



BELMONT
UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



School of Social Work: MSW Program Student Handbook

Belmont University | April 2024

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LOCATION AND FACILITIES

The Belmont University School of Social Work is located:
Jack C. Massey Center Suite 403
1900 Belmont Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37212

ACCREDITATION STATUS

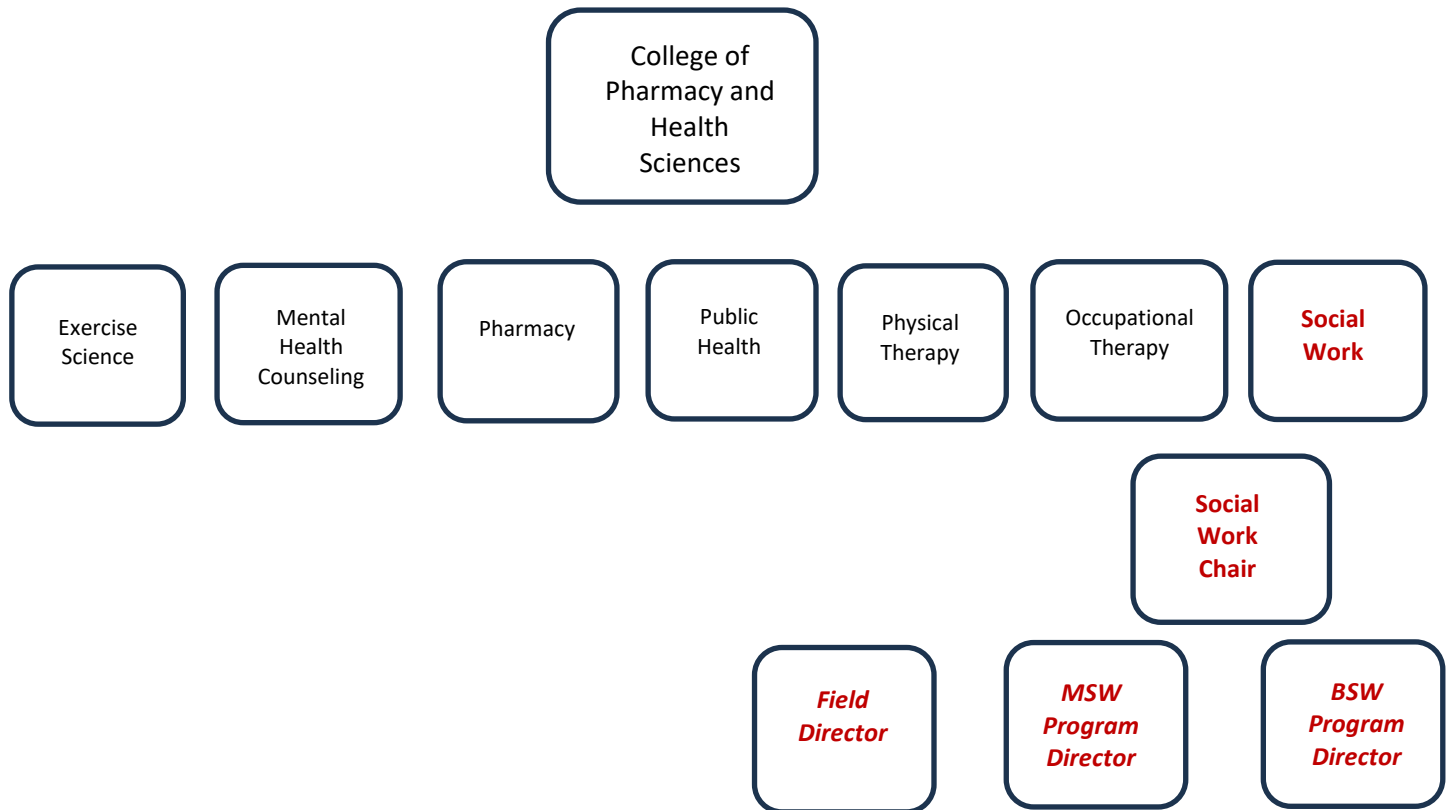
The Belmont University School of Social Work is currently seeking Pre-Candidacy Status for the Master's in Social Work (MSW) Program by the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Board of Accreditation (BOA). Pre-candidacy for a baccalaureate or master's social work program by the BOA indicates that it submitted an application to be reviewed for candidacy and received approval of its Benchmark 1 from CSWE accreditation staff to move forward for a candidacy review within 1-year. A program that has attained pre-candidacy status has not yet been reviewed by the BOA nor verified to be compliant with the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Students that are admitted to pre-candidate programs in the fall (or later) of the academic year in which the program is granted candidacy status will be retroactively recognized as graduates from a CSWE-BOA accredited program as long as the program attains initial accreditation. Candidacy is typically a 3-year process and attaining pre-candidacy does not guarantee that a program will eventually attain candidacy and initial accreditation. Pre-candidacy applies to all program options, which includes locations and delivery methods. Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program. Review our program's pre-candidacy status in CSWE's Directory of Accredited Programs. For more information about social work accreditation, contact CSWE's Department of Social Work Accreditation.

SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE

Once accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, those earning a Master's degree in Social Work from Belmont University have met the first of several steps needed to attain state licensure to practice social work at the Master's level. It is important to note that state licensure is a separate process from that of attaining your master's degree and requires additional criteria. For example, Tennessee requires that additional examinations be taken. Since state licensure is handled through state boards and not through Belmont University, students are advised to seek licensure information through the requisite state Department of Health's Social Work Licensure Board.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Master’s in Social Work program is housed in the Belmont School of Social Work. The School of Social Work is a division of the Belmont College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. The organizational chart below highlights the organizational structure of the College, School, and Social Work degree program(s).



MSW PROGRAM CONTEXT & CURRICULUM

University Mission Statement

Belmont’s mission states “*we are a Christ-centered, student-focused community, developing diverse leaders of purpose, character, wisdom and transformational mindset, eager and equipped to make the world a better place.*”

Social workers are innately eager and equipped to take on the most urgent social challenges of our time, helping to *make the world a better place* via social work’s mission and focus on anti-racism, social, economic, and environmental justice, and the advancement of human rights. The skills gained in pursuit of a social work degree integrate with the *transformational mindset* our university supports, preparing students to engage in solving the world’s complex problems innovatively and skillfully. Further, social work professional values and ethics serve as the cornerstone of our work, embodying the university’s focus on *character, wisdom, diversity, equity, and inclusion* in our approach to practice. The School of Social Work reflects this emphasis, and the strong alignment with the university mission results in robust support for the social work faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

MSW Program Mission Statement

Belmont University and the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences' mission and vision, and the program's strong alignment with these, influence the program and are core features of the program's context. The mission of the Belmont MSW program is:

The Master's of Social Work program at Belmont University is dedicated to nurturing empathetic, proficient, and culturally sensitive social work professionals who embody the essence of the social work profession. Guided by a person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, and our faith-based context, the Belmont MSW program empowers students as servant leaders in upholding the core values and purpose of social work while promoting human and community well-being.

Our mission is anchored in the belief that every individual and community deserve the opportunity to flourish. In alignment with the purpose of social work, which is actualized through a quest for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice, we are committed to creating conditions that facilitate the realization of human rights and the elimination of poverty. Through our dedication to respect for human diversity and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, we strive to support students in enhancing life for all people, locally and globally.

At the heart of our program lie the foundational values of social work: service, respect for the dignity and worth of every individual, the promotion of social justice through advocacy and scientific inquiry, the importance of human relationships, competence and integrity in professional practice, human rights, and the enhancement of well-being for all. We believe in the inherent strengths and resilience of individuals and communities. At our core we empower our students to use a range of prevention and intervention strategies to effect meaningful change at all levels of society.

Recognizing the diverse needs and experiences of the populations we serve, we prepare social work practitioners who are responsive to cultural, socioeconomic, and systemic factors that influence individual and collective well-being, eager and equipped to promote individual dignity and community well-being, and to make the world a better place. Our advanced generalist specialization embraces innovation and evidence-based practice, specifically related to professional leadership and the provision of trauma informed care. Our program extends and enhances students' development of the requisite knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes required of professional practice. This focus honors the rich history and tradition of the social work profession while fostering forward-thinking approaches to address contemporary challenges, consistent with our university driven transformational mindset.

Generalist MSW Curriculum – Generalist Practice

Generalist Practice

The School of Social Work at Belmont utilizes the definition of generalist practice espoused by the Council on Social Work Education in the 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards:

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

Generalist Competencies and Student Outcomes

Consistent the definition of generalist practice, the purpose of the profession, and the Council on Social Work Education in the 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, students must demonstrate competency across nine areas of generalist practice. Each competency is defined by practice behaviors that are associated with each of the nine core competencies. These competencies and behaviors are outlined below:

COMPETENCY 1 DEMONSTRATE ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

- Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional Codes of Ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;
- Demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

COMPETENCY 2 ADVANCE HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- Demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

COMPETENCY 3 ENGAGE ANTI-RACISM, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (ADEI) IN PRACTICE.

- Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
- Engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

COMPETENCY 4 ENGAGE IN PRACTICE-INFORMED RESEARCH AND RESEARCH-INFORMED PRACTICE

- Apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
- Identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

COMPETENCY 5 ENGAGE IN POLICY PRACTICE

- Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
- Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

COMPETENCY 6 ENGAGE WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES

- Apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

COMPETENCY 7 ASSESS WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES

- Apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
- Demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

COMPETENCY 8 INTERVENE WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES

- Engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
- Incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

COMPETENCY 9 EVALUATE WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES

- Select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
- Critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Generalist Program of Study

The generalist practice curriculum in the Belmont MSW consists of the first two semesters, or the first academic year (for those students without undergraduate social work course credit from a CSWE accredited program). The curriculum is designed to provide students with the foundational knowledge, values, skills, cognitive, and affective processes that support competency in social work practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities/social systems. The courses that comprise this sequence form a logical progression which supports the mission of the MSW program and prepares students for the specialized curriculum. The generalist practice curriculum is comprised of ten courses. The course sequence, spread across two semesters, is presented in the following table. Please see the [graduate catalog](#) for course descriptions.

Belmont MSW Generalist Curriculum

Semester 1	Semester 2
SWK 5000 Social Policy, History, and Ethics	SWK 5500 Social Work Research Methods
SWK 5100 Social Work Practice I: Individuals & Families	SWK 5600 Social Work Practice II: Groups, Organizations, & Communities
SWK 5200 Exploring Human Diversity	SWK 5700 Social Work Policy Analysis and Advocacy
SWK 5300 Human Behavior in the Social Environment	SWK 5800 Psychopathology
SWK 5400 Field Instruction 1 (200hrs)	SWK 5900 Field Instruction 2 (200hrs)

Specialized MSW Curriculum – Advanced Generalist Practice

Advanced Generalist Practice

The primary aim of the Belmont MSW area of specialized practice is to extend and enhance the elements of generalist practice outlined above to prepare students for advanced generalist practice across multiple system levels. This is accomplished via an intentional focus on furthering students' knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and practice behaviors associated with generalist practice. Each of the ten competencies related to the advanced generalist specialization is designed to prepare students for advanced generalist practice, while emphasizing leadership in the provision of trauma-informed care. This specialization is designed to equip graduates to assume leadership roles in a variety of social work settings, where they can effectively address the complex needs of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities impacted by social ills, including trauma.

Advanced Generalist Competencies and Student Outcomes

Consistent with the requirements outlined in the Council on Social Work Education in the 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, this curriculum builds on generalist content to

extend and enhance student competency in the following ten areas.

COMPETENCY 1 DEMONSTRATE ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

- Communicate professionally and respectfully with colleagues from diverse disciplines, valuing their unique perspectives and contributions to client care.
- Recognize and navigate ethical dilemmas inherent in advanced, trauma-informed practice with sensitivity, integrity, and adherence to the National Association of Social Workers professional values and ethics.
- Demonstrate efforts toward continuous learning and improvement by engaging in professional development and organizational capacity-building around practice techniques such as trauma-informed care.
- Demonstrate proficient skill in maintaining professional boundaries while providing compassionate and effective support in practice.
- Critically evaluate historical and current contexts of oppression that shape institutions and social work practice.

COMPETENCY 2 ADVANCE HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- Engage in ongoing self-reflection and education to cultivate a deeper understanding of how cultural factors influence trauma and healing, allowing for the provision of more responsive and effective support for clients.
- Demonstrate leadership in incorporating an understanding of trauma and systemic oppression, poverty, marginalization, and privilege into their practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Foster resilience, empowerment, and collective healing, by promoting social justice and equity in their interactions and interventions.
- Leverage their foundational knowledge and practice experience to challenge systemic oppression and promote equity through advocacy, policy change, and community organizing.

COMPETENCY 3 ENGAGE ANTI-RACISM, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (ADEI) IN PRACTICE.

- Engage in advocacy efforts that address underlying structural inequalities and promote equitable access to resources, opportunities, and services.
- Advocate for culturally inclusive and equitable policies and services that address the unique needs of marginalized and underserved populations, especially those affected by trauma.
- Engage in ongoing self-reflection and education to deepen understanding of systemic barriers and actively work to dismantle oppressive structures while promoting inclusivity, diversity, and equity in practice.

COMPETENCY 4 ENGAGE IN PRACTICE-INFORMED RESEARCH AND RESEARCH-INFORMED PRACTICE

- Critically appraise research literature and evidence-based practices relevant to trauma-informed care, applying findings to inform advanced decision-making at multiple levels of practice.
- Design and implement practice evaluations to assess the fidelity and outcomes of interventions, utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods.

- Disseminate evaluation findings to stakeholders and use feedback to refine and improve social work programs and services.

COMPETENCY 5 ENGAGE IN POLICY PRACTICE

- Mobilize community members and stakeholders to identify needs and priorities, fostering participatory decision-making and collective action, especially as it relates to trauma-related challenges.
- Advocate for policy reforms and resource allocation to support specialized and/or trauma-informed services and interventions at the local, state, and national levels.
- Advocate for systemic changes to promote ethical accountability and transparency in social work practice.

COMPETENCY 6 ENGAGE WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES

- Actively cultivate authentic relationships with their clients and constituencies. They invest time and effort in building rapport, demonstrating empathy, and fostering trust and mutual respect.
- Implement tailored engagement approaches to align with individual and/or community needs, strengths, and backgrounds. They employ a client-centered approach, acknowledging the autonomy and self-determination of those they serve.
- Utilize attentive listening and genuine interest, creating safe and supportive spaces where clients and constituencies feel valued and understood, laying the foundation for meaningful engagement and collaboration.

COMPETENCY 7 ASSESS WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES

- Employ culturally responsive assessment practices by integrating theories of human behavior, the person-in-environment perspective, and interprofessional conceptual frameworks into their assessment processes.
- Collaboratively explore presenting challenges, identify strengths, and co-create personalized assessment plans that prioritize client autonomy, dignity, and agency, valuing the expertise and insights of clients/constituencies.
- Engage in ongoing self-reflection and self-awareness to recognize and mitigate the influence of bias, power dynamics, privilege, and personal values on their assessment practices. They strive to ensure that assessments are conducted ethically, respectfully, and without judgment.

COMPETENCY 8 INTERVENE WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES

- Actively seek opportunities to collaborate with colleagues from diverse disciplines, recognizing the value of collective expertise and perspectives in addressing complex challenges.
- Engage in ongoing methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing interventions that are grounded in evidence and tailored to the unique needs and strengths of their clients and communities.

- Use culturally responsive approaches informed by foundational theories of human behavior and the person-in-environment perspective, to promote healing, empowerment, and social justice within their interventions.

COMPETENCY 9 EVALUATE WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES

- Critically evaluating research literature and incorporating evidence-based approaches into practice, they ensure the effectiveness and relevance of their interventions across diverse contexts.
- Employ methods such as surveys, interviews, case studies, and statistical analysis to gather comprehensive data on the outcomes of their interventions across various levels of practice. By utilizing a mix of methodologies, they ensure a holistic understanding of the impact of their work on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Skillfully communicate evaluation findings through clear and concise reports, presentations, and other mediums, ensuring that diverse audiences can understand and engage with the results.

COMPETENCY 10 PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

- Use a trauma-informed approach to engagement and assessment, acknowledging the impact of past trauma on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Foster strong working relationships with community partners and stakeholders, promoting collaboration and shared accountability for achieving positive outcomes in interprofessional trauma-informed practice.
- Collaborate with community organizations and coalitions to amplify the voices of trauma survivors and promote trauma-informed approaches in diverse settings.
- Engage in and provide opportunities for continuing education related to trauma informed care.
- Practice self-care to mitigate the effects of vicarious trauma and burnout.

Specialized Program of Study

The specialized practice curriculum in the Belmont MSW consists of the third and fourth semesters, or the second academic year. The specialized practice curriculum also comprises the Advanced Standing Curriculum. This coursework prepares students for advanced social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The courses that comprise this curriculum form a logical progression which supports the mission of the MSW program and prepares students for practice after graduation. During the specialized semesters, students are supported in developing a sense of the unique role social workers play in the field via coursework related to trauma, leadership in practice, and their advanced field placement. They deepen their engagement with diverse constituencies and enhance their reflexive practices not only in relationship to their individual approach to practice, but also that of their agency settings, and our community. Through this, they deepen their advocacy skills related to systemic oppression, and use advanced research and evaluation skills to ensure their interventions are efficacious and well supported by evidence. They will graduate valuing social, racial, environmental, and economic justice, while being equipped with the theoretical knowledge, and practice skills, necessary to support it.

The course sequence, spread across two semesters, is presented in the following table. Please see the [graduate catalog](#) for course descriptions.

Belmont MSW Advanced Generalist Curriculum

Semester 3	Semester 4
SWK 6000 Advanced Practice with Individuals & Families	SWK 6400 Advanced Practice with Organizations & Communities
SWK 6100 Advanced Practice with Groups	SWK 6500 Evaluation for Advanced Social Work Practice
SWK 6200 Trauma Theory in Practice	SWK 6600 Leadership for Advanced Social Work Practice
SWK 6000 Level Elective	SWK 6000 Level Elective
SWK 6300 Field Instruction 3 (250hrs)	SWK 6700 Field Instruction 4 (250hrs)

Fieldwork

Field Instruction I (SWK 5400), Field Instruction II (SWK 5900) – taken during the generalist year – and Field Instruction III (SWK 6300), and Field Instruction IV (SWK6700) – taken as part of the specialized curriculum – are required of all students enrolled in the MSW program. Practicum hours associated with these four courses result in 900 hours of total supervised experience in a social work practice setting. The successful completion of each course is required to progress in the program such that Field I is required to progress to Field II – Field II to Field III and – Field III to Field IV.

All field related policies and procedures are included in the Belmont School of Social Work MSW program field manual.

MSW Portfolio Project

PORTFOLIO PROJECT OVERVIEW

The portfolio is intended to document the professional growth and educational development of each student during their graduate education. In the Belmont MSW Program, students are challenged to establish an advanced generalist model for their practice. The portfolio is designed to evidence and evaluate the process by which each student has achieved that level of practice. The portfolio is also a reflective exercise through which students examine educational achievements and articulate the integration of theories, research, policy, ethics, and professional values learned in class and the field practicum. This reflective exercise demonstrates critical thinking and strong affective processes on the part of the student and is a necessary component of the portfolio's development. Ultimately, the portfolio documents each student's journey in the program and their:

- Competency across nine areas of generalist practice
- Competency across ten elements of advanced generalist practice highlighted in the Belmont MSW specialized curriculum
- Professional development over the course of the program, including areas of personal and professional growth
- Knowledge of key theories for social work practice, the academic literature, and the ability to apply both in guiding practice

- Collaborative work with community members and organizations
- Ability to apply knowledge, values, and skills in the field

The portfolio consists of three components, the narrative, the appendices, and the presentation. Together these three components demonstrate student competency. This project is undertaken in the context of in the context of SWK 6600 Leadership for Advanced Social Work Practice.

The Narrative: The narrative is a 15–20-page overview of student professional development during their time in the MSW program. In it, students should demonstrate the objectives above through examples and explanation. Students should also use the narrative to explain how the work included in their appendices demonstrates the portfolio objectives. The portfolio narrative should be in APA format with appropriate citations and works cited.

The narrative can be organized in ways that help to highlight the student experience (i.e., thematically, a story of growth, by year, by competency, etc.). The narrative needs to provide specific evidence of the student’s theoretical and practical knowledge base, as well as their professional values positionality, and reflective processes. For example, in addressing theories that inform practice, the student should not only name specific theories but also describe the key principles of the theory, cite theoretical sources, and provide a rationale that shows how and why this theory is relevant to practice from their view – *and how they have used it*. Students should use examples to demonstrate how specific knowledge, values, and or skills are used in practice (e.g. group work skills, advocacy skills, motivational interviewing skills, skills of accompaniment, etc). The narrative should also be used to demonstrate development as an Advanced Generalist Practitioner. As such, a student may include an appendix item from any point in the program that shows foundational skills in research, such as a literature review. In the narrative, the student could refer to that work and address how student’s knowledge and skills have advanced since creating that document.

The Appendices: The appendices consist of work produced by the student during the MSW program that demonstrates the portfolio objectives. Students may include work from their courses and/or products developed in the context of practice (resource guides, action plans, outlines and supporting materials from presentations, etc.). Assignments for core social work courses have been designed for possible inclusion in the portfolio. (e.g. a client simulation self-reflection, group research proposal, or self-care for a leader assignment, or their social family policy paper). Students are not required to include these items; they are listed here as possible examples of portfolio items.

Examples of materials to consider for appendices include:

- Agency reports (i.e., strategic planning, program evaluation)
- Case studies
- Grant proposals
- Policy analyses
- Program development plans
- Published documents (i.e., journal, newsletter, or newspaper articles)
- Professional papers
- Annotated bibliographies
- Research reports

- Community development projects
- Written text of legislative testimony
- Community organization meeting summaries
- Links to videos or Podcasts
- PowerPoint presentations

Students should explain how the work included in their appendices illustrates their professional development, knowledge, and abilities; *the appendices do not speak for themselves*. This explanation can occur in the narrative or in a rationale that accompanies each appendix.

The Presentation: The portfolio presentation is scheduled for an hour and a half. The structure is generally as follows:

1. Brief welcome, introductions, and overview of the process by the Portfolio chair (5 minutes)
2. Student presentation (30 minutes)
 - a. The Student presentation is the presentation of your portfolio—the competencies and selected artifacts to demonstrate advanced generalist practice behaviors. The presentation is an opportunity for the student to demonstrate the ability to speak in an open forum about their competence. The student is expected to cover each of the advanced generalist competencies utilizing the artifacts and evidencing personal-professional value integration, specific advanced generalist practice skills, affective processes that denote growth as a masters-prepared social worker, adherence to social work ethics, activities advancing social justice, and appreciation and approach to diversity throughout the presentation.
3. Questions and discussion—includes questions from committee members and audience (+/- 15 minutes)
 - a. The Questioning Portion is an exercise requiring the student to respond to questions posed by the portfolio committee. Questions are based on the advanced generalist competence the student presents in the written portfolio, the student’s oral presentation, and behaviors specific to Belmont MSW Program competencies. The student is expected to answer questions in a clear, concise way that speaks directly to the question posed. These questions are generally designed to elicit information for clarity or probe for evidence of specific practice behaviors missed in the presentation.
4. Committee evaluation—the student and audience leave the room while committee meets (15-20 minutes)
 - a. Committee evaluation is time given to the members of the portfolio committee to deliberate and complete their rubric scoring.
5. Feedback from the committee to the student (5-10 minutes)

In addition to the committee, the student may invite colleagues, friends, and family to attend the portfolio presentation. Students can choose to make the presentation open to the public or open only to the student and committee.

PORTFOLIO ORGANIZATION

The portfolio should be clearly organized.

1. Include a title page. You may title your portfolio if you wish or just refer to it as the “MSW Portfolio.” Include your name, date of presentation and names of committee members on title page.
2. Include a concise table of contents for the entire portfolio.
3. Include the Portfolio Checklist after the table of contents.
4. The narrative follows the table of contents.
5. The portfolio appendices follow the narrative. The appendices should be designated alphabetically, and each appendix should have a title (e.g. Appendix A: Applying the Code of Ethics in Practice; Appendix B: Analysis of Housing First Policy).

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE

Students present the portfolio to their portfolio committee during the second semester of the concentration year, or their final semester of the program, in the context of SWK 6600 Leadership for Advanced Social Work Practice. The committee will consist of the student’s faculty advisor, another faculty member from the School of Social work, and one person from outside the School. Examples of the outside committee person include the student’s agency supervisor, MSW outside supervisor, or a faculty member from another department at Belmont. The student’s advisor will serve as chair of the committee and work to ensure that the portfolio meets program requirements.

PORTFOLIO TIMELINE

Within the context of SWK 6600 Leadership for Advanced Social Work Practice:

- Fall Semester: Student selects portfolio committee
- Start of Spring Semester: Student chooses date for presentation, coordinates room reservation, and calendaring
- 4 weeks before presentation: Student submits portfolio draft to Chair of their committee
- 3 weeks before presentation: Chair provides feedback to student with suggestions for revision
- 2 weeks before presentation: Student submits revised portfolio to full committee
- 1 week before presentation: Chair and committee members provide feedback on revised portfolio and chair determines whether student goes ahead with the revised portfolio as is or makes further revisions prior to presentation.
- Presentation: Student receives feedback from committee, which includes expectations for any final portfolio revisions.
- Post-presentation: Chair and student set date for submission of final revised portfolio.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Admissions Criteria

Students are admitted simultaneously to both the institution and the MSW program. Prospective students can be admitted to the Belmont MSW via three pathways: Standard admittance, transfer admittance, or advanced standing admittance. The application for admission is comprised of materials collected across four areas: Evidence of an applicant’s educational experience, experience in the human services (i.e., professional, interns, and/or volunteer), the applicant’s

written statement, and their recommendations. Details about each are provided below.

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

1. Only applicants with **an earned baccalaureate degree from a college or university accredited by a recognized regional accrediting organization** are considered for admission. Prospective students are required to submit transcripts from all undergraduate credit bearing institutions attended.
2. **A minimum overall GPA average of a B (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) is suggested for traditional admission. A minimum Social Work GPA of 3.3 is suggested for Advanced Standing admission.** Prospective students with a grade point average of less than 3.0 may be admitted to the degree program; however, they may be required to interview with a faculty member from the School of Social Work. A minimum Social Work GPA of 3.3 is suggested for admission to the advanced standing program. Prospective students with a grade point average of less than 3.3 may be admitted to the advanced standing degree program; however, they may be required to interview with a faculty member from the School of Social Work.
3. **An undergraduate record that reflects a liberal arts perspective.** There is no official prerequisite coursework required for admission to the MSW program, but it is suggested that students have successfully completed approximately 18 credit hours of courses such as psychology, sociology, statistics, biology, anthropology, economics, history, political science, government, and/or languages. Prospective students whose undergraduate experience does not include a liberal arts background may be admitted, however, they may be required to interview with a faculty member from the School of Social Work.

EXPERIENCE IN THE HUMAN SERVICES

1. **Experience related to human services is strongly suggested.** This experience can be paid/professional, volunteer or internship based.
2. **This experience should reflect intellectual and or personal qualities likely to lead to success in social work practice,** as well as a commitment to engage in practice reflective of the mission of social work. This includes anti-racist social work roles, and associated efforts related to the pursuit of social, environmental, and economic justice.
3. **Applicants are asked to submit a professional resumé or curriculum vitae.**

WRITTEN STATEMENT

1. In crafting their written statement, **prospective students will submit responses to the following prompts:**
 - a. Describe your understanding of the social work profession. How have you incorporated the National Association of Social Workers values (held by the profession) in your life personally and professionally? Choose 2 of the values to discuss. You can access these [here](#). (300 words or less)
 - b. Why do you want to be an advanced (graduate) level social work practitioner? What are some of your professional goals? How will you use your MSW to enhance the well-being of a population or issue of importance to you? (300 words or less)

- c. How do your unique skills, professional work, and/or lived experiences contribute to your perspective and prepare you to work towards social justice? (300 words or less)
- d. How have you developed self-awareness around racism or other areas of oppression? Identify areas where you'd like to grow in your anti-oppressive approach using the following prompts to expound: How does oppression impact the communities you intend to serve? Please highlight examples of structural, institutional, or systemic levels of oppression, discrimination, and marginalization that are of particular concern to you. (500 words or less).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Applicants are required to submit no fewer than three letters of recommendation**, and no more than five. These letters should be from individuals qualified to evaluate the applicant's potential for success in graduate work. Students are asked not to use family members, counselors, or pastors.
2. **The letters should attest to the applicant's potential for success in the human services**, and their commitment to engage in practice reflective of the mission of social work.
3. At least one of these letters should be from a former professor if possible. For students applying to the advanced standing program, at least one additional letter should be from a field supervisor or instructor.

Admission Types

STANDARD ADMITTANCE

Standard admittance to the program includes the evaluation of prospective student application materials as described above. Students who are admitted via this pathway do not hold a baccalaureate degree in Social Work and have not completed any coursework associated with an MSW degree program at another institution.

TRANSFER ADMITTANCE

Transfer admittance to the program includes the evaluation of prospective student application materials as described above. Applicants requesting a transfer of credits must also meet specific criteria and provide additional documentation per university policy. Institutional policy holds graduate applicants can request the transfer of up to 15 graduate credit hours, while advanced standing transfer applicants can request up to 9 credits. Such applicants must have completed their previous coursework at a Council on Social Work Education accredited MSW program within the last seven years. The coursework must be equivalent to Belmont MSW coursework, and grades earned must be no lower than a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (or a B). In addition to the application materials noted above, transfer applicants must submit a transfer request application, a letter of good standing from the administration of the previous program(s), and a syllabus from each course they are requesting credit from. Transfer applications are evaluated by the MSW admissions committee and approved by the Chair for the School of Social Work.

ADVANCED STANDING ADMITTANCE

The advanced standing MSW program accepts only students who meet application criteria as noted above, **and** hold a baccalaureate social work degree from a CSWE accredited program, a CASWE-accredited baccalaureate social work degree, and those who hold an ISWDRES-evaluated degree

comparable to a baccalaureate social work degree, earned within the last seven years.

Students accepted into the advanced standing program can move into the specialized curriculum of the MSW program. Content from the generalist practice year is waived, provided a student has an overall social work GPA of 3.3, and has earned a B or higher in each generalist equivalent course.

For applicants who have a social work GPA lower than 3.3, or who have had any social work coursework from a CSWE accredited program, a CASWE-accredited baccalaureate social work degree, and those who hold an ISWDRES-evaluated degree comparable to a baccalaureate social work degree, generalist content may be waived on a *class-by-class basis*, pending the grade calculation is a B or higher, and the course was taken within the last seven years. Applicants may be asked to submit a syllabus to facilitate an evaluation of Belmont MSW generalist course equivalency. Course equivalency decisions are made via comparison of the courses' learning outcomes/objectives, readings, assignments, and credit hours. All course equivalency decisions are made at the discretion of the MSW admissions committee and are approved by the Chair for the School of Social Work.

Admissions Decisions

The Belmont MSW program has four application decision types:

- **Acceptance** - Applicants whose materials are consistent with the above criteria may be admitted to the program, pending any final approval needed of their undergraduate transcript(s) and/or the awarding of an undergraduate degree.
- **Denial** - Applicants whose materials are inconsistent with the admissions criteria may be denied outright.
- **Wait-List** – Applicants who apply after the number of available seats in the program are full/ deposited are notified of their option to join a waitlist for the program.

Academic Policies and Procedures

GENERALIST PRACTICE COURSE CREDIT

Students with undergraduate course credit from a CSWE-accredited baccalaureate social work program are entitled to have generalist-equivalent course credit waived, regardless of the undergraduate degree they hold, or their ability to enter the advanced standing program.

The Social Work Centralized Application to the MSW program includes a question asking prospective students if they have successfully completed undergraduate course work in social work. Applicants qualifying for an evaluation of generalist social work course credit must have completed their previous coursework at a Council on Social Work Education accredited program, and any grade(s) earned must be no lower than a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (or a B). If an applicant responds yes/meets these initial criteria, they are asked to submit a syllabus to facilitate an evaluation of Belmont MSW generalist course equivalency. Course equivalency decisions are made via comparison of the courses' learning outcomes/objectives, readings, assignments, and credit hours. All course equivalency decisions are made at the discretion of the MSW admissions committee

and are approved by the Chair for the School of Social Work.

TRANSFER CREDIT

Applicants requesting a transfer of credits must also meet specific criteria and provide additional documentation. Institutional policy holds graduate applicants can request the transfer of up to 15 graduate credit hours, while advanced standing transfer applicants can request up to 9 credits. Such applicants must have completed their previous coursework at a Council on Social Work Education accredited MSW program within the last seven years. The coursework must be equivalent to Belmont MSW coursework, and grades earned must be no lower than a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (or a B). In addition to the application materials noted above, transfer applicants must submit a transfer request application, a letter of good standing from the administration of the previous program(s), a syllabus from each course they are requesting credit from. Course equivalency decisions are made via comparison of the courses' learning outcomes/objectives, readings, assignments, and credit hours. All transfer course equivalency decisions are made at the discretion of the MSW admissions committee and are approved by the Chair for the School of Social Work.

The Belmont School of Social Work does not grant social work course credit for life experience and or previous work experience.

Academic Performance Monitoring and Review Procedures

ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

The Belmont School of Social Work and the MSW program faculty and staff uphold a strong and shared commitment to ensuring graduating students meet the standards of practice and competence outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics and CSWE's practice competencies. In support of these standards, student academic performance is continually monitored.

Advisement, both academic and professional, is essential in social work education. Therefore, advisement is required of all MSW students throughout their period of study. Each student will be assigned a faculty advisor or staff advisor.

Each fall and spring semesters, the University designates "Academic Advising Periods" wherein students around the university are to meet with their advisor. MSW students must sign up for an advising time with their advisor to discuss their academic progress, course selection and planning, and ensure progress toward graduation during this time. Students are expected to learn to utilize the tools in the Ellucian Banner portfolio such as degreeworks (i.e., a student's unofficial transcript), and classfinder (a published resource of courses available for registration in the upcoming term) for use in these sessions.

Academic advising is designed to enable students to:

- Plan their courses, and review progress toward degree
- Be advised of changing employment patterns and career opportunities in social work, including information about specific fields of practice and courses that may connect to these contexts.
- Receive help with resolving problems related to pursuance of their educational goals in social work; and
- Receive support around field education

In addition to academic advising periods, advisors meet upon request throughout the year. Each faculty member holds eight open office hours weekly and is also available by appointment, to discuss issues as they arise.

REGISTRATION

Students are responsible for their program of study, and their timely progression toward graduation. They are encouraged to utilize university resources in understanding the registration process, and to consult with their academic advisor as necessary. [The Belmont University Office of the Registrar](#) offers information to help students understand drop/add procedures and deadlines.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

MSW students are expected to maintain a 3.0 GPA, or no lower than a B in each completed MSW course. Students receiving a grade of C or lower – at midterm or as their final grade – are subject to an academic performance review.

Additionally, students who demonstrate behaviors that may compromise academic performance such as – but not limited to – absences, tardiness, late or missing assignments, poor performance on an assignment or exam, poor content-related performance in field, academic dishonesty, or cheating are also subject to an academic performance review.

The university community is committed to personal integrity in the pursuit of knowledge. This requires intellectual honesty and transparency in student scholarship. To that end, the university has adopted an honor pledge, “a Bruin does not lie, cheat or steal.” Each student pledges to uphold the Honor Pledge as a condition of membership in the community. Refer to the student handbook, [the Bruin Guide](#), and the graduate catalog for further information on university policy.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Belmont University is committed to the idea that regular class/fieldwork attendance is essential to successful scholastic achievement. Additionally, social work is a professional program in which class interaction is essential to the learning process. Therefore, students are expected to attend all regular class sessions, and associated field activities. Attendance is checked during every class session. Specific requirements are outlined in course syllabi, as are penalties for absences and late arrivals.

When the number of absences exceeds the number permitted, the student may receive the grade of “FN” (failure for non-attendance.) The FN counts as an F when computing GPA. Failure to attend class may result in administrative withdraw.

MONITORING

Student academic performance is monitored by program faculty and staff. The MSW program director engages program faculty and staff in discussions of student engagement, commitment, persistence, and academic progress in monthly meetings. In addition, the MSW program director receives midterm and end of term grade reports from each faculty member.

The School of Social Work recognizes that individuals may have unique needs and circumstances, as such resources and support are available to assist students in overcoming barriers or challenges related to their academic success. Students are encouraged to discuss reasonable accommodations for academic support with their academic advisor and the [Office of Accessibility Services](#).

REVIEW PROCESSES

The School of Social Work upholds academic standards to ensure the well-being of all individuals involved in our academic community. In the spirit of collaboration, MSW program administration, faculty or staff can utilize the following academic review processes at any time, to offer the support needed for student success and intervene around student academic performance.

1. **Primary Intervention:** If a student is observed to demonstrate behaviors that are incongruent with academic success, including but not limited to absences, tardiness, late or missing assignments, poor performance on an assignment or exam, poor content-related performance in field, they will receive an email communication about this behavior. The MSW Program director and the student’s advisor will also be notified. This communication will include detail regarding the concern(s) and will serve an opportunity to schedule a verbal discussion of the concern(s). This intervention may come from course instructors, advisors, administrators, field personnel or staff members.
2. **Intermediate Intervention:** If a student demonstrates continued instances of concerning academic performance, or a more significant initial issue (such as a failed exam, or field related concern), they will receive written communication outlining the circumstances of the concern, along with a request to meet with the MSW program director, their advisor and any other relevant party (such as a course instructor, field personnel or staff member). During this meeting, the student and their advisor will develop a plan to help achieve academic success, including any connections needed to school, college, or university resources that may assist. The student will receive formal guidelines for continued good

standing, and detailed information about possible courses of action following concerning academic performance/behavior. This plan will be signed by the student as acknowledgement that they have received it and understand it.

- 3. Academic Performance Review:** Upon a third instance of academic concern, or a significant initial issue (such as an earned grade of C or lower, an instance of academic dishonesty, or dismissal from field), the MSW program director will communicate the need for an academic performance review with the Chair for the School of Social Work. The Chair will be responsible convening the review meeting and will work with the student, the student's advisor, and the director to establish a meeting time. The intent of this meeting is to make a recommendation for academic support, to identify if content needs to be repeated before progressing in the program, and/or to determine the student's ability to remain in the program.

In partnership with the student, this group will identify what course of action can bring the student's academic performance into compliance with school, university, and professional standards. In situations where such action is feasible and desirable, a contract will be created. The contract will set forth standards to be upheld, actions to be taken to solve identified problems, and a period for the completion of designated actions and a re-evaluation of student academic performance. Consequences for non-adherence to any element contained in the contract will be included, as will options for appeals should the panel determine a student be terminated from the program. The contract will be signed by the student and the Chair and/or MSW program director.

If no such course of action is deemed possible, students may be terminated from the School of Social Work and the Belmont Master's in Social Work program. Decisions regarding responsibility and consequences will be delivered to the student in writing through their Belmont e-mail address. The student is considered to have received the academic performance review contract and decision letter upon the letter being sent via e-mail.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Any student earning a C or lower in any MSW course is on academic probation and is subject to an academic performance review. The academic performance review process will identify what course of action, if any, can bring the student's academic performance into compliance with school, university, and professional standards. In situations where such action is feasible and desirable, a contract will be created. The contract will set forth a term for academic probation and what is required for ending this probationary period.

If no such course is deemed possible, students may be dismissed from the Program. Any student who is dismissed may apply for readmission. Students may participate in Field Instruction while on academic probation only with the support of the student's advisor, field director, and instructor, who all concur they are otherwise safe and ready for the experience.

Dismissal from field results in failure of the field course, immediate academic probation, and an immediate performance review regardless of GPA. The academic and or professional performance review process will be utilized to determine an appropriate course of action regarding a students'

progress in the curriculum, and possible termination from the program. Students may not attend field seminar once dismissed from field.

Professional Performance MONITORING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

PROFESSIONAL ADVISEMENT

Professional advising is provided to all Belmont MSW students by School of Social Work Faculty and the Director of Field. Each student will be assigned an advisor upon entry to the program. Each fall and spring semesters, the University designates "Academic Advising Periods" wherein students around the university are to meet with their advisor. MSW students must sign up for an advising time with their advisor to discuss their professional trajectory. In addition to these advising periods, faculty advisors meet upon request throughout the year. Each faculty member holds open office hours weekly and is also available by appointment, to discuss issues as they arise.

Professional advising is designed to:

- Support students in their development of professionalism in all contexts – educational and practice based.
- Advise them of changing employment/practice contexts and career opportunities in social work, including their understanding and pursuit of licensure in Tennessee or elsewhere.
- Offer guidance about the continuation of their studies in a post-graduate or doctoral program.
- Discuss matters related to fieldwork, including continuing education, professional development, and professional ethics.
- Offer additional, informal supervision related to fieldwork as needed.

TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The technical and professional standards provided below delineate foundational and essential functionality needed for both professional social work practice, and to achieve success in the Belmont University MSW program. These standards offer students a baseline of professionalism and capacity necessary to perform key functions in their pursuit of an MSW degree. Upholding these standards helps to safeguard the well-being of all individuals involved in a student's academic journey. It is important to note that these standards are not prerequisites for admission to the Belmont Master's in Social Work, but instead serve as a guideline for understanding the qualities and behaviors required for professional success. The School of Social Work recognizes that individuals may have unique needs and circumstances, and as such resources and support are available to assist students in overcoming barriers or challenges related to their success in meeting these standards. Students may work with their advisor, program director, the Chair for the School of Social Work, and the [Office of Accessibility Services](#) to seek reasonable accommodations related to technical and or professional standards.

Cognitive and Affective Standards

- Calmly handle situations which may be physically, emotionally, or intellectually stressful.

- Demonstrate interpersonal skills needed for productive classroom discussion, respectful interaction with classmates, faculty, staff, and development of appropriate client/worker relationships.
- Display values of caring, empathy, and responsiveness to the needs of clients
- Accurately observe, gather and report verbal and written data in a timely manner.
- Synthesize information for effective problem solving needed in the completion of psychosocial or community and organizational assessments, intervention planning, and evaluation of practice.
- Demonstrate ability to assess environmental safety and risk factors, such as when making home visits, intervening in cases of child and elderly maltreatment, domestic or any other type of interpersonal violence situations.

Standards for Professional Communication

- Understand and manage nonverbal communication (including behavioral, emotional, and affective communication).
- Express own ideas and feelings clearly and respectfully and in a manner conducive to a positive outcome.
- Listen actively in order to receive and interpret oral communication.
- Demonstrate proficient written and oral language skills for communicating with school, local agencies, and clients.
- Comprehend and effectively communicate in the English language orally and in writing using appropriate grammar and vocabulary.
- Demonstrate professional interpersonal communication and interactions.
- Demonstrate ability to use methods, technology, and resources needed to complete assignments and communicate professionally and ethically.
- Demonstrate professional use of technology related to the academic program and field (including, but not limited to telephone calls, email, social media, and texting).
- Communicate in a timely manner when circumstances arise that impact ability to participate in academic activities, including classroom or field placements activities.

Professional Relationships Standards

- Adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics ([available here](#)).
- Demonstrate the interpersonal skills necessary to relate effectively and empathically in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Attend and participate in class and field activities consistently in compliance with any specific attendance and participation requirements set forth by instructors.
- Demonstrate ability to engage with others with appropriate respect for diversity and difference.
- Consult and collaborate with peers, faculty, social work practitioners and other members of the community.
- Communicate effectively as part of an interdisciplinary team.
- Prioritize responsibilities to meet the demands of personal and professional expectations and obligations.

- Listen to constructive feedback and implement subsequent changes.

Standards for the Professional Use of Self

- Accurately self-assess performance and strengths and weaknesses and demonstrate self-awareness and growth necessary for professional social work practice.
- Demonstrate the knowledge that one's own values, beliefs, emotions, past experiences, and attitudes may affect thinking, behavior, and relationships.
- Apply self-awareness and emotional self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values.
- Manage response to situations or stimuli that may interfere with performance of social work functions.
- Manage personal problems and situations that may negatively impact performance including medical, interpersonal, mental, emotional or behavioral problems or challenges.
- Proactively seek assistance from appropriate professionals for medical, interpersonal, mental, emotional, or behavioral problems and challenges that may interfere with performance. (Faculty, instructors, and fellow students are not responsible for providing such assistance to students.).

Additionally, students are expected to uphold community standards set forth by the University. See [The Bruin Guide](#) for the descriptions of personal, social, and sexual conduct violations. Also refer to the policies on alcohol beverages, illicit drugs, sexual assault, sexual harassment, solicitation, and tobacco use.

MONITORING

Student professional performance is monitored by program faculty and staff, both in the context of the field, and across all educational spaces. The MSW program director engages program faculty and staff in discussions of student professional development and conduct in monthly meetings. In addition, the MSW program director meets monthly with the Field Director, which offers a specific pathway for communicating concerns related to student performance in the community. Student professional development is formally assessed in the context of Field II and Field III seminars using a student self-evaluation instrument, and in consultation with a student's advisor. Students receive advising, at minimum, twice annually to discuss their professional development.

REVIEW PROCESSES

Demonstrated behaviors that are incongruent with the School of Social Work technical and professional standards, and the essential functions outlined above, will prompt a review by the school. In the spirit of collaboration, MSW program administration, faculty or staff can utilize the following professional review processes at any time to offer the support needed for student success and to intervene around student professional performance.

1. **Primary Intervention:** If a student is observed to demonstrate behaviors that are concerning and/or incongruent with professional or technical standards, including but not

limited to cognitive and affective standards, communication standards, standards related to professional relationships and the professional use of self, and or those outlined in the Bruin Guide, they will receive an email about this behavior. This email communication will detail the concerns and will serve an opportunity to schedule a verbal discussion of the concern. This intervention may come from course instructors, advisors, administrators, field personnel or staff members.

2. **Intermediate Intervention:** If a student demonstrates continued instances of concerning professional performance, or a more significant initial issue (such as an unprofessional or concerning comment in class, an absence of self-awareness as it relates to diversity and difference, or a concern from a field instructor), they will receive written communication outlining the circumstances of the concern, along with a request to meet with the MSW program director, their advisor and/or any other relevant party (such as a course instructor, field personnel or staff member). During this meeting, the student and their advisor will develop a plan to help achieve professional success, including any connections needed to school, college, or university resources that may assist. The student will receive formal guidelines for continued good standing, and detailed information about possible courses of action following concerning professional performance/behavior. This plan will be signed by the student as acknowledgement that they have received it and understand it.
3. **Professional Performance Review:** Upon a third instance of professional concern, or a significant initial issue (such as inappropriate work with a client, violation of the university code of conduct, or the NASW Code of Ethics), the MSW program director will communicate the need for a professional performance review with the Chair for the School of Social Work. The Chair will be responsible convening the review meeting and will work with the student, the student's advisor, and the director to establish a meeting time. The intent of this meeting is to make a recommendation for professional support if possible, and/or to determine the student's ability to remain in the program.

In partnership with the student, this group will identify if there is a course of action that can bring the student's professional performance into compliance with school, university, and professional standards. In situations where such action is feasible and desirable, a contract will be created. The contract will set forth standards to be upheld, actions to be taken to solve identified problems, and a period for the completion of designated actions and a re-evaluation of student performance. Consequences for non-adherence to any element contained in the contract will be included, as will options for appeals should the panel determine a student be terminated from the program.

If no such course of action is deemed possible, students may be terminated from the School of Social Work and the Belmont Master's in Social Work program. Decisions regarding responsibility and consequences will be delivered to the student in writing through their Belmont e-mail address. The student is considered to have received the professional performance review contract and/or decision letter upon the letter being sent via e-mail.

Students' Rights, Responsibilities, and Grievance Procedures

UNIVERSITY POLICY

Several university policies cover issues in relationship to the Honor Code, sexual harassment, non-sexual harassment, discrimination, associated protections, Title IX, reasonable accommodations, the University Code of Conduct, and all procedures for appeals. Each Social Work student is required to be familiar with these policies found in the [Bruin Guide](#).

ACADEMIC APPEALS

Grade appeal procedures outlined in the [Belmont Graduate Catalog](#) are as follows:

- Students have the right to appeal grades directly to the instructor if they believe that an incorrect grade has been assigned for the course. If a grade issue is not resolved after contact with the instructor, the student may appeal in writing to the department chair / associate dean of the college. This must occur by the mid-term point of the next semester. In the written appeal the student must be prepared to demonstrate and document an unusual circumstance that warrants a review of the grade and evidences of the grade s/he believes should have been given by the instructor. All written appeals will be reviewed within one month of receipt and responded to in writing either confirming or changing the posted final grade. A copy of this response will go to the Registrar's Office for the student's record.
- Further appeal is through the administrative structure of the college in which the course was taken, with final appeal to the Dean of the College. Any appeal must be in writing and include appropriate documentation to support the student's position that a grade change is warranted.
- The final grade is the instructor's posted grade, which may be viewed in the student's grade report on-line at the close of the term or part-of-term. It is solely the responsibility of the student to check that grades are posted for all courses taken during a semester and note the grade given for each class. All grade appeals must be requested by the mid-term point of the next semester. Unless an active appeal is under review, after the mid-term point of the next semester, neither instructors nor the university will consider a grade change.
- Once a final grade has been posted the student may not petition the instructor to do additional work or extra credit to raise the grade awarded. Any grade change as a result of such action will be disallowed.
- For grades of IP or I, once the I or IP is replaced (required prior to mid-term of the follow semester) by a grade, including a change to F, that becomes the posting date of the final grade. Administrative grades such as W (withdrawal) are handled through the Registrar's Office

PROGRAMMATIC DECISION APPEALS

Students may also seek an appeal related to a decision made regarding their academic or professional performance during any of the three leveled reviews described above (*primary performance interventions, intermediate performance interventions, and/or performance review decisions*). Grievance and appeal procedures are as follows:

- If a student has a complaint regarding a *primary performance intervention*, an instructor or course-based concern, every effort should be made to resolve the issue with that specific instructor or staff member.

- If the issue is not resolved with the instructor or staff member, and/or the student has a complaint regarding an *intermediate intervention*, they should provide in writing their complaint and any requested action for resolution to the Chair for the School of Social Work.
- The Chair will review the student's complaint and, if needed, request additional information or clarification from the student, MSW program director, faculty members and any other individual that may be involved. The Chair will determine any next steps and communicate this to the appropriate individuals within the bounds of appropriate confidentiality.
- If the student is not satisfied with this resolution, and or they have a complaint regarding an *performance review decision*, they may further appeal to the College of Health Sciences Senior Associate Dean. The student should provide in writing their initial complaint as well as an explanation of why they are appealing the decision of the School of Social Work.
- The Senior Associate Dean will review the complaint, and, if needed, request additional information or clarification from the student, Chair/Program Director, faculty member and any other individual that may be involved.

TERMINATION FROM THE PROGRAM

The Belmont University Master's in Social Work is a professional degree granting program, which prepares students for board examinations, state licensure, and ultimately professional practice with vulnerable and marginalized people. Poor academic performance, behavior in a field and/or educational setting that is in violation of the School of Social Work's technical and professional standards, the Belmont University Code of Conduct (details can be found in [The Bruin Guide](#)), and/or the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) may result in student termination from the program, as determined in an academic and or professional performance review process.

The following list details actions or behaviors considered just cause for immediate dismissal from the Master's in Social Work Program:

- Violation(s) of the School of Social Work's technical and professional standards, the Belmont University Code of Conduct (see [The Bruin Guide](#)), and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Violation of Belmont University's Title IX policies.
- Cheating, plagiarism, giving false information, or altering official records.
- Abuse or disrespect for clients, peers, or faculty.
- Earning an insufficient grade in any course(s).
- Willful conduct that may cause injury.
- Harassment, discrimination, non-sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct as defined in [The Bruin Guide](#).

Processes for student complaint and grievances regarding termination decisions are outlined in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and [The Bruin Guide](#). Any student who is dismissed may apply for readmission.

Students may file a formal complaint by e-mailing the Office of the Dean of Students to determine the appropriate appellate official. They must describe the treatment, action, final decision given by the academic or administrative area, and the remedy still sought. Complaints will be investigated and / or referred to other offices as necessary. A written response regarding the issue will be sent to the student who initiated the complaint. The Associate Provost and Dean of Students serve as the primary

coordinator of response and support to students with concerns or those students experiencing a crisis. Please see [The Bruin Guide](#), page 89.

Leave of Absence and Withdrawal

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

[Per University policy](#), a leave of absence status may be a suitable option for degree-seeking students who demonstrate a hardship or mitigating circumstances resulting in their inability to attend the next semester. Approval for a leave of absence status can only be granted prior to the first day of the semester. If after the start of the semester a student is unable to attend classes even for involuntary reasons, the student should officially withdraw from the university by completing a university withdrawal form. For consideration of a leave of absence, the student is required to provide the following documentation prior to the start of the term:

- [Leave of Absence Request Form](#)
- Official supporting documentation
- Letter of explanation with student's signature

WITHDRAWAL

Students considering a complete withdrawal from the program should schedule an exit interview with the Chair for the School of Social Work prior to initiating withdrawal procedures. Official withdrawal should be made through the Office of the Registrar per the timeline established by the Registrar. Students should consult with the Office of the Registrar and Student Financial Services to determine if a refund of tuition is possible. Note that MSW program faculty do not determine refunds and will refer students to the Student Financial Services if refunds are requested. Readmission to the Program may only be considered if the student provides written notification to the Chair. Readmission is subject to faculty approval; therefore, the student will need to submit the request to the Chair no later than May 1st prior to the academic year of the proposed return.

Faculty Hours and Course Expectations

MSW Program faculty hold regular office hours outside of class. Students should coordinate meetings with individual faculty members by appointment, and or in consultation of their posted office hours.

At the beginning of each semester students will be provided a course syllabus via the University LMS (Canvas®) which outlines the course of study, materials to be used, course requirements and objectives, description of criteria by which the student will be evaluated and on which the course grade will be based, the grading scale, and references to required and recommended readings. The grading criteria may include the number of exams, any required papers, outside readings, class presentations, type of participation required and a listing of appropriate dates and deadlines.

Liability Coverage and Health Insurance

LIABILITY

Students receive professional liability insurance through Belmont University and are covered at the time of enrollment. Note that students are covered ONLY during the time they are involved in University-related activities (classroom, and fieldwork). This does NOT cover the student who is

involved in some form of intervention/work-related activity when not in school.

HEALTH INSURANCE AND HEALTHCARE

Belmont University requires that each student have health insurance. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that she/he is fully covered for the entirety of the program. Please note – field placements may request to see evidence of health insurance upon. Failure to maintain valid health insurance may result in termination of a field experience. All full time Graduate students will be required to have comprehensive healthcare coverage during their matriculation at Belmont University. Graduate student insurance is available through United HealthCare. All graduate students must either opt in or waive the insurance policy here. For more information contact Roslian.Humphrey@belmont.edu.

Basic health services are available to students through Belmont University Health Services. While some of the health care given through the University Health Services is at no cost to the individual, a student may be required to assume financial responsibility for some designated services beyond routine care. As a prerequisite for seeking health care from this center, a student must have on file a completed, up-to-date health record. University Health Services also maintains an active referral list for those students desiring health care off campus. All medical expenses incurred off campus are the responsibility of the student.

Americans With Disabilities Act

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, The Office of the Dean of Students, Disability Services Program coordinates reasonable accommodations for all students with disability at Belmont University. Students may request supportive services at 615- 460-6407 via the Office of Accessibility Services located in the Beaman Student Life Center, Suite 200.

Shared Governance and Student Participation

STUDENT REPRESENTATION

Belmont MSW students are invited to offer input and to participate in guiding the context of the MSW program, while providing leadership within the School of Social Work.

The Social Work Student Association invites participation from both the BSW and MSW programs. Leadership of the group includes representation from each program. Respective Student Association leaders will support Belmont BSW and MSW program by facilitating student input in the following ways:

- Provide student consultation as needed on student programming.
- Provide a student liaison for program level faculty meetings.
- Provide program level representation to the School of Social Work Advisory Council.
- Provide representation to program level committees as needed, such as admissions, student development, grievances, and faculty governance.
- Provide student consultation as needed on curricular changes.
- Provide a student liaison for program level faculty meetings.
- Provide program level representation to the School of Social Work Advisory Council.
- Provide representation to program level committees as needed, such as curriculum, assessment, and field.

In addition, Belmont MSW students have an opportunity to offer feedback to the MSW program faculty and staff via an annual survey that seeks to assess the impact of the program and the student experience, as well as garner suggestions for continued improvement - specially as it relates to ensuring programmatic experiences that support anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

COALITION OF BLACK SOCIAL WORKERS STUDENT CHAPTER

The purposes of the CBSW student organization is to engage, connect, and empower Black social work students and professionals. This group works to prioritize the needs and success of Black people on Belmont's campus, and within the Social Work community.

SOCIAL WORK STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The purposes of the student organization are to promote interest in social work and social work issues through association with other interested students; to support supplemental education experiences for students; to act as an advocate for students in academic and administrative matters; and to promote social interaction among the membership. Students also initiate projects to help disadvantaged persons in the community.

Membership is open to any Social Work student. The officers of the club are BSW and MSW Chairs, Secretary/Treasurer, and Student Organization Association (SGA) representative. The officers are elected annually, during the fall semester, by the membership of the organization. The Co-Chairs automatically become members of the Social Work Advisory Council.

PHI ALPHA SOCIAL WORK HONOR SOCIETY ZETA XI CHAPTER

In the spring semester of 1997, the Student Social Work Club at Belmont University organized the initial membership into Phi Alpha, a national honor society for social work students. Our chapter, Zeta Xi, began with seven social work students who met the criteria for membership. Induction is held every spring, for qualifying MSW and BSW students. Social Work Student Association Leadership lead this event. Criteria for membership are as follows:

- Completed 9 semester hours of required social work courses
- Has achieved academic ranking in the top 35% of all Social Work students in their respective program of study.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Belmont School of Social Work Advisory Council regularly ensures the professional practice community has an opportunity to inform the generalist practice curriculum. This board is comprised of area practitioners who are selected based on their wide-ranging levels of preparation, practice contexts, and professional interests. This team meets annually, in the fall, to discuss the previous year's assessment data, to consider curricular revisions, and to offer insights into ways the Belmont MSW program can ensure integration with the needs being experienced in the field. The MSW Co-Chair of the Social Work Student Association is a representative to this group.

Graduation

Students completing all university and MSW program requirements may apply for graduation and participate in the campus-wide graduation ceremony held December and May each year. It is the

student's responsibility to file graduation forms and pay fees by university designated deadlines. Failure to complete the appropriate requirement or forms within the specified deadlines will result in the student being unable to graduate during that semester.

Appendix A: Faculty and Staff

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Appendix B: Helpful Resources

[The NASW Code of Ethics](#)

[Tennessee Chapter of the NASW](#)

[Tennessee Board of Social Work](#)

[The Bruin Guide](#)

[The Belmont Graduate Catalog](#)

[Campus Maps](#)

[The Belmont University Registrar's Office](#)

[Belmont University Office of Student Financial Services](#)

[Belmont Health Services](#)

[Belmont Counseling Center](#)

[Belmont Office of Accessibility Services](#)

[Library Services](#)

[My Belmont](#)

[Classfinder](#)