

Simmons UNIVERSITY

SocialWork@Simmons



DSW Student Policy Handbook
& Program Information

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DOCTORATE OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENT POLICY HANDBOOK & PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Doctorate of Social Work Student Policy Handbook and Program Information is the Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) student's guide to the program.

Students are responsible for knowing the policies and procedures in this document, as well as Simmons School of Social Work Policies and the Policies of Simmons University, which are available on the Simmons University website.

The information in this document is subject to change. The Simmons School of Social Work reserves the right to change any policy or procedure without notice.

GENERAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Simmons University School of Social Work is to provide exceptional training, build knowledge and further social and economic justice. We provide transformative learning experiences to students at the bachelors, masters and doctoral levels. Our graduates are prepared to practice social work in a complex, multicultural world and engage in leadership, scholarship, and teaching, drawing from evidence-based and community informed research, and interprofessional education. Our teaching, scholarship and community engagement purposively includes community stakeholders and works to empower marginalized, oppressed and excluded populations. We promote social change through advancing understanding of the connection between individual circumstances and social policy structures, case to cause.

DSW PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the DSW program is to develop scholar-practitioners with expertise in the pillars of advanced practice, teaching and leadership. DSW graduates are holistic scholar-practitioners who seamlessly apply doctoral-level knowledge and practices to their work in the field. The DSW program is designed by expert faculty-practitioners who train students to become holistic scholar-practitioners as defined by: ability to apply evidence-based frameworks grounded in the principles of social justice, including diversity, equity, inclusion, intersectionality, power analysis and anti-racism (DEIPAR), using interdisciplinary approaches, to transform their clinical, pedagogical and leadership practices. Through this experience, DSW graduates are prepared to make a meaningful difference with their work.

DSW PROGRAM GOALS

DSW graduates are prepared for diverse career paths in the areas of social work thought, education, clinical practice, and leadership. Students become doctorally-prepared holistic scholar-practitioners by:

- Learning emerging anti-racism practices and being prepared to implement novel approaches in social work educational programs, agencies or their practices and/or consultancies.
- Engaging in systematic inquiry that adheres to scholarly convention, including critical evaluation and use of advanced-level evidence-based practice.
- Developing leadership skills that prepare them to build and sustain organizations that live up to the core values of social work and the values of the communities they serve, including educational programs.
 - Gaining advanced understanding of leadership theory and skills needed to promote inclusion, anti-racist practices, and improve client systems.
- Building advanced understanding of teaching practice grounded in diversity, equity, social justice, anti-racism, interdisciplinary approaches; learning theory, evidence-based pedagogy; responsive teaching and classroom practices; and knowledge dissemination.
- Translating new and inclusive teaching skills to both traditional academic and other diverse educational contexts.

DEIPAR—Framework & Definitions

(diversity, equity, inclusion, intersectionality, power analysis, anti-racist)

DEIPAR is an evergreen, or living, framework that is grounded in principles of social justice, and is used to organize the way we include these principles. It is not designed to be static in definition, but to evolve with the changing social definitions of each of its facets. It is designed to be stable in its role as a framework that helps those engaged with it to develop baseline understandings of these principles of social justice. This framework infuses the particular foci and emphases of those who use it to help them develop their own DEIPAR informed perspectives on issues central to them (Dyer, 2020, unpublished manuscript).

The definition of social justice adopted for this program:

Social justice embraces the complex, intersectional identities of individuals, and the rich histories of communities, in the redistribution of resources and opportunities, educational and beyond...through a transformative process that disrupts the marginalization of non-dominant social groups.

(Adapted from Pugach et al, 2021, 238)

Diversity

- Difference across social dimensions inclusive of but not limited to “age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status.”

[CSWE EPAS Competency 2, 2015, p. 7](#)

Equity

- “Equity is the condition of fair and just inclusion into a society. Equity will exist when those who have been most marginalized have equal access to opportunities, power, participation and resources and all have avenues to safe, healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives. It requires restructuring deeply entrenched systems of privilege and oppression that have led to the uneven distribution of benefits and burdens over multiple generations. Society will be stronger when the promise in all of us is actualized.”

[City of Boston](#)

Inclusion

- "Inclusion is the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity...in ways that increase one's awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact with and within systems and institutions."

[Inclusive Excellence Framework](#)

Intersectionality

- “Conceptions of discrimination and disparities must account for the interaction of marginalized identities for those who are “multiply burdened...[b]ecause the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of” any single -ism experienced” (Crenshaw, 1989, p140). “Intersectionality operates as both the observance and analysis of power imbalances, and the tool by which those power imbalances could be eliminated altogether. And the observance of power imbalances, as is so frequently true, is far less controversial than the tool that could eliminate them” (Coaston, 2019).

Power

- The word power, by definition in any dictionary, is simply ‘ability’ or ‘capacity.’ Structural power comes from the relationships that social groups have with each other (1), which is impacted by their positionality in society. The positionality created by various social constructs, such as race, gender and class, can also shape the agency or efficacy of an individual or group, and shape social dynamics: “power is a dispositional concept, identifying an ability or capacity, which may or may not be exercised (Lukes, 2005, p109).
(1) Three Dimensions of Power ([found here](#))
 - **Marginalization** -- Marginalization is a manifestation of power. It is both a condition and a process that prevents individuals and groups from full participation in social, economic, and political life enjoyed by the wider society. (Alakhunova et al, 2015, p2)
- What has been identified by some as the third face or dimension of power refers to the ability to shape ideas and to influence. This may include “the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation—which different classes and social groups deploy in order to

make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works” (Hall, 2005, p26).

Anti-racism

- “Anti-racism is an active way of seeing and being in the world, in order to transform it. Because racism occurs at all levels and spheres of society and can function to produce and maintain exclusionary ‘levels’ and ‘spheres,’ anti-racism education/activism is necessary in all aspects of society. In other words, it does not happen exclusively in the workplace, in the classroom, or in selected aspects of our lives. ... [Racism] is complicated (and often reinforced) by other forms of oppression.”
- “A person who practices anti-racism is someone who works to become aware of:
 - How racism affects the lived experience of people of color and Indigenous people;
 - How racism is systemic, and has been part of many foundational aspects of society throughout history, and can be manifested in both individual attitudes and behaviors as well as formal (and "unspoken") policies and practices within institutions;
 - How people participate, often unknowingly, in racism.”

[Alberta Civil Liberties Research](#)

OVERVIEW

The DSW Program is 48 credits with a total of 15 courses, which is typically completed within 2 to 4 years. Students take three courses in each of the three core areas of leadership, practice and teaching. Additional coursework enables students to shape their skills as research-informed practitioners. In order to advance to candidacy in the Capstone Seminar course, students will need to successfully complete the Integrative Seminar course, which includes the comprehensive exam. Once candidacy is achieved, students can begin work on their capstone project, where they integrate their learning via the lens of anti-racism, diversity, equity, inclusion, and power. The completed capstone project includes a plan for dissemination of the represented knowledge and is presented to faculty and their peers.

ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

GENERAL PROCEDURES

The DSW Program admits students to begin courses in January, May and September. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Applicants should consult with Student Financial Services to determine timelines for receipt of financial aid.

An MSW degree from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited program and a minimum of two years post-master's degree of relevant experience is preferred. Applicants who hold a doctorate degree who do not hold an MSW must have relevant post-master's experience and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Applicants must submit via the online application portal, a personal statement of professional and educational intent, a resume, two letters of recommendation. If English is not an applicant's first language, a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score or an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) academic score that demonstrates satisfactory proficiency is required. Details regarding application for admissions can be found on the School of Social Work website.

In order to hold a place in the DSW Program, a tuition deposit must be received by the date indicated in the acceptance packet. Deferrals are permitted at the discretion of the School of Social Work only once admission has been granted and a deposit paid. If an applicant is admitted to the DSW Program but requests a deferral, any deferral that is granted would extend one calendar year only.

DSW Program Admission Criteria

- A Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from a CSWE-accredited institution is preferred for all applicants, though graduate degrees from other practice professions will be considered.
- A GPA of at least 3.0 or higher in their MSW (preferred) coursework.
- A resume that reflects relevant post-MSW practice experience. Two years preferred.
- In the Statement of Professional and Educational Intent (in appendix), the applicant should demonstrate a commitment to advancing their skills and knowledge in the areas of social work practice, leadership and/or higher education.
- Letters of recommendation should reflect the applicant's readiness for doctoral education.
- All academic transcripts
- No standardized test scores are required, except for international applicants in which English is not their first language (TOEFL or IELFTS required).
- An interview is not required; however, under certain circumstances the School may require an interview after application review.

Process and Procedure for Evaluating Applicants

Application files are screened by admissions staff and reviewed by DSW faculty. Each applicant's file is reviewed against the criteria for admission. Faculty reviewers make the determination to accept or reject applications. Applicants are informed of their admissions status (accepted or rejected) by an email from the director of admissions.

TRANSFERS & WAIVERS

Transfer Students Applying to Simmons from other Doctoral Programs

If an applicant wishes to transfer into the DSW Program from another doctoral program attended within the past five years, they must complete the regular admission application and meet admission criteria. In addition, transfer applicants must include all transcripts from their

doctoral studies, a letter of good standing from their program director or dean, and a personal statement explaining their reason for wanting to transfer into the Simmons DSW Program. Applicants may transfer up to 6 credits (2 courses).

Current DSW Student Transfer and Waiver Policy

The DSW program does not accept transfer credits or requests for waivers from matriculated students.

Student Expectations & Responsibilities

DSW students are expected to be versed in understanding professional ethical conduct and academic performance as a result of their MSW education and professional practice experience. These remarks are primarily an overview of Simmons University expectations in these areas. Students are expected to know this content and apply it in their studies and practice while in the DSW program. Simmons University DSW students take on the role of being a member of our community at their home locations and in their fields of work.

The principles and values of the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) guide our profession: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence. They require a commitment to respecting others as well as to working to increase one's own self-awareness and self-knowledge, taking responsibility for personal behavior and self-care.

We expect these principles, including knowledge of the ethics and laws that govern practice to guide professional behavior, in addition to the student's state licensing board regulations. Therefore, as a part of our community, we expect professional behavior from DSW students where they practice. The Simmons School of Social Work faculty expect ethical and honorable behavior from students, and for students to understand and adhere to the school's academic policies

Failure to meet generally accepted standards for professional conduct, ethics and personal integrity requisite for professional social work practice, as outlined in the *NASW Code of Ethics* may constitute grounds for a Level 3 review (see below) or the filing of a Student Code of Conduct or Academic Integrity infraction, and could result in academic sanctions including dismissal. DSW students are also expected to be familiar with and abide by the SocialWork@Simmons Live Session Protocol and Online Etiquette.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM

The DSW Program Committee

Charge: The faculty delegates the DSW Program Committee to set policy and implement procedures for the DSW Program. This is accomplished within the general guidelines, policies, and procedures of the School of Social Work through the Faculty Policy Manual Implementation Guidelines. In implementing this charge, the DSW Program Committee:

- Reviews the applications of prospective students and determines their admission to the DSW Program
- Develops, reviews, and revises the DSW Program's curriculum and procedures
- Develops, administers, and determines the outcome of the Comprehensive Examination
- Develops, reviews and revises procedures for the capstone process
- Makes recommendations to the Faculty regarding awarding of the DSW degree.

DSW Committee Membership: The DSW Committee consists of the DSW Program Director, the online MSW Program Director, and all full-time SW faculty who teach in the DSW Program within any two-year period, and a tenured faculty member or one who teaches in the PhD program who is ex-officio. The ex-officio member also serves a two-year period. The Committee membership can include one doctorally prepared and licensed faculty from both campus-based and online programs who will be elected by the SSW faculty and serve on the committee for two-year terms.

Unless contested, two doctorate students will be selected by their classmates each year to serve one-year committee terms. The President and another elective member from the DSW SGO Executive Board will participate in the faculty DSW Program Committee meeting. However, student members do not have a vote and are excluded from participating in the forum when individual student issues or other sensitive issues are addressed. Students must be in good program standing to hold elected office in the DSW SGO.

Academic Advising (AA)

The Academic Advisor will facilitate DSW student success by defining and implementing strategies that help Students fulfill educational goals. The DSW AA can help address other concerns such as course incompletes, plans of study and /or changes in program goals, academic performance issues, and changes in status, i.e. leaves of absences and withdrawals. The AA will monitor progress toward degree completion, provide support follow-up regarding SSW and program policies and procedures, and generally assist students in working towards solutions regarding their concerns. Should a student have an issue that impacts their academic performance, the student should schedule an appointment with the AA to discuss the matter. The AA functions in the roles of Advisor for DSW Student Government Organization (DSWSGO, see below) and Facilitator for DSW Community Meetings. The DSW AA provides ongoing student-facing communications, and also develops and distributes the program newsletter.

Faculty Mentoring (FM)

Students are connected to a Faculty Mentor within their first term in the program via an introductory email and others periodically throughout the term. Students have primary responsibility for meeting at least one meeting per term with their FM. Students should meet with their FM regularly to establish a productive mentoring relationship. Meetings between students and FMs should focus on goal attainment throughout the program, evolution of professional identity, and areas of professional and research interest, professional career development, as well as capstone project idea development.

The FM can facilitate contact with the Academic Advisor as needed for concerns about conflicts that might impact course progression or academic support. Students who require support related to personal issues or general academic concerns are encouraged to seek assistance and referrals through the Academic Advisor, or the Student Success Representative.

Students experiencing emergencies or who are in crisis should contact 911 Emergency Services.

DSW Student Government Organization

The Simmons University School of Social Work DSW Student Government Organization (DSWSGO) is a self-governed student group designed to provide mutual peer support among DSW students at all phases of the program. The DSWSGO's primary goals are to assist

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students through the normal challenges of the program, to provide support during transitions and adjustments, and to provide a forum for information sharing among students and with faculty.

Each academic year DSW students elect a representative and an alternate to be non-voting members of the DSW committee, one from the capstone project cohort and one from the pre-capstone project cohort. Each serves one-year committee terms, must maintain good standing in the program with a 3.0 GPA. They are excluded from participating in meetings when individual student issues are discussed. The representatives report back to the DSW student cohort about committee discussions and decisions.

COMPONENTS OF THE DSW CURRICULUM

Overview & Coursework

All students are required to take and pass the courses listed below. From time to time the curriculum will be revised by the Doctoral Committee to meet student learning needs. Current students will be advised of any changes and related implications for their course of study by the Director of the DSW program. Students must follow their plan of study as it is written. Any changes to plans of study must be discussed with the Academic Advisor.

SWO-701: Transformation, Inspiration, and Inclusion: Social Work Leadership for the Future (Leadership 1)

SWO-702: The Inner Life of the Adult Learner: Introduction to Theory and Practice (Teaching 1)

SWO-703: Seminar in Ethics & Social Justice

SWO-704: Deconstruction and Development of Clinical Social Work Knowledge and Practice (Practice 1)

SWO-705: Power, Passion & Social Change

SWO-706: Theories to Advance Practice (Practice 2)

SWO-707: The Research-Informed Practitioner

SWO-708: The Fundamentals of Inclusive Course Design and Effective Instruction (Teaching 2)

SWO-709: Strategies for Decolonized Clinical Supervision & Management (Leadership 2)

SWO-710: Complex Learning Environments (Teaching 3)

SWO-711: Complex/Diverse Populations (Practice 3)

SWO-712: Interdisciplinary Social Work

SWO-713: Adaptive Leadership: Implementing Leadership Through Social Justice Lens (Leadership 3)

SWO-714: Integrative Seminar

SWO-715: Capstone Seminar (6 credits)

Advancement to Candidacy

Students advance to candidacy upon successful completion of the Integrative Seminar. In this course students must successfully complete three papers:

1. Comprehensive Exam (Integrative Paper): The focus of the integrative paper is a culmination of what students have learned from the program. Students should have identified their broad area of interest when coming into the program. The focus of this paper is to synthesize what has been learned from the different program pillars and the DEIPAR lens. If a student does not meet the threshold for passing the Comprehensive Exam, even after a possible revision, the student will need to withdraw from the Integrative Seminar course.
2. Literature Review: The purpose of the literature review is to explore what exists in the scholarly literature about a specific topic area. This is a substantive review of ideas and must provide project gap discussion and project justification. The literature review will become a part of the student's proposal.
3. Proposal: The proposal is an outline of your Capstone project. It is a step by step map detailing the work of the project to be undertaken.

Based on student completion of the Comprehensive Exam (Integrative Paper), the Literature

Review paper, and their Proposal for their Capstone project, course faculty will formulate questions for an oral defense. Upon faculty review and determination of successful defense, students will advance to candidacy.

Full-time Student Course Matriculation Flow Chart

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
SWO 701 Transformation, Inspiration, and Inclusion: Social Work Leadership for the Future (3) [Leadership 1]	SWO 703 Seminar in Ethics & Social Justice (3)	SWO 707 The Research-Informed Practitioner (3)	SWO 711 Complex/Diverse Populations (3) [Practice 3]	SWO 710 Complex Learning Environments (3) [Teaching 3]	SWO 715 Capstone Seminar (6)
SWO 702 The Inner Life of the Adult Learner: Introduction to Theory and Practice (3) [Teaching 1]	SWO 705 Power, Passion, & Social Change (3)	SWO 706 Theories to Advance Practice (3) [Practice 2]	SWO 713 Adaptive Leadership: Implementing Leadership Through Social Justice Lens (3) [Leadership 3]	SWO 714 Integrative Seminar (3)	
SWO 704 Deconstruction and Development of Clinical Social Work Knowledge and Practice (3) [Practice 1]	SWO 708 The Fundamentals of Inclusive Course Design and Effective Instruction (3) [Teaching 2]	SWO 709 Strategies for Decolonized Clinical Supervision & Management (3) [Leadership 2]	SWO 712 Interdisciplinary Social Work (3)		
9	9	9	9	6	6

Part-time Student Course Matriculation Flow Chart

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6	Term 7	Term 8
SWO 701 Transformation Inspiration, and Inclusion: Social Work Leadership for the Future (3) [Leadership 1]	SWO 703 Seminar in Ethics & Social Justice (3)	SWO 707 The Research- Informed Practitioner (3)	SWO 711 Complex/ Diverse Populations (3) [Practice 3]	SWO 712 Interdisciplinary Social Work (3)	SWO 708 The Fundamentals of Inclusive Course Design & Effective Instruction (3) [Teaching 2]	SWO 710 Complex Learning Environment s (3) [Teaching 3]	SWO 715 Capstone Seminar (6)
SWO 704 Deconstruction and Development of Clinical Social Work Knowledge and Practice (3) [Practice 1]	SWO 705 Power, Passion, & Social Change (3)	SWO 706 Theories to Advance Practice (3) [Practice 2]	SWO 709 Strategies for Decolonized Clinical Supervision & Management (3) [Leadership 2]	SWO 702 The Inner Life of the Adult Learner: Introduction to Theory and Practice (3) [Teaching 1]	SWO 713 Adaptive Leadership: Implementing Leadership Through Social Justice Lens (3) [Leadership 3]	SWO 714 Integrative Seminar (3)	
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6

Course Prerequisites and Corequisites

Practice Pillar Courses:

- **SWO 704**, Deconstruction and Development of Clinical Social Work Knowledge and Practice, is the prerequisite for SWO 706, Theories to Advance Practice
- **SWO 706**, Theories to Advance Practice: Has the following course as prerequisite, SWO 704 Deconstruction and Development of Clinical Social Work Knowledge.
- **SWO 711**, Complex/Diverse Populations: Has the following course as a prerequisite, SWO 706 Theories to Advance Practice.

Leadership Pillar Courses:

- **SWO 701**, Social Work Leadership for the Future, is the prerequisite for SWO 709, Strategies for Decolonized Clinical Supervision & Management
- **SWO 709**, Strategies for Decolonized Clinical Supervision & Management: Has the following course as a prerequisite for SWO 701 Social Work Leadership for the Future.
- **SWO 713**, Adaptive Leadership: Implementing leadership through a social justice lens: Has the following courses as prerequisites: SWO 705 Power Passion & Social Change and SWO 707 Research-Informed Practitioner, and SWO 709 Strategies for Decolonized Clinical Supervision & Management; SWO 712 can be a pre or corequisite (depending on whether the student is full or part time).

Teaching Pillar Courses:

- **SWO 702**, Inner Life of the Adult Learner, is the prerequisite for SWO 708
- **SWO 708**, Fundamentals of Inclusive Course Design: Has the following prerequisite, SWO 702 Inner Life of the Adult Learner. This course can be a pre or corequisite course with SWO 710 Complex Learning Environments.

Integrative Courses:

- **SWO 703**, Ethics & Social Justice: Has the following course as a prerequisite: SWO 704 Deconstruction and Development of Clinical SW Knowledge and Practice.
- **SWO 705**, Power Passion & Social Change: Has the following prerequisite, SWO 701 Social Work Leadership for the Future.
- **SWO 707**, Research-Informed Practitioner has the following courses as prerequisites: SWO 703, Ethics & Social Justice. Please note that the SWO 703, Ethics & Social Justice, has as a prerequisite: SWO 704, Deconstruction and Development of Clinical SW Knowledge and Practice
- **SWO 712**, Interdisciplinary Social Work can have the following course as a corequisite or prerequisite: SWO 711 Complex/Diverse Population. However the following course can only be a prerequisite: SWO 709 Strategies for Decolonized Clinical Supervision & Management

Pre-Capstone and Capstone Seminar courses:

- **SWO 714**, Integrative Seminar: has the following courses as prerequisites, SWO 713 Adaptive Leadership, as a corequisite, SWO 711 Complex/Diverse Population, and SWO 707 Research-Informed Practitioner. The following course is a co-requisite, SWO 710 Complex Learning Environments.
- **SWO 715**, Capstone Seminar: has the following two courses as prerequisites, SWO 710 Complex Learning Environments, and SWO 714 Integrative Seminar.

The Integrative Seminar and Capstone Seminar Overview

What is the DSW Capstone Project?

The Capstone is the culminating degree project designed to address a problem, gap or unmet need in social work practice, leadership, or teaching. The strategy used to address the identified concern can be creative and delivery of the project can be varied. However, students will demonstrate their expertise in a chosen area through application of knowledge and theory gained in the three program pillars of practice, incorporating the DEIPAR social justice lens. Ultimately, the project [1] should advance the future of social work practice, leadership and/or education, and [2] set the stage for their post-DSW career trajectory. Students can consider projects that include but are not limited to the following:

- Course Development and Teaching Demonstration Video
- Business Development Planning (new business model or proposal; adding a previously non-existent practice component to current practice)
- Grant Application
- Research Study (qualitative, quantitative, intervention study, program evaluation)
- Scholarly Article (i.e. analysis paper regarding a given practice area)
- Policy Analysis Paper
- Website Development
- Podcast Series Development

How do I pick a Capstone Project idea?

- **A Capstone project should be:**
 - a. Grounded in the DEIPAR framework (social justice analysis) – review the DEIPAR video in your Foundations course, in Module 1 (DEIPAR Overview and Application). How are you accounting for each of the various principles represented by the acronym DEIPAR?
 - b. Relevant- A topic should be related to work experience, career goals, and/or a social problem.
 - c. Interesting to you! You will be doing a great deal of reading on this topic and you want to be interested in what you are reading.
 - d. Project must advance the future of social work practice, leadership and/or education, as related to their career. Students must be able to justify the contribution being made through a thorough literature review. Identify significance of the project to the profession, including how it may fill a gap, advance knowledge or contribute to improved practice at any of the different systems levels. Basically addressing the “so what” question.
 - e. Manageable- Your topic and project should not be too broad making it difficult to cover with the literature. Be sure that your topic is also not too narrow that you cannot locate literature on your topic.
 - f. Scaled to Time Limitations- Make sure to develop your project to be completed in a 7-8 week period of time.

- **Begin with what you love. Reflect on what your passions are and the desired impact you want to make:** Think back at what you discussed in your DSW application personal statement. Consider your post DSW degree plans and reflect on what type of project would best position yourself to reach those career goals.
 - a. Select a topic that is interesting to you, personally, professionally, or based on life experiences.
 - b. Identify a social problem or concern and think about how to address it or advance knowledge in that area.

- **Search the literature!** Go to the library website and enter keywords based on your interests or experiences.
 - a. As you review the literature, look for gaps, needs, or new knowledge that can advance the profession.
 - b. Consider a topic that you can develop that might address a problem or need.
 - c. Identify two (2) topics that could be viable for your Capstone project. This gives you another option in case you decide, after delving into the literature, that your first idea is not one you want to pursue.
 - d. **Suggestion:** Create a Capstone ideas folder and save all relevant resources (i.e., articles, reports, video links etc.) in this folder as you move along in the program. Revisit the folder at least once a term to organize the resources by topics and subtopics and reflect on what seems to stand out as most interesting to you. Consider also creating a junk folder that you move resources to on topics that you have ruled out temporarily or permanently.

- **Suggested ways to focus on your Capstone topic(s) of interest for course assignments:** You can use your assignments to test out your ideas, build your thinking around the topic, and continue adding to the resources in your Capstone ideas folder that relate to your topic(s) of interest.

What are some additional considerations when deciding on a Capstone project?

- Project implementation must be completed within a period of 7-8 weeks
- Project must involve the demonstration of theory and knowledge application
- Project must be original. Meaning, you cannot use a project that you already prepared for other purposes. For example, if you choose to develop a course, it needs to be a previously non-existent course that you are creating from scratch. Working on the project prior to the Capstone Seminar course would violate the integrity of the process and will be addressed accordingly.
- We strongly suggest that all students consider the following:
 - Review the IRB Primer found in your Foundations course; go to Module 3 (Making a Difference with Research).
 - Visit the [Simmons IRB webpage](#) and complete the CITI training.
 - Create a Cayuse account – this is only necessary if you are going to need to submit an IRB application for approval for your project.

- Note: dependent on collaborations and population, students' projects may require approval through multiple IRBs inclusive of IRB and/or approval from a collaborating agency. *Anticipate potentially needing to revise and resubmit.*
- Important note: Students should keep in mind that if they need multiple agency approvals, in addition to the Simmons University IRB, this could delay progression to launch of the Capstone Project and, subsequently, completion of DSW program. Written documentation on appropriate letterhead confirming all needed approvals is required. Students should investigate timelines and procedures of collaborating agencies as well as Simmons IRB expectations, and **plan early**.
- When writing up any formal scholarly work, remember to provide arguments and commentaries as if the reader is not familiar with your topic.

The Integrative Seminar and Capstone Seminar Process

Capstone Seminar Process: Your Capstone process is extended across two courses; the Integrative Seminar and Capstone. The process is initiated in the Integrative Seminar course where you will research and write your literature review on your topic, develop and defend your Capstone proposal. In the Capstone Seminar course, you will implement your Capstone project. The Capstone process and all deliverables will be done within these courses. All review, feedback and grading will be done within those courses, by the instructor(s).

The process will not involve committees.

The Integrative Seminar and Capstone Seminar courses will require multi-hour blocks of time. The Capstone Seminar course will meet twice each week. Please refer to the course registration schedule to know day and time specifics and adjust your schedules accordingly.

The *Integrative Seminar course* is where the capstone project preparation begins. In this course, students will integrate their learning and knowledge from previous curricular content. Students prepare for this through the process of developing three papers in the course: [1] integrated comprehension of the three program pillars (teaching, leadership and practice) and the DEIPAR framework as it relates to their topic of interest for their capstone project in a paper that is the Integrative Paper (Comprehensive Exam), [2] the Project Literature Review and discussion of theory application, and [3] the Project Proposal. These papers are described in greater detail in the Integrative Seminar course section of the DSW Student Handbook.

Please note: A passing grade on the Comprehensive Exam paper is required for a student to advance to developing the literature review and Capstone proposal. Students receiving an unacceptable grade will be allowed one week to revise and resubmit after the paper has been initially returned. If the revision is not acceptable, the student will need to withdraw from the Integrative Seminar course. This is the only course for which a revision and a resubmit is integrated for the course, and it is only in place for the Comprehensive Exam. The possibility of being able to revise and resubmit a paper in any other course is per the discretion of the course instructor, under the auspices of academic freedom. Any student needing to withdraw from the Integrative Seminar course may follow up with the Academic Advisor to address progress issues as needed.

The Integrative Paper and the Literature Review become part of the full proposal. The proposal is designed to provide a step-by-step process for each phase of the project. Students will work with the Course Instructor to refine their Project Proposal and build toward oral defense of their proposal. This process may also require Institutional Review Board (IRB) application submission and review. Upon review and determination of successful defense, students will advance to candidacy. Doctoral candidates can then register for the Capstone Seminar course when such registration is available. Students who do not pass the Integrative Seminar will need to repeat the course and will then be subject to the program policy for repeating any course.

The *Capstone Seminar course* is where the student implements the capstone project. The Capstone process is made up of two parts: the project implementation, and the presentation and oral defense of the implemented project. The work of the capstone project should be scaled to unfold across approximately a 7-8 week window from launch to wrap-up within the first two-thirds of the Capstone course. In the final portion of the Capstone course, students will submit their completed Capstone Project Paper. The Capstone Project Paper will provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate synthesis of their substantial learning, integration of DEIPAR social justice principles, and the three program course pillars. The Capstone Project Paper includes a project evaluation and dissemination plan. This ultimately will demonstrate their expertise in their chosen content area.

For the oral defense, students will present their completed project and respond to instructor and attendee questions. Students will consider feedback on the content presented during the oral defense when making final revisions to the Capstone Project Paper. Class participation includes live session attendance and presentations, and the individual meetings with the Capstone Instructor.

Important note regarding research-focused projects:

Students are reminded that this DSW program is focused on developing scholar-practitioners. This program is not structured to support any lengthy and/or large scale project research designs. For example, the research course connected to this program does not provide instruction regarding quantitative and qualitative analyses. Should a student desire to engage in a small pilot research study that includes advanced analyses into their Capstone project, that student must independently identify needed instruction and resources that will facilitate project termination or wrap-up in approximately seven to eight weeks from project implementation or launch in the Capstone course. Those resources should be identified in the Integrative Seminar where the project design, preliminary documentation requirements, and possible Institutional Review Board (IRB) review needs to occur.

CSWE Core Expertise and Skills for Doctoral Practitioners

- C1 Engage in systematic inquiry that adheres to scholarly conventions;
- C2 Use and critically evaluate at an advanced-level evidence-based practice;
- C3 Develop and disseminate practice-relevant knowledge through a variety of channels, such as teaching, scholarship, professional presentations, mentoring, and administration;
- C4 Demonstrate leadership in social work practice and education; and
- C5 Develop and maintain substantive expertise in one or more areas of social work practice.

Capstone Project Paper (*Please refer to the course syllabus for the detailed outline*):

All projects will result in the generation of a final two-part paper:

Part 1

Project Executive Summary– provides the overview & context for the Capstone Project paper. It is a formal write up of the project that emerged from the proposal. *While the Integrative Seminar work looked ahead to what would be done, this paper will need to reflect what WAS done.* This write up will address the following:

1. Summarize Background Context & Need for Project
2. Purpose: How does this project address the identified need
3. Methodology: project structure and activities (steps taken to implement the project), including any data gathering and analysis
4. Project outcomes (& findings)
5. Discuss project strengths and limitations and Identify the lessons learned from having implemented the project
6. Implications for social work practice, teaching, and leadership
7. Recommendations for future work in this area

Part 2

The Capstone Integrated Learning demonstrates achievement and learning regarding the indicated competencies below. *Part 2 represents how all the learning fits together.* This part of the paper will have five sections—descriptions are noted below; deliverables will be found in the Capstone syllabus.

Section A

Discuss how the project incorporates the DEIPAR social justice principles.

Section B

Critically examine the project implementation and outcomes in relation to your career goals and social work practice. (C5)

Section C

Discussion of literature: This section is an update of your literature review from your proposal. (C1 & C2)

Section D

Identify your plan to evaluate your project and disseminate knowledge produced from the project through various channels. (C3 & C4)

Publishable Paper Option:

Students who decide to do the publishable paper and dissemination plan for their capstone project will follow these guidelines: Students will submit one manuscript to a peer reviewed journal and provide the submission confirmation. Students will also identify a plan to distribute the knowledge represented in the paper as noted in the following dissemination plan.

The dissemination plan: Options include a submitted conference proposal or confirmation of an implemented community workshop created from the material. In your Capstone Project Paper appendix, please provide the conference proposal content and submission confirmation, or annotated outline of workshop and informational flier that shows the implementation date.

Possible Project Categories
<p>Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New course development and teaching demonstration video: New syllabus development, course weekly class plan & activities, assigned readings & related resources, assignments and rubrics
<p>Practice / Program Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business development planning (new business model or proposal; adding a previously non-existent practice component to current practice): Develop a detailed business plan—including executive summary, organization overview (describe the problem the business seeks to solve; describe its vision, mission and objectives), organization governance and structure (including management and staffing plan and Board and/or advisory committees), programs and services (including theory of change and/or theory of action), growth strategy (including phases of growth and key success factors and potential risks), marketing strategy and analysis, and financial plan and projections (including operations & program costs, revenue sources, and plan for sustainability). ● Grant application –including project mission and objectives, organizational and community context, proposed project activities, project evaluation plan, project budget, sustainability plan and required appendices.
<p>Practice / Scholarship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research study implementable within the indicated timeframe noted in the Integrative Seminar. Reference for study design guidance: Burkholder, G. J., Cox, K. A., Crawford, L. M., & Hitchcock, J. H. (Eds.). (2019). Research design and methods: An applied guide for the scholar-practitioner. SAGE Publications. ISBN: 9781544342382 <p>Design examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Qualitative</u> ○ <u>Quantitative</u> ○ <u>Intervention study</u>--including intervention description and setting, theory(ies) that inform the intervention, overall question(s), review of the literature including how the study will fill a knowledge gap or extend a knowledge-base, methodology (including design, key variables, measurement, sampling and data collection procedures, plan for human subjects protection; and justification for methodological decisions proposed), data analysis, summary of findings, and discussion (including limitations as well as implications of findings for social work practice, policy, education, and future research, as relevant). ○ <u>Program evaluation</u>--including introduction (evaluation context, overall question/s, and conceptual framework), review of the literature including how

the evaluation will fill a knowledge gap or extend a knowledge-base, methodology (including design, key variables, measurement, sampling and data collection procedures, plan for human subjects protection; and justification for methodological decisions proposed), data analysis, summary of findings, and discussion (including limitations as well as implications of findings for social work practice, policy, education, and future research).

Some examples include:

- Process evaluation to examine questions about program operations, implementation, service delivery or the way recipients experience the program services
- Outcome evaluation to examine if expected program objectives are being achieved or are moving in the desired direction (ideally using existing data in order to feasibly complete the project within the 8 week time frame)
- Need assessment that informs a plan to take their own private practice or an existing agency in new and inspiring directions. This may include but is not limited to, an analysis of needs of population served, practice and/or workplace context, and leadership.

Education / Scholarship:

- Scholarly article (includes submission for publication or conference presentation, associated workshop creation and implementation): Analysis paper regarding a given practice area, i.e. a health literacy.
- Policy Analysis Paper: Analyze a policy in a well constructed paper that contributes to understanding the need for new or modified policies regarding a social justice concern. The policy analysis paper must be guided by an existing policy analysis framework/model and, as appropriate, include specific evaluation criteria to assess different elements of the policy (i.e. performance standards); include an overview of the goals, objectives, values, and underlying assumptions/theories of the policy; and include evidence-informed alternatives/recommendations. Policy paper often include these sections ([UNC Chapel Hill](#)):
 - **Title:** A good title quickly communicates the contents of the brief in a memorable way.
 - **Executive Summary:** This section is often one to two paragraphs long; it includes an overview of the problem and the proposed policy action.
 - **Context or Scope of Problem:** This section communicates the importance of the problem and aims to convince the reader of the necessity of policy action.
 - **Policy Alternatives:** This section discusses the current policy approach and explains proposed options. It should be fair and accurate while convincing the reader why the policy action proposed in the brief is the most desirable.
 - **Policy Recommendations:** This section contains the most detailed explanation of the concrete steps to be taken to address the policy issue.

- **Appendices:** If some readers might need further support in order to accept your argument but doing so in the brief itself might derail the conversation for other readers, you might include the extra information in an appendix.
- **Consulted or Recommended Sources:** These should be reliable sources that you have used throughout your brief to guide your policy discussion and recommendations.

Depending on your specific topic and assignment, you might combine sections or break them down into several more specific ones.

Practice / Technology / Education:

- Website development (new creation, original content) —include identification of teaching strategies incorporated to make the platform an effective teaching tool that impacts practice and supports leadership development
i.e. a profession (field) /professional (people) resource clearinghouse, such as innopsych.com.
- Podcast series development — minimum of 5 episodes (45mins ea), guests can be included in 4th &/or 5th episodes (new creation, original content)
—presenting research of new content, analysis of the gap filled by this project that includes a discussion of new and emerging strategies and how your approach is different and why, understanding of the existing array of resources, development & production, must include an annotated outline for the full season of 10 (ten) podcasts.

Authorship and Publication of Student Work

All doctoral students are encouraged to publish scholarly work and present scholarly presentations while they are in the program.

When students submit work where they are the principal investigator or the lead researcher or scholar on a project, they retain the right for first authorship on the paper or presentation. Students who submit a paper for publication or a presentation for a conference that stems from a course paper or other course work in a doctoral class, where they are the main author or project lead, retain the right of first authorship and are not required to offer authorship to the course instructor.

Students are permitted to have co-authors on the paper with the provision that co-authors contribute to the paper, and that the student be listed as first author, and maintain a primary role in all aspects of the work reported in the paper, and in the writing of all sections of the paper. In addition to being accountable for the parts of the work he or she has done, an author should be able to identify which co-authors are responsible for specific other parts of the work. In addition, authors should have confidence in the integrity of the contributions of their co-authors.

In cases where students invite others to collaborate on their work, including faculty members, they should discuss authorship and author order prior to beginning the collaboration. Faculty members who provide technical assistance including guidance on research, editing, or other types of assistance should not assume authorship will be offered by a student if prior discussion

has not been had regarding authorship before the faculty member provides the assistance.

Students retain the right of first authorship on all original work. Students may invite faculty members to co-author scholarly papers or presentations after the Capstone project has been defended. In order to warrant authorship, faculty members must demonstrate contribution to the proposed publication in accordance with the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors authorship guidelines which have been recommended for adherence to scientific journals by COPE, the International Committee on Publication Ethics.

All those designated as authors should meet all four criteria for the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) authorship guidelines, and all who meet the four criteria should be identified as authors. The criteria are both listed, and also found using the link, below. Those who do not meet all four criteria should be acknowledged. The manuscripts must be submitted in accordance with the journal instructions. Detailed description of all authors contributions to the manuscript must be delineated on the Publishable Paper submission form provided in Appendix.

ICMJE guidelines for inclusion as an author are:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

You can access the ICMJE Guidelines [here](#).

REGISTRATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Expected Flow of Course Registration

Students must register for courses in the identified order established for each course term (please refer to the charts below in this Handbook) based on being at full time or part time status. This progression of course registration cannot be changed unless the student receives a customized plan of study (CPOS) based on unavoidable life situations that impact their previously identified academic trajectory. A CPOS must be discussed with the Academic Advisor.

Students must maintain continuous registration in order to retain matriculation in the DSW program. Registration schedules are disseminated to students each semester. If you have a registration question, please contact the Registrar's Office.

Students must register for at least 6 credits to be considered part-time or 9 credits to be considered full-time. For information on Financial Aid implications and the amount of course credits taken per term, [please review the Financial Aid website](#).

Drop or Add a Course

Prior to the start of classes and until the end of the second class, students may add or drop a class on Workday. Students are responsible for informing the instructor and for making up any

missed coursework in an added class. For courses dropped after week two, students must contact the DSW Academic Advisor to determine the correct procedure. Students may not add a class after the second class meeting.

Students who change their schedule by dropping or adding a course should consult with their Academic Advisor to ensure that they will continue to meet degree and graduation requirements. Students should meet with their Academic Advisor and subsequently receive permission from both the Academic Advisor and the DSW Program Director when dropping or adding a class. Students should also consult with the Student Financial Services to be fully apprised of the impact of course changes on their financial aid.

Withdrawal from a Course

Student transcripts will show a “W” grade for “withdrawn” for any courses withdrawn from after the 2nd week and up to the end of the 8th week. No withdrawals are permitted after week 8; the instructor will record the grade the student has earned. Students are not allowed to withdraw from the same course more than once. Withdrawals after the 4th week count as “credits attempted” for purposes of the Federal SAP policy. Doctoral students may withdraw from a maximum of 3 courses during their tenure in the program.

DSW Students must meet with the course instructor, their FM, and the DSW Program Director in a Level 2 meeting before withdrawing from a course.

Audits

DSW students may not audit a degree course but may audit a course outside of the degree requirements.

Students wishing to audit a non-required course must speak with the FM to indicate an interest in auditing a course outside of the DSW Program. Factors related to audit consideration include among other things, class size and course structure. The FM will first explore options with the DSW Program Director, then with the Director of the program that houses the desired course. If permission is obtained via both directors, the student should contact the School of Social Work Registrar for doctoral students who will assist with enrollment. That email should include the FM and both program directors, and indicate the course for audit. The FM can confirm with the student the email for the Registrar.

Registration to audit a course in the SSW, may occur ONLY two weeks prior to the start of class, not before. Only one class may be audited per semester. The cost to audit is the equivalent of one credit tuition. Auditing students are typically exempt from submitting papers and exams, but are expected to attend all class sessions, complete the readings, and meet any additional requirements at the discretion of the instructor. The audit will appear on the student transcript; students receive no grade and no credit. Students may not register to audit a course in the SSW and then change the status from audit to enrolled. Instructors cannot approve an audit for which a student has not registered.

Current DSW Student Transfer and Waiver Policy

The DSW program does not accept transfer credits or requests for waivers from matriculated students.

COURSEWORK AND GRADING POLICIES

Classroom Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend and have active participation in both asynchronous and synchronous class sessions, with exceptions for some extenuating circumstances. Whether or not a grade for class participation is identified in the syllabus, it will be a factor in the overall course grade. Instructors are permitted to and will consider individual class attendance and asynchronous participation/responses when determining a student's final grade for a course. In addition to lowering a grade, excessive absences and/or poor participation may justify a non-passing grade for the entire course. At the SSW an "excessive absence" is typically defined as missing 20% or more of combined asynchronous and synchronous work.

Asynchronous Course Work Policy for Academic Courses

The asynchronous course work is an essential component of student acquisition of knowledge, values and skills related to course content and professional development. The asynchronous course work and the synchronous session comprise at least three hours of contact time for each course, per week.

A student who submits asynchronous course work late, submits incomplete work, or does not submit asynchronous course work for the week has effectively been absent from class. Unless a student has negotiated an extension in a timely manner with their instructor or has accommodations that enable them to submit work after the deadline, missing 20% or more of combined asynchronous and synchronous work will automatically result in a non-passing grade.

Asynchronous course work includes responding to all prompts requiring either a written or video recorded response, as well as assignments that are to be completed and brought to live sessions. While readings and videos are not graded, all students are expected to have read and viewed all readings and videos before attending each live session.

Religious Observance/Student Absence

Simmons abides by the Massachusetts law on Religious Observances. Students who are unable, because of their religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in an examination, class, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from the class, study, or work requirement and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up the examination, study, or work they may have missed consistent with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 151c, Section 2b. That law states:

"Any student in an educational or vocational training institution, other than a religious or a denominational education or vocational training institution, who is unable, because of their religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study, or work missed because of such absence on any particular day; provided, however, that such make-up examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon such school. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the said student such opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of their availing themselves of the provisions of the sections."

A student should inform the instructor prior to missing a class if they expect to miss class because of their religious observances. Questions about absences for religious observances

should be directed to the Simmons University Office for Student Life.

GRADING

Faculty evaluate students' academic performance throughout the term culminating in a final course grade. The grading scale is published in the DSW Student Handbook (below) and on each syllabus; additional expectations about attendance, participation and timeliness of work are also listed in the syllabus and Handbook. Please note that even if class participation is not noted for a separate grade percentage in the course syllabus robust participation is still expected and it will be a factor in the final course grade.

Assignment grading rubrics, when used, are also given to students. Students are required to follow all academic policies outlined in DSW Student Handbook and to adhere to academic progression guidelines. Students who exhibit uneven or poor performance are referred for additional support and advising. Students may be asked to participate in Level 1, 2 or 3 reviews. (See description of Level Reviews below in this Handbook).

Students are expected to maintain a B (3.0) grade average throughout their tenure in the DSW program. Courses are graded using the A-F grading system. The numerical equivalent for each grade is as follows:

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	GPA Equivalent	Point Scale
A	4	100-94
A-	3.67	93-90
B+	3.33	89-87
B	3	86-84
B-	2.67	83-80
C+	2.33	79-77
C	2	76-74
C-	1.67	73-70
D+	1.33	69-68
D	1	67-64
D-	.67	63-60
F	0	59 or below

Non-Matriculation Grade Policy & Syllabus Access

A non-matriculated student is not eligible to take a DSW course. A Simmons doctoral level student can register for DSW courses. Course syllabi are not available prior to student access to the course site.

Requesting Supplemental or Replacement Work

Once the student has notified their faculty member of the planned absences, they are asked to talk with their faculty member no later than the end of the first week of the term to discuss how they will make up for the missed class.

Extensions for Assignments

Students are expected to complete coursework assignments on time; instructors should clearly articulate policies regarding extensions on the course syllabus and their grading policy for work/assignments passed in after the deadline. In most cases, an extension must be requested by a student prior to the due date of the assignment and a revised date for submission of work must be approved by the instructor. Though instructors may grant an extension or accept late work, a student who misses a due date, even with the instructor's permission, may still receive a lesser grade from the instructor due to the missed deadline. If you're having academic difficulties, talk with your course instructor and FM to work out a plan to help you improve your performance.

Students who are approved for extensions through the Office of Accessibility Services should consult their accommodation letters for extension guidelines.

Rewriting of Graded Papers

Students may, at the instructor's sole discretion, be given the option of rewriting a paper that has received a grade of "B minus" or below. However, final course assignments may not be rewritten.

Incomplete Policy

Completion of coursework by the last day of the semester is essential. An instructor may use their discretion to grant an Incomplete **when the majority of the course requirements and assignments have successfully been completed** and when the student is unable to complete assignments due to extenuating circumstances. ***In permitting an Incomplete, the instructor and the student must establish a plan that identifies a completion date no later than three weeks from the last day of classes or by the first day of classes of the following semester (including summer)-whichever is earlier (unless extenuating circumstances require a later date).*** The instructor should email a mutually agreed upon plan, including due dates and nature of work to be completed and submitted, to the Academic Advisor with a cc to the student. The student then schedules an appointment with the Academic Advisor to review the plan and get the appropriate form submitted.

If the student completes the requirement(s) by the extension date, the mark of Incomplete will be changed to a letter grade. If not, the student will be assigned a grade based on the work completed to date, and the *instructor will submit a grade based on the work submitted by incomplete-work due date*. Grades not submitted by the Instructor to the Office of the Registrar by the approved deadline will automatically be converted to a grade of "F."

Incompletes cannot extend to the end-date of an LOA; they must be completed before end of an LOA.

Students will not be permitted to take the Integrative Seminar if they have an outstanding mark of Incomplete in a course.

Independent Studies

DSW students must follow their program plans, which do not include an option for independent study.

Tutoring & Writing Center Resources

Students in need of academic tutoring support should reach out to their Academic Advisor to explore resources. Students may obtain a private tutor at their own expense if desired. For any submitted work, it must be clear to doctoral faculty that a student has completed their work independently.

DSW students may use the services of the Writing Center at Simmons University. DSW students should be aware that guidance provided by Writing Center staff may not meet the standards for doctoral level work. [The Simmons Writing Center](#) is available for students, in a limited capacity, to assist in the understanding of structure of the current APA format and proof reading of research papers. The description for the Writing Center and its resources are explained in the Simmons Foundations Course. Students may use editing services, however it must be clear to doctoral faculty that a student has completed work independently on their own.

Students in need of additional academic support may request external tutoring. Requests should be made to the Academic Advisor. Sessions are available per **calendar** year, must be approved by the DSW Program:

- [Wyzant](#)

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Appeal of Final Course Grade

Students have the right to be awarded grades that are calculated correctly and assigned based on a fair evaluation of work. Students have the right to understand how a grade was calculated and why the faculty member evaluated the work as they did.

The School of Social Work is guided by the principles of academic freedom and respects the integrity, expertise, and professional judgment of its faculty in the evaluation of students' academic work. Faculty members' right and obligation to evaluate students' academic work and determine student grades are fundamental to this principle.

Faculty members have the right to set grading standards in their courses and the responsibility to advise students of their grading standards at the outset of the course; to use their best judgment in applying those standards; and to assign grades based on methods of evaluation they deem appropriate so long as those methods are not arbitrary or capricious or the product of prejudice or discriminatory animus.

Simmons faculty are strongly encouraged to advise students in writing of their grading methods and standards at the beginning of each term in each course they teach, preferably as part of the

course syllabus. Students are encouraged to raise questions about how the instructor will calculate the final grade at the beginning of the semester.

Discussions with Instructor

Students should talk to their instructors about any grade concerns or questions before initiating the Grade Appeal Process described below.

Within one week of the posting of the course grade, students should meet (or speak on the phone/email) with their instructor and express their concerns about their course grade, providing information the faculty member would need to reconsider the grade. If the faculty member agrees to change a grade, they will submit the changed grade to the Registrar. If, after the discussion, the faculty member decides to let the grade stand, a student may wish to initiate a formal grade appeal.

Basis of Grade Appeal

Simmons formal grade appeal process addresses situations in which a student believes a grade has been assigned for one of the following reasons:

- Computational or clerical error
- Arbitrariness or capriciousness (including where grading criteria have changed after assignment submission and without explanation)

If a student believes that one of these reasons applies to a grade they have received, they should follow the procedures and timelines outlined below.

Only the final grade in a course is subject to this process. As a result of the process, the final grade may be raised, lowered, or stay the same. No new or revised course work can be requested by the student or accepted by the faculty member as part of the grade appeal process.

GRADE APPEAL PROCESS

Overview

As noted above, before initiating a formal grade appeal, students are encouraged to meet with their faculty member and discuss their concerns and/or ask questions about the grade. Grade concerns are frequently resolved through these “informal” (i.e., before formal appeal) discussions, most often when there is a computational error. A grade appeal has two stages: to the Program Director and to the Director of the School of Social Work.

Appeals must be submitted within 1 week of posting of the grade on Workday which is the subject of the appeal. At each level of appeal, a denial of the appeal means that the grade will not be reviewed or changed. Granting of an appeal may mean the final grade may be raised, lowered, or stay the same.

Process and Deadlines

If the student’s discussion with the instructor has not reached a satisfactory conclusion, the following process and timeline are to be followed for a formal grade appeal:

1. First Step: Informal Resolution with Course Faculty Member.

If the student believes they have received an unfair course grade, they shall attempt to resolve the matter informally with the faculty member who assigned the grade. The faculty member shall

communicate with the student to consider their reasons for believing the final grade to be unfair. If the faculty member does not believe there is merit for a grade change, they notify the student. The student may then proceed to the second step below. If the faculty member believes there is reason to change the grade, they should request and submit a Grade Change Form from/to the Director of Student Support. If approved, the Director of Student Support will notify the registrar's office that they completed the "Change of Grade" form, including a clear explanation of the reason for the change that is consistent with the terms of this grade appeal policy. The faculty member submits the "Change of Grade" form to the Program Director's Office and the Registrar's office.

Deadline: The student must make their appeal to the faculty member no later than one week of the posting of the grade. If the grade is not to be changed, the faculty member will notify the student of their decision within five days of their meeting. If the grade is to be changed, the faculty member should request and submit a Grade Change Form from/to the Director of Student Support. If approved, the Director of Student Support will notify the registrar's office and submit the "Change of Grade" form to the Program Director or their designee and Registrar's office within five days of their meeting.

2. Second Step: Formal Appeal with the Program Director or their designee.

If, after the faculty member's notification of their consideration of the initial grade appeal, the student continues to believe that the grade is unfairly assigned, the student may submit the formal Grade Appeal petition, which can be requested through the student's Academic Advisor. The student will provide all supporting course materials. The Program Director, or their designee, shall review all materials and, if needed, meet with the faculty member and/or the student.

If the Program Director, or their designee, agrees that the grade should be changed, they complete a "Change of Grade" form, including a clear explanation of the reason for the change that is consistent with the terms of this grade appeal policy. The Program Director, or their designee, "Change of Grade" form to the Director of Student Support who will approve and submit to the registrar. If the Program Director, or their designee, decides that the grade is not to be changed, the Program Director, or their designee, will notify the student of their decision within five days of their meeting.

Deadlines: The student must submit an appeal with the Director of Student Support within one week after notice of the decision in "first step" above. The Director of Student Support informs the student of their decision within five business days of their meeting.

Step 3: Appeal to the Director of the School of Social Work.

If the student is not satisfied with the response of the DSW Director, or their designee, within 1 week of receipt of the decision, the student may appeal that decision to the Director of the School of Social Work, or their designee. The Grade Appeal Form, faculty response, and the DSW Program Director's outcome determination, are then forwarded to the Director of the School of Social Work.

Within one week, the Director of the SSW, or their designee, will decide whether the appeal should move to the next stage. If the appeal is granted, the Director will appoint a 3-person faculty panel composed of SW doctoral teaching faculty to review the appeal and related information. The panel may seek additional information from the student and/or the instructor. The panel will forward a decision to the Director of the SSW, or their designee, within 2 weeks of

receipt, who will inform the instructor and student of the outcome and, if the appeal results in a change of grade, complete and submit the change of grade to the Director of Student Support.

The grade appeal policy respects the privacy of students and faculty. All parties are responsible for maintaining confidentiality.

Grievance Policy

Students have the right to appeal a final grade, a dismissal or an Honor Board finding by following the procedures and guidelines outlined in the grade and dismissal appeal sections of this handbook. Students can appeal Honor Board findings by following the Honor Board finding appeal process. Students who believe they have encountered bias, harassment or discrimination can follow the Simmons Bias Response Protocol by filing a bias claim.

General Complaints and Concerns

Other complaints and grievances not covered in the above should be addressed as follows:

- A student first discusses the issue with the course instructor
- If discussion with the course instructor is not helpful or appropriate for the situation, or the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, the concern can be brought to the DSW Academic Advisor to determine best next steps, which may include a conversation with the Faculty Mentor.
- If discussion with the Faculty Mentor is not helpful or appropriate for the situation, or if the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, the concern can be brought to the DSW Director.
- If discussion with the Director is not helpful or appropriate for the situation, or if the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, the concern can then be brought to the Director of the SSW.

Bias Response Protocol

Simmons is committed to inclusive excellence in all aspects of an individual's community experience. Our values, vision and mission mandate that we strive to create an environment that is free of bias, prejudice, discrimination and hurtful acts. Individuals who believe they have experienced or encountered bias, harassment or discrimination can use the Simmons bias response protocol to have their concern addressed.

STUDENTS WITH ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS/ACCOMMODATIONS

Students who wish to receive academic accommodations for a course must first register due to a documented diagnosis/disability with the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS). The most commonly requested accommodations are extended time for testing and use of the OAS Testing Center. OAS will provide eligible/registered students with an Academic Accommodations Authorization form to share with each instructor to confirm the student's authorized accommodations. The OAS is open from 8:30 am EST to 4:30 pm EST, Monday through Friday.

Please note that emergency absences such as hospitalizations and emergency surgery are not within the purview of the Office of Accessibility Services. The Academic Advisor is the best resource for support during that time.

For more information about the services and accommodations available through the Office of Accessibility Services please review [this link](#).

SIMMONS UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Students are required to abide by the [Simmons University Academic Integrity Policy](#), which includes the University's guidelines pertaining to plagiarism and cheating. Specifically, each student is responsible for presenting work of their own creation and refraining from presenting others' work as their own creation.

Cheating and plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are considered an academic integrity violation. In situations where cheating or plagiarism is suspected, the faculty person informs the DSW Director, or designee, and schedules an individual meeting with the student to discuss the possible infraction and consequences. The DSW Director, or designee, is informed of the meeting's outcome. In serious situations, at the discretion of the DSW director the student may be given a Level 3 review (see below).

Use of TurnItIn

TurnItIn is similarity-detection software that locates areas in student writing that closely resemble or exactly match the data source from which ideas are extrapolated. TurnItIn may be used for major written assignments in some courses as indicated in course syllabi. The purposes of this tool include providing students with feedback when:

- Their citations are not in compliance with APA Style Guide guidelines;
- They are incorrectly representing their work as original ideas or meaning making informed by reliable evidence and literature;
- They are drawing verbatim from text sources, but either not citing appropriately or at all.
- If potential plagiarism is indicated, then the procedure outlined in the [Student Code of Conduct](#) will be followed.

MAINTENANCE OF ACADEMIC STANDING

Required Course Grades Below a "B"

Any student earning a grade lower than a B in a required course is required to have a Level 2 review no later than the first day of the subsequent term. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the grade, the reasons for the low academic performance, and to develop an Action Plan, which will be sent to the student. If a student fails to attend the Level 2, an Action Plan will be created without their input.

If the earned grade is a B- or below, the student will be required to retake the class as part of the Action Plan. Students required to retake a class will do so at their own expense. Additionally, the Action Plan to retake the course must occur and be resolved before students can proceed forward in the program and register for further courses. Students who earn a grade of a B- or below receive a Level 2 review.

Students who earn a second grade of B- or below are administratively dismissed from the DSW program without a Level 2 review.

When a Student is Required to Retake a Class

As part of an Action Plan, a student may be required to retake a course and to achieve a grade of B or better. In such cases, both grades remain on the transcript and are accounted for in the GPA. All students are required to earn the requisite number of unique degree credits to graduate. A student is allowed to repeat a maximum of one course in which they have earned a grade below a B. The same course cannot be taken more than twice.

Students who are required to retake a course must repeat that same course at the SSW, and can occur with a different instructor. Students should be aware that on occasion a DSW course may not be offered. Repeating a course will very likely extend the time to complete core course requirements in the DSW program.

Students must retake (as needed) and pass all courses prior to taking the Integrative Seminar course.

Academic Probation

Poor academic performance is grounds for a student to be placed on academic probation. For the purposes of academic probation, poor performance is defined as: one grade below a B, and/or a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0. A student on academic probation will have a Level 2 review no later than the end of the first week of class of the subsequent semester. The purpose of the meeting is to develop an Action Plan. A copy of the plan must be forwarded to the student, the Academic Advisor, and the Director of the DSW program. A student's failure to attend a Level 2 review meeting and to follow the Action Plan will result in the administrative withdrawal of the student's registration.

Removal From Academic Probation

To be removed from academic probation, a student must achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher by the end of the following term and/or earn a grade of B or better in a course that the student is required to repeat.

TIMELY PROGRESS IN THE PROGRAM

Program Time Constraints

The program is structured for completion within 2-3 years for full-time students, 3-5 years for part-time students, except in unusual circumstances. The student must graduate from the DSW program within five years of their matriculation start date. Students may appeal to the Director of the DSW Program for an extension. The Director will consult with the DSW Committee regarding the granting of an extension. If granted an extension, a Level 2 meeting will be convened and a timeline for completion of the program put in place.

If the student does not request an extension or is unable to meet the timeline requirements laid out in the Level 2 meeting, the student will be administratively dismissed from the program. A student is not able to appeal this termination.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Voluntary Leave of Absence

Students may take a voluntary leave of absence from their studies as a result of medical, mental health, or other personal matters that compromise their ability to continue in an academic program. A student may apply for a Leave of Absence (LOA) at any time after enrolling. To request a Leave of Absence, students should follow the process listed on the Registrar's web page and also contact the DSW Program Director. The maximum combined duration of all leaves of absence is one year.

If the student chooses to take a voluntary leave of absence in order to receive intensive clinical health care treatment, the DSW Academic Advisor will assist with processing this request. In some instances, the student may be asked to complete the Process for Returning from an Involuntary Leave of Absence as a requirement of returning.

Involuntary Leave of Absence

Simmons is committed to the safety and well-being of its community members and to the integrity of our living and learning environment. Our goals therefore are to maintain the health and safety of every member of the Simmons community and to enable all enrolled students to participate fully in the life of the community.

As noted above, students may take a voluntary leave of absence from their studies as a result of medical, mental health, or other personal matters that compromise their ability to continue in an academic program. There may be times when it will be necessary for Simmons to require a student to take an involuntary leave – a leave, which Simmons has concluded, is in the best interest of the student, even if the student objects.

In instances where a student's mental, emotional, or medical health pose a threat to themselves and/or others, or where health circumstances or conditions become a barrier to appropriate or prescribed levels of self-care, or when a student's health condition causes significant disruption to the activities of the Simmons community, students may be required to take an involuntary leave of absence for a specific period of time.

In instances when a student's mental, physical or emotional health may pose a direct, imminent, threat to the safety and well-being of the Simmons community, or the student has been admitted to a healthcare setting to undergo medical or psychological treatment (hospitalization, intensive outpatient or inpatient program), the Director of the SSW or designee, as an interim measure, can place the student on an involuntary leave of absence from the University. When applicable, the student will be informed in writing of the actions that lead to her/him being placed on leave and direct the student to the process for return. The student's parent/guardian/emergency contact person may also be notified that the student is in a potentially dangerous situation.

Any student placed on an involuntary leave of absence will not be allowed to remain on campus. This includes living in residence, attending classes, and participating in Simmons sponsored events. Students are also prohibited from participating in Simmons-related activities online.

In circumstances when the student has not met direct threat/inpatient criteria, the Director of Student Support, or designee, may, based on observable/recorded behavior, still require a student to undergo an individualized psychological and/or medical assessment to make an informed decision regarding the student's ability to meet the academic, social, and emotional

requirements of a Simmons student. This evaluation must be completed by an external health care provider who is treating the student. The student will be required to sign a release that gives permission to the designated clinical personnel at Simmons to speak with their external evaluating health care provider and to allow for the release of any relevant medical reports as part of the assessment. If the student chooses not to engage in the process above, then they will be required to take an involuntary leave of absence.

If, following the evaluation, a leave is deemed unnecessary, the Director of the SSW or designee may impose other conditions and/or requirements which the student would be required to comply with as a condition of continued enrollment.

In any instance in which a leave is required, the Director of the SSW or designee will provide written notice to the student, including the specific requirements that must be met as a condition of eligibility for re-enrollment, the timeline for initiating and completing the return process, as well as the procedure for appealing the decision.

The duration of the leave is typically no fewer than six months, although the specific length of the leave will be based on the individualized assessment and determined on a case-by-case basis by the SSW Director or designee. When a student takes a leave before the end of a semester, whether voluntary or involuntary, Simmons' standard tuition and residence hall refund schedule applies.

Process for Returning to Simmons After an Involuntary Leave

Simmons students who have been placed on an Involuntary Leave of Absence will be required to undergo an individualized assessment to be cleared for return, prior to their return. They are also required to sign an authorization form that enables the hospital, treatment facility, and/or all pertinent external healthcare providers to release information necessary for the review process. The review process will involve an interview with the Director of Student Support, or their designee.

Following the interview with Director of Student Support, or their designee, a recommendation based on the student's report, their treatment history, information gathered from the external treatment facility, and/or a student's personal health care provider, will be shared with the Director of the SSW or designee regarding the student's readiness to return. Then, on a case-by-case basis the Director of the SSW or designee will decide if the student shall be permitted to return to the Simmons community. If it is determined that the student can return, the student will meet with the Director of the SSW or designee to establish a plan to return and identify community resources. The DSW Program Director will be consulted for purposes of establishing the plan to return to active student status. As a condition of continued enrollment the following criteria must be met:

1. The consulting health care provider must find that the student has maintained a significant level of physical, mental, or emotional stability along with the skill set necessary to successfully engage in the student's academic program and all activities associated with being a Simmons student.
2. The student and the consulting Simmons clinical staff member, in conjunction with all relevant external health care providers, must establish and agree upon a plan for continued managed care after returning to the University.
3. The student must commit to follow the recommended and established treatment plan.

If, after reviewing all pertinent information, the Director of the SSW or designee denies a student's request to return from an involuntary leave of absence, or the student disagrees with the conditions established as part of the return process, the student can appeal the decision in writing to the designated Director of the SSW.

ADMINISTRATIVE DISMISSAL FROM THE DSW PROGRAM

A student is allowed to repeat a maximum of one course in which he/she has earned a grade below a B. The same course cannot be enrolled in more than twice. Students who earn a second grade below a "B" in that course will be dismissed from the program. Students are not allowed to withdraw from the same course more than once. Two grades below a B will lead to automatic administrative dismissal.

Students who do not register for classes in consecutive semesters (excluding summer semester) and are not on an official leave, or have not officially withdrawn, will be administratively withdrawn by Simmons. A new admissions application is required to be considered for return to the active student status.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Students who withdraw from Simmons should first meet with their Academic Advisor in order to receive and submit appropriate withdrawal forms. Students who withdraw from the DSW program and who wish to seek re-admission at some later time, must apply for readmission through the standard admissions process applicable to all candidates. Admission to the program once does not guarantee admission a second time. Recipients of financial aid should also notify the Office of Student Financial Services regarding their withdrawal.

FEDERAL STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY

To be eligible to continue to receive Federal Student Aid (FSA), students must make satisfactory academic progress toward achieving and completing their program of study through measurement of qualitative (GPA) and quantitative (completed credits) standards. The full SAP policy can be found on the Student Financial Services website and should be read to understand how and when this is evaluated.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

School of Social Work DSW students are expected to abide by their respective profession's standards for ethical practice as well as the *NASW Code of Ethics*. DSW students are required to abide by commonly held standards of scientific integrity including publication and authorship standards as well as standards for engagement with human subject research.

GPA REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION

Students must achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.0 to be eligible for graduation.

ACADEMIC AND CONDUCT ISSUES LEADING TO DISMISSAL

DSW students will be dismissed from the doctoral program due to academic performance. The following circumstances lead to dismissal:

- Earning a single semester cumulative GPA that falls below a 3.0 for two consecutive semesters

- When it is determined at the end of a semester that a student cannot return their overall cumulative GPA in the DSW program to at least a 3.0 at the conclusion of the following semester
- Earning two grades below a B
- Failure to progress through the DSW program in a timely manner as described in this Handbook.
- Behaviors and actions judged to be in violation of human subject protocols and/or IRB ethical standards as articulated by the Simmons University Institutional Review Board.
- Behaviors and actions judged to be in violation of commonly held scientific ethical standards.
- Behavior judged to be in violation of Simmons University Policies
- For Social Work Students: Behavior that is deemed unprofessional per the NASW Code of Ethics and the Simmons School of Social Work Standards of Professional Practice Behavior
- Any threat or attempt to harm someone else inside or outside of the Simmons community
- Commission of a criminal act that is contrary to professional practice, occurring during the course of study at Simmons or occurring prior to admission to the School of Social Work and becoming known after admissions

Notification of Dismissal

A student who is dismissed will be informed in a letter from the Director of the SSW or designee. The reasons for the dismissal will be outlined in the letter.

Appeal of Dismissal

The student may appeal the decision, in writing, to the School of Social Work Director. A written appeal must be received within seven (7) days of the date of the letter from the School of Social Work Director or designee. This appeal does not constitute a new review process. Rather, it is a request from a student to have the Director review the original record of the dismissal on either one or more of the following three grounds:

- (1) one or more errors in the dismissal process; or
- (2) new evidence or information material to the case that was not available at the time of the dismissal process; or
- (3) a substantive error occurred because the decision maker misinterpreted evidence used in the dismissal process.

The appeal letter should include an explanation regarding the grounds for appeal and should reference one or more of the three grounds for appeal listed in this policy. The student shall provide the SSW Director all documentation necessary for the appeal to be considered. The SSW Director will respond to the student appeal within 10 business days of its receipt. The decision of the SSW Director is final.

STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Professional Standards and Policy for Professional Performance

NASW Code of Ethics

Students are expected to abide by the *NASW Code of Ethics* and Simmons School of Social Work Standards for Professional Practice. Students are expected to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and established norms, values, and behavior while earning their Social Work degree. The NASW Code of Ethics outlines behaviors and responsibilities expected of all professional social workers. The NASW considers students to be professional social workers from the time they enroll into a social work program. Students should obtain a copy of the NASW code of ethics and become familiar with its contents.

Simmons SSW Standards for Professional Practice Policy

Social Work students are also expected to be familiar with and abide by the Simmons School of Social Work Standards for Professional Practice (available on the College's website). Students are informed about the Standards for Professional Practice during new student orientation; they are instructed to read the Standards of Professional Practice as a required component of orientation. At orientation, students are informed about the consequences of not meeting the standards for professional practice. Specifically, failure to meet generally accepted standards for professional conduct, ethics and personal integrity requisite for professional social work practice, as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics and the SSW Social Work Standards for Professional Practice Education, may constitute grounds for a Level Three Review or a referral to the Simmons College Honor Board, and could result in dismissal or other academic sanctions.

Commonly Held Scientific Ethical Standards

Ethical guidelines for research can be found on the Simmons IRB website. In addition, below are guidelines for scientific ethical standards that provide guidance:

- [World Health Organization: Ethical Standards and procedures for research with human beings](#)
- [National Institutes of Health: Ethics in Clinical Research](#)

Simmons University Academic Integrity Policy

Students are required to abide by the Simmons University Academic Integrity Policy, which includes the University's guidelines pertaining to plagiarism and cheating. Specifically, each student is responsible for presenting work of their own creation and refraining from presenting others' work as their own creation. Cheating and plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are considered an academic integrity violation. In situations where cheating or plagiarism is expected, the faculty person informs the DSW Program Director and schedules an individual meeting with the student to discuss the possible infraction and consequences. The DSW Program Director is informed of the meeting's outcome. In serious situations, at the discretion of the DSW Program Director the student can be referred to the director of academic integrity at Simmons University

POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA FOR REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE ISSUES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The SSW is committed to supporting student success and the achievement of academic and practice proficiency while also upholding professional standards and the expectations set forth by the University-wide [Student Code of Conduct](#). A three-level review process is used to address student academic performance and professional conduct issues. The specific level of review depends upon the severity of the concern. Information shared by the student with faculty and school administrators related to the concerns being reviewed will not be treated as confidential if the information shared raises concerns about professional performance or student safety. Students are advised that faculty or administrators will share pertinent information with each other on a need to know basis for the purpose of identifying student issues and enhancing problem solving about those issues and concerns. A student will be reviewed at the level (1, 2 or 3) that is appropriate to the concern.

Reviews of students can occur for the following reasons:

- To identify need for academic support
- To determine a remediation plan for an Honor Board violation
- If a student fails to meet or maintain academic requirements
- If a student is terminated from a teaching or research practicum due to performance issues
- If a student exhibits behavior judged by faculty to be in violation of professional ethics and/or Simmons University and/or SSW policies and/or commonly held scientific ethical standards
- If a student exhibits consistent pattern of unprofessional behavior in the classroom, in practicums, or in the Capstone phase of the program

Three Levels of Review:

There are three levels of review to address student academic performance and professional conduct issues. A student can be reviewed at any level, and consecutive level review is not required. Specifically, a student may have undergone a Level 1 review and then may be asked to engage in a Level 3 review, without having engaged in a Level 2 review.

Level 1

A Level 1 review involves a consultation between a faculty member and a student, typically at the request of the faculty member. When a faculty member has concerns about a student meeting any of the academic criteria, whether related to professional behavior or academic performance, that faculty member will:

- Discuss those concerns directly with the student and seek to work with the student to resolve the difficulties.
- Apprise the FM of the concerns
- Summarize plans and or recommendations in an email to the student.

The purpose of the Level 1 review is to provide the student an opportunity to receive feedback from their instructor about areas of concern and suggestions for addressing the concerns.

The outcome of many Level 1 consultations is that, together, the faculty and students resolve the concerns and no further reviews are desired or required. Examples of situations triggering a Level 1 review are attendance issues, a poor grade or missed assignment.

Level 2

A Level 2 meeting can be convened when concerns have not been resolved at Level 1 or when a student appears to be developing a pattern of not following academic or program standards, policies, or procedures. All students on academic probation will have a Level 2 review meeting.

A Level 2 review usually involves a meeting with the appropriate faculty member, student, and DSW Program Director, the student's FM, and the student may invite the Academic Advisor as a support.

The student will be informed of the Level 2 review by their advisor or their instructor. In preparation for the Level 2 meeting, the advisor or program administrator will gather information about the nature of the concern. The meeting will be used to discuss the concerns and to develop a Action Plan to address that concern. If the outcome of the meeting is that no further action is needed, the meeting will be documented to the student and the program director but no Action Plan will be created. When an Action Plan is determined to be appropriate next steps, the Action Plan may address the need for the student to modify their behavior and/or seek appropriate help or academic assistance. All parties to the Level 2 meeting, including the student, shall receive a copy of the Action Plan.

The purpose of a Level 2 review is to assist students in fully understanding and addressing the academic or behavioral concerns that are negatively impacting their success in the program. Examples of issues that may lead to a Level 2 review are repeated attendance problems, poor grades, other difficulties meeting the standards and expectations of a course.

The DSW Program Director may consult with the Director of the School of Social Work and/or the Director of Student Support to determine if the Level 2 assessment is sufficient or whether it would be in the Student's and Simmons's best interests to conduct a more comprehensive review, pursuant to Level 3.

Level 3

A Level 3 review involves the SSW Director or designee, members of the Academic Standards Committee and the student. Generally, the Level 3 review is called when serious or complex problematic patterns are identified with students or when the issues are serious enough to

require formal consultation with faculty and the student. A student can be referred for a Level 3 review by a faculty member or administrator. A Social Work Professional Conduct form is submitted online to the SSW Director or designee. The SSW Director or designee, in consultation with the committee, decides whether a Level 3 meeting shall be convened. The SSW Director or designee may also consult with the Assistant Dean of Community Standards (see next section). The SSW Director or designee informs the Simmons University Office for Student Life or appropriate University office about the decision to convene a Level 3 review.

A Level 3 review may be conducted when concerns have not been fully resolved at prior Level 1 or Level 2 meetings. Additionally, a level 3 review may be conducted when a student exhibits unprofessional or unethical behaviors in a classroom or other academic setting. Uncivil interactions from a student with other program students, staff or faculty are not tolerated, and violate the NASW code of ethics. Students will receive a warning from their faculty or other program representative regarding any such behavior. Upon another occurrence, the student will be referred to the Program Director or designee.

When a Level 3 review is called, the SSW Director or designee will convene a meeting with the appropriate faculty and the student. Information will be provided by the student and by appropriate faculty to determine the nature of the problem and to identify alternatives for its remediation.

The student will be notified in writing of the concerns and meeting date by the SSW Director or designee, with sufficient time to prepare for and attend the meeting. If a student chooses not to attend, a finding can be made with the available information in the student's absence.

Once an understanding has been reached, the student will be excused from the meeting. Faculty conducting the Level 3 review will confer and agree on recommendations, which will then be made to the SSW Director or designee who will implement a course of action based on the recommendations.

The SSW Director or designee will inform the student of the decision, which can include one of the following:

- Continue the student in the program with no conditions.
- Establish written conditions for the student's continuance in the program.
- Consult with or refer to the Simmons University Office for Student Life
- Dismiss student from the program

In any Level 3 review, there must be clear, concise documentation of the problem areas as well as verification that the concerns have been discussed with the student and attempted to be ameliorated when appropriate. Students must be notified of the decision in 10 business days of the review.

Level 3 Reviews and Referral and/or Consultation with the Simmons University Dean for Student Life

In some instances, depending on the nature of the problem, the Simmons University Dean for Student Life or the Assistant Dean of Community Standards may be consulted to determine whether a Level 3 Review or a non-academic incident referral or an academic integrity referral is the most appropriate course of action.

SocialWork@Simmons Program Information

After consultation, if it is determined that a report requiring a University disciplinary action is appropriate, the student will be notified. Situations that may result in referral include academic dishonesty, plagiarism, cheating, gender-based misconduct (which includes unlawful harassment), damage or destruction of University property, and conduct that endangers the health or safety of any University student, employee, campus visitor or member of the Simmons community and conduct that disrupts the functioning of the University as an open, educational community.

Students who are referred for Academic Integrity violations or Code of Conduct Violations may be referred back to the SSW Director or designee for the purpose of developing an implementation of sanctions plan (Action Plan) The SSW Director or designee may consult with the Academic Standards Committee for guidance in the sanctions implementation plan.

ADDITIONAL SIMMONS UNIVERSITY POLICY INFORMATION

Simmons Connection

[Simmons Connection](#) is the main gateway used to access Simmons technology resources such as email, Workday Student (our course registration system), the library, and more.

Please note: Before using Simmons Connection or any other Simmons electronic resources, you must activate your Simmons account with your user ID number.

Workday Student

[Workday Student](#) is our Student Information System (SIS) which the University community will use to manage student records, academic programs, student course registrations, course grading, student financial services, degree conferral and transcript information. You will need your student username and password to log into Workday Student.

Accessibility Services and Equal Access Policy

The Accessibility Services and Equal Access Policy can be [accessed here](#).

Name and Address Changes

Name and address change information can be [found here](#).

Human Rights in Research

Institutional Review Board and Human Rights in Research can be [found here](#).

The Simmons University Code of Conduct

[The Simmons University Code of Conduct](#) includes information on the Honor System, Student Rights and Responsibilities Statement, and Simmons University Academic Integrity Policy.

Tuition Refunds

Please consult the Student Financial Services representatives or see online at [Tuition and Housing Refund Schedules and Appeal Information](#) for the exact dates for all terms and a description of the financial implications.

Please note: The schedule differs from semester to semester.

Financial Information

To be eligible to continue to receive Federal Student Aid (FSA), students must make satisfactory academic progress toward achieving and completing their program of study. Please see the complete information and policies on the [Student Financial Services Website](#).

Other Financial Aid Resources

- o For information on tuition and fees please [use this link](#).
- o For information on tuition and financial aid for online students, please [use this link](#).
- o Tuition, Billing and Financial Aid FAQs [can be found here](#).

Other scholarship information

CSWE lists a variety of student funding resources. The listing can be found beginning [here](#).

Health Insurance

Please note Simmons University does **not** offer Student Health Insurance to students participating in online programs.

THE SIMMONS COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The Simmons Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion was developed with input from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Council, supported by the University leadership, and unanimously affirmed by our Board of Trustees.

Simmons is committed to inclusive excellence in all aspects of an individual's community experience. Our values, vision and mission mandate that we strive to create an environment that is free from bias, prejudice, discrimination and hurtful/hateful acts that can prevent each member from thriving in the Simmons community.

Our Diversity & Inclusion Mission

We seek to extend to the entire Simmons University community opportunities for learning, growth, success, and meaningful participation and to build a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive culture for our community. To that end, we will engage in ongoing work to combat racism, bias, and all forms of individual and institutional oppression.

We believe diversity is necessary in all aspects of an educational and residential environment to ensure inclusive excellence. As an academic community, rich with varied life experiences, perspectives, and values, we are uniquely positioned to facilitate the ongoing engagement and intellectual dialogue that honors the inherent and unique characteristics of each member of our community. This includes, but is not limited to, interrogating socially constructed concepts and addressing issues of power, phobia, isms, or any other detractors to building and sustaining an equitable community.

Simmons will affirm diversity and inclusion by moving beyond tolerance and civility to a respect and appreciation that recognizes the social positioning of underrepresented and marginalized segments of the population.

Simmons values academic excellence, intellectual freedom, critical thinking, leadership, innovation, respect for the dignity of all individuals, and continuous improvement. We adhere to policies and practices that promote and support diversity and inclusion.

We prepare students to be well informed, open-minded, and sensitive to the values and diversity of others. We strive to foster an atmosphere where students can become actively engaged leader in a changing, diverse society. We promote this goal through proactive and continual exchange of ideas among students, faculty and the general University community.

To ensure that these goals are attained, Simmons University commits to the following principles.

- o We recognize, respect and honor the inherent individuality of all. We strive to ensure that all decisions concerning the educational progress of students are based on considerations appropriate to an academic institution and not on factors such as race, color, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, disability, or veteran status.
- o All students are given equal access to the University's programs and resources. Admission to the University's undergraduate baccalaureate program considers people who self-identify as women. The University is committed to admitting qualified students of any race, color, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, disability, or veteran status to all programs and activities made generally available to students at the University, including scholarship and loan programs, athletic programs,

and other University-administered student services, and social, educational and recreational programs.

- o We subscribe to the policies set forth in Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which mandates equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities in educational programs and activities.
- o We are committed to creating an atmosphere where diversity is supported with understanding, respect, and encouragement. The University does not tolerate unlawful or other harassment of employees or students. Any discrimination or harassment by any member of the faculty, staff, or student body against any other member of the community will be handled according to the process articulated in the Bias Response Protocol, Title IX Policy, Faculty Policy Manual, Employee Handbook, and other relevant Simmons policies.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Chartered in 1899 and opened in 1902, Simmons is first and foremost an academic community whose goals include preparing students and other members of the Simmons community to be well informed, open-minded, and respectful of the values and diversity of others.

Simmons is, therefore, committed to the following principles:

We support equal educational and employment opportunities for all persons, based on each individual's qualifications and fitness, and we seek to administer our university policies without regard to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or parental status, religion, age, national or ethnic origin, socio-economic status, ancestry, disability, veterans' status or genetic predisposition.

We strive to administer our educational programs and activities, as well as the employment opportunities we provide, in accordance with all relevant state and federal requirements and implementing regulations. This includes, but is not limited to, Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Titles I and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, the Massachusetts Equal Rights Law (M.G.L. 93, Section 102 et seq.), and Equal Pay Act, and Chapter 151B of the General Laws of Massachusetts, as amended.

SocialWork@Simmons Program Information

We are committed to making our programs and activities accessible to individuals with disabilities, including our online/digital services and offerings. We recognize that in the virtual/online learning environment, technology-dependent teaching and learning processes may create unique and unanticipated access barriers. We encourage individuals to contact us if an obstacle to access is found to exist. (See below for how to do so.)

We seek to build and maintain a Simmons where the diversity of our community members is met with understanding, respect, and encouragement, and where unlawful discrimination, harassment and retaliation by any member of the administration, faculty, staff, or student body against any other individual will be investigated, evaluated and redressed. The University does not tolerate unlawful discrimination or harassment of its employees or students or retaliation against those who report incidents of unlawful behavior or those who cooperate in the investigation of such complaints.

Reporting Sexual Misconduct

If you believe you have been subjected to gender-based misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual violence, gender discrimination, stalking, exploitation), please contact our Title IX Coordinator, at (617) 521-2768.

Students Reporting Discrimination or Retaliation

If you are a student and you believe you have been subjected to unlawful discrimination or retaliation, please contact the Dean of your College, the Director of your Program or the Dean for Student Life. The Dean for Student Life can be found in C-115 of the Main Campus Building.

For reporting a web/online accessibility barrier, please use [this form](#). We are committed to making our programs and activities accessible to all individuals.

Bias Response Protocol

Simmons is committed to inclusive excellence in all aspects of an individual's community experience. Our values vision and mission mandate that we strive to create an environment that is free of bias, prejudice, discrimination and hurtful acts. Individuals who believe they have experienced or encountered bias, harassment or discrimination can utilize the Simmons bias response protocol to have their concern addressed.

For Advice on Whom to Contact about a Concern or Incident

If you are unsure of where to bring complaints or concerns about unlawful discrimination, harassment or retaliation, please contact the Office of the General Counsel in E-200 in the Main Campus Building or call 617-521-2276.

Grievance Procedure

A written complaint alleging violation of the federal sex and disability discrimination laws and/or regulations (34 C.F.R. Part 106 and 45 C.F.R. Part 86, implementing Title IX; 34 C.F.R. Part 104 and 45 C.F.R. Part 84, implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; and 45 C.F.R. Part 83, implementing Section 855 of the Public Health Service Act) may be filed with the University by any student, employee, or other aggrieved person. Complaints under this procedure will not be processed from applicants for employment or admission. A University employee's allegation that they have been subjected to discrimination prohibited by the regulations will be processed under the relevant employee grievance procedure. Inquiries concerning the application of non-discrimination policies may also be directed to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the U. S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 330 C Street, Washington, DC 20202.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Information can be [found here](#).

Please visit [this link](#) for College Policies on the following topics:

- Prohibited Conduct
- Judicial System
- College Policies & Procedures
- Residence Hall Policies and Procedures
- Policies about your use of Technology
- Notice of Non-Discrimination and Grievance Procedures
- Students with Disabilities
- Hazing Policy
- Gender-based Misconduct Policy
- Student Rights and Responsibilities Statement
- Policy on Valuing Diversity
- CORI Report and Crime Statistics

For more information about required forms, procedures, and processes related to the doctoral curriculum not specified in this Handbook, students should consult with their Advisor or the DSW Program Director.

STUDENTS ON ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY: CLASS ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

The Simmons School of Social Work (SSW) is committed to supporting students who are enrolled in the SSW while on active duty in the U.S. Military.

We recognize that active-duty students are subject to unexpected and unavoidable changes in their schedules and that you may be deployed to areas where internet access is unreliable or unavailable. Because we know it is not uncommon for students in the military to miss one or more live sessions, we ask our active military students to take the following steps to ensure their success.

Duty to Notify Faculty in Advance of Anticipated Absences

In most instances, we expect students will know in advance when they will need to report for duty and how the nature and location of the deployment may impact their ability to attend live sessions or to participate in field placement. Thus, when students have advance notice that they will be absent from a class due to a military assignment, they are asked to provide the following in writing to their instructor (if missing a class):

- A list of all the dates/times of live sessions from which the student anticipates being absent due to military service obligations.
- If the student cannot specify a precise date of absence but know of circumstances or conditions that might preclude them from attending one or more live sessions or to report at their clinical placement site, students must provide their faculty member with as much information as they can regarding the potential absence and how it will affect completion of course work or requirements.

For Missed Classes

When a student is absent for one or more live sessions due to military duties, it is likely that their faculty member will assign them one or more supplemental or replacement assignments. The decision to assign supplemental or replacement work for absences due to military deployment rests in the sound discretion of the faculty member as is the decision regarding the nature and kind of supplemental or replacement academic work that may be submitted by the student to fulfill the course requirements. Agreements by faculty and students on whether and how replacement or supplemental work will be done, and the dates of completion, are to be written out to confirm expectations and to avoid misunderstandings.

When Students Have No Notice of Changes in Deployment

For urgent military matters in which students are called to service, they are required to notify all relevant faculty, the FM, and the Program Director as soon as they know when they will be absent from class. To the extent feasible, the same process for determining expectations related to make-up work will be employed. If a student's deployment requires them to be disconnected from the internet, or with limited or no access to the internet, they must notify their FM, and their instructors.

APPENDIX 1: SocialWork@Simmons Program Information

THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The Office of the Director of the School of Social Work (SSW) provides leadership for the BSW, MSW, DSW, and PhD programs. The Director's Office develops and implements policies and procedures regarding admissions, academic standing and student requests and petitions. The director is responsible for the faculty and budgets.

The DSW program and DSW Committee oversee curriculum development, student services, and admissions.

Correspondence from SSW

Students must activate and maintain a Simmons University email account. All school-related correspondence will take place only through the Simmons email. Simmons email can be forwarded to a personal email address, but it is the student's responsibility to make certain that Simmons email is checked at least once per day regularly year-round (including during breaks between terms).

REGISTRATION

Course registration for SocialWork@Simmons students typically will open five weeks prior to the first day of classes for any given term. Students will receive a registration notification email on the Friday prior to registration opening.

This email will include the classes that students will be registering for, the term to select and screenshots showing how to register.

All registration is done on Workday, the Simmons University online registration system. Students should consult with their FM about course selections and course sequencing, the Simmons Service Desk (617-521-2222) for Workday technical issues, and the Registrar's Office (617-521-2111 or workdaystudent@simmons.edu regarding Workday registration error codes and registration issues. Other questions should be directed to their FM or Student Success representative.

GRADUATION INFORMATION

The Faculty and the Board of Trustees grants degrees six times per academic year. The dates are the last business days of January, March, July, August and October, and the third Friday in May. The University has one on-campus graduation ceremony, held in May on the third Friday. In addition, online graduation ceremonies ("Virtual Commencements") are held in September and March; the exact dates and additional information will be sent to eligible graduates.

Diplomas

For all students graduating other than May, diplomas will be mailed directly to the address listed in Workday approximately four to six weeks after degree conferral. It is important that the student's address is correct on Workday.

For students graduating in May, your diploma will be available for pickup at Commencement. For students who do not attend Commencement or claim their diploma, it will be mailed in mid-June to the address listed in Workday. It is important that the student's address is correct on Workday.

Replacement diplomas can be ordered through the Registrar's Office. Diplomas will not be ordered for students who do not return completed Petitions to Graduate.

Late petitions may delay the availability of your diploma.

Students who have completed all degree requirements must submit a Petition to Graduate form to the Registrar's Office. Failure to complete the required paperwork, or selecting the incorrect graduation date, could affect participation in graduation ceremonies, diploma availability, or the student's conferral (graduation) date.

Transcripts

The Registrar's Office is no longer able to process official transcript requests to be mailed out or picked up in the office. Moving forward, we will only be able to process *electronic* official transcripts, through [Parchment](#) by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/SimmonsUniversityTranscript>.

When creating your account on Parchment, please use your NON-Simmons account. Please allow 3-5 business days for your order to be processed."

Student Business Card Request Form

Simmons University DSW Student Business Card Request Form

Instructions:

Please fill out this form and submit it by email to the DSW Program Director for approval. Once approved, the form will be forwarded to the SW Operations Manager who will place the order. The cost of one box of cards purchased directly through Simmons is approximately \$30.

Contact information for how to reach you regarding this request and/or when the order arrives:

Date:

Name:

Email address:

Contact information to be printed on the cards:

Your Name as you wish it to appear:

Please indicate one of these:

_____ DSW student (if have not yet passed the qualifying exam)

Or

_____ DSW candidate (if you have passed the qualifying exam)

Simmons email address:

Telephone number if you wish to list one:

Note: Simmons University's address will be listed as the mailing address on all card orders.