agreement, understand it, and agree to abide by it.

Signature Date

Witness Date

RECEIPT OF STUDENT HANDBOOK

I, (please print) _____, am aware the **Samford University MSW Program Handbook** is online and acknowledge responsibility for reviewing the contents contained therein. I will clarify with my advisor, any part(s) I do not understand. I further understand that failure to follow these rules and regulations contained in the handbook may result in various consequences, according to the infraction.

Student's Signature _____ Date: _____

PERMISSION TO PROVIDE REFERENCES

I, (please print) _____, realize that in the future, references will be requested by potential employers. I give permission to the Samford University MSW Program administration and/or faculty to provide the requested information. A copy will also be directed to the Student File.

Student's Signature _____ Date: _____

PERMISSION TO DISPLAY/PRESENT WORK

I, (please print) _____, hereby give the Samford University MSW Program permission to display and/or present examples of my work as part of a program review process by accrediting or approving organizations and their designated personnel.

Student's Signature _____ Date: _____