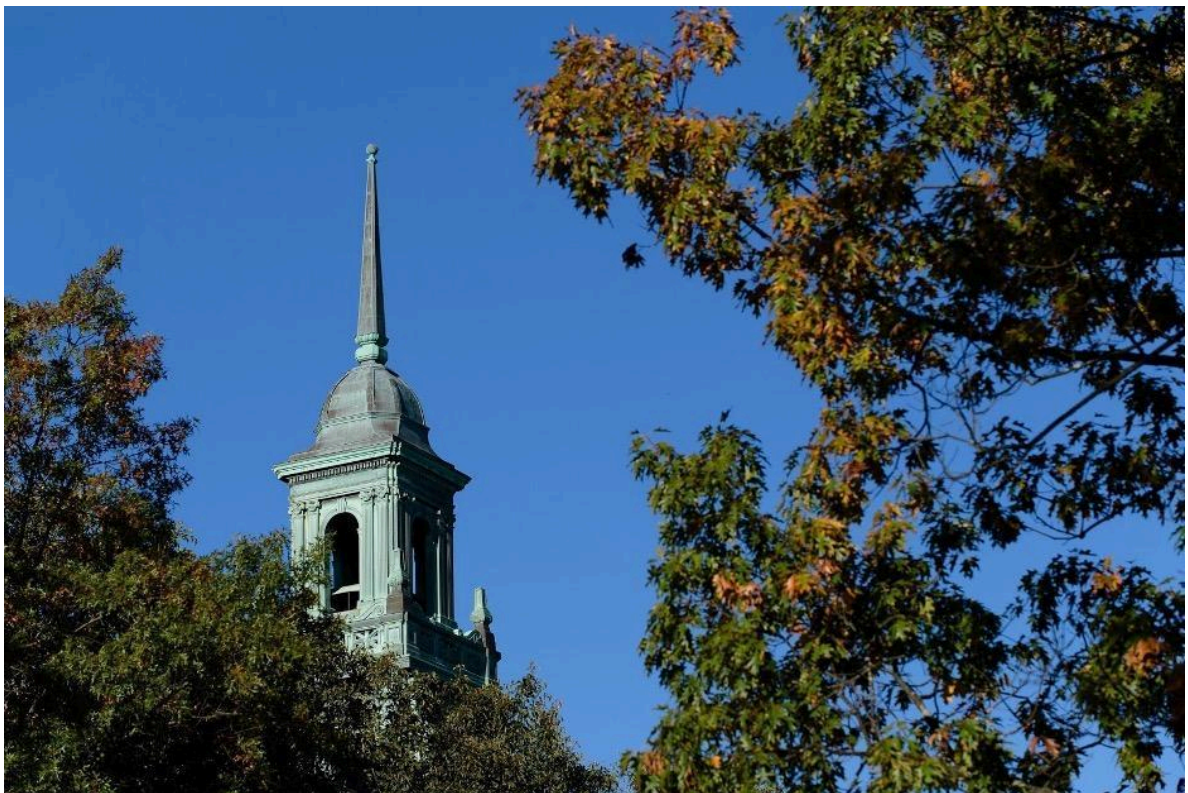


# Simmons UNIVERSITY

School of Social Work

## School of Social Work MSW Program Student Handbook 2025-2026



## Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Welcome and Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
MSW Program Mission Statement	5
MSW Program Definition of Clinical Social Work Practice	5
MSW Program Goals Statement	6
MSW Program Goals	6
MSW Program Outcomes and Assessment of Learning	6
CSWE Competencies	7
MSW Program Administration and Staff 2025-2026	8
<b>Academic and Professional Advising</b>	<b>9</b>
Academic Advising	9
Director of Student Support: Leah Tennen (leah.tennen@simmons.edu)	9
Associate Director of Student Support: Sandra Bailly (sandra.bailly@simmons.edu)	9
How can I find out who my Academic Advisor is?	9
Advising for Certificates, Licensure, and Special Programs	9
Practicum Advising	9
<b>Additional Resources and Support for Students</b>	<b>10</b>
SSW Student Support Website	10
Tutoring & Writing Center Resources	10
Support For Students With Accessibility Accommodations	10
Support for Students with Religious Accommodations	10
Support for Students Who Are on Active Duty in the U.S. Military	11
Auditing Courses	12
Verification Requests	12
<b>Evaluation of Students' Academic and Professional Performance</b>	<b>13</b>
Evaluation of Academic Performance	13
Grading Scale	13
Classroom Attendance Expectations	14
Assignment Submission Expectations	14
Assignment Extension Requests Requiring a Grade of "Incomplete"	14
Asynchronous Course Work Expectations	15
Simmons University Academic Integrity Policy	15
Evaluation of Professional Performance	16
Academic Standing and Progression Towards Graduation	16
Course Grades Below a "B"	16
When a Student Is Required to Retake a Class	17
Non-Matriculation Grade Policy	17
Academic Probation	17

Removal from Academic Probation	17
MSW Program Progression	17
GPA Required for Graduation	18
Satisfactory Academic Progress (Sap) For Federal Financial Aid	18
<b>Levels for Reviewing Student Professional and Academic Performance Issues</b>	<b>18</b>
The Three Levels of Review	19
Level 1	19
Level 2	20
Level 3	20
<b>Dismissal for Academic and Professional Reasons</b>	<b>22</b>
Dismissal Due to Academic Performance	22
Dismissal Due to Professional Performance or Conduct Issues	22
Procedure for Dismissal	22
<b>Procedures for Student Grievances and Complaints</b>	<b>23</b>
Overview	23
Students' Right to Appeal Final Grades	23
Explanation of Grounds for Appeal and Deadlines	24
Grade Appeal Procedures and Deadlines	24
1. Informal Resolution with Course Faculty Member	24
2. Formal Appeal to the Program Director or their Designee	24
3. Formal Appeal to the SSW Dean or their designee.	25
Students' Right to Appeal Dismissal	25
Appeal Process	25
Reapplying after Dismissal	26
<b>Registration Policies and Procedures</b>	<b>26</b>
Prerequisites and Plans of Study	26
Waitlist Policy	26
Drop/Add	27
Changing Sections of Two-Semester/Continuation Courses	27
Courses that must be taken Concurrently	27
Summer Semester Course Registration Policy (Campus-based Students)	27
Course and Practicum Placement Schedule (Campus-based Students)	27
Independent Study Policy	28
Withdrawal from a Course	28
Drop/Withdrawal from Practicum Placement After the Add/Drop Period	28
<b>Leaves of Absences and Withdrawal from the University</b>	<b>28</b>
Voluntary Leave of Absence	28
Involuntary Leave of Absence	29
Process for Returning to Simmons after an Involuntary Leave	30
Withdrawal from the University	31

<b>MSW Credit Transfer &amp; Waiver Policies and Procedures</b>	<b>31</b>
Transfer Credits from Another MSW program	31
Transfer Students Applying to Simmons from other MSW Programs	31
Transfer of an Elective Course Taken at Another Institution while enrolled at Simmons	32
Waivers for Students who Receive Advanced Standing in the MSW Program	32
Request for Waiver of Required Generalist Research Course	33
Policy On Course Credit For Life Or Work Experience	33
<b>Opportunities for Student Input, Involvement, and Recognition</b>	<b>33</b>
Student Feedback on the Explicit and Implicit Curriculum	33
Mid-Semester Course Evaluations	33
Explicit Curriculum: Final Course Evaluations	34
Implicit Curriculum Survey	34
Alumni Survey	34
Student Participation In Committees	34
MSW Student Awards	35
Graduation And Commencement Participation	36
<b>Other Simmons University Policies</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix 1: SSW Standards of Professional Practice</b>	<b>38</b>
Introduction	38
Professional Standards	39
<b>Appendix 2: Online Class Protocols &amp; Etiquette</b>	<b>42</b>
Live Session Protocol	42
Online Etiquette	42
Technology Requirements	43
Recording of Live Sessions	43
<b>Appendix 3: The Simmons Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</b>	<b>44</b>
Our Diversity & Inclusion Mission	44
Notice of Non-Discrimination	45

## Welcome and Introduction

Welcome (or welcome back) to Simmons University, the School of Social Work, and the MSW Program! Simmons University is a private, nonprofit, nonsectarian university providing undergraduate and graduate programs since 1899. The Simmons School of Social Work (SSW), founded in 1904, is the first clinical social work school in the United States. At present, the SSW offers SW degrees at every level, from bachelors (BSW), masters (MSW), in both in person and online platforms, as well as online doctoral (DSW and PhD) programs.

The administration, faculty, and staff are delighted to prepare you for your future roles as professional, clinical social workers. As part of your training, please become familiar with the contents of this handbook, as it contains important information that will guide your MSW educational experience at the School of Social Work. Students are responsible for knowing and following the policies in this handbook, as well as those of the School of Social Work and Simmons University (see the [university website](#) for more information). Some MSW Program policies will differ depending upon whether you are enrolled in the campus-based, hybrid, or online program option. Students should consult documents that are specific to their program option, including their respective Practicum placement manuals. These documents are available on the SSW Student Support website found [here](#). The information in this Handbook is subject to change, and the SSW reserves the right to change any policy or procedure without notice.

### MSW Program Mission Statement

The mission of the MSW program is to prepare masters level professional practitioners with skills for clinical social work practice in a complex, multicultural world using knowledge based on evidence-informed and community-informed practice, in which clinical practice is defined, in part, as a disciplined process for collaboration, in service of social, emotional, and behavioral change for individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities. This educational experience, consistent with the history and philosophy of the social work profession, is grounded in a values perspective that emphasizes client strengths, actively opposes all forms of oppression and supports social, economic, and environmental justice. The curriculum is designed to help students develop competence, critical thinking, and the ability to attend to clients' presenting concerns and build on their strengths, as well as cultural responsiveness and self-awareness.

### MSW Program Definition of Clinical Social Work Practice

A disciplined process for collaboration in service of social, emotional, and behavioral change for individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities, clinical social work draws on knowledge of human development, psychotherapeutic interventions, relational and group process, cultural learning, and social policies and practices. It employs evidence-informed methods that facilitate change through dialogue and collective action. It is grounded in a history of commitment to social justice and guided by a professional code of ethics.

## **MSW Program Goals Statement**

Students learn multiple social work roles and skills necessary to be effective within evolving areas of practice. Graduates will be able to work with a variety of populations and social issues, using a broad and flexible array of evidence-informed interventions at an advanced level. They will have the ability to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to facilitate healing, development and change in the service of social, economic, and environmental justice. Graduates will be prepared to practice with an appreciation for the dignity and worth of the person and the importance of human relationships; they will learn to practice with a sense of integrity and a commitment to supporting human rights and actively opposing structures and practices that oppress and marginalize individuals, groups, and communities. The MSW program goals are directly linked to our mission statement.

## **MSW Program Goals**

1. Provide high quality education for generalist practice and a concentration in clinical social work.
2. Create and sustain a learning environment that encourages critical thinking and problem-solving, promotes cultural responsiveness and self-awareness, and values the contributions of all stakeholders to the educational experience.
3. Enact a program culture that creates and sustains a learning environment in which we critically self-reflect on issues of human rights, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnicity, class, national origin, immigration status, religion, the intersection among these factors, and the roles they play in education and the practice of social work.
4. Infuse all activities of the MSW program, including the implicit and explicit curricula, with the values and ethics of the social work profession.
5. Prepare students for competent ethical practice in a complex, multicultural world and a rapidly changing global environment.
6. Promote the development of professional knowledge, skills, and accountability through the use of evidence-informed practice and a commitment to life-long learning.

## **MSW Program Outcomes and Assessment of Learning**

The SSW is committed to continuous examination and improvement of student learning outcomes within the framework of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) 2022 Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). To that end, we have developed a robust infrastructure for systematically assessing the student learning of the explicit curriculum in the classroom and practicum through the framework of the nine CSWE competencies (see below). We also assess outcome attainment using the indicator of post-graduate employment through the administration of an alumni survey. Additionally, we assess the impact of the implicit curriculum (learning environment) through an annual survey of all MSW students. Findings from these various assessment measures are used to inform curricular revisions, address changes in the learning environment, and make changes to our evaluation methods. Built into our assessment plan is a continuous feedback loop that is foundational to our capacity to strengthen student learning. All vested interest partners are included in and contribute to this feedback loop, including faculty, administrators, students, Practicum

agencies, and staff. We also post our findings on the SSW website for the larger public. *Please note that the campus and online options use the same assessment plan for the implicit and explicit curriculum.*

## **CSWE Competencies**

The nine [2022 CSWE competencies](#) expected for an MSW graduate are listed below. These competencies are operationalized differently at the Generalist (first half of the program) and Specialist (second half) levels. For detailed descriptions of the competencies, related learning behaviors, and embedded dimensions of practice for the Generalist and Specialized levels, see course syllabi.

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

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

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

**Competency 4:** Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

**Competency 5:** Engage in Policy Practice

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

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

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

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

## MSW Program Administration and Staff 2025-2026

*\* Below are faculty and staff who you may engage with at some point during your time in the MSW program. Please refer to this table when referencing roles listed in this document.*

<b>Michael LaSala</b> Dean and Professor <a href="mailto:michael.lasala@simmons.edu">michael.lasala@simmons.edu</a>	<b>Leah Hart Tennen</b> Director of Student Support <a href="mailto:leah.tennen@simmons.edu">leah.tennen@simmons.edu</a>
<b>Johnnie Hamilton-Mason</b> Associate Dean of Faculty Development <a href="mailto:johnnie.hamilton-mason@simmons.edu">johnnie.hamilton-mason@simmons.edu</a>	<b>Sandra Bailly</b> Associate Director, Student Support and Alumni Networks <a href="mailto:sandra.bailly@simmons.edu">sandra.bailly@simmons.edu</a>
<b>Kristie A. Thomas</b> Associate Dean for Academic Affairs <a href="mailto:kristie.thomas@simmons.edu">kristie.thomas@simmons.edu</a>	<b>Michele Livingood</b> Academic Advisor, MSW Program <a href="mailto:michele.livingood@simmons.edu">michele.livingood@simmons.edu</a>
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<b>Jeannine Chester</b> Associate Director of On-Ground Practicum Education <a href="mailto:jeannine.naidoochester@simmons.edu">jeannine.naidoochester@simmons.edu</a>	<b>Ivanna Adams</b> Faculty Support Coordinator of On-Ground <a href="mailto:Ivanna.Adams@simmons.edu">Ivanna.Adams@simmons.edu</a>
<b>Vee Williams</b> Associate Director of Online Practicum Education <a href="mailto:vee.williams@simmons.edu">vee.williams@simmons.edu</a>	<b>Practicum Support</b> On-ground and Hybrid: <a href="mailto:sswogpracticum@simmons.edu">sswogpracticum@simmons.edu</a> Online: <a href="mailto:sswolpracticum@simmons.edu">sswolpracticum@simmons.edu</a>

## Academic and Professional Advising

### Academic Advising

Students are assigned an Academic Advisor when they enter their program. The Academic Advisor provides guidance in regards to concerns or conflicts that might arise with course progression, plans of study, status (e.g., leave of absence, withdrawals, change of program options), and academic performance issues. In addition, the Academic Advisor might assist with clarification of learning styles and needs, along with guidance with materials found in any of the student handbooks. The Academic Advisor serves as an advocate during a student's tenure as a graduate student and helps to connect students with academic and other support. Advisors also provide advising pertaining to post-graduate social work careers and career resources. Students also are assigned a separate advisor for Practicum related matters called a Practicum Liaison (see below).

### Director of Student Support: Leah Tennen ([leah.tennen@simmons.edu](mailto:leah.tennen@simmons.edu))

The Director of Student Support oversees the academic advisors, student resources, and student disciplinary issues for MSW students.

### Associate Director of Student Support: Sandra Bailly ([sandra.bailly@simmons.edu](mailto:sandra.bailly@simmons.edu))

The Associate Director of Student Support organizes community career events (licensing, resume and interviewing workshops, recruitment fair), professional development opportunities, and oversees all MSW student government volunteers and affinity groups.

### How can I find out who my Academic Advisor is?

Students can email [swadvising@simmons.edu](mailto:swadvising@simmons.edu) to obtain the name and contact information of their assigned Academic Advisors.

### Advising for Certificates, Licensure, and Special Programs

Students in certificate programs can also meet with the Faculty Certificate Coordinators for advising pertaining to elective choices and career options. Students can email [swadvising@simmons.edu](mailto:swadvising@simmons.edu) for the contact information for the appropriate certificate coordinator.

### Practicum Advising

Each year students in Practicum placements are assigned a Practicum Liaison who serves as a liaison between the student and the Practicum placement agency. The liaison collaborates with Practicum agency instructors in evaluating student progress and learning and, when necessary, serves as a mediator in problem situations. The liaison also participates in discussions, as needed, about concerns or problems in Practicum placement or academic coursework as it pertains to Practicum education. See your program's [Practicum manual](#) for more information.

## **Additional Resources and Support for Students**

### **SSW Student Support Website**

The SSW Student Support [Website](#) provides a wealth of information for students, including forms and FAQs. Be sure to bookmark the tab and visit it whenever you have a question!

### **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.

MSW students may use the services of the Writing Center at Simmons University. [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 proofreading 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.

### **Support For Students With Accessibility 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.

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 [their webpage](#).

### **Support for Students with Religious Accommodations**

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, work or practicum requirement on a particular day shall be excused from the class, study, or work or practicum 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 Director of Student Support, or their designee.

### **Support for Students Who Are on Active Duty in the U.S. Military**

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. We know it is not uncommon for students in the military to miss one or more live sessions or clinical placement hours due to military obligations. 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 Practicum placement. Thus, when students have advance notice that they will be absent from a class or clinical placement due to a military assignment, they are asked to provide the following in writing to their instructor (if missing a class) or to both their Practicum instructor and Practicum Liaison (if missing Practicum placement hours):

- A list of all the dates/times of live sessions and/or Practicum placement hours 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.

Once the student has notified their instructor of the planned absences, they are asked to talk with their instructor no later than the end of the first week of the term to discuss how they will make up the missed class and/or clinical placement hours.

When a student is absent for one or more live sessions due to military duties, it is likely that their instructor 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 instructor 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 instructor and students on whether and how replacement or supplemental work will be done, and the dates of completion, should be completed in writing to confirm expectations and to avoid misunderstandings.

If the student will be absent from Practicum placement, they must discuss their anticipated absences with their Practicum instructor and Practicum Liaison. Students should review the Practicum Education Manual for their program, for policies relating to absences.

For urgent military matters in which students are called to service with little or no warning, they are required to notify all relevant faculty, the Academic Advisor, and the Program Director as soon as they know when they will be absent from class or clinical placement. 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 Academic Advisor, their instructors, and, if in Practicum, their Practicum instructor and Practicum Liaison of these extenuating circumstances.

### **Auditing Courses**

- Auditing is only permitted for MSW courses that are offered in the campus-based platform.
- Auditing is not permitted for MSW courses offered in the online platform.
- To audit a course in the MSW campus-based platform, the following conditions apply:
  - There must be space in the course.
  - There must be permission from the MSW Director and the course instructor.
  - Registration to audit is permitted no earlier than two weeks prior to the start of course, not before.
  - Only one class may be audited per semester.
  - The cost to audit is the equivalent of one credit of 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.
- The audit will not fulfill any degree requirements.
- Students may not register to audit a course in the MSW program and then change the status from audit to enrolled.
- Non-degree seeking students cannot audit classes.
- Instructors cannot approve an audit for a student who is not registered in the course.
- Campus-based MSW students interested in auditing should contact Academic Advising ([SWAdvising@simmons.edu](mailto:SWAdvising@simmons.edu)).

### **Verification Requests**

As students approach the end of their MSW Program and graduation, organizations may require verification requests. These include, but are not limited to:

- Academic Standing letters
- Practicum verification (hours, site details, etc.)
- State license applications
- Expected degree completion letters
- Syllabi requests

Students may submit these requests to [sswverification@simmons.edu](mailto:sswverification@simmons.edu) for completion.

## Evaluation of Students' Academic and Professional Performance

### Evaluation of Academic Performance

Course instructors evaluate students' academic performance throughout the semester culminating in a final course grade. The grading scale is below and can typically be found on course syllabi.

Assignment grading rubrics, when used, are also given to students at the start of the semester.

All students are expected to maintain a B (3.0) grade average or better throughout their program in the SSW. Courses are graded using the A-F grading system. School of Social Work students must take all classes for a letter grade with the exception of social work Practicum education courses, in which case Pass, Marginal Pass, or Fail are used instead of a letter grade. The numerical equivalent for each grade is as follows:

### Grading Scale

Grade	Numerical Equivalent
A (4.00)	94+
A- (3.67)	90 – 93
B+ (3.33)	87 – 89
B (3.00)	84 – 86
B- (2.67)	80 – 83
C+ (2.33)	77 - 79
C (2.00)	74 - 76
C- (1.67)	70 - 73
D+ (1.33)	68 - 69
D (1.00)	64 - 67
D- (0.67)	60 - 63
F (0)	59 and below

## Classroom Attendance Expectations

Attendance is mandatory. Attending class means arriving to every synchronous/live class session on time and ready to participate. Tardy arrivals or leaving class early may result in overall grade reduction. Excessive absences, defined as missing more than 20% of synchronous attendance, will likely result in a non-passing grade for the course. For example:

- Missing more than 2 class/live sessions in a 14 week term will result in a non-passing grade.
- Missing more than 1 class session in a 9 week term will result in a non-passing grade.
- Missing any class in an intensive course will result in a non-passing grade.

Attendance differs from participation; expectations for each are typically articulated in course syllabi. Students with approved accessibility accommodations from OAS and/or in need of religious or military accommodations should consult with their instructor and academic advisor about how this policy applies to their individual situation.

## Assignment Submission Expectations

Students are expected to complete coursework assignments on time. Individual instructors typically articulate their policies regarding extensions on the course syllabus and their grading policy for work/assignments submitted after the deadline. These vary from instructor to instructor. In most cases, an extension (when allowed) 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, before work can be submitted late. A student who submits work late, even with the instructor's permission, may nonetheless receive a lesser grade from the instructor to reflect the missed deadline. Students who are approved for extensions through the Office of Accessibility Services should consult their accommodation letters for extension guidelines. Students are also expected to attend all class sessions on time and for the duration of the session. Course instructors include students' attendance into the student's final course grade.

## Assignment Extension Requests Requiring a Grade of "Incomplete"

Completion of coursework, including Practicum education, by the last day of the semester is required. An instructor, in consultation with the student's Academic Advisor 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 the remainder of assignments due to extenuating circumstances.

A student must consult with both their instructor and Academic Advisor to discuss the options for an Incomplete. If an agreement is reached, the Academic Advisor will send the Petition for an Incomplete Grade to the student to submit in advance of the last class session of the semester/term. The form will then be reviewed by the Director of Student Support, who may consult with the Program Director or a designee. The Incomplete request must include the nature of the work to be completed, the date and time by when assignments will be submitted to the instructor, and the date

and time by when the instructor will submit the updated grade to the registrar. Approval of an Incomplete request is not guaranteed.

If the Incomplete is approved, the student must complete the requirement(s) by the extension date. At that time, the mark of Incomplete on the student's transcript will be changed to the assigned letter grade. If the requirement(s) are not completed, the student will be assigned a grade based on the work completed to 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."

Outstanding work must be completed and the Incomplete changed to a final letter grade before the start of the next term. Students with an unresolved Incomplete may not progress to the next term.

### **Asynchronous Course Work Expectations**

Asynchronous course work is an essential component of student acquisition of knowledge, values and skills related to course content and professional development and is considered part of the student's overall participation grade. Some classes have little or no asynchronous course work (typically those hosted on-ground) while other classes may have 50% or more of class time each week be asynchronous.

It is expected that students will submit asynchronous course work on time (typically 24 hours in advance of class/live session, but individual instructors may have different policies). A student who submits asynchronous course work late, submits incomplete work, or does not submit asynchronous course work for the week will see a deduction in their overall participation grade. (Note: this policy applies only to academic courses. There is a separate asynchronous attendance policy for Practicum courses.)

### **Simmons University Academic Integrity Policy**

In addition to the academic policies of the SSW and MSW program, Simmons University maintains and strictly enforces a policy on academic integrity for all students that includes procedures for addressing a student's academic performance when there is a question of academic dishonesty. This may include a formal hearing by the Simmons Academic Integrity Board (AIB), and/or review by the AIB Secretary. One particularly egregious violation of academic integrity is plagiarism, which is defined as following:

- The citations and references are not in compliance with APA Style Guide guidelines
- Students are incorrectly representing their work as original ideas or meaning making informed by reliable evidence and literature;
- Students 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. See the [Simmons website on academic integrity](#) for more information about what constitutes academic integrity, and the process following an allegation of academic integrity violation at Simmons.

In summary, students are required to follow all academic policies outlined in this Handbook and adhere to academic progression guidelines for the MSW program. Students who exhibit uneven or poor academic performance are referred for additional support; advising; and a Level 1, 2, or 3 review. (See description of Procedures for Review below in this Handbook).

### **Evaluation of Professional Performance**

A student's professional performance is integral to their overall academic performance and success in the program. Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the Simmons School of Social Work Standards for Professional Practice (Appendix 1) and Live Session Protocol for Online Etiquette (Appendix 2). Students are informed of these criteria for evaluation of professional performance as part of new student orientation.

In addition, students are expected to adhere to the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) and established norms, values, and behavior during class, professional work, Practicum placements, and in all other aspects of their professional and academic work 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.

Adherence to the SSW Standards for Professional Practice and the NASW Code of Ethics is evaluated as part of program progression. 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, may constitute grounds for a Level 3 review (see pages 18-22), filing of a Student Code of Conduct or Academic Integrity Board infraction, and/or could result in academic sanctions, including dismissal.

### **Academic Standing and Progression Towards Graduation**

#### **Course Grades Below a "B"**

As mentioned, students are expected to maintain a B (3.0) grade average throughout their MSW program. MSW students must take all classes for a letter grade with the exception of social work Practicum education courses, in which students are assigned a mark of Pass, Marginal Pass or Fail.

Students that earn three or more grades below B (84) will be dismissed from the program. A B- (83-80) is considered a marginal pass and while it does not require the course to be repeated, it does count towards the number of grades below B. Earning a C+ (79-77) or below will require the student to repeat the course at their own expense.

Any MSW student earning a grade lower than a B (84) in a course will be notified by their Academic Advisor or program administrators. A Level 2 (see pages 18-22) review may be convened to discuss the grade, the reasons for the low academic performance, and to develop an Action Plan, which will be sent to the student. A student's failure to attend a scheduled Level 2 review may result in the administrative withdrawal of the student's registration and other consequences.

### **When a Student Is Required to Retake a Class**

- A student is required to repeat an academic course if they earn a C+ (79-77) or below.
- Both grades remain on the transcript and are accounted for in the GPA.
- Students required to retake a class will do so at their own expense.
- All students are required to earn the requisite number of unique degree credits to graduate.
- A student cannot repeat more than two unique courses and the same course cannot be enrolled in more than twice.
- Students may not submit any previously submitted work. This includes written assignments, exams, and asynchronous work in the online platform.

### **Non-Matriculation Grade Policy**

A non-matriculated student must earn a grade of “B” or better in their first MSW course to remain eligible to enroll in a second course. Additionally, courses taken as a non-matriculated student that are completed with a grade of “B” or higher may be eligible for transfer into the MSW program, pending review and approval by the School of Social Work. The non-matriculated option is not available for online classes.

### **Academic Probation**

Poor academic performance, and poor performance in Practicum placements or external internships are grounds for a student to be placed on academic probation. For the purposes of academic probation, poor performance is defined as any one of the following:

- receiving two grades below a B,
- earning a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0,
- or receiving a Marginal Pass (MP) in Practicum placement.

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 term. The purpose of the meeting is to develop an Action Plan. A copy of the plan, written by the advisor or Practicum liaison, must be forwarded to the appropriate program administrator. A student’s failure to attend a Level 2 review meeting and to develop such a plan may 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 following term, or otherwise resolve the issues that caused them to be placed on academic probation, to the satisfaction of the responsible program director or SSW Director of Student Support.

### **MSW Program Progression**

- A student may only attempt a course twice. Failure to pass a course on the second attempt will result in dismissal from the program.

- Students may also only repeat two unique courses. In other words, if a student earned a C in SW409 AND a C in SW411, but passed both on the second attempt, this would be acceptable, but they could not repeat any other courses for the duration of their time in the program. Students who have exhausted their allowed course repeat allowances and then go on to earn a grade below a “B” will be dismissed from the program.
- Students are not allowed to withdraw from the same course more than once.
- All MSW degree requirements must be completed within five years of matriculation. Academic coursework completed five or more years prior to credit transfer (typically the date of matriculation) does not count toward degree requirements, and must typically be repeated.
- Students who do not register for classes in consecutive terms 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, and admission is not guaranteed.
- Students who desire to change program status must consult with their Academic Advisor.

### **GPA Required for Graduation**

Students must achieve a cumulative point average of B (3.0) to be eligible for graduation.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress (Sap) For Federal Financial Aid**

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 as measured using qualitative (GPA) and quantitative (completed credits) standards. For more information on Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), please see the complete information and policies on the [Student Financial Services Website](#).

## **Levels for Reviewing Student Professional and Academic Performance Issues**

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 SSW Standards of Professional Practice, University-wide Student Code of Conduct, and Code of Ethics. A three-level review process is used to address student academic performance and professional conduct issues. A student will be reviewed at the level (1, 2 or 3) that is appropriate to the severity of the concern. 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. Faculty and administrators may 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. Instances of academic dishonesty (e.g. plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized collaboration) are addressed in the processes described by the [Simmons Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Reviews of students can occur for the following circumstances, among others:

- To identify need for academic support
- To determine a remediation plan for a violation of the the academic integrity policy, SSW Standards of Professional Practice, University Student Code of Conduct, or NASW Code of Ethics
- If a student fails to meet or maintain academic requirements
- If a student is terminated from a Practicum placement or internship either by the placement or by SSW administrators due to performance issues
- If a student is rejected by three agencies during the Practicum placement process in one term
- If a student exhibits behavior judged by faculty to be in violation of professional ethics and/or Simmons University, SSW, or program-specific policies
- If a student exhibits consistent pattern of unprofessional behavior in the classroom or in Practicum placements

### **The Three Levels of Review**

As mentioned, 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. Thus, a student may undergo a Level 3 review without prior reviews, or 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 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 Academic Advisor of the concerns
- Summarize the meeting, plans and/or recommendations in an email to the student

If a problem arises in an external training site (e.g., Practicum placement) the supervisor is expected to promptly discuss concerns directly with the student and with the Practicum Liaison. It is the responsibility of the Practicum Liaison to appraise their Practicum department contact of the concerns.

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 (see below for information about academic probation).

A Level 2 review is a meeting that usually involves the student and the student's Academic Advisor and can also include the appropriate faculty member and appropriate program administration. If a problem arises in an external training site, the external supervisor and Practicum Liaison will also be included.

The student will be informed of the Level 2 review by their Advisor, their instructor and or practicum liaison, or the Director of Student Support. 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 an Action Plan to address those concerns. 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 Corrective Plan will be created. When a Corrective Plan is determined to be the appropriate next step, the Corrective 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 Corrective Plan.

The purpose of a Level 2 review is to assist students in fully understanding and addressing the academic or professional conduct 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, and general difficulties meeting the standards and expectations of coursework or Practicum placement.

The administrator overseeing the Level 2 review may determine if the Level 2 assessment is sufficient or whether it would be in the student's and/or Simmons's best interests to conduct a more comprehensive review, pursuant to Level 3.

## Level 3

A Level 3 review typically involves: (1) the SSW Director for Student Support, MSW program director, Practicum Director (if applicable), or other designee of the SSW Dean, (2) members of the Academic Standards Committee, and (3) 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 Level 3 review may be conducted when concerns have not been fully resolved at prior Level 1 or Level 2 meetings, when a student continues to not meet the criteria for academic performance, or when a student exhibits unprofessional or unethical behaviors in a classroom, Practicum placement, or other clinical setting.

The SSW Director of Student Support 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, with sufficient time to prepare for and attend the meeting, as determined by the Director of Student Support but typically at least three business days. If a student is unable to attend, or 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 Director of Student Support who will implement a course of action based on the recommendations and inform the student of the decision, which may include one of the following among others:

- 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 another office, such as the Academic Integrity Board or the Simmons University Dean for Student Life or their designee
- Dismiss student from the program

In any Level 3 review, there will 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.

Decisions which result in dismissal can be appealed following the SSW dismissal appeal policy. Other appeals must be made within five calendar days of the student's receipt of the committee's decision. Appeals should be made in writing to the SSW Dean, or their designee, and may be made on these grounds only:

- procedural error that unfairly affected the outcome of the committee's decision;
- new information that was not reasonably available at the time to the review;
- sanctions imposed are arbitrary and capricious, or disproportionate to the nature and severity of the offense and the cumulative conduct of the responding party.

In some instances the Dean, MSW Program Director, Practicum Director, or their designees, may be consulted to determine whether a Level 3 review, a non-academic incident referral, or an academic integrity referral is the most appropriate course of action.

If a University-level review is appropriate, the student will be notified. Situations that may result in referral include, but are not limited to: academic dishonesty; plagiarism; cheating; unlawful discrimination or harassment; sexual harassment; damage or destruction of University property; 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. The University may place the student on a temporary suspension until the case can be reviewed.

Cases that are referred to another body may be referred back to the Director of Student Support, or their designee, for the purpose of developing a corrective plan. The Director of Student Support, or their designee, may consult with the Academic Standards Committee, Program Director, and/or the Dean of Student Experience, or their designees, for guidance in developing the corrective plan.

## **Dismissal for Academic and Professional Reasons**

Students can be dismissed (i.e., termination of enrollment) from the SSW for not meeting academic and/or professional requirements.

### **Dismissal Due to Academic Performance**

The following academic circumstances, among others, may lead to dismissal:

- Earning a cumulative GPA falling below a 3.0 for two consecutive terms
- Earning a cumulative GPA falling below a 3.0 in one term and it is determined that it is not possible to bring the GPA back to 3.0 in the following term.
- Earning more than 3 grades below a B in any academic course
- Failure to progress as described in program progression policy
- Failure to gain a Practicum placement after three interviews in one term
- Earning two grades of MP or one grade of F in Practicum education
- In the case of conditional admission, failing to meet the conditions determined

### **Dismissal Due to Professional Performance or Conduct Issues**

The following professional performance or conduct issues may lead to dismissal:

- Simmons University Student Code of Conduct or Academic Integrity violations
- Behavior judged to be in violation of Simmons University policies
- Behavior that is deemed unprofessional per the NASW Code of Ethics or the Simmons School of Social Work Standards for Professional Practice
- 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 admission.
- Violations of academic integrity, including requirements of the Institutional Review Board

### **Procedure for Dismissal**

Prior to dismissal it is typical for problematic academic and professional performance issues to be addressed in meetings with faculty, advisors and program administrators. In most cases these meetings will include a level 2 or level 3 review. This process, however, is not required, nor is it always possible.

Students being dismissed are notified of dismissal in a letter from the SSW Director of Student Support, or their designee, which will include the reasons for the dismissal.

## Procedures for Student Grievances and Complaints

### Overview

Students have the right to grieve actions or decisions, which can include grieving a final grade, appealing status decisions, appealing a sanction related to an Academic Standards, Academic Integrity, or Student Code of Conduct finding, or filing a complaint.

Specifically, students can:

- Appeal a final course grade by following the grade appeal process. (See next section for more detail.)
- Appeal a dismissal by writing a letter to the SSW Dean or designee that addresses allowable appeal criteria. (See subsequent section for more detail.)
- Appeal a sanction pertaining to an academic integrity violation or academic misconduct (see Simmons Academic Integrity Guidebook, and prior section on the levels of review and Academic Standards Committee.)

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

- For a class-related issue, a student should first discuss the issue with the instructor.
- If discussion with the instructor is not appropriate to the situation, or the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, the concern can be brought to their Academic Advisor.
- If discussion with the Academic Advisor is not appropriate to the situation, or if the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, the issue can be brought to the Director of Student Support or their designee. Except where otherwise stated, the decision of the Director of Student Support, or their designee, is final for student complaints, grievances, and appeals.

For **Ethical Complaints and Grievances**, please see here: <https://www.simmons.edu/report-incident>

### Students' Right to Appeal Final Grades

Course final grade appeals can occur for the following two reasons: a computational error, or arbitrariness/capriciousness (described in the next section). If a student believes that they have the basis to appeal a final course grade, and the student wishes to appeal their final grade, the student must follow the grade appeal procedures and deadlines outlined below. A student cannot appeal a grade after they have graduated. Appeals can only be initiated after final course grades have been posted, and only final course grades can be appealed. Grade appeals must be submitted within seven (7) days of final grades being posted.

Please note that although individual assignments become part of a course grade appeal, only the final course grade is open to appeal under this process. Individual assignment grades cannot be appealed.

As a result of the grade appeal process, the final grade may be raised, lowered, or stay the same. The grade appeal process will not result in the grading or re-grading of individual assignments or aspects of course work; only the final course grade is subject to change. Similarly, no new or revised course work may be requested by the student or accepted by the faculty member as part of a grade appeal process. Students are strongly encouraged to keep copies of all work submitted to the faculty member as well as graded work returned to the student by the faculty member.

An explanation of grounds for the appeal and process are described below.

### Explanation of Grounds for Appeal and Deadlines

1. Computational error
  - a. An appeal on the basis of “computational error” means the student has a good faith belief that the faculty member made a mistake in the mathematical computation of the course grade.
2. Arbitrariness or capriciousness
  - a. An appeal on the basis of “arbitrariness or capriciousness” means the student believes:
    - i. That the grade was based on something other than the student’s performance in the course (i.e. non-academic criteria);
    - ii. The grade reflects standards of evaluation different from those applied to other students in the course; and/or
    - iii. The grade departs from the standards of evaluation set forth in the syllabi, rubric, or other written document in a substantial, unreasonable, and unannounced way.

### Grade Appeal Procedures and Deadlines

#### 1. Informal Resolution with Course Faculty Member

A student who disputes the accuracy of their grade shall first attempt to resolve the matter informally with the faculty member who assigned the grade. The faculty member shall communicate with the student, and will consider their reasons for believing the final grade to be incorrect.

If the faculty member does not believe there is merit for a grade change, they will notify the student and the Director of Student Support, or their designee. If the student still believes the grade is erroneous, then the student may 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.

**Deadline:** The student must either speak to the respective faculty member or send the faculty member an email regarding the student’s belief the final grade is inaccurate, not before grades are posted, and no later than seven calendar days after the posting of the grade.

#### 2. Formal Appeal to the Program Director or their Designee

If, after receiving the faculty member’s determination (as described above), the student continues to dispute the accuracy of the final grade and wishes to continue the grade appeal process, the student may submit the formal Grade Appeal petition, using the grade appeal form which can be requested

through the student's Academic Advisor. As part of the Grade Appeal petition, the student must provide a written statement that includes the student's reasons for appealing the grade, all supporting course materials, and any other supporting materials. The Program Director, or their designee, shall review the Grade Appeal petition and attendant materials.

As part of their review, the Program Director or designee may meet with the student, faculty member, and/or other relevant faculty, staff, or administrators, and may request the submission of additional supporting materials. If the program director's, or designee's, review determines that there is no merit to the grade appeal, they will inform the student that the final grade stands. If they agree 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, and submit the "Change of Grade" form to the Director of Student Support who will approve and submit to the Registrar.

**Deadlines:** The student must submit an appeal to the Program Director, or their designee, within seven calendar days after the decision in the "First Step" above is issued to the student.

### **3. Formal Appeal to the SSW Dean or their designee.**

If, after receiving and completing steps 1 and 2 above, the student continues to dispute the accuracy of the final grade and wishes to continue the grade appeal process, the student may submit the formal Grade Appeal petition to the SSW Dean, who may review the appeal directly or delegate it to a designee. As part of the Grade Appeal petition, the student must provide a written statement that includes the student's reasons for appealing the grade, all supporting course materials, and any other supporting materials. The Director, or designee, shall review the petition and attendant materials, and follow the same process described in Step 2. The decision of the SSW Dean, or designee, is final, and no higher appeals will be heard.

**Deadlines:** The student must submit an appeal to the SSW Dean, or designee, within seven calendar days after the decision in the "Second Step" above issued to the student.

## **Students' Right to Appeal Dismissal**

### **Appeal Process**

The student may appeal a dismissal decision, in writing, to the SSW Dean or their designee. A written appeal must be received within three (3) calendar days of the date of the dismissal letter from the Director of Student Support, and should be submitted using the dismissal appeal form (available from the Director of Student Support). This appeal does not constitute a new review process. Rather, it is a request by a student to have the Director review the original record of the dismissal on one or more of the following grounds:

1. one or more errors in the dismissal process;
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 Director, or their designee, all relevant documentation necessary for the appeal to be considered. The decision of the SSW Dean, or their designee, is final.

If the appeal is premised on a grading dispute, the grade appeal process will be completed before the SSW Dean will decide on the dismissal appeal. Regardless of the premise of the appeal, the student's written appeal of dismissal must be received by the SSW Dean within three (3) calendar days of the date of the dismissal letter.

### **Reapplying after Dismissal**

Students who are dismissed from the program, and have been denied reinstatement, must wait at least one year from the date of program dismissal before reapplying. A new application must be submitted and is reviewed by the Dean and MSW Program Director or their individual designees.. Prior admission does not guarantee subsequent admission. Students readmitted after a dismissal are not eligible to appeal future dismissals.

## **Registration Policies and Procedures**

### **Prerequisites and Plans of Study**

When registering for classes each term, students must follow the plan of study provided as it is written. Students must successfully complete all required generalist courses, generally the first half of the program, before registering for specialist courses, (the second half) including electives. Information about course sequencing, plans of study and pre-requisites is available from Academic Advising. Students are strongly encouraged to consult these resources before registering. Exceptions to the above are rarely allowed and only under highly exceptional circumstances. A request to enroll in an elective, or any course out of sequence, before completion of required generalist course work must be discussed with the Academic Advisor and receive final approval from the Director of Student Support, or their designee.

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](#).

### **Waitlist Policy**

On Ground (OG) and Hybrid (H) students must use the automatic waitlist system when they wish to be placed in line for a closed/full class. Professors cannot override the system and add students to their classes. The student should not contact the professor to be put into the class.

Waitlisted students should monitor their Simmons email for further information and for notification that they may enroll in an open seat. Students must follow instructions from the Registrar, and meet

any requirements/deadlines related to the process, or they will be automatically removed from the waitlist and the seat will be offered to the next student on the waitlist.

Online (OL) students should reach out to Academic Advising for the Section Capacity Exception form. Students that have completed this form should monitor their Simmons email for further information and for notification that they have been enrolled in the requested section. Students must follow instructions from the Registrar, and meet any requirements/deadlines related to the process, or they will lose the ability to enroll in the preferred section. The student must not directly contact the professor to ask to be enrolled in the class.

### **Drop/Add**

Prior to the start of classes and until the end of the second week of the term, students may add or drop by first communicating with their Academic Advisor. Requests to add courses will be processed based on enrollment availability. Students are responsible for informing the instructor and for making up any missed course work in an added class. For courses dropped after week two, students must first communicate with their Academic Advisor and then submit a Course Withdrawal Form. Students may not add a class after week two. Courses dropped after the second week of the term will appear on the student's transcript with a grade of "W." Note that these requirements differ from Simmons University policies for non-SSW graduate students.

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 also consult with the Student Financial Services to be fully apprised of the impact of course changes on their tuition accounts and financial aid.

### **Changing Sections of Two-Semester/Continuation Courses**

MSW students are required to remain in the same section of the two semesters of year-long class for which they registered (SW/SWO 421 A&B, SW/SWO 424 A&B). Students must register for each class each semester (Fall and Spring for on ground (OG) classes).

### **Courses that must be taken Concurrently**

MSW students are required to register for the appropriate Practicum and practice courses concurrently.

### **Summer Semester Course Registration Policy (Campus-based Students)**

MSW students are not permitted to be enrolled in more than two courses during the summer semester.

### **Course and Practicum Placement Schedule (Campus-based Students)**

To accommodate Practicum placement attendance for MSW students in their generalist year (M, T, Th/F) and specialist years (M, W, Th/F), courses are offered as follows:

- Monday evenings (generalist and specialist year courses)
- Tuesday daytime (specialist year courses only)
- Tuesday evenings (generalist and specialist year courses)

- Wednesday daytime (generalist year courses only)
- Wednesday evenings (generalist and specialist year courses)
- Thursday evenings (generalist and specialist year courses)
- Friday daytime (generalist and specialist year courses)

Note that campus-based courses are not offered Monday daytime, Thursday daytime, Friday evenings, Saturday, or Sunday.

### **Independent Study Policy**

Independent study for course credit is not available to MSW students.

### **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.

Students must meet with their Academic Advisor and must submit the relevant form before withdrawing from a course.

### **Drop/Withdrawal from Practicum Placement After the Add/Drop Period**

To withdraw from Practicum Placement after the add/drop period, the student must receive approval from the Director of Practicum Education, specific to whichever option they are enrolled in, campus-based or online. Students who perform poorly and/or are not making sufficient progress and withdraw after the add/drop period may be given a grade that reflects their performance at the time of their withdrawal. Students that withdraw from Practicum must also withdraw from the associated Practice course.

In rare cases, an appeal to extend an Incomplete deadline can be submitted. For courses, students submit this appeal to the Director of Student Support who may establish an alternative deadline to be listed on the form. This appeal must be submitted 48 hours prior to the expiration of the original Incomplete submission date. Approval of this appeal is not guaranteed.

## **Leaves of Absences and Withdrawal from the University**

### **Voluntary Leave of Absence**

Students wishing to leave the University for a temporary period, with the intention of returning to complete their degree, may apply to take a leave of absence (LOA). Students considering an LOA should first meet with their Academic Advisor to discuss their reason for a Leave, create an updated plan of study, and receive the link to the LOA request form. Following the meeting the student can submit a LOA form. Students who take a leave of absence during the semester are assigned grades based on the Course Withdrawal policy.

A student seeking to take a leave of absence should also consult with Student Financial Services. International students should consult the Center for Global Education for the implications of withdrawal on their visa status

If the student chooses to take a voluntary leave of absence, the Dean of Student Experience 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 to the University. (See below.)

Leaves will not be ordinarily granted for periods longer than one academic year. The request for the extension of a leave (for a maximum of one year) is approved only in unusual circumstances.

Extension requests must be made before the expiration of the original leave of absence.. Students who do not return at the end of an authorized Leave of Absence will be withdrawn from their academic program and must submit a subsequent readmission to the program.

### **Involuntary Leave of Absence**

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

In instances in which a student's mental, emotional, or medical health pose a threat to themselves and/or others, becomes a barrier to appropriate or prescribed levels of self-care, or causes significant disruption to the activities of the University community, such students may be required to take an involuntary leave of absence from the University.

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 health care setting to undergo intensive medical or psychological treatment (hospitalization, intensive outpatient or inpatient program), the Dean of Students 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 emergency contact person may 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 be on campus. This includes living in residence, attending classes, engaging in Simmons online platforms, and participating in Simmons-sponsored events.

In circumstances when the student has not met direct threat/inpatient criteria, the Simmons University Dean for Student Experience or designee may, based off of observable/recorded behavior, still require a student to undergo an individualized psychological and/or medical assessment in order to make an informed decision regarding the student's ability to meet the academic, social and emotional requirements of being a Simmons student. This evaluation can be conducted by a member of the University's clinical staff, or by a student's external health care provider who is treating the student. The student will be required to sign a release that gives permission to the University's

designated clinical personnel to speak with her/his 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 listed above, then she/he will be required to take an involuntary leave of absence and if applicable, immediate removal from the residence halls.

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

In any instance in which a leave is required, the Dean of Student Experience 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 full months, although the specific length of the leave will be based on the student's individualized assessment and determined by the Dean or designee on a case-by-case basis. When a student takes leave before the end of a semester, whether voluntary or involuntary, Simmons' usual tuition and residence hall refund schedule apply.

### **Process for Returning to Simmons after an Involuntary Leave**

Simmons University students who have been placed on an Involuntary Leave of Absence will be required to undergo an individualized assessment to be cleared to return to Simmons, prior to their return to the University. They are also required to sign an authorization form that enables the hospital, treatment facility, and/or all pertinent external health care providers to release information necessary for the review process. The review process will involve an interview with the appropriately licensed Simmons clinical staff member as well as the Dean for Student Experience or designee. Following the interview with an individual of the clinical staff, a recommendation that is based off 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 Dean for Student Affairs or designee regarding the student's readiness to return. Then, on a case by case basis, the Dean for Student Experience or designee will make a determination if the student is permitted to return to the Simmons community. If it is determined that the student can return, the student will meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee to establish a plan to return to the University and identify community resources. As a condition of continued enrollment and, if applicable, as a condition of re-admittance to the residence halls, 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 as well as the activities associated in 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 following the recommended and established treatment plan.

If, after reviewing all pertinent information, the Dean for Student Experience 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 University's Student Affairs leadership, or their designee.

### **Withdrawal from the University**

Students who wish to withdraw from the university must complete a Program Withdrawal Form, available from their Academic Advisor. Students should consult with their Academic Advisors and with Student Financial Services for information on the implications of withdrawal for tuition and student loans. A request for withdrawal is effective on the day it is received in the Registrar's office. Students who withdraw during the semester are assigned grades based on the Course Withdrawal policy.

## **MSW Credit Transfer & Waiver Policies and Procedures**

### **Transfer Credits from Another MSW program**

Students entering the MSW program may request to transfer up to six course credits taken as a non-matriculated student at a CSWE accredited MSW program. The student must provide an official transcript from that program and request transfer credits during the admissions process.

Transfer credits will not be accepted after the first semester in the program. To be transferred, a grade of "B" or better must be received in the course. Courses for transfer must be at least three credits, and they must be taken at a graduate level school of social work that is accredited by CSWE. All degree requirements must be completed within five years of matriculation. At five years or more prior academic coursework must be repeated. Students should submit the official transcript, official syllabi, learning objectives and readings (if not on the syllabi), an assignment completed for the course, and a narrative describing how the course(s) taken elsewhere are commensurate with the Simmons MSW course(s) to be replaced. Requests will be reviewed by the MSW Program Director or their designee.

Neither certificate programs nor continuing education programs, even when taken in an MSW program, are eligible for transfer.

### **Transfer Students Applying to Simmons from other MSW Programs**

Transfer students are those who leave their current MSW program and matriculate as an MSW student at Simmons. Applicants must be in good standing with the school from which they are transferring and must have a minimum GPA of 3.0. The transfer student submits a course syllabus for each course for which they are seeking transfer credit. The request for transfer credit is reviewed and approved by the MSW Director or their designee and the Practicum Director or their designee (if applicable). Additional supporting material may also be requested.

Additional information for transfer applicants:

- A maximum of 32 credits may be requested for transfer
- The student must provide an official transcript and a letter of good standing from the Director or Associate Director of the MSW program
- A syllabus for each course must be submitted for transfer credit
- Courses in which the student receives a “B-” or lower will not be transferred
- A practicum evaluation for first year field education is required
- All coursework including transfer credits must be completed within 5 years

### **Transfer of an Elective Course Taken at Another Institution while enrolled at Simmons**

Matriculated students with special interests may be given permission to take one elective course at another institution or in another Simmons University graduate program if:

- It is a Master’s level course at an accredited, degree-granting institution
- The course content shows clear relevance to the social work degree
- The course is not offered at SSW
- The course earns a minimum of 3 credits and meets for at least the equivalent classroom contact hours as the MSW course

Students must notify their Academic Advisor in writing of such a proposal prior to the registration period. The MSW Director or their designee must review and approve the plan.

If permission is granted, the student is responsible for the transfer of credit to Simmons at the end of the semester. Non-receipt of a transcript and the executed Transfer of Credit Form by the proper deadline in the final year could affect the student’s ability to graduate on time. Students must receive a grade of “B” or better to transfer credit.

Matriculated students may not take any required (i.e. core or non-elective) courses outside of the School of Social Work.

### **Waivers for Students who Receive Advanced Standing in the MSW Program**

Advanced Standing students take advanced year courses and 36 credits are waived for the following foundation courses. By waiving Generalist year courses, students are not required to repeat baccalaureate social work content.

- Social Work Practice (SW/SWO 421A & B), 6 credits
- Social Policy and Social Work in Organizations and Communities (SW/O 403) 3 credits
- Human Behavior in the Social Environment (SW/SWO 411), 3 credits
- Racism (SW/SWO 409), 3 credits
- Research (SW/SWO 441), 3 credits
- Practicum Education (On-ground: SW446A & SW446B; Online: SWO446X & SWO446B), 9 credits

- Substance Use in Social Work (SW/SWO 422, 3 credits)
- 2 Electives, 6 credits

### **Request for Waiver of Required Generalist Research Course**

To prevent students from repeating content mastered in other research courses, the MSW program offers students an opportunity to waive SW/SWO 441 Social Work Research. To be approved for a course waiver, a student needs to have taken an identical or very similar graduate course within the past five years and to have earned a grade of “B” or better in that course. If approved for a waiver from SW441, a student must enroll in another 3-credit Simmons MSW elective course in place of SW441 to ensure they meet the credit requirements for graduation. Students must meet the prerequisites for any course they choose to take instead of SW441.

A student intending to seek a waiver from SW441 should submit the waiver form and the following supplemental documents listed below to the MSW Program Director or their designee:

1. Course syllabus
2. Course learning objectives
3. Course description
4. Course readings
5. At least one example of work done for the course (exam or written assignment)
6. Narrative linking the previously-taken course to the specific SW441 learning objectives. The narrative explains how the previously-taken course’s learning objectives are commensurate with the SW441 learning objectives.
7. A student may use more than one course as the basis of their waiver request. If submitting more than one course, the student should submit the first five documents described previously. One narrative describing the courses will suffice.

Requests are due one month prior to the first day of classes for the semester in which the waiver is requested. Students will be informed of the approval or denial of the request for a SW 441 waiver within two weeks of submission. All decisions are final. Incomplete requests will not be reviewed.

### **Policy On Course Credit For Life Or Work Experience**

The SSW does not grant course credit for life experience or previous work experience.

## **Opportunities for Student Input, Involvement, and Recognition**

### **Student Feedback on the Explicit and Implicit Curriculum**

#### **Mid-Semester Course Evaluations**

Each course is evaluated anonymously by students both at midterm and at the end of the term. Midterm evaluations are designed to provide real-time feedback so instructors can make timely

adjustments, better understand what students are enjoying, and identify areas where additional support may be needed. End-of-term evaluations are available to instructors only after final grades have been submitted and are also reviewed by program directors and/or their designees.

### **Explicit Curriculum: Final Course Evaluations**

Each course is anonymously evaluated by students by the last class meeting. The evaluations can be reviewed by the instructor only after student grades have been submitted. Evaluations are reviewed by the instructor and program directors and/or their designees.

### **Implicit Curriculum Survey**

Each year, all current MSW students are asked to complete a confidential survey about the following aspects of the program: overall experience, advising and other supports, professional development and preparation, employment prospects (specialist year students only), sense of community, placement process, sense of belonging among students with marginalized identities, likelihood to stay connected, and technology and student success staff (online only). This survey was created with considerable student feedback, including during development, piloting, and refinement. The responses are analyzed and findings are shared with faculty, staff, and students and used to inform program improvement.

### **Alumni Survey**

Each year, recent MSW graduates (< 1yr) are asked to complete a confidential survey about the following areas: current employment (e.g., agency, role, location, salary) or school enrollment (e.g., discipline), job search process, extent to which they used certain resources offered by the MSW program and level of helpfulness, licensure plan/status, career goals, satisfaction with the program, and suggestions for improvement). This survey was created with considerable student feedback, including during development, piloting, and refinement. The responses are analyzed and findings are shared with faculty, staff, and students and used to inform program improvement.

### **Student Participation In Committees**

SSW students are encouraged to become active participants in the SSW community and in their educational experience. Students participate in the governance of the SSW through membership on SSW committees. Students help to frame SSW policies and initiate community activities; through membership on SSW committees, students participate in the formulation and modification of academic and student affairs.

Each year students receive an email soliciting their involvement on SSW committees and boards. Student representatives convey student concerns at committee and board meetings. The purpose of student participation on committees is to provide student perspective and preference in decision making about the curriculum and program policies. Students report back to the student body at student meetings and in the community newsletter. Students are members of:

- Alumni Board
- Assessment Committee
- Curriculum Committee

- Student Advisory Board
- Student Practicum Advisory Committee

## **MSW Student Awards**

Simmons School of Social Work confers annual awards to MSW students who have made significant contributions to the SSW community, their agency, or the larger realm of social work. Students, supervisors, faculty and Advisors are invited by the Faculty Award Committee to submit nominations.

### ***The Shirley Saks Greenberg Award***

This award honors Shirley Saks Greenberg who received her MS degree from Simmons SSW in 1956. Mrs. Greenberg had a gift for combining theoretical perspectives to understanding with clinical practice. She had a particular interest in the area of psychodynamic psychotherapy and clinical casework. She met an untimely death in 1982. Her family established this award in her honor to recognize a first-year student who shows promise in integrating theory with practice, especially practice pertaining to psychodynamic theory. In recent years the scope of the award has been expanded to a broader definition of clinical practice.

### ***The Iris MacRae Award***

This award was established in 1980 by students, colleagues, alumni and friends to honor Iris MacRae, a member of the Simmons faculty, who devoted the major part of her professional life to teaching and advising students at the school. Her dedication and commitment remain an inspiration to all that knew her. In 1983, the faculty decided that this award should be granted to a student in their final year. Please submit the name of a student and an accompanying letter of support for a student who has made an outstanding achievement in either class or Practicum work.

Examples of Practicum achievement could include special talents in working with a challenging client group, initiation of a special program in the agency, or other evidence of creative achievement in the course of the Practicum work practicum. Class (academic) achievement might consist of overall outstanding performance or particularly creative papers completed for course requirements.

### ***Achievement in Political Action and Social Justice Award***

This award is given to a student who makes a contribution in the areas of political action and social justice through intervention in a larger system.

### ***Outstanding Competence in Multicultural Practice***

This award is given to a student for work with a multicultural population, for the education of professional colleagues, program planning, or sensitivity and excellence in cross-cultural practice.

### ***Faculty Leadership Award***

This award is given at faculty discretion for exemplary school or community leadership. This may be awarded to an individual or group of students.

### ***The Community Service Award***

This award recognizes special service to the Simmons community by a student or group of students. Nominations may be made by students, faculty, or staff. Note: The Student Advisory Group selects the winner of this award.

### ***Written Scholarship in Social Work***

This award is given to a student who demonstrates creativity, originality and outstanding scholarship in a written paper. Submitted papers should hold promise for publication.

### ***The Priscilla Mullen Riley Award***

Established in memory of Professor Emerita Priscilla Mullen Riley, this award honors the dedication, commitment and perseverance of its namesake. Professor Riley experienced significant challenges in her early life, yet went on to have a very successful, rich and rewarding career as a clinical social worker and a social work educator. She was a member of the Simmons Faculty for thirty-four years and the Director of its Practicum Education Department for many years. She was a national leader in promoting the importance and centrality of Practicum education in graduate social work learning.

### ***Peter Salgo '01 Award***

This endowed fund is established in memory of Peter Salgo '01SW with gifts contributed by friends and family in 2007. This fund will provide an annual award to one or more School of Social Work students upon the completion of their graduate degree from the University.

Preference will be given to individuals who, like Mr. Salgo, made the difficult decision to switch careers and obtain a degree with the intent of entering the Practicum of social work.

### **Graduation And Commencement Participation**

Students who have completed all degree requirements must submit a Petition to Graduate form to the Registrar's Office by the published deadline for their graduate date. 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.

Simmons University holds its in-person Commencement ceremony on the third Friday in May of each year. **Only** graduate students who complete **all** requirements of their programs by May of a given calendar year will be invited to participate in that same month's (May) in-person Commencement ceremony. Graduate students who do not complete all requirements by May, but whose degrees are conferred in July and August directly following May Commencement, will be invited to participate in the October online commencement ceremony and the in-person May Commencement ceremony of that following year. The Provost's Office determines eligibility for participation in commencement, and may change this policy without warning or notice. If you are not sure you will complete all program requirements before your intended graduation date, contact the Registrar or Provost's Office for more information on commencement requirements before you or your loved ones make plans (or purchase travel) to participate in commencement.

Graduate students whose degrees are conferred in October and January will be invited to participate in the following March online commencement ceremony and the May in-person Commencement ceremony. See the [Registrar's website](#) for degree conferral dates and the [commencement web page](#) for information about commencement.

## Other Simmons University Policies

The University makes all reasonable efforts to deliver the programs of study, other services, and facilities in the way described in its materials and on its website. However, the University shall be entitled, if it reasonably considers it to be necessary (including in order to manage its resources and pursue its policy of continuous improvement appropriately):

- To alter the timetable, location, number of classes and method of delivery of programs of study, provided such alterations are reasonable.
- To make reasonable variations to the content and syllabus of programs of study (including in relation to placements).
- To suspend or discontinue programs of study to make changes to its policies and procedures which the University reasonably considers necessary. Such changes if significant will normally come into force at the beginning of the following academic year, and if fundamental to the program will normally come into force with effect from the next cohort of students.
- Not to provide programs of study or to combine them with others if the University reasonably considers this to be necessary (for example, because too few students apply to join the program for it to be viable).

Finally, Simmons University maintains a variety of policies, which all students are expected to be familiar with. Explore the course catalog and Simmons website to learn more.

## Appendix 1: SSW Standards of Professional Practice

### Introduction

These standards are presented in a social work framework that values diversity of perspective and experience, understands there is diversity between and within cultures, and respects difference. Achieving professionalism in social work requires a commitment to and demonstration of the values of the social work profession.

The Simmons School of Social Work (SSW) is committed to preparing its graduates to be highly competent and ethical social work practitioners. Faculty make a commitment to provide students with a curriculum that supports their educational and professional development and that assists them in adherence to these standards. Additionally, the SSW is mandated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) to promote and evaluate professional development for students in Social Work programs (BSW, MSW). Likewise, the SSW is responsible to the community at large for graduating knowledgeable, ethical, and skilled social work professionals whose practice reflects the competencies, skills, and values of the social work profession.

This document outlines eight professional performance standards: Communication, Electronic Communication, Self-Awareness, Openness and Willingness to Learn, Physical and Cognitive Ability, Presentation of Self, Emotional Stability and Stress Management, and Professional Values and Ethics. Each professional standard is accompanied by descriptions of behavioral expectations. Students must satisfy the professional standards to enroll in, progress through, and graduate from the SSW. Specifically, students are expected to act in a manner that is consistent with the values, ethics, and conduct required for professional social work practice in the classroom, in Practicum placements, and in the broader school community. Becoming a professional is a gradual process; as a result, the SSW faculty, Practicum instructors and administrators will continually assess students in accordance with these standards, which constitute the criteria for professional performance.

In addition to the standards outlined in this document, SSW students are expected to abide by the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) (NASW, 2017), the Simmons University policy on academic integrity, and the policies outlined in the SSW Student Handbook and in the Simmons University Handbook.

Procedures for addressing a violation of the Standards for Professional Practice or any of the ethics, codes, or policies identified above are outlined in the SSW Student Handbook. The ultimate goal of the SSW Standards for Professional Practice is to help you have a successful experience at the SSW and to be prepared for post-graduate practice. This document does not include the complete NASW Code of Ethics or the CSWE Educational Policies, however it highlights particular ethics and competencies to serve as a framework for professional and ethical behaviors to abide by while a student at the SSW. As an SSW student, you will be informed of the Standards for Professional Practice at the time of application to the SSW and at new student orientation. The standards are on the SSW web site and also in each program's student handbook.

To participate in a degree program, you are expected to satisfy program requirements, including these professional standards, *with or without accommodations*. If you seek reasonable accommodations for disabilities, you must contact the Simmons Office of Accessibility Services. This office will determine your eligibility for accommodations and recommend accommodations and/or services.

## **Professional Standards**

### **1. Self-Awareness**

Expectations to meet the standard:

1. Accurately assess your own strengths and limitations and display a willingness to examine and change behaviors that interfere with your work in Practicum placement, in the classroom, on campus, and in the larger community
2. Actively examine your own biases
3. Seek supervision and use constructive feedback to inform practice
4. Take responsibility for your own actions and consider the impact of these actions on other
5. Demonstrate a willingness to examine and assess the relationship between your own personal values/socialization and their alignment with expected professional ethics
6. Reconcile conflicts between your personal values and those of the profession, as required by the *NASW Code of Ethics*

### **2. Communication**

Expectations to meet the standard:

1. Express ideas, thoughts, and feelings clearly in the classroom and in Practicum placement
2. In written work, communicate clearly and at a level that reflects the academic standards of SSW programs
3. Demonstrate a willingness and ability to actively listen to others with objectivity and openness
4. Communicate responsibly and respectfully, with speech that is free of bias, discriminatory language, or stereotyping in all interactions with colleagues, faculty, Practicum instructors, staff, and clients
5. Advocate for yourself in an ethical, direct, respectful, and responsible manner using SSW and agency-specific channels for conflict management

### **3. Electronic Communication and Use of Social Media**

Expectations to meet the standard:

1. Demonstrate respect for the privacy of your clients; refrain from gathering information about clients from online sources without the client's consent (i.e., googling client history, accessing client social media); photographing clients; or publishing client information on social media
2. Communicate about and with colleagues and peers with respect and accuracy, avoiding cyberbullying, harassment, or making derogatory or defamatory comments, or disclosing personal information without consent
3. Follow relevant laws, Practicum education agency policy, *NASW Code of Ethics* (1.07) pertaining to social media and in use of technology in all aspects of service delivery

4. Maintain awareness of how personal communications using social media could affect professional relationships with clients, colleagues, and agencies

#### **4. Openness and Willingness to Learn; Flexibility and Adaptability**

Expectations to meet the standard:

1. Demonstrate openness learning new ideas and perspectives
2. As required by the demands of professional practice, be flexible and adaptable in new situations and as circumstances change
3. Assume the stance of a learner with humility; avoid solely relying on current or past professional experiences to inform your judgment or decision-making in the Practicum and in the classroom
4. Demonstrate a willingness to effectively communicate your learning needs and request clarification to understand requirements

#### **5. Physical and Cognitive Ability, Critical Thinking**

Expectations to meet the standard:

1. Attend and participate in classes and Practicum placement as scheduled, demonstrating punctuality, dependability, accountability, and the ability to prioritize responsibilities
2. Navigate transportation needed to attend Practicum and classroom requirements
3. Use the technology required to engage in scholarship and effective practice including, but not limited to, use of computers, telephones, and agency electronic records and databases
4. Demonstrate the ability to acquire knowledge and reflect on experiences to inform practice
5. Demonstrate the capacity to think critically and to apply effective problem-solving skills that are well reasoned, examine multiple perspectives and worldviews, integrate evidence and knowledge, and lead to well-supported decisions and conclusions

#### **6. Emotional and Mental Stability, and Stress Management**

Expectations to meet the standard:

1. In accordance with the *NASW Code of Ethics* (4.05), demonstrate the ability to honor the best interests of people for whom you have professional responsibility by keeping personal life circumstances or problems from interfering with judgment or performance
2. Recognize current life stressors that may interfere with scholastic or professional performance; seek and effectively use help for medical or emotional problems such as those problems stemming from psychosocial distress, substance misuse, and mental health difficulties
3. Demonstrate professional boundaries, including ethical use of self-disclosure
4. Maintain respectful relationships with all colleagues, faculty, Practicum instructors, staff, and clients consistent with *NASW Code of Ethics* (2.01)

#### **7. Professional Values and Ethics**

Expectations to meet the standard:

1. Exhibit judgment and conduct that is consistent with the values and ethics of the profession as stated in the *NASW Code of Ethics*, as well as with established laws, policies and professional standards

2. In accordance with *NASW Code of Ethics* section on: Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception (4.04), you should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception
3. Demonstrate professional and academic integrity, including exhibiting truthfulness in fulfilling program requirements. Students should remain aware of, and abide by, the Simmons Honor Code
4. Follow Federal and State laws and agency policies regarding confidentiality and mandatory reporting

#### **8. Respect for Diversity and Social Justice**

Expectations to meet the standard:

1. Exhibit a willingness to relate and work nonjudgmentally across difference with others
2. Demonstrate knowledge of, and sensitivity to: diversity, oppression, and privilege, including a willingness to examine personal beliefs, values, and assumptions that perpetuate oppression

Meeting the academic degree requirements is not sufficient to successfully complete the program. If you meet the academic requirements, but fail to adhere to the *NASW Code of Ethics* and/or the Standards for Professional Practice, you are at risk for dismissal or other disciplinary action.

*Acknowledgements to UNC Chapel Hill School of Social Work Technical Standards Document  
Updated and Approved by SSW Faculty 5/10/2018*

## Appendix 2: Online Class Protocols & Etiquette

### Live Session Protocol

Live sessions occur each week in all online courses. Your attendance is required. The live session class time is intended to deepen your understanding of the asynchronous materials and any clinical work you have experienced in a given week. It also offers a time to discuss, demonstrate and analyze skills that will be applied in nursing practice.

Below is a list of required expectations for live-session classes:

- Be on Time
  - Log in to the session early enough to have your audio and camera setup. Be ready to work when the class time begins.
- Be Professional
  - Our online classrooms are an extension of the Practicum and therefore you are expected to treat live class time as you would a professional setting.
- Respect the Classroom
  - Setting: Set your live session classroom space in a quiet private area where you know family, pets and other distractions will not interrupt your learning (or the learning of your classmates).
  - Lighting: Be sure your camera has the appropriate lighting on your face. Be careful you do not have too much backlight, such as a bright window behind you, making it difficult for your face to be seen.
- Be Prepared
  - Each week you are expected to prepare for the live session prior to class time; specific details on work to be completed before the live session can be found in the course work area for each week. Section Instructors will review this prior to the live session and use it to inform discussion and deepen learning.
- Be Engaged
  - You are expected to be ready to work during your live session. Live session is not a passive experience—it requires your full presence and commitment to learning. Each week you must be prepared to listen to your classmates, offer feedback and engage in a lively discussion.

### Online Etiquette

All students are expected to demonstrate the same professional behavior and mutual respect for teachers and colleagues in the online environment as they would demonstrate face-to-face. The expected standards of behavior for interacting with others online are generally referred to as “netiquette.” Here are general guidelines, each of which are related to required professional standards of behavior:

- Under no circumstances are you allowed to join the class session if you are operating a vehicle. This includes joining by phone only.

- Copying, sharing or posting recordings of live class sessions is not allowed and will result in disciplinary action. Do not use or misuse substances during class time. This includes alcohol and tobacco.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of your peers, clients, and agencies. Please refrain from disclosing overly sensitive private information about yourself that might not be appropriate in a teaching-and-learning environment.
- Embody the behaviors and skills of an advanced-degree social work student. This includes being honest and respectful in all communication with students and faculty. If you are feeling upset, be sure to review the content and tone of your messages prior to sending (e-mail or chat). Remember that the use of bold typeface, emojis, and capital letters may be received as you intend.
- Be mindful of how you present in the live session. This includes being in a private space with minimal distractions, ensuring that your camera and room lighting allows others to see your full face, muting yourself unless you are speaking, limiting the frequency with which you pause your video, and making sure you are muted and your video is paused when you step away from the camera.

### **Technology Requirements**

It is the student's responsibility to assure proper technology (i.e. computer, webcam, etc.) and reliable access to the internet/technology prior to synchronous sessions, and exams in particular in order to complete course work (i.e. exams, synchronous/asynchronous sessions, assignments, etc.). If a student anticipates a technology issue prior to any of these situations, they should notify both their Section Instructor and Student Support proactively.

### **Recording of Live Sessions**

Simmons and/or Simmons's technology partner may record and store any session conducted through the Learning Management System in accordance with the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy.

## **Appendix 3: 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 leaders 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. 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Simmons University prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. Individuals may report concerns or questions to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Please see the University's [Notice of Non-Discrimination](#) for information on how to report concerns or questions relating to sex discrimination.