



DSW Program Handbook

2026-2027 Academic Year

The *Vision* of the University at Buffalo School of Social Work:

The diverse community of UB's School of Social Work is unified by our vision of a better society achieved through generation and transmission of knowledge, promotion of social justice, and service to humanity.

The *Mission* of the University at Buffalo School of Social Work:

In our teaching, research, and service we strive to:

- educate future generations of social workers who will be the leaders of the profession locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally;
 - facilitate critical inquiry into and analysis of the causes and consequences of social problems and injustice;
 - produce innovative, theoretically based and empirically-sound means of alleviating and rectifying such problems and injustices through policy and practice;
 - provide professional leadership in resolving critical social, economic, and political challenges;
 - be responsive and responsible members of our university, regional, national, and global communities; and
 - honor the inherent dignity, rights, and strengths of all individuals, families, and communities.
-

The *Mission* of the University at Buffalo School of Social Work DSW Program:

The Doctor of Social Work (DSW) Program at the University at Buffalo School of Social Work prepares experienced social workers to advance the use of evidence-informed interventions in their professional practice and promote the responsiveness of organizations and communities to fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. The program applies implementation science and a trauma-informed human rights perspective to translate evidence into best practice interventions that address factors influencing the uptake, use, and sustainability of programs, policies, and services. DSW practitioner-scholar graduates are equipped with the expertise and skills to advance social, racial, economic, and environmental justice through leadership, scholarship, partnership, and innovation.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM AND HANDBOOK	5
Program Introduction	5
UBSSW DSW Program Application and Admission	5
Standard Admittance Criteria	6
Transfer Admittance Criteria	6
Handbook Introduction	6
SECTION I: ETHICAL AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS	7
ETHICAL CONDUCT	7
Academic Integrity.....	7
Research Responsibility.....	10
NASW Code of Ethics	10
Technical Standards for Admission, Promotion, and Graduation	10
Termination Policy for Ethical Misconduct.....	10
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE & PROGRESS	12
Academic Performance	12
Academic Progress and Student Performance	13
Repeating Courses	13
Program Dismissal	14
Due Process Policy for Reasons of Academic Performance.....	14
STUDENT RECOURSE	15
Student Grievance against a Faculty/Staff Member	15
Grievance Procedures	16
UBSSW RESTORATIVE PROCESS	18
The Goals of a Restorative Process.....	18
Trauma-Informed and Restorative Principles	18
When a Student has Experienced Racism or Other Form of Oppression in the Classroom:.....	20
What Does a Restorative Conversation Look Like?	20
Guiding Principles for UBSSW Community Members	21
A Restorative Conversation is not the same as a Restorative Conference	21
UB Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	21
SECTION II: TECHNOLOGICAL AND CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS.....	23
DSW TECHNOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS	23
DSW CURRICULUM	23
DSW COURSEWORK DESCRIPTIONS.....	24
Semester 1 (Fall).....	24
Semester 2 (Spring)	24
Semester 3 (Fall).....	25
Semester 4 (Spring)	26
Semester 5 (Summer).....	26
Semester 6 (Fall).....	27
Semester 7 (Spring)	27
Electives.....	28

ALTERNATIVE ACADEMIC PLAN	28
COURSE ENROLLMENT	28
ORIENTATION REQUIREMENT	28
DSW TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY	29
Transferring Credit from Other Doctorate Programs	29
Elective Credits	29
CAPSTONE PROJECT.....	30
Capstone Project Proposal	30
Advancement to Candidacy	31
Capstone Project Final Paper	31
USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS IN ALL DSW CAPSTONE COURSES POLICY	32
CONFERRAL & COMMENCEMENT	33
SECTION III: ACADEMIC ADVISING, MENTORSHIP, STUDENT INPUT AND PARTICIPATION, AND RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS.....	34
ACADEMIC ADVISING	34
MENTORSHIP.....	34
Core Mentorship Components	34
STUDENT INPUT AND PARTICIPATION	35
Implicit Curriculum: Governance, Climate, and Administration	35
Explicit Curriculum: Design, Instruction, and Scholarly Products	36
ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES & PERSONNEL	37
DSW Program Director	37
DSW Program Assistant	37
DSW Program Advisors	37
Doctoral Programs Committee	37
Assistant Dean, SSW Student Services.....	37
RESOURCES	38
Accessibility	38
Computer Access and Technical Support.....	38
Software.....	38
My Virtual Computing Lab.....	38
Library	38
Center for Excellence in Writing.....	38
NY Social Work Contact Hours	38

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM AND HANDBOOK

Program Introduction

The University at Buffalo School of Social Work's (UBSSW) Doctor of Social Work (DSW) Program in Social Welfare is guided by our objective of graduating social work scholars who:

- advance the use of evidence-based practices and interventions through the application of implementation science;
- promote the integration of a trauma-informed human rights (TIHR) and social justice perspective;
- generate and share knowledge;
- utilize advanced technologies;
- converse and collaborate across systems and stakeholders; and
- uphold social work ethics.

The UBSSW's DSW program is an intensive, accelerated program for experienced social workers interested in advancing their knowledge and professional practice. Practitioner-scholar graduates are prepared to assume leadership in the implementation and dissemination of evidence-based interventions with vulnerable populations. The following highlight the three fundamental aspects that make our DSW program unique:

- Utilizes implementation science to translate evidence into best practices interventions;
- Incorporates a TIHR perspective to transform social work practice; and
- Integrates state-of-the-art digital technologies to innovate social work education and practices, including the development of a global professional collaboration network.

The DSW differs from the PhD in that the DSW is a practice-oriented degree while the PhD is a research-oriented degree. The DSW is designed to prepare students, experienced at the master's level in social work, for advanced practice and leadership. While conducting research is a component of the DSW program, it is not intended to prepare students for academic careers in research.

UBSSW DSW Program Application and Admission

On the UBSSW website you can find the [DSW application process and prerequisites](#), [international application requirements](#), and curriculum and tuition details for the [DSW program](#).

The [application process videos and live virtual information sessions](#) can also be found on our website. Students can also request information session recordings on the [bottom of each program page](#).

Standard Admittance Criteria

The UBSSW requires all applicants to the DSW program to have a master's degree in social work (MSW) from a CSWE-accredited program or international equivalent with a minimum of a 3.0 GPA. All applicants must also have completed a minimum of at least two years of post-MSW work experience in a social work setting and must have access to a target population with which to implement their Capstone Project.

Transfer Admittance Criteria

UBSSW policy states that students cannot transfer credits into the DSW program to fulfill degree requirements. Transfer students have the same admittance criteria as the standard criteria outlined above and go through the same application process.

Handbook Introduction

This handbook describes the structure and requirements of the DSW Program and presents the policies and procedures that guide students' progress through the DSW Program. When applicable, links to other university units, external sites, and their policies and documents are provided.

The DSW Program conforms to all [Graduate School policies](#) regarding registration, grading, and degree requirements (e.g., those dictating leaves of absence, course resignation, course attendance). These are available on the [Graduate School website](#). Graduate students are expected to be aware of and satisfy all regulations governing their work at study at the university. Students should consult the Office of the Registrar for [class schedules](#) and [academic calendars](#) (including dates for registration, drop/add periods, and class resignations).

This handbook represents the offerings and requirements in effect at the time of publication, but there is no guarantee that they will not be changed or revoked. However, adequate and reasonable notice will be given to students affected by any changes.

The handbook is divided into the following sections:

[SECTION I: ETHICAL AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS](#)

[SECTION II: TECHNICAL AND CURRICULAR REQUIREMENT](#)

[SECTION III: ACADEMIC ADVISING, MENTORSHIP, STUDENT INPUT AND PARTICIPATION, AND RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS](#)

SECTION I: ETHICAL AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

ETHICAL CONDUCT

The DSW Program abides by prevailing principles of academic integrity, ethical standards of behavior, and research responsibility. Students are expected to adhere strictly to the standards and policies identified below and may be dismissed by the DSW Program Director for any violation thereof.

Academic Integrity

The DSW Program follows the [UB Academic Integrity Office's](#) policy and procedures. These apply to all work conducted while a student in the program including coursework, capstone project, and any affiliated research projects and materials (i.e., white papers, manuscripts, policy briefs, training manuals, infographics and/or presentations). To emphasize the program's unconditional commitment to academic integrity, students must sign the *Academic Integrity Agreement* prior beginning coursework.

The following provides the UB Academic Integrity Policy:

Academic integrity is a fundamental university value. Through the honest completion of academic work, students sustain the integrity of the university while facilitating the university's imperative for the transmission of knowledge and culture based upon the generation of new and innovative ideas.

Students are held to a high level of accountability and are expected to uphold our standards of honesty in order to sustain a fair learning environment. Academic dishonesty comes in many forms, including but not limited to:

- **Aiding in academic dishonesty.** Taking action that allows another student to engage in an act of academic dishonesty, including completing an examination or assignment for another student, failing to protect academic work by leaving it unattended, or collaborating without instructor permission.
- **Cheating.** Use of unauthorized resources, including sources not permitted by the course instructor, or tools such as calculators, smart watches, phones, or other students' work.
- **Falsifying academic materials.** Altering, fabricating, forging, or submitting: any course-related materials, including laboratory reports, notes, or any forms of data; an instructor's name or initials; an examination or assignment for re-evaluation; an assessment (in whole or in part) prepared by any person or technology (e.g., artificial intelligence) other than the student responsible.

- **Misrepresenting documents.** Altering, fabricating, forging, or submitting any non-course-related materials, including any university or official document, instrument of identification, or medical record.
- **Plagiarizing.** Representing the ideas or work (e.g., written text, computer code, artwork) of another as one's own or improperly referencing original authors.
- **Purchasing academic assignments.** Buying assignments intended for submission in fulfillment of any course or academic program requirement.
- **Sabotage.** Damaging another student's work to prevent fair assessment or interfering with the access or production of knowledge (e.g., deleting another student's material from a shared Box folder; destroying another student's experiment; preventing another student from gaining access to required material).
- **Selling academic assignments.** Offering for sale and/or receiving compensation for any academic assignment intended to fulfill any course or academic program requirement.
- **Submitting previously submitted work.** Also called self-plagiarism, re-submitting academic material (in whole or in part) that has been previously submitted by the same student without prior and expressed consent of the instructor.

Timeline

- Instructors must notify students within 10 academic days of discovery of the suspected dishonesty.
- Students must meet with instructors within 10 academic days of notification, or the instructor will make a decision in their absence.
- Instructors must notify students and the Office of Academic Integrity of the charge and sanction within 10 academic days of the consultative resolution meeting.

Instructors have the responsibility to charge and sanction students who are in violation of these standards through the [Consultative Resolution procedure](#). All cases must be filed, regardless of severity, with the Office of Academic Integrity. While a case is pending, students are not allowed to withdraw or resign from the course. Instructors have the authority to execute one or more of the sanctions below. If the violation is not the student's first offense, the chosen sanction may be revised by the Office of Academic Integrity.

- **Warning.** Written notice to the student that they have violated a university academic integrity standard.
- **Revision of work.** Requirement that the student replace or revise the work in which dishonesty occurred.
- **Reduction in assignment grade.** Student's grade is decreased with respect to the particular assignment.
- **Reduction in course grade.** Student's final grade in the course is decreased.

- **Failure in the course.** A grade of "F" is applied.
- **Remediation.** Requirement that the student complete an educational remediation assignment through the Office of Academic Integrity. If the student passes the remediation assignment, the instructor may alter the original sanction.
- **Other.** Faculty may determine another appropriate assignment or penalty (e.g., an additional assignment, inability to drop lowest grade), except for any OAI or university sanction described below.

Recommendations for more serious sanctions may be made to the Office of Academic Integrity for review. Possible sanctions requiring Office of Academic Integrity approval include:

- **Failure in course, remediation required, temporary notation of academic dishonesty.** A grade of "F" for the course is recorded on the student's transcript with notation of academic dishonesty. Upon successful completion of UB's remediation assignment, the notation is removed. Failure to successfully complete the OAI assignment will result in the notation remaining permanently on the student's transcript.
- **Failure in the course with permanent notation of academic dishonesty.** A grade of "F" for the course is recorded on the student's transcript with a permanent notation that the grade of "F" was assigned for reason of academic dishonesty.
- **Dismissal from the degree program.** The academic integrity violation results in ineligibility for continuation in the student's degree program.
- **Dismissal from the degree program with notation of academic dishonesty.** The academic integrity violation results in ineligibility for continuation in the student's degree program, with a notation on the student's transcript that the dismissal is for reason of academic dishonesty.
- **Dismissal from the department.** The academic integrity violation results in ineligibility for continuation in any degree program within the department.
- **Dismissal from the department with notation of academic dishonesty.** The academic integrity violation results in ineligibility to continue in any degree program within the department, with a notation on the student's transcript that the dismissal is for reason of academic dishonesty.

Possible sanctions requiring both Office of Academic Integrity and Office of the President (or designee) approval include:

- **Suspension from the university.** The student is suspended for a defined time period with stated conditions and a permanent notation on the transcript that suspension is due to reason of academic dishonesty.

- **Expulsion from the university.** The student is expelled with permanent notation on the transcript that expulsion is due to reason of academic dishonesty.

Infractions not associated with a course in which the student is enrolled will be assigned appropriate penalties and may be additionally referred to [Student Conduct](#) for judicial procedures.

Students have the right to [appeal](#) the instructor's findings to the [Office of Academic Integrity](#). While a case is pending, students are not allowed to withdraw or resign from the course.

Upon request and with the student's permission, academic integrity violations and sanctions may be reported by the OAI to an authorized body (e.g., a graduate school application or employment application).

Research Responsibility

All research conducted under university auspices is monitored by the [UB Human Research Protection Program](#) for adherence to principles of ethical and responsible research. Prior to engaging in research with human subjects, DSW students must complete a free online training in Responsible Conduct of Research hosted by the [Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative](#) (CITI) prior to undertaking Capstone Project.

NASW Code of Ethics

In addition to the [university standards](#) applicable to all undergraduate and graduate students, the SSW also adheres to the [NASW Code of Ethics](#). DSW students must abide by these standards in all program domains and capacities. Alleged violations may be referred to the SSW's Committee on Students, which will conduct a thorough review of evidence, convene a hearing as indicated, and recommend consequent action to the Dean. The procedure for this review follows the steps outlined in the UBSSW's DSW Student Handbook. Alleged violations may also be referred to the current licensing body in the state where the student is currently licensed and to the NASW.

Technical Standards for Admission, Promotion, and Graduation

Given the ethical responsibilities of professional social work practice to promote and protect the well-being of the clients and communities we serve, the UBSSW established [Technical Standards](#) for students that not only focus on academic performance but that also emphasize the abilities and attributes essential for the profession.

Termination Policy for Ethical Misconduct

In cases where a UBSSW faculty member, administrator, or staff person suspects that a student has violated the NASW Code of Ethics or University standards of behavior, has committed a criminal act, or appears to be harmful to clients, the procedure is as follows:

1. The UBSSW faculty member, administrator, or staff person who discovered the violation will consult with the appropriate Program Director to determine whether a review should be requested from the Committee on Students (COS) chair.
2. If such a review is requested, it must be done in the form of a written report prepared by that UBSSW faculty member, administrator, or staff person for the COS to review. The report will include a description of the incident/case, and which ethical violations have been committed, as well as supporting evidentiary materials (e.g., email communications, a screen capture, description of a video file, etc.), where appropriate. The report materials can be supplemented with information gathered from other parties and compiled by the complainant, where appropriate.
3. Upon receipt of the report, the COS chair will:
 - a. Forward the report to the student;
 - b. Inform the student that they can begin to prepare their response (if they wish) and, if appropriate, gather supporting evidentiary materials;
 - c. Encourage the student to read the procedure as described in this document so that they are aware of their rights. The COS chair will also answer any questions the student may have at that time.
4. Once a review is requested, the COS chair will also set the meeting time and date ideally within 10 academic days (but up to 30 academic days) of receipt of the request. All parties should be notified at least 10 academic days in advance of the meeting date.
5. If the student chooses to prepare a response, it (and any supporting evidence) is to be submitted to the COS chair at least 5 academic days before the review meeting.
6. The COS chair will distribute the report and any additional materials to the attending COS members at least three academic days before the review meeting.
7. The student or complainant can provide additional information at the meeting. This additional information should be in the form of printed documents for distribution.
8. The student may bring one person of their choosing from among the University community to assist, advocate for, and support them. Students may not bring an attorney to represent them, and if they do so, the meeting will be cancelled, and the student and attorney will be referred to the SUNY lawyer. The chair of the COS will appoint a minute taker for the meeting. If a student refuses to attend the review meeting, or unreasonably rejects alternative meeting dates, or fails to attend a scheduled meeting, the COS will meet without the student present.
9. After hearing the concerns regarding the student brought before the committee and reviewing the supporting evidence and the student's response to these concerns, the committee will excuse the student, the UBSSW faculty member, administrator, or staff person bringing forth the violation, and the student's advocate. The COS, including student members, will then meet in a closed session to determine if the evidence presented substantiates the concerns.
10. If the concerns are found by the committee to be substantiated, the committee may decide what recommendations to make the Dean regarding actions to be taken in response to the substantiated concerns.

11. The chair of the COS will then send a memo stating the findings and, if any, the recommendations of the committee to the Dean within 45 academic days of receiving the request for the review. The chair of the committee will then notify the student and the appropriate UBSSW faculty member, administrator, or staff person that the committee's memo has been sent to the Dean's Office. A copy of the COS memo will be placed in the student's file. If there is to be a delay in the release of the memo, the chair of the COS will notify the Dean and those parties involved describing the reason(s) for the delay.
12. Within 10 academic days of receipt of the committee on student's findings and recommendation letter, the Dean will review and take into consideration the findings and recommendations and determine the outcome of the case as presented. The Dean's office will notify the student and the appropriate UBSSW faculty member, administrator, or staff person via a letter of the outcome decision of the Dean.
13. The outcome decision may be appealed. The appeal must be made in writing to the Dean no later than 10 academic days following the release of the outcome decision letter. There are only two grounds for appeal:
 - a. Violation of the procedures as outlined above.
 - b. The existence of new information relating to the concerns brought to the committee.

If the outcome decision is appealed, the Dean will decide if a re-opening of the process is warranted. If the Dean decides that the student brought before the committee must meet prescribed conditions in order to remain in good standing in the school, it is the responsibility of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to judge if the conditions required by the Dean have been met, and if the identified concerns have been satisfactorily resolved.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE & PROGRESS

A doctorate is the most advanced degree possible. Work required to earn a DSW is held to the highest standards of intellectual breadth, depth, and rigor. Feedback to students about their performance will be delivered through course grades and comments. Students will also have the opportunity to reflect on their academic experience when they complete the *DSW Program Annual Student Survey* and are required to regularly meet with their academic advisor. As per procedures outlined below, students may be dismissed from the program for substandard academic performance.

Academic Performance

Students must demonstrate adequate proficiency in course material in order to fulfill program requirements. With the exception of Capstones I-IV, all DSW courses must be completed with a "B-" or better. Capstones I-IV must be completed with a "S" grade. Receiving a grade below a "B-" or a "U" in a required course may require a student to take a leave of absence and will extend the length of his/her program.

A student's performance in a course is considered substandard and warrants consequences as follows:

- **C+, C, or C- in a course:** The student must repeat the course. The student must consult with the DSW Program Director prior to the start of the next semester to discuss her/his performance and remedial strategies. Others may attend at the discretion of the DSW Program Director.
- **D, F, or U in a course:** The student must repeat the course. The DSW Program Director will convene an academic review prior to the start of the next semester, to be attended by the student and others at the discretion of the DSW Program Director. At the review, specific remedial steps and a corresponding timeline will be established. The Program Director will send review attendees a summary of these terms within five academic days.
- **Below 3.0 overall GPA:** The student is placed on academic probation. The DSW Program Director will convene an academic review prior to the start of the next semester, to be attended by the student and others at the discretion of the DSW Program Director. At the review, terms of probation will be specified (e.g., corrective actions and corresponding timeline, circumstances under which probation will be lifted, consequences if terms of probation are not met). Students may have up to two semesters for remedial action. The DSW Program Director will send a summary of the probationary conditions to all attendees within five academic days.

The DSW Program Director may take additional action if a student does not: respond to requests for an academic review; appear at a scheduled academic review; or uphold terms devised at the review. Such action includes but is not limited to one or more of the following: placement on academic probation; restriction from course registration; or program dismissal.

Academic Progress and Student Performance

Students must demonstrate steady progress toward their degree. This is monitored by the DSW Program Director and Academic Advisors through the *Academic Advising Report*. The report has three purposes: 1) to track students' academic progress; 2) to facilitate future planning and goal setting; and 3) to ensure that students receive feedback about their performance and progress. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to complete a *DSW Program Annual Student Survey* which will be used to guide student learning and measure student progress and performance.

Repeating Courses

Students may repeat DSW courses for which they receive a grade lower than a "B-" or "U" only once; they must achieve a "B-" or better or a "S" on the second attempt. If a student receives less than a "B-" or "U" in the second attempt, they will be dismissed from the program.

Program Dismissal

The DSW Program Director may dismiss from the program any student who does not uphold academic standards. A student may also be dismissed if they do not maintain continuous registration or do not meet [Graduate School time limits](#). Doctoral degrees must be completed within seven years from the student's initial formal matriculation in that doctoral program. Requests for extensions of time limits must be petitioned using the [Extension of Time Limit to Complete a Degree Program form](#). Each divisional or area committee may establish its own stricter policies within the constraints of these overarching institutional policies.

In certain instances, students may need to request a leave of absence if less than a “B-” or a “U” is received in a course that is not offered the subsequent semester. In all cases, students will be notified when in jeopardy of program dismissal. The student will have an opportunity, if reasonable and feasible, to redress the concern or to present claims on her/his behalf.

As per [Graduate School guidelines](#) pertaining to dismissal, students who are dismissed on academic grounds (i.e., substandard performance, failure to progress, failure to maintain continuous registration, or exceeding Graduate School time limits for degree completion) will have a service indicator placed on their record that will prevent them from future registration. A student may contest her/his dismissal and seek reinstatement to the program by submitting a formal request to the Dean (see the relevant Graduate School policy under “[Reinstatement](#)”). If a student wishes to reapply to the same program or another at the university, they must also submit a formal request for reinstatement.

Due Process Policy for Reasons of Academic Performance

Per the [Graduate School Policies and Procedures](#), a student who has been officially dismissed due to academic performance and who seeks reinstatement shall submit a formal request for reinstatement, along with a supporting statement of explanation, to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Students are encouraged to consult the UB academic withdrawal guideline if they feel they have the grounds to utilize this process. If a student is not eligible for academic withdrawal, a reinstatement request must be received within ten business days of receiving the dismissal letter. A review of the request will be conducted by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The student will be notified in writing of the reinstatement request outcome within ten business days of receipt of original request. This decision may be appealed to the Dean. The appeal must be made in writing to the Dean no later than ten academic days following the release of the decision letter. There are only two grounds for appeal: 1) Violation of the procedures outlined above; 2) The existence of new information relating to the dismissal. Students who do not file for reinstatement or whose reinstatement requests are denied may opt to re-apply to the program at a later date.

STUDENT RECOURSE

DSW students may have concerns about the conduct of student peers, faculty, or staff. In such cases, students are entitled and encouraged to seek guidance or take action through a variety of channels. Students may express their concerns to the DSW Program Director, Assistant Dean for Student & Academic Affairs, or any other trusted UBSSW faculty/staff member. Beyond the UBSSW, students may contact the following university-wide resources for consultation, clarification of policies and procedures, or further referral.

- [UB Students' Advocate Office](#)
- Student advocates are able to help with an array of academic and non-academic issues, including but not limited to questions related to your student account, registration and records, campus services, and policies related to the conduct of all university community members (faculty, staff, and students).
- [UB Office of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion](#)

Student Grievance against a Faculty/Staff Member

If a DSW student believes that they have been subject to unfair, inequitable, or discriminatory treatment by a faculty member, they may file a grievance.

When a UBSSW faculty member is involved, the grievance is heard by the UBSSW's Committee on Students (COS) and follows the process set forth below.

A grievance can be brought to the COS when a student feels that they have not received fair treatment because of inequitable or discriminatory treatment by a school of social work faculty/staff member or practicum educator. Reviews are to be conducted in confidence and without publicity, and all members of the School will be expected to cooperate with the Committee on Students as it seeks information. The committee will have the prerogative to determine if it chooses to refer such claims or grievances to other bodies within the University for review. All persons involved in the process will be expected to adhere to strict rules of confidentiality.

The chair and members of COS are designated by the by-laws of the School. If student members are present, they can participate in the committee's discussion and can vote on the final decision. In cases where a committee member (faculty, staff, or another student) is directly involved in the grievance, and is determined to have conflicting interests, they will be excused from serving. The student or faculty member may be replaced at the discretion of the chair or the Dean.

The COS is empowered to assess a grievance and make decisions in cases where students believe one or more of the following:

1. They have been subject to a violation, misinterpretation, or inequitable application of any of the regulations of the University, the Graduate School, the School of Social Work, or the NASW;

2. They have been inequitably treated by reason of any act or condition contrary to established policy or practice governing or affecting graduate students;
3. They have been discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation by a school faculty/staff member or practicum educator.

In cases where the committee finds proof of inequitable or discriminatory treatment, it will make recommendations to the dean for appropriate action.

Grievance Procedures

In cases where a student believes that they have received inequitable or discriminatory treatment as described above, the student may initiate a grievance process by expressing their intent to open the process. A grievance may be submitted within one academic year of the alleged occurrence. This time limit may be extended by the Dean of the School of Social Work upon good cause. The procedure below is to be followed:

1. Students interested in exploring or pursuing the grievance process should first contact the Assistant Dean for Student and Academic Affairs or another member of the Student Services team to discuss their concerns. Student Services will provide the student with guidance about the grievance process as well as any additional and/or alternative options that may be appropriate for them to pursue. Other options include but are not limited to the UBSSW restorative process, filing a complaint with the UB Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and providing feedback to the appropriate Program Director(s). If the circumstances are determined to be grievable, and the student has sufficient documentation, Student Services will direct the student to complete and submit the Grievance Worksheet.
2. Students should complete the [Grievance Worksheet](#) and submit it to the COS chair and the faculty/staff/practicum member who is the subject of the potential grievance. Questions about the Grievance Worksheet and/or grievance process can be directed to Student Services.
3. Upon receiving the student's Grievance Worksheet, the chair, or appointed member of the committee, will inform the student in writing that they need to discuss the matter with the faculty/staff member or practicum educator for the purpose of finding means to resolve the problem at hand. The chair or a member of the committee will also inform the faculty/staff member or practicum educator in writing of the need to meet with the student. **Regardless of both party's previous attempts to resolve the problem, they are required to meet and discuss possible solutions.** Both the student and the faculty/staff or practicum educator are expected to make a good faith effort to such ends and to report to the committee chair the outcome of their meeting. Should both parties report their grievance as resolved and agreed-upon follow-up is completed, the same grievance may not be reopened in the future. In cases where it may not be appropriate for the student to have a meeting with the faculty/staff or practicum educator alone (e.g., charges of sexual harassment), the chair of the committee, or appointed member, will proceed to step "4".

4. If the student and the faculty/staff or practicum educator fail to reach an agreement, the chair or an appointed member of the committee, the student, and the faculty/staff or practicum educator will meet to discuss alternative means of resolving the problem. The meeting date will be provided in writing to both parties at least a week in advance. In this meeting, the chair or the member of the committee will function as a facilitator.
5. If the outcome of step "3" is not satisfactory to the student, and they want to proceed to a full committee review with the COS, they must request to do so in writing (e-mail will suffice) to the committee chair within 10 academic days. The student must also present to the chair a written report documenting the date of interaction, the nature of the problem/grievance, and supporting materials substantiating inequitable or discriminatory treatment in order to initiate the scheduling of the committee review. The student must send the faculty/staff or practicum educator a copy of the written request, the report, and supporting materials. The student will also receive the faculty/staff or practicum educator's written response.
6. Upon receiving the student's written request, report, and supporting materials, the chair sets the meeting time, ideally, within 10 academic days (but up to 30 academic days) of notification and notifies all parties in writing at least 10 academic days in advance. At the time of the full committee meeting, the student and the faculty/staff or practicum educator may provide additional information. Both the student and the faculty or staff member may bring a support person (such as a peer or mentor) from among the University community. If bringing a support person, the student must notify the COS chair in advance and sign a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) waiver. The support person's role is to offer assistance and support to the student. The support person will not be permitted to represent or speak on behalf of the student. The chair will appoint a minute taker for the meeting.
7. After reviewing the concerns of the student, the supporting documents, and the responses of the faculty/staff or practicum educator, the committee will then meet in a closed session to determine if the evidence presented substantiates the concerns. The committee may make recommendations to the Dean regarding actions to be taken in response to the concerns.
8. The chair of the committee will send a letter stating the findings and, if any, the recommendations of the committee to the Dean within 45 academic days of receiving the request for the review. If there is to be a delay in the release of the letter, a memo will be sent by the chair of the committee to the Dean, the student and the relevant faculty/staff or practicum educator before the committee stipulating the reason(s) for the delay.
9. Within 10 academic days of receipt of the committee on student's findings and recommendation letter, the Dean will review and take into consideration the findings and recommendations and will determine the outcome of the case as presented. The Dean will notify the student (via letter, return receipt) and the appropriate faculty/staff or practicum educator of the outcome.

10. The Dean's decision may be appealed. The appeal must be made in writing to the Dean no later than 10 academic days following the release of the decision letter. There are only two grounds for appeal:

- Violation of the procedures as outlined above.
- The existence of new information relating to the concerns brought to the committee.

The Dean will decide if a re-opening of the process is warranted.

If a DSW student believes that they have been subject to unfair, inequitable, or discriminatory treatment by a **non-UBSSW faculty member** (i.e., an instructor from another academic unit) is involved, the grievance process follows the [Graduate School's Academic Grievance Policies & Procedures](#).

UBSSW RESTORATIVE PROCESS

Students may experience or witness racism, heterosexism, cissexism (i.e., (i.e., oppressive behavior and policies targeting transgender/non-binary people) and other forms of oppression in their classroom and/or field placement. These incidents could involve faculty, staff, field liaisons, field educators, or other students. The UBSSW is committed to addressing these incidents in a trauma-informed and restorative manner when they occur.

The Goals of a Restorative Process

- To build community
- To strengthen relationships
- To repair any harm that has occurred through participatory decision-making.

Trauma-Informed and Restorative Principles

TI-Principles	Restorative Values and Principles
• Safety: All parties will commit to creating a safe, brave space for students and other parties to share what happened, how it impacted them, and what needs to happen to repair and prevent future harm.	• Speak and listen with respect. • Speak and listen from the heart. • Parties to a conflict "own the conflict" and are the ones who resolve the conflict.
• Trustworthiness and Transparency: Administrators, faculty and staff will be transparent with students and other parties about the process. No action will be taken without the student's consent, unless administrators, faculty, and staff determine, with full disclosure to the student, that the situation poses too much risk of	• Trust, mutual understanding, and shared values bind us together and make cooperative action possible. • Fair Process ✓ Engagement – Shared involvement in decision-making. ✓ Explanation – Provide a rationale for decisions. ✓ Expectation Clarity – Widespread understanding of expectations.

TI-Principles	Restorative Values and Principles
physical and/or emotional harm for the student.	Confidentiality is upheld throughout the process.
Peer Support: Peer support and mutual self-help are important for establishing safety. The student may bring a peer to the restorative conversation, preferably someone who is aware of the impact the incident had on the student.	Members of one's community of care may contribute meaningfully to the conversation.
Collaboration and Mutuality: Importance is placed on leveling of power differences and in the meaningful sharing of decision-making.	- Embraces values of community participation, community caring, and respectful dialogue. - We build our social capital by repairing relationships. - The needs of all affected are addressed.
Empowerment, Voice, & Choice: Students will have choice about the extent to which the UBSSW administration, faculty, and staff will intervene in the situation, unless administrators, faculty, and staff determine, with full disclosure to the student, that the situation poses too much risk of physical and/or emotional harm for the student. The voices of all parties to the incident will be heard.	- Participation is voluntary. - All voices matter. - Everyone speaks their truth. - We build relationships and a sense of community through participatory learning and decision-making. - Parties to a conflict "own the conflict" and are the ones who resolve the conflict.
Active Movement to Create Culturally Responsive Environments: The UBSSW recognizes that our students, administrators, faculty, and staff are impacted by interpersonal and institutional racism, sexism, heterosexism, cissexism (i.e., oppressive behavior and policies targeting transgender/non-binary people), classism and other forms of oppression. The UBSSW is committed to eradicating racism and other forms of oppression in our curricula, policies. Operations, and culture. The UBSSW recognizes that we are all learners when it comes to undoing white	Embraces values of healing, moral learning, community participation, community caring, respectful dialogue, and repairing harm.

TI-Principles	Restorative Values and Principles
supremacy and other systems of oppression, and that we must act.	

When a Student has Experienced Racism or Other Form of Oppression in the Classroom:

1. Whenever possible, we encourage students to professionally address the issue directly with the person involved. However, we understand that many reasons exist for why students may choose to not address the situation directly as a first step.
2. It is our best hope that the student will tell someone. We hope the student will reach out to someone they trust. This could be a faculty member, a Program Director, a Student Services staff person, a Field Liaison, Field Educator, Field Education faculty member or staff person, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, or the Faculty Support Liaison for Racially Underrepresented Students. We have multiple point persons in this process in line with our principle of providing students with choice over the person from whom they want to access help and resources. This person can help the student process the incident and potential options for intervention. This conversation will be held in confidence unless the administrator, faculty member, or staff believes, with full disclosure to the student, that the situation poses too much risk of physical and/or emotional harm for the student, and that someone else needs to be pulled into the conversation.
3. If the student would like assistance in addressing the situation with the individual that harmed them, the student simply needs to make that desire known to the faculty member, staff person, or administrator to whom they disclosed the situation. The people who can help them identify a facilitator are the Program Directors, the Associate Deans, the Faculty Liaison for Racially Underrepresented Students, Field Faculty and staff, and Student Services staff.
4. A Restorative Conversation will be scheduled at a time convenient for all parties. If the conflict occurred between one or more students in a class, the students' class professor may be the best person to facilitate the conversation. In other situations, the conversation may be most appropriately facilitated by a neutral UBSSW administrator, faculty member, or staff person who is not involved with the incident. Factors to consider in choice of the facilitator will be the student's preference, whether the incident was in field or in the classroom, and the availability, comfort level, and neutrality of the person(s) being considered.
5. If students, faculty, or staff have any questions about this process, please do not hesitate to contact the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

What Does a Restorative Conversation Look Like?

- The facilitator will reach out to the parties involved, gather their perspectives on the incident, and schedule a time for a restorative conversation that is convenient for all parties.
- When the parties convene, the facilitator will review guiding principles for the conversation (i.e., One person speaks at a time; Speak from the I-perspective; Listen with openness).

- The facilitator will ask each party, beginning with the student, to address:
 1. What happened?
 2. What did you think and feel at the time?
 3. What have you thought about since?
 4. What impact has it had on you?
 5. What has been the hardest thing for you?
 6. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
- The facilitator will invite each party to ask any clarifying questions they may have, to identify what they would like to see happen as a result of the conversation, and to identify ways that the harm can be repaired. The facilitator will allow time for consensus to be achieved.
- The conversation will end with the facilitator summarizing any agreements that were reached.

Guiding Principles for UBSSW Community Members

- This work is important. It is grounded in our shared values, with people with whom we have relationships and shared commitments.
- We will make mistakes. We will learn, grow, and keep going.
- We value acknowledging and repairing harm when harm has occurred.
- We bring an awareness to these conversations of power differentials.
- Addressing racism and other forms of oppression is more important than how concerns may sometimes get expressed. We will keep that in perspective. Both the content and the process provide us with opportunities for learning.

A Restorative Conversation is not the same as a Restorative Conference

A formal Restorative Conference, called a Real Justice Conference, may be necessary in some situations when the scope of the harm is wide and involves multiple students, faculty, field personnel, and/or staff persons.

In a Restorative Conference, all involved parties come together with a trained facilitator to explore what happened, who was affected, and what needs to be done to make things right. Parties to the incident typically invite members of their communities of care (e.g., family members, friends, other colleagues).

Right now, the UBSSW expects that most incidents can be resolved with a Restorative Conversation. However, we are in the process of thinking about and identifying situations that may call for a formal Restorative Conference.

UB Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Students also can report any concerns about discrimination and harassment to the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will speak with any UB community member confidentially to discuss concerns about classroom or workplace situations, provide support, and investigate complaints.

Obtaining Assistance and Advice: <https://www.buffalo.edu/equity.html>

Reporting Discrimination and Harassment: <https://www.buffalo.edu/equity/reporting-discrimination-and-harassment.html>

References

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014a). SAMHSA's concept of trauma and guidance for a trauma-informed approach. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Wachtel, T. (2016). *Defining restorative*. Bethlehem, PA: International Institute for Restorative Practices. https://www.iirp.edu/images/pdf/Defining-Restorative_Nov-2016.pdf

SECTION II: TECHNOLOGICAL AND CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

DSW TECHNOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS

To ensure an optimal learning experience for the UBSSW DSW program, students are responsible for ensuring their computers and related equipment meet the minimum [technical requirements](#). Technical difficulties on a student's part do not excuse a student from timely completion of assignment.

DSW CURRICULUM

The UBSSW's DSW is a part-time, fully online program that enables working professionals to satisfy all degree requirements in three years. The following courses are required for all DSW students. Courses are listed in the expected sequence of the DSW curriculum.

Course	Credit Hours
SW620: Stakeholder Mapping and Needs Assessment in Pre-Implementation Mapping	3
SW626: Doctoral Seminar in Trauma & Human Rights	3
SW621: Concepts in Implementation Science	3
SW622: Evaluating & Using Evidence-Based Practices in Social Work	3
SW627: Organizational Characteristics & Implementing Evidence-Based Practices	3
SW624: Methods in Implementation Science I	3
SW635: Methods in Implementation Science II	
SW631: DSW Capstone I: Identifying Evidence-Based Interventions for Translation	3
SW632: DSW Capstone II: Designing Implementation Strategies	3
SW633: DSW Capstone III: Implementing & Testing Strategies	3
SW634: DSW Capstone IV: Evaluating & Disseminating Interventions	3
SW629: Disseminating, Spreading / Scaling and Sustaining Interventions	3
SW628: (Elective) Teaching & Pedagogy	3
Total DSW Program Credit Hours	39

DSW COURSEWORK DESCRIPTIONS

Semester 1 (Fall)

SW620: Stakeholder Mapping and Needs Assessment in Pre-Implementation Planning (3)

In this course, students will begin the process of identifying their substantive area of focus and engaging in pre-implementation planning. Students will conduct a needs assessment in their practice settings, with the goal of bridging the research to practice gap. Students will establish a professional collaboration network (PCN) as a platform for knowledge development and translation. We will consider how PCNs can be utilized to interact, collaborate, and strategize with a diverse range of stakeholders holding expertise in students' substantive areas. Using a range of technologies, students will learn to evaluate and assess information obtained from key stakeholders through a trauma-informed human rights (TIHR), racial trauma, and liberation lens, with an emphasis on ethics and accessibility.

SW626: Doctoral Seminar in Trauma & Human Rights (3)

In this course, students will examine in-depth the theoretical and empirical literature pertaining to trauma and its relation to human rights. Through original and authoritative source material, we will consider the possible causes and implications of trauma at diverse system levels (e.g., individual, community) and over time (e.g., intergenerational transmission). We will critically analyze research and modes of practice in relation to interventions designed to address prior traumatic experiences and human rights violations and to prevent their future incidence. Students will have the opportunity to explore their own areas of interest in trauma and consider how current evidence can be integrated into the assessment and treatment process in order to promote human rights.

Semester 2 (Spring)

SW621: Concepts in Implementation Science (3)

This course grounds students in the principles and practice of implementation science, and provides the foundation to develop strategies designed to advance the successful adoption and use of evidence-based interventions. Students will be introduced to terminology commonly used within implementation science and models that guide the process of translating research into practice. The course will explore theories and frameworks that are frequently applied to guide implementation planning and evaluation, and to identify barriers and facilitators to successful implementation of evidence-based interventions. We will consider strategies used to promote the uptake of interventions, and measures designed to assess key determinants of implementation strategies. Challenges faced in implementing evidence-based practices, programs, and policies within the context of a trauma-informed human rights (TIHR) perspective will be considered. We will also explore how professional collaboration networks (PCNs) can be used when translating evidence into practice.

SW622: Evaluating and Utilizing Evidence-Based Practices in Social Work (3)

This course will focus on developing students' knowledge of current interventions in relation to evaluating and utilizing existing evidence. Students will be introduced to the principles and processes of evidence-based practice formulation, systematic review of the literature, critical evaluation of individual studies, and structured data synthesis to assess the quality of evidence associated with interventions and outcomes. We will critically assess the strengths and limitations of research with vulnerable populations, including the risks and benefits of conventional and emerging approaches. We will also consider how existing evidence applies to direct practice within the context of a trauma-informed human rights (TIHR) perspective.

Semester 3 (Fall)**SW624: Methods in Implementation Science I (3)**

This course focuses on providing basic research knowledge for implementation science methodologies. It provides students with a solid introduction to the structure, function, and process of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods designs commonly used to evaluate implementation strategies, and how these innovative designs can be employed when translating evidence into practice. This course also addresses ethical issues involved in assessing evidence-to-practice gaps within the context of a trauma-informed human rights (TIHR), racial trauma, and liberation lens.

Prerequisite: SW621: Concepts in Implementation Science or permission of instructor.

SW627: Organizational Characteristics & Implementing Evidence-Based Practices (3)

In this course, students will examine theoretical and empirical literature pertaining to organizational culture, climate, and receptivity to adopt evidence-based practices (EBPs), and assess contextual factors that support or deter intervention implementation. We will consider strategies for assessing, intervening, and supporting the implementation of EBPs in organizations, including a trauma-informed approach and an understanding of human rights. This includes assuming a leadership role to facilitate the translation of evidence into practice within organizations, and interacting, collaborating, and strategizing with a diverse range of stakeholders. Students will have the opportunity to explore the receptivity and readiness of their own agencies in relation to EBP implementation, and to consider tactics to promote organizational change and encourage the uptake of EBPs.

Prerequisites:

- SW621: Concepts in Implementation Science or permission of instructor(s).
- SW622: Evaluating and Utilizing Evidence-Based Practices in Social Work or permission of instructor(s).

Semester 4 (Spring)**SW631 DSW Capstone I: Identifying Evidence-Based Interventions for Translation (3)**

This proseminar integrates knowledge acquired in previous coursework, and is the first step in students' multi-semester capstone projects. Students will identify interventions that have sufficient evidence of effectiveness or are recommended by relevant organizations to address specific problems. Using theories, models, and conceptual frameworks as a basis for implementation planning, students will recognize and critically assess client, organizational, community, and/or policy factors that affect the translation of evidence into practice. Students will also formulate evidence-informed implementation research questions and hypotheses that will be used to guide continued capstone project development and incorporate a trauma-informed human rights (TIHR) perspective. Emphasis will be placed on continued engagement with professional collaboration networks (PCNs) and other key stakeholders in identifying and assessing evidence-to-practice gaps.

Prerequisites:

- SW627: Organizational Characteristics & Implementing Evidence-Based Practices or permission of instructor(s).

Corequisite:

- SW635: Methods in Implementation Science III or permission of instructor(s).

SW635: Methods in Implementation Science II (3)

This course builds upon the basic principles and methodologies of implementation research learned in Methods in Implementation Science I, and engages and familiarizes students in the selection and implementation of appropriate methodologies and analysis tools based on the data they have collected. Students will apply principles, methods, and analytic techniques associated with qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches to measure the process and outcomes of implementation strategies and evidence-based interventions. We will also examine the various forms of analysis used to evaluate the effectiveness of implementation interventions and promote the uptake of evidence-based practices.

Prerequisite: SW624: Methods in Implementation Science I or permission of instructor.

Semester 5 (Summer)**SW632: DSW Capstone II: Designing Implementation Strategies (3)**

The course builds on DSW Capstone I, and is the next step in students' capstone projects. Students will design, adapt, and/or tailor intervention processes, and develop an implementation and evaluation plan that targets key behavioral and/or contextual determinants of uptake with an emphasis on integrating trauma-informed human rights (TIHR) and racial justice perspectives. We will also identify

outcomes, metrics, and assessment tools that are aligned with intervention strategies, and propose study designs and relevant methods to evaluate implementation efforts while adhering to ethical guidelines. Students will continue to consult with professional collaboration networks (PCNs) and other key stakeholders in the development of evidence-based, TIHR interventions.

Prerequisites:

- SW624: Methods in Implementation Science II or permission of instructor(s).
- SW631: DSW Capstone I: Identifying Evidence-Based Interventions for Translation.

SWXXX: Elective (3)

Semester 6 (Fall)

SW633: DSW Capstone III: Testing Implementation Strategies (3)

This course builds on DSW Capstone II, and is the next step in the students' capstone projects. Students will implement evidence-based interventions that incorporate a trauma-informed human rights (TIHR) perspective into practice settings. Students will evaluate the implementation science strategies and implementation and intervention outcomes using qualitative and/or quantitative research methodologies. This process includes analyzing and documenting preliminary results and engaging in ongoing reflection and revision pertaining to their implementation efforts.

Prerequisite: SW632: DSW Capstone II: Designing Implementation Strategies.

SW629: Disseminating, Spreading/Scaling, and Sustaining Interventions (3)

This course will focus on developing students' knowledge of the science of dissemination, and theories and frameworks used to support the spread, scale, and sustainment of an intervention. We will examine knowledge translation strategies for dissemination and methods to assess barriers and facilitators to effective dissemination. Using implementation science, students will consider how to adopt a structured and phased approach to replicating, adapting, and further evaluating an intervention, including approaches to advance equity and a TIHR perspective. We will review theoretical and empirical literature pertaining to the concept of sustainability and examine tools to assess and plan for the sustainment of interventions. Students will also have the opportunity to explore frameworks and models used in de-implementation when needed.

Prerequisite: SW632: Capstone II Designing Implementation Strategies or permission of instructor.

Semester 7 (Spring)

SW634: DSW Capstone IV: Evaluating & Disseminating Interventions (3)

This course builds on Capstone III, and is the final step in the students' capstone projects. In consultation with professional collaboration networks (PCNs) and key

stakeholders, students will critically evaluate whether strategies to reduce evidence-to-practice gaps were effective and why. This includes assessing how the elements of the implementation strategies were delivered or adapted, the fidelity to the evidence-based intervention components and principles, and uptake and sustainability. It is expected that students will exhibit leadership in advancing evidence-based interventions that incorporate a trauma-informed human rights (TIHR) perspective, and disseminate results pertaining to implementation efforts through a variety of venues and modalities. This may include but is not limited to white papers, manuscripts, policy briefs, training manuals, infographics, and/or presentations at local, national, and international conferences.

Prerequisite: SW633: DSW Capstone III: Testing Implementation Strategies.

Electives

SW628: Teaching and Pedagogy (3) – Recommended Semester 5, Summer

The purpose of the course is to prepare doctoral students for effective teaching in BSW, MSW, and PHD/DSW programs. The course examines the structure and content of social work courses in each of the five curriculum areas: policy, practice, human behavior in the social environment, research, and field education. Students will learn how to develop course syllabi, lectures, assignments, and course evaluations. Students will examine effective teaching techniques, classroom management strategies, and theories of learning and education, as they develop their own teaching philosophies. Students will also explore the nature of higher education in the United States and the role of schools/departments of social work within the academy.

Prerequisite: Doctoral program acceptance and enrollment.

ALTERNATIVE ACADEMIC PLAN

The DSW Program Curriculum is sequenced and designed to be completed within three years. In rare instances, life circumstances require modification to the student's course of study. Students should consult with DSW Program Director about an Alternative Academic Plan to determine the feasibility should the need arise. Entering into an Alternative Academic Plan is subject to the approval of the DSW Program Director.

COURSE ENROLLMENT

- Enrollment in DSW Capstones (i.e., SW631, SW632, SW633, SW634) are limited to matriculated UBSSW DSW students. All other DSW courses are open to other students at the discretion of the instructor.

ORIENTATION REQUIREMENT

- All newly admitted DSW students are required to attend the new student orientation prior to beginning their first semester of study. Failure to complete all aspects of the orientation may result in non-continuance in DSW program. Course credit for the orientation is not awarded.

DSW TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY

Transferring Credit from Other Doctorate Programs

The UBSSW DSW program recognizes that some students may have completed coursework in another doctoral-level program that provided advanced education and training in a substantive area related to the student's area of interest. However, the UBSSW's DSW program is highly structured and requires the ability to build upon specific skills that will be delivered through a prescribed curriculum. Because of this, no previous academic credit will be accepted from other masters or doctoral programs. In addition, the UBSSW does not grant DSW program course credit for life experience or previous work experience.

Elective Credits

Students are required to complete one, three-credit electives throughout the DSW program. The elective will be selected in consultation with the DSW Program Director and the student's academic advisor. In general, the elective should have a direct relevance to the student's substantive area and/or enable the student to expand pedagogical skills. In any case, students should have a clear rationale for the elective they select.

In general, the elective should be taken at the graduate level and from within the UBSSW DSW or Master of Social Work (MSW) program. In order to take a MSW course for DSW elective credit:

1. The course must be taught by a faculty member holding a doctorate.
2. The instructor must agree to adjust assignments and expectations to qualify as doctoral-level work.
3. Course content may not duplicate a previous course (including from the student's MSW program).
4. The student must submit a *DSW Elective Permission* form, including clear justification, for review and approval by the DSW Program Director prior to enrolling in the course.

In certain circumstances, a graduate-level course outside the UBSSW may be considered to fulfill the DSW elective course requirements. The student should contact course instructor and/or academic unit prior to registration to ensure the course of interest is open to students from other disciplines and includes doctoral-level content prior.

In order to take a graduate-level course outside the UBSSW for DSW elective credit:

1. The course must be taught by a faculty member holding a doctorate.
2. Course must be completed when student is enrolled in the UBSSW DSW program.
3. Course content may not duplicate an existing or available course offered through the UBSSW MSW or DSW program.

4. No more than three credits outside the UBSSW may be applied to the DSW degree.
5. The student must submit a *DSW Elective Permission* form, including clear justification, for review and approval by the DSW Program Director prior to enrolling in the course.

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Students are required to complete a Capstone Project. The Capstone Project is a four-semester process that reflects the integration and culmination of coursework to complete an implementation research project. Through the Capstone Project, students will use implementation science principles and strategies to promote the adoption and integration evidence-based interventions in direct practice settings and advance the trauma-informed human rights perspective. While the DSW Capstone I-IV provide guidance to students on the specific components of the Capstone Project, students independently identify and pursue a problem, intervention, and implementation research question(s) of their choice and implement the intervention at their agency with a target population. The target population can include clients, practitioners, administrators, volunteers, and/or other individuals associated with or served by the student's agency. At the conclusion of the DSW program, students will demonstrate leadership in the implementation and dissemination of best practice interventions.

Capstone Project Proposal

In addition to any requisite IRB approval, the student must develop a Capstone Project Proposal. At minimum, the Proposal must include:

- Thorough, well-organized literature review pertaining to the proposed intervention and its effectiveness to address a specific problem;
- Theory, model, and/or conceptual framework used to guide implementation planning;
- Implementation science strategies used to address identified barriers and facilitators to evidence translation;
- Methodology, including measures and a detailed plan for data collection;
- Analytic strategy; and
- Timeline for completion of work.

Using a grading rubric, the DSW Capstone II (SW632) course instructor(s) will evaluate the Capstone Project Proposal and the extent to which the Proposal meets the criteria. As such, it is expected that the Proposal will be completed by the end of Semester 5. To advance to candidacy and begin Capstone Project implementation, students must obtain a "S" grade on the Capstone Project Proposal in SW632 and receive formal approval of IRB Protocol. All academic products are evaluated against doctoral-level standards of intellectual breadth, depth, and rigor.

Advancement to Candidacy

Upon successful completion of DSW Capstone II (SW632), the student advances to DSW candidacy.

Capstone Project Final Paper

The Capstone Project Final Paper is the culminating academic product of the UBSSW DSW program, representing the integration of the entire curriculum. Developed across the final two semesters (Capstone III and IV), the paper provides a rigorous written description of a student's original implementation research project proposed in Capstone I and II and is explicitly designed to serve as the basis for a manuscript for publication or other professional dissemination.

The Capstone Project Final Paper must follow APA guidelines and include the following structured sections:

- **Abstract:** A structured summary (maximum 300 words) with headers for Background, Methods, Results, and Conclusions.
- **Introduction:** This section defines the problem area and practice population, provides a literature review, describes the evidence-based intervention and any pre-implementation adaptations, identifies targeted barriers and facilitators, and lists specific research/evaluation questions.
- **Evaluation Methods:** Students must describe the frameworks used (such as RE-AIM or logic models), explain how a trauma-informed human rights (TIHR) perspective informed the evaluation, and detail the implementation and intervention measures, sample, and data collection procedures.
- **Results:** This section documents the data analysis process. It includes univariate summaries of the sample and outcomes, followed by detailed bivariate analysis and qualitative results (if applicable).
- **Adaptations, Sustainability, and Scale:** Students describe how process models or implementation frameworks guided their approach to adaptations *during* implementation. It also requires a plan for the sustainability of the intervention and a discussion on potential plans for spread or scale-up to other settings.
- **Discussion and Conclusions:** This section synthesizes key findings, compares results to previous evidence, reflects on unanticipated contextual factors, and discusses the project's contributions to the organization and the broader field of social work knowledge.
- **Dissemination Plan and Product:** As an appendix, students must provide a plan for sharing their findings (specifying target audiences, messaging, and channels) and submit at least one **completed dissemination product**, such as an infographic, podcast, or draft manuscript.

Public Presentation: In addition to the written paper, students are required to present their findings publicly at the DSW Capstone Showcase and Celebration hosted on Zoom

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS IN ALL DSW CAPSTONE COURSES POLICY

As doctoral students and DSW practitioner-scholars, it is critical to uphold integrity and ethics in research, scholarship, and practice. This includes locating, reading, understanding, and critically assessing credible research evidence; collecting, interpreting, and analyzing data; and generating original writing that discusses, contextualizes, and reports on findings. While AI-powered tools can be useful in some situations, there is also the potential for AI to compromise scholarly integrity. In accordance with [UBSSW's Guiding Principles for the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence](#), the purpose of this policy is to provide clarity about uses of AI that are acceptable, unacceptable, and possibly acceptable (with instructor approval) in the DSW Capstone courses.

Acceptable use of AI tools in all Capstone courses is limited to the following:

- Use of reference management software to create a reference list and/or format your references. If your reference management software paraphrases literature, you are still responsible for reading each source independently.
- Use of AI-powered search tools to locate relevant literature. However, you are responsible for reading and understanding any articles or other sources of literature yielded through the search. In addition, reading and engaging with original source articles is essential to rigorous doctoral scholarship, ensuring accurate interpretation of evidence and appropriate attribution of ideas. This practice is especially critical given that an estimated 10-15% of peer-reviewed publications contain errors or inaccuracies (Brewin, 2023).
- AI tools may be used to develop your general knowledge of a particular topic, similar to other non-peer reviewed sources. The key distinction is that while you may use AI tools to advance your own understanding, you are responsible for verifying the accuracy and credibility of information these sources provide, and you may not use AI tools to generate text that you submit as part of your course assignments (e.g., the Capstone Project Proposal, IRB Protocol, Capstone Project Final Paper, or reflection papers).

Unacceptable uses of AI tools in all Capstone courses include:

- Use of generative AI to generate text or references for any part of your Capstone Project Proposal, IRB Protocol, Capstone Project Final Paper, or other Capstone course assignments.
- Use of generative AI tools to rewrite your own writing for any part of your Capstone Project Proposal, IRB Protocol, Capstone Project Final Paper, or other Capstone course assignments.
- Use of generative AI to develop data collection instruments, such as interview guides or surveys.
- Use of AI to assist with data cleaning, coding, or qualitative or quantitative data analysis. To clarify, no study participant data should ever be uploaded to a Chatbot or Large Language Models (LLM) without their informed consent.

- Use of generative AI to translate written materials between languages for submission as original work.

There are other potential uses of AI that may be ethical and acceptable for Capstone Project purposes; however, you are required to obtain written approval from your Capstone instructor (who will consult the DSW program director as needed) for any use that is not specifically referenced above. Any use of AI should be transparently disclosed and cited according to academic norms.

The University recognizes that AI-driven assistive technologies—including University-supported speech-to-text, automated captioning, screen readers, and electronic note-taking software—are essential tools for ensuring equitable access. To support this, students utilizing AI-based assistive technology for their coursework or research are encouraged to connect with the [Office of Accessibility Resources](#) through an interactive process. This collaborative approach ensures that adaptive tools are recognized as approved accommodations when reasonable, upholding both the student's civil rights, and the doctoral program's commitment to original scholarship as outlined by this document.

Please note that generative AI tools can produce inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading information. You are solely responsible for the accuracy and integrity of any work you submit. Misuse of AI constitutes a violation of the [University at Buffalo Academic Integrity Policy](#). Specifically, submitting “a report, paper, materials, computer data or examination (or any considerable part thereof) prepared by any person or technology (e.g., artificial intelligence) other than the student responsible for the assignment” is considered falsification of academic materials.

This policy was developed and approved by the UBSSW Doctoral Programs Committee and Faculty Council and will be reviewed annually.

Brewin, C. R. (2023). Inaccuracy in the scientific record and open postpublication critique. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 18(5), 1244-1253.
https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10475207/pdf/10.1177_17456916221141357.pdf

CONFERRAL & COMMENCEMENT

The Graduate School confers degrees three times per year: February 1; June 1; and September 1. Refer to the Graduate School's details on [degree conferral deadlines and requirements](#).

Each May, the SSW holds a DSW Capstone Showcase and Celebration to highlight and acknowledge graduating students. This is only a ceremonial event; it is neither equivalent to degree conferral nor is participation required. Students who wish to participate in commencement must provide the event coordinator with the following information no later than April 1: full name; capstone project title; undergraduate institution and degree; and MSW institution.

SECTION III: ACADEMIC ADVISING, MENTORSHIP, STUDENT INPUT AND PARTICIPATION, AND RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Each DSW student is assigned a faculty advisor. DSW Program Advisors provide ongoing consultation and guidance pertaining to program and coursework, monitor student progress, advise on course elective selection, and confer with students on an annual basis. The DSW Program Director supervises all aspects of the DSW program, including academic advising and student support.

Students are required to regularly meet with their academic advisor. Academic progress is monitored by the DSW Program Director and Academic Advisors through the Academic Advising Report. The report serves three purposes: (1) to track students' academic progress; (2) to facilitate future planning and goal setting; and (3) to ensure that students receive feedback about their performance and progress. In addition, students are required to complete an Annual DSW Program Student Survey, which is used to guide student learning and measure student progress and performance.

Elective course selections are made in consultation with the DSW Program Director and the student's Academic Advisor. The Assistant Dean for Student & Academic Affairs consults advisors on school- and university-wide policies as needed. Advising support is available via Zoom, phone, or email, ensuring accessibility for all students.

MENTORSHIP

Mentorship in the UBSSW DSW program is designed to support the individualized professional development of each DSW practitioner-scholar and to provide rigorous oversight of the required academic products. The model is characterized as high-touch and high-support, ensuring that students have the tools, resources, and social capital needed to navigate doctoral education and assume leadership roles in social work practice.

Core Mentorship Components

The UBSSW DSW program utilizes the following modes of mentoring to ensure student success:

1. **Individualized One-to-One Consultations:** Regular Zoom, phone, or email meetings focused on progress and guidance.

2. **Iterative Scholarly Review:** DSW faculty provide extensive, detailed, scaffolded feedback on all academic products. Feedback becomes more individualized and frequent when students are engaged in their Capstone Project:
 - **Proposal Phase (Capstones I & II):** Focuses on practice problem identification and proposal development. Requires a minimum of four individual meetings per semester (30–60 minutes each).
 - **Implementation & Evaluation Phase (Capstones III & IV):** Focuses on real-world implementation, data collection/analysis, the final paper, and dissemination. Meetings typically increase to weekly or bi-weekly based on project complexity.
3. **Specialized Technical Mentorship:** Direct support for navigation of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process and complex data management through the BCSR.
4. **Group Mentorship and Peer Support:** Faculty facilitate student consultation groups and synchronous sessions that allow for peer-to-peer feedback in a tutoring-style environment.
5. **Professional Collaboration Network (PCN) Support:** Faculty mentor students in building their PCNs, which are global networks of experts and practitioners, to obtain feedback and disseminate research-informed knowledge.
6. **Professional Development:** Faculty advisors provide ongoing mentorship related to coursework, professional development, including support with job searches and scholarship pursuits, throughout the program.

STUDENT INPUT AND PARTICIPATION

The UBSSW is committed to providing equitable and inclusive opportunities for DSW practitioner-scholars to provide input into the implicit and explicit curriculum to ensure that students' voices are integrated into the continuous improvement of the program's culture and administration. The following outlines the formal mechanisms through which DSW students provide input into and participate in both the implicit (institutional climate, culture, governance, and administration) and explicit (formal course design, content, delivery, and scholarly expectations) curricula to ensure continuous program evaluation and improvement.

Implicit Curriculum: Governance, Climate, and Administration

Committee Representation and Shared Governance

DSW students shall hold voting representation and active membership across key institutional bodies:

- **Standing Committees:** DSW student representatives serve as voting members on the Doctoral Programs Committee (DPC)—participating in policy and operational oversight—and the Committee on Students (COS), which reviews academic policies, grievances, and adherence to professional standards.
- **Ad Hoc and Institutional Committees:** Periodically, students are eligible to participate to specialized committees (including the DEIA Committee and Accessibility Committee) to inform school-wide initiatives and institutional climate.

Feedback and Assessment

To maintain evidence-based program administration, the DSW program enforces structured channels for student input:

- **Annual DSW Program Assessment:** All matriculated DSW students complete an annual survey assessing academic culture and learning environment.
- **Focus Groups and Strategic Planning:** UBSSW leadership conducts periodic listening sessions, focus groups, and interviews with targeted student populations (e.g., LGBTQ+ scholar groups, the Association of Black Social Workers) to address systemic challenges.
- **Module Feedback:** Courses offer structured, anonymous feedback mechanisms within learning modules to collect data on learning dynamics and classroom climate.

Leadership Access and Consultative Engagement

- **Program Leadership:** The DSW Program Director facilitates periodic virtual drop-in sessions to ensure ongoing, transparent dialogue between administration and the student body.
- **Annual Review:** Every DSW student undergoes a mandatory annual individual consultation with the DSW Program Director to review academic standing, evaluate institutional support, and provide feedback on program environment.

Explicit Curriculum: Design, Instruction, and Scholarly Products

Formal Curriculum Governance

DSW students participate in the governance, design, and continuous modification of the explicit curriculum through formal committee appointments:

- **Curriculum Decision-Making (DPC):** The designated DSW voting representative on the Doctoral Programs Committee (DPC) actively participates in curricular development and proposals for new or modified course offerings.
- **Faculty Council Representation:** A DSW student representative participates in Faculty Council proceedings to ensure the academic curriculum aligns with emerging practice trends and professional competencies.

Curricular Integration and Customization of Practice Expertise

The DSW curriculum formally incorporates practitioner expertise into academic production and study pathways:

- **Capstone Project:** Students independently design, formulate, and execute their required Capstone Project. Students select their practice population, research questions, and implementation methodology in consultation with faculty.
- **Advising and Elective Selection:** Students customize their academic trajectory by selecting an elective in consultation with their academic advisor and the DSW Program Director.
- **Professional Collaboration Networks (PCNs):** Students are required to establish and consult with external expert networks (PCNs), facilitating a

continuous integration of field data and practice knowledge directly into course requirements.

Curricular Evaluation and Instructional Delivery

- **Formal Academic Evaluations:** Course evaluations, module reflections, and exit surveys are regularly administered to collect actionable data on instructional delivery, rigor, and content relevance.
- **Continuous Programmatic ADEI Action:** Survey data regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion in course content is integrated into the DSW Program Annual Survey to ensure alignment with social work standards.

ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES & PERSONNEL

This is not a comprehensive list of SSW faculty and staff involved in the DSW Program. It includes only those who play a direct role in determining and/or implementing DSW Program policies.

DSW Program Director

Supervises all aspects of the DSW program, including admissions, curriculum, academic standards, policy compliance, and student support and academic advising.

DSW Program Assistant

Assists with program coordination and operation, particularly student admission and academic files, registration, and communication.

DSW Program Advisors

Provides ongoing consultation and guidance pertaining to program and coursework, monitors student progress, advises on course electives, and confers with students on an annual basis.

Doctoral Programs Committee

Comprised of faculty and doctoral students, this body oversees policies, procedures, and planning for both the PhD and DSW programs.

Assistant Dean, SSW Student Services

Provides student support services, oversees orientation coordination, and ensures compliance with applicable DSW Program, SSW, Graduate School, and University policies.

RESOURCES

Accessibility

Students requiring reasonable accommodations due disability should contact the [Office of Accessibility Resources](#). The office can provide information and review appropriate arrangements for reasonable accommodations. Accommodation requests must be discussed with the instructor prior to the start of the semester and cannot be retroactive.

Computer Access and Technical Support

The [UBIT Help Center](#) provides technical support and computer assistance to students.

Software

UB provides free licensing of [major software packages](#) for UB students, including Microsoft Office and Symantec Antivirus.

My Virtual Computing Lab

The most popular UB-licensed software in the Cybraries and Public Labs can be accessed directly by students from a personal computer. These programs are available on or off campus at any time through the [My Virtual Computing Lab](#).

Library

UBSSW DSW students have full access to [UB Libraries](#) and online resources available through the libraries, [Bryan Sajecki](#), Social Science Librarian, is the Social Work Librarian and is available to provide assistance. He has offices in 523 Lockwood Library and is available to provide assistance by phone: (716) 645-1798 and email: bsajecki@buffalo.edu

Center for Excellence in Writing

The Center for Excellence in Writing (CEW) can help with course papers, independent projects, personal statements, theses and dissertations, articles for publication, and even emails! The CEW also present topical workshops, hosts dissertation retreats, and writing groups. Online appointments are available Monday-Thursday, and Sunday and scheduled through the [EAB Student Success Portal](#).

NY Social Work Contact Hours

Select DSW courses are approved by NYSED social work contact hours to renew your license registration. If you have a license in another state, check with your state regulatory board to determine if NY hours will be accepted in your state. Each three-credit online DSW course listed on the [application form](#) is approved for 45 NYSED live online social work contact hours. Upon completion of the DSW coursework, [use the application form](#) to request a contact hours certificate.