



ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

December 4, 2025

Roaden University Center, Room 282

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of Minutes for the September 25, 2025 Committee Meeting
- III. Provost's Report
- IV. Academic Program Modification (APM) for BS in Artificial Intelligence
- V. Academic Program Update: Post Approval Monitoring
- VI. New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP) for the Master of Social Work (MSW)
- VII. TTU Policy 207 (Tenured Faculty)
- VIII. Student Affairs Update-Mental Health Services
- IX. Other Business
- X. Adjournment



ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

September 25, 2025

Roaden University Center, Room 282

MINUTES

Meeting was streamed live via link found on this web page:

<https://www.tntech.edu/board/board-and-board-committee-meetings.php>

AGENDA ITEM 1 – CALL TO ORDER

The Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees Academic & Student Affairs Committee met on September 25, 2025 in Roaden University Center, Room 282. Chair Rudd called the meeting to order at 8:38 a.m.

Chair Rudd asked Mr. Lee Wray, Secretary, to call the roll. The following members were present:

- Camron Rudd
- Teresa Chasteen-Dunn
- Garry McNabb
- Michael Allen
- Braxton Westbrook

Other board members also in attendance were Rhedona Rose, Trudy Harper, Thomas Lynn, Fred Lowery, Barry Wilmore, and Tom Jones. A quorum was met. Tennessee Tech faculty and staff and members of the public were also in attendance.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Rudd asked for approval of the minutes of the June 26, 2025 Academic & Student Affairs Committee meeting. Trustee Allen moved to approve the June 26, 2025 Academic & Student Affairs Committee minutes. Trustee Chasteen-Dunn seconded the motion. Trustee Rudd called a voice vote. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – ENROLLMENT REPORT

Karen Lykins, Vice President for Enrollment and Communication, began her presentation by sharing the overall student headcount for fall 2025, which was up from last year. She shared new student numbers, breaking those numbers into new first-time freshmen, new transfer, new graduate, and new non-degree students.

Ms. Lykins then presented information about first-time freshmen for fall 2025, noting a strong academic profile reflected in average ACT scores and GPAs. She also highlighted the number of Presidential Scholars and National Merit Semifinalists, further showcasing the academic strength of the 2025 freshmen class. Additional demographic data highlights included geographic distribution, student age ranges, and the number of veteran/military-affiliated students. Ms. Lykins then presented the top 10 undergraduate majors and the top 5 graduate programs based on enrollment.

She concluded her presentation with an overview of the university's recruitment cycle, emphasizing the College Town Kickoff as a key event supporting recruitment and retention. She also shared early initiatives already underway for Fall 2026 recruitment, including key dates and planning efforts.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – PROVOST'S REPORT

Interim Provost John Liu began his presentation by outlining the four pillars of academic excellence that guide students in choosing Tennessee Tech. He discussed student needs and family expectations, along with the metrics used to assess how these are being met. He also explained how these metrics relate to national rankings. He then reviewed the university's first-year retention rate, noting it has reached a record high. Additionally, he presented the university's 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year graduation rates, all showing a positive upward trend.

Next, Provost Liu announced that Tennessee Tech has been designated an "Opportunity University" by both the Carnegie Foundation and the American Council on Education—an honor recognizing institutions that combine high access with high post-graduation earning potential. He noted that while two public universities in Tennessee are considered high-earning, Tennessee Tech is the only one that is both high-access and high-earning.

Provost Liu then introduced Dean Mike Gotcher from the College of Emerging and Integrative Studies to give a focused update on the college. Dean Gotcher began his presentation by emphasizing the collaborative nature of the college, which works across departments and with faculty and staff to promote student success. He outlined the structure of the college including academic components and programs, degrees offered, number of faculty, and majors under each academic area.

Dean Gotcher then discussed a few challenges that the university faces and how the college is actively working to address those challenges. These challenge areas included enrollment, retention, cost, and relevancy.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Expedited New Academic Program Proposal (ENAPP) for the Master of Science (MS) in Industrial and Systems Engineering

Interim Provost John Liu presented a proposal for a Master of Science in Industrial and Systems Engineering (MSISE). He began by outlining the need for the new program, followed by an overview of its structure and key features. Dr. Liu also identified the target student population for the proposed program and concluded his presentation by sharing projected enrollment figures, anticipated instructional costs, and expected revenue. He then answered several questions from Board members.

Trustee Allen moved to send the Expedited New Academic Program Proposal (ENAPP) for the Master of Science (MS) in Industrial and Systems Engineering to the Board for approval and to be placed on the Board’s consent agenda. Trustee McNabb seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Research & Economic Development Report

Interim Provost and VP for Research & Economic Development, John Liu, began his report with an update on research funding for Fiscal Year 2025, noting that total research funding is up and continues to trend upward. He credited this growth to the efforts of Tennessee Tech’s faculty. Dr. Liu also shared data on research expenditures, which showed similar positive trends.

He then provided an overview of Tennessee Tech’s Carnegie research activity rankings and National Science Foundation (NSF) research expenditure rankings. To provide clarity, Dr. Liu offered a detailed explanation of the distinctions between grants, activations, and expenditures. He concluded his portion of the report by emphasizing the value that enhanced research brings to the university and its students.

Dr. Liu then introduced Dr. Michael Aikens, Associate Vice President for Research and Economic Development, who outlined goals for research activations for the current year and detailed the strategies in place to achieve them, noting that progress is already in place toward several of those goals. Dr. Aikens concluded the Research and Economic Development Report by sharing an overview and update on the university’s economic development efforts. His update included how research drives economic development, counties served, student involvement in economic development activities, types of economic development initiatives, and overall impact of these efforts.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – Student Affairs Update

Interim Vice President for Student Affairs, Mr. Marc Burnett, began his presentation by outlining the divisions under the Office of Student Affairs. He then highlighted the success of Fall 2025 move-in, sharing data on the number of students who moved into residence halls during move-in days, as well as total occupancy for both residence halls and Tech Village. He concluded this section by noting that a new residence hall is currently in the design phase.

Next, Mr. Burnett shared information about the fall's week of welcome, highlighting the various and large number of events held on campus and in the local community during this period.

He then presented highlights from Intercultural Affairs for the 2024–2025 academic year, focusing on the growth in programming, new initiatives, and increased collaboration across campus.

Mr. Burnett also recognized the Tennessee Tech Police Department providing updates on restitution secured, response rates, and officer training and professional development commitments.

He also provided an update on campus recreation, including usage data for the fitness center and participation levels in intramural sports and other recreational activities.

Lastly, Mr. Burnett shared updates on Health Services, highlighting the number of students utilizing medical services and offering insight into counseling and mental health services provided on campus.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – Athletics Update

Athletics Director, Casey Fox, discussed a new strategic plan for athletics that will be implemented after the first of the year. He began by highlighting four core values that will guide the athletic department moving forward and serve as a foundation of the new strategic plan. Mr. Fox then discussed the recent conference change, highlighting Tennessee Tech's transition from the Ohio Valley Conference (OVC) to the Southern Conference (SoCon). He provided comparative data on how Tennessee Tech compares with peer institutions in both conferences and explained the strategic rationale behind the move, noting the benefits and alignment with the university's long-term goals. He concluded his presentation with a brief update on the stadium project and responded to questions from Board members.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT REPORT

Dr. Kevin Braswell, Vice President for University Advancement, began his presentation by

sharing an update on the ongoing, multi-year “It’s Personal” campaign. He shared the focus area goals and overall goals of the campaign, as well as current numbers. He then shared the current money raised for these areas before sharing the total raised for fiscal year 2024-2025.

Dr. Braswell then highlighted fundraising totals for the last ten fiscal years. He shared the amount of fundraising dollars committed for several major projects that help enhance student experiences. He also shared information about the university’s scholarship strategy, particularly the role of donor funded scholarships.

Next, Dr. Braswell shared committed dollars for faculty support and discussed how philanthropy can play a role in increasing Tennessee Tech’s research activity. Dr. Braswell also shared information on giving by source over the last ten years and provided a side-by-side comparison of the number of proposals placed for FY15-19 and FY21-25.

Dr. Braswell concluded his presentation with updates on efforts to increase alumni and donor engagement, developments related to the Foundation Board, and an overview of the next steps for the campaign.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Academic & Student Affairs Committee adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

Approved,

Lee Wray, Secretary



Agenda Item Summary

Date: December 4, 2025

Agenda Item: Provost’s Report

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Review

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Action

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No action required

PRESENTERS: Interim Provost John Liu

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS: With the background of what was reported in September’s Board meeting, Interim Provost John Liu will amend with information for quality assurance assessment from the state. He will provide a detailed look at this year’s Quality Assurance Funding Score as well as a comparison with those of LGI schools and selected University of Tennessee schools. A detailed report of the Quality Assurance Score is also included in the Board book. He will also provide a brief update for the process of SACSCOC accreditation.



Agenda Item Summary

Date: December 4, 2025

Agenda Item: Academic Program Modification (APM) for Bachelor of Science (BS) in Artificial Intelligence

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Review

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Action

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No action required

PRESENTERS: Interim Provost John Liu

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS:

The Bachelor of Science (BS) in Artificial Intelligence was elevated from a concentration entitled Data Science and Artificial Intelligence within the BS in Computer Science program. Offering a bachelor's degree in Artificial Intelligence will allow Tennessee Tech to meet the growing demand for professionals trained specifically in AI technologies that are rapidly transforming industries from healthcare and finance to defense and manufacturing. According to the World Economic Forum, AI and machine learning specialists are among the fastest-growing jobs globally, with demand projected to increase by 40% over the next five years. Graduates with a BS in AI will be well-prepared for roles such as machine learning engineer, data scientist, AI software developer, and natural language processing specialist positions that typically command salaries well above the national average. By offering a dedicated AI degree, Tennessee Tech ensures that students gain both the theoretical foundation and practical skills needed to contribute immediately to a workforce increasingly reliant on AI expertise.

The Department of Computer Science introduced a concentration in Data Science in 2016, which migrated to the Data Science and Artificial Intelligence concentration in 2021. Since its inception, the concentration has experienced significant enrollment growth, from just three students in Fall 2016 to 118 students in Fall 2025. Elevation of AI to the level of a major will make the program prominently visible to perspective students, being the first bachelor's AI program in the state of Tennessee.



Agenda Item Summary

Date: December 4, 2025

Agenda Item: Academic Program Update: Post Approval Monitoring

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Review

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Action

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No action required

PRESENTERS: Interim Provost John Liu

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS: Interim Provost Liu will provide an update on new academic programs previously approved by the Board, as presented typically at each November/December Board meeting.

Academic Program Proposals Previously Approved

(December 2025)

| Program | LON (Pre-Proposal)* Submitted | LON (Pre-Proposal)* Approved by THEC | UCC/GSEC** Approvals | Academic Council Approvals | NAPP (Full Proposal)*** Approved by Board of Trustees | NAPP (Full Proposal)*** Approved by THEC | Current Status |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---|--|---|
| PhD Counseling and Supervision | December 2017 | February 2018 | July 2018 | September 2018 | September 2018 | July 2019 | <p>Enrollment initiated Fall 2020</p> <p>Post-Approval Monitoring Metrics Year 6 Enrollments Projected: 16 Year 6 Enrollments Actual: 17 Year 6 Degrees Conferred Projected: 4 Year 6 Degrees Conferred Actuals: 2</p> <p>Enrollment Trends Fall 2020: 6 Fall 2021: 8 Fall 2022: 12 Fall 2023: 13 Fall 2024: 16 Fall 2025: 17</p> |

Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM) Period:
BS/MS: 5 years; Doctorate: 7 years

Academic Program Proposals Previously Approved*(December 2025)*

| Program | LON (Pre-Proposal)* Submitted | LON (Pre-Proposal)* Approved by THEC | UCC/GSEC** Approvals | Academic Council Approvals | NAPP (Full Proposal)*** Approved by Board of Trustees | NAPP (Full Proposal)*** Approved by THEC | Current Status |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Master of Science Community Health and Nutrition | March 2019 | May 2019 | October 2019 | October 2019 | June 2020 | July 2020 | <p>Enrollment initiated Fall 2021</p> <p>Post-Approval Monitoring Metrics Year 5 Enrollments Projected: 10 Year 5 Enrollments Actual: 13 Year 5 Degrees Conferred Projected: 9 Year 5 Degrees Conferred Actuals: 10</p> <p>Enrollment Trends Fall 2021: 13 Fall 2022: 21 Fall 2023: 20 Fall 2024: 14 Fall 2025: 13</p> |
| Bachelor of Science Animal Science | | | October 2021 | November 2021 | December 2021 | January 2022 | <p>This was an academic program modification to establish a free-standing academic program from two existing concentrations</p> <p>Enrollment initiated Fall 2022</p> <p>Enrollment Trends Fall 2022: 50 Fall 2023: 107 Fall 2024: 119 Fall 2025: 146</p> |

Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM) Period:
BS/MS: 5 years; Doctorate: 7 years

Academic Program Proposals Previously Approved*(December 2025)*

| Program | LON (Pre-Proposal)* Submitted | LON (Pre-Proposal)* Approved by THEC | UCC/GSEC** Approvals | Academic Council Approvals | NAPP (Full Proposal)*** Approved by Board of Trustees | NAPP (Full Proposal)*** Approved by THEC | Current Status |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Bachelor of Science Design Studies | | | February 2022 | March 2022 | March 2022 | May 2022 | <p>This was an academic program modification to establish a free-standing academic program from two existing concentrations</p> <p>Enrollment initiated Fall 2022</p> <p>Enrollment Trends Fall 2022: 76 Fall 2023: 119 Fall 2024: 144 Fall 2025: 165</p> |
| Bachelor of Science Studio Arts | December 2020 | June 2021 | October 2021 | November 2021 | June 2022 | July 2022 | <p>Enrollment initiated Fall 2022</p> <p>Post-Approval Monitoring Metrics Year 4 Enrollment Projection: 15 Year 4 Actual Enrollment: 28 Year 4 Degrees Conferred Projection: 9 Year 4 Actual Degrees Conferred: 7</p> <p>Enrollment Trends Fall 2022: 4 Fall 2023: 19 Fall 2024: 26 Fall 2025: 28</p> |

Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM) Period:
BS/MS: 5 years; Doctorate: 7 years

Academic Program Proposals Previously Approved*(December 2025)*

| Program | LON (Pre-Proposal)* Submitted | LON (Pre-Proposal)* Approved by THEC | UCC/GSEC** Approvals | Academic Council Approvals | NAPP (Full Proposal)*** Approved by Board of Trustees | NAPP (Full Proposal)*** Approved by THEC | Current Status |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| MA in Learning Design and Technology | | | February 2023 | March 2023 | | May 2023 | <p>This was an academic program modification to establish a free-standing academic program from existing major.</p> <p>Enrollment initiated fall 2023</p> <p>Enrollment Trends Fall 2023: 8 Fall 2024: 6 Fall 2025: 6</p> |
| Bachelor of Science Music | December 2020 | September 2021 | September 2021 | October 2021 | October 2022 | November 2022 | <p>Enrollment initiated Spring 2023</p> <p>Post-Approval Monitoring Metrics Year 3 Enrollment Projection: 20 Year 3 Actual Enrollment: 61 Year 3 Degrees Conferred Projection: 8 Year 3 Actual Degrees Conferred: 6</p> <p>Enrollment Trends Fall 2023: 38 Fall 2024: 55 Fall 2025: 61</p> |

Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM) Period:
BS/MS: 5 years; Doctorate: 7 years

Academic Program Proposals Previously Approved*(December 2025)*

| Program | LON (Pre-Proposal)* Submitted | LON (Pre-Proposal)* Approved by THEC | UCC/GSEC** Approvals | Academic Council Approvals | NAPP (Full Proposal)*** Approved by Board of Trustees | NAPP (Full Proposal)*** Approved by THEC | Current Status |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| PhD Higher Education | June 2021 | January 2022 | March 2022 | March 2022 | June 2023 | July 2023 | <p>Enrollment initiated fall 2023</p> <p>Post-Approval Monitoring Metrics Year 3 Enrollment Projection: 30 Year 3 Actual enrollment: 31 Year 3 Degrees Conferred Projection: 5 Year 3 Actual Degrees Conferred: 0</p> <p>Enrollment trends: Fall 2023: 16 Fall 2024: 23 Fall 2025: 31</p> |
| Bachelor of Science Nuclear Engineering (BSNE) | Approval is not needed for ELON | April 2023 | February 2024 | March 2024 | March 2024 | May 2024 | <p>Enrollment initiated fall 2023</p> <p>Post-Approval Monitoring Metrics Year 2 Enrollment Projection: 10 Year 2 Actual enrollment: 45</p> <p>Enrollment trends: Fall 2024: 18 Fall 2025: 45</p> |

Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM) Period:
BS/MS: 5 years; Doctorate: 7 years

Academic Program Proposals Previously Approved*(December 2025)*

| Program | LON (Pre-Proposal)* Submitted | LON (Pre-Proposal)* Approved by THEC | UCC/GSEC** Approvals | Academic Council Approvals | NAPP (Full Proposal)*** Approved by Board of Trustees | NAPP (Full Proposal)*** Approved by THEC | Current Status |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Master of Science Agriscience Technology | Approval is not needed for ELON | August 2022 | April 2024 | April 2024 | March 2025 | May 2025 | Enrollment initiated: Fall 2025 Year 1 Enrollment Projection: 7 Year 1 Actual Enrollment: 4 Year 1 Degrees Conferred Projection: 0 Year 1 Actual Degrees Conferred: 0 Enrollment trends Fall 2024: 4 |
| Bachelor of Science Interdisciplinary Computing | Approval is not needed for ELON | August 2024 | September 2024 | October 2024 | April 2025 | May 2025 | Enrollment initiated: Fall 2025 Year 1 Enrollment Projection: 10 Year 1 Actual Enrollment: 0 Year 1 Degrees Conferred Projection: 0 Year 1 Actual Degrees Conferred: 0 Enrollment trends Fall 2025: 0 |
| Master of Science Child Life | November 2023 | Submitted February 2024 | July 2024 | September 2024 | March 2025 | May 2025 | Enrollment to begin: Fall 2026 |
| Master of Science Industrial and Systems Engineering | September 2023 | October 2023 | March 2025 | April 2025 | September 2025 | | |

*Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM) Period:**BS/MS: 5 years; Doctorate: 7 years*

Academic Program Proposals Previously Approved*(December 2025)*

| Program | LON (Pre-Proposal)* Submitted | LON (Pre-Proposal)* Approved by THEC | UCC/GSEC** Approvals | Academic Council Approvals | NAPP (Full Proposal)*** Approved by Board of Trustees | NAPP (Full Proposal)*** Approved by THEC | Current Status |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| PhD Computer Science | | | October 2023 | October 2023 | | January 2024 | This was an academic program modification to establish a free-standing academic program from existing major. Enrollment initiated: Fall 2025 Enrollment Trends: Fall 2025: 48 |
| Master of Social Work | August 2025 | October 2025 | October 2025 | November 2025 | | | |
| PhD Integrative Biology | June 2025 | June 2025 | | | | | |
| Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence | | | September 2025 | October 2025 | | | |

Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM) Period:
BS/MS: 5 years; Doctorate: 7 years



Agenda Item Summary

Date: December 4, 2025

Agenda Item: New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP) for Master of Social Work (MSW)

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Review



Action



No action required

PRESENTERS: Interim Provost John Liu

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS:

The new degree program for which approval is sought is a Master of Social Work (MSW). Faculty in the Department of Sociology and Political Science in the College of Arts and Sciences are leading this proposal.

The proposed MSW program is in response to urgent and growing needs for professional social workers trained in addiction recovery, mental health services, community development, and social service leadership—particularly within the Upper Cumberland region, the state of Tennessee, and the nation as a whole. Labor market data and state agency reports indicate a critical and increasing need for licensed social workers, especially in the following areas:

- Mental health and behavioral health
- Addiction and recovery services
- Child welfare and family services
- School and community-based support systems

The program is designed to be accessible to students from any undergraduate major, as well as working professionals and career changers seeking to enter or advance within the social services field.

In alignment with Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requirements, the proposed MSW

program is structured as a 60-credit-hour curriculum, consisting of a 30-hour foundation year and a 30-hour concentration year. The program will be delivered in a Majority Online (Hybrid) format, combining online coursework with in-person instruction and field experiences. This approach offers flexibility while maintaining academic rigor and fostering strong community engagement. The program will pursue CSWE accreditation.

**Tennessee Technological University
College of Arts & Science
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Masters of Social Work Degree
New Academic Program Proposal**

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Section I: New Academic Program Proposal Overview

Program Information:

Academic Information: Tennessee Technological University
College of Arts & Science
Department of Sociology & Political Science

Academic Program Name: Social Work

Degree Designation: Masters of Social Work

Proposed CIP Code: 44.0701

CIP code title and definition: Social Work
A program that prepares individuals for the professional practice of social welfare administration and counseling, and that focus on the study of organized means of providing basic support services for vulnerable individuals and groups. Includes instruction in social welfare policy; case work planning; social counseling and intervention strategies; administrative procedures and regulations; and specific applications in areas such as child welfare and family services, probation, employment services, and disability counseling.

Corresponding SOC codes and SOC definitions applicable for graduates of the program:

| CIP CODE | CIP Title | SOC CODES | SOC Titles |
|----------|-------------|-----------|--|
| 44.0701 | Social Work | 11-9151 | Social and Community Service Managers |
| | | 21-1023 | Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers |
| | | 21-1019 | Counselors, All Other |
| | | 21-1021 | Child, Family, and School Social Workers |

Academic Program Liaison: Steven Seiler, PhD, MSW
Professor, Department of Sociology & Political Science
sseiler@tntech.edu, 931-372-3171

Proposed Impl. Date: Fall 2027

Estimated Timeline:

- LON Submitted – August 2025
- NAPP submitted - October 2025
- TN Tech Board of Trustees approval - March 2026
- THEC Action – May 2026
- SACSCOC Approval – Approx. June 2026
- Submit Candidacy Eligibility Application to Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) – no later than October 1, 2026
- CSWE Pre-Candidacy Status– December 2026
- First Part-Time Cohort – August 2027*
- CSWE Candidacy Status – October 2027
- CSWE Accreditation – March 2030

**Tennessee Technological University
College of Arts & Science
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Masters of Social Work Degree
New Academic Program Proposal**

Section II: Background

Background Concerning Academic Program Development

Tennessee Technological University (Tennessee Tech) is pursuing the development of a Master of Social Work (MSW) program in response to urgent and growing needs for professional social workers trained in addiction recovery, mental health services, community development, and social service leadership—particularly within the Upper Cumberland region, the state of Tennessee, and the nation as a whole.

Across Tennessee and the United States, communities are experiencing persistent challenges related to substance use disorders, mental health crises, homelessness, poverty, trauma, and community disinvestment. These issues have been especially acute in rural and underserved areas, such as the Upper Cumberland region, which continues to face a shortage of qualified, licensed social workers with graduate-level training.

Tennessee Tech's undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Sociology program, with established concentrations in Social Work, Criminal Justice, and General Sociology, has long provided students with a foundation in applied social science and community engagement. However, an increasing number of graduates and community partners have expressed the need for a local pathway to advanced social work credentials, particularly one that focuses on practical, community-based solutions to the region's most pressing social challenges.

The proposed MSW program will address this gap by offering students comprehensive training in:

- Addiction and recovery services, with attention to the opioid epidemic and rural substance use treatment infrastructure;
- Mental and behavioral health, including trauma-informed care and crisis intervention;
- Community development and organization, preparing graduates to build capacity, lead initiatives, and advocate for equity;
- Public and nonprofit social services, equipping students for leadership roles in human service agencies, schools, healthcare systems, and the justice system.

The program will align with national accreditation standards set by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and be designed to support licensure eligibility for graduates (e.g., Licensed Masters of Social Work [LMSW], Licensed Clinical Social Workers [LCSW], Licensed Advanced Practice Social Worker [LAPSW]). The curriculum will reflect best practices in social work education while integrating the unique demographic, economic, and geographic context of the Upper Cumberland region.

With Tennessee Tech's existing infrastructure, experienced faculty, grant funding, collaboration with the Tennessee Tech Center for Addiction Prevention and Support (CAPS), and strong partnerships with regional social service providers, this MSW program will serve as a much-

needed academic and workforce development initiative. It will strengthen the professional pipeline of social workers equipped to meet both immediate and long-term needs in Tennessee and contribute meaningfully to the national call for accessible, community-focused mental health and social care.

Purpose & Nature of Academic Program

The MSW at Tennessee Tech is designed to prepare advanced social work practitioners who are equipped to meet the pressing needs of individuals, families, and communities – particularly in the Upper Cumberland region of Tennessee. This program aligns with Tennessee Tech’s longstanding mission to serve as a regional engine for professional development, community impact, and applied learning.

The primary purpose of the MSW program is to produce competent, licensed, and community-engaged social workers who will strengthen the social service infrastructure of rural and underserved areas across the Upper Cumberland and beyond. The program will emphasize evidence-informed practice, ethical leadership, and systems-level thinking, with a curriculum built around the core areas of mental health, addiction and recovery, community development and organization, trauma-informed care, and public and nonprofit service delivery.

Graduates will be prepared for direct clinical practice, macro-level community leadership, and interdisciplinary collaboration in:

- Behavioral and mental health care settings
- Addiction treatment and recovery programs
- Schools and family services
- Courts, reentry, and criminal justice systems
- Nonprofits and government agencies

As the region continues to experience a critical shortage of licensed clinical social workers, particularly those trained in integrated behavioral health and community response, Tennessee Tech’s MSW program will serve as a strategic solution to workforce shortages and an essential support to regional employers. Through targeted field placements, local partnerships, and regionally relevant curriculum, the program will infuse highly skilled social workers into the local workforce—helping to stabilize and grow social services, improve health outcomes, and enhance community resilience throughout Tennessee.

In doing so, Tennessee Tech aims to become a regional leader in social work education, uniquely positioned to bridge academic excellence with real-world service in rural communities.

Description. The MSW at Tennessee Tech is a professional graduate program designed to prepare students for dynamic careers in clinical practice, community leadership, advocacy, and human services across a wide range of settings. This program welcomes students from any undergraduate major who are passionate about creating meaningful change in the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

Whether students’ interests lie in mental health, addiction recovery, child welfare, healthcare, education, social justice, or community development, the MSW at Tennessee Tech provides the

knowledge, skills, and professional foundation needed for advanced social work practice and licensure.

This hybrid program will be structured to meet the needs of working students and adult learners. Coursework will be delivered in a 50% on-ground and 50% online format, combining in-person engagement with the flexibility of virtual instruction. The program is committed to building a fully online delivery option within 5–10 years, expanding access to rural and underserved areas across Tennessee and beyond.

The MSW program will offer two specialized tracks designed to meet the unique needs of the Upper Cumberland and other rural areas: the Advanced Generalist Track (AGT) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Track (SAMHT). The AGT prepares students for flexible, multi-level practice across individuals, families, organizations, and communities, equipping them with the skills to navigate complex systems and provide leadership in underserved rural settings. The SAMHT focuses on evidence-based clinical and community interventions for individuals and families affected by substance use and mental health challenges—pressing issues in the Upper Cumberland region. Both tracks emphasize culturally responsive, rural-informed practice, preparing graduates to serve high-need populations through direct service, advocacy, and systemic change.

As part of its integrated approach to education and service, the MSW program will support the CAPS substance abuse and mental health clinic, where faculty members will maintain a limited client caseload, and advanced concentration students will have the opportunity to work directly with clients under licensed clinical supervision. This model provides students with hands-on clinical experience while expanding access to mental health services in the region.

Students will benefit from:

- A curriculum grounded in evidence-based practice, trauma-informed care, and social justice.
- Field placements with regional social service agencies, nonprofits, schools, and healthcare providers.
- A strong emphasis on serving the unique needs of rural and Appalachian communities, including the Upper Cumberland region.
- Preparation for state licensure (LMSW/LCSW/LAPSW) and leadership roles in a variety of sectors

Tennessee Tech's MSW program is designed for those who want to make a lasting impact—on the ground, in systems, and in lives.

Target Audience. The MSW program is designed to serve a diverse and mission-driven student population committed to making a difference in the lives of others through professional social work practice.

This program is ideal for:

- Students from any undergraduate major who are interested in mental health, social justice, addiction recovery, child and family services, aging populations, or community

development. The MSW is intentionally interdisciplinary and welcomes students with backgrounds in sociology, psychology, criminal justice, human services, education, public health, and beyond.

- Residents of the Upper Cumberland region and other rural or underserved areas of Tennessee who seek to build careers that serve their local communities. The program is designed to address critical shortages of licensed social workers in these regions and to provide accessible pathways to professional practice.
- Graduates of BSW programs from other institutions seeking an Advanced Standing option. These students can fast-track their graduate education by completing the MSW in a shorter timeframe, building on the strong foundation of their undergraduate training.
- Working professionals in the fields of education, criminal justice, healthcare, social services, and nonprofit leadership who want to advance their careers, gain licensure (LMSW/LCSW/LAPSW), or transition into clinical or community-based social work roles. The hybrid format (50% on-ground / 50% online) provides flexible access for adult learners balancing school, work, and family life.
- Career changers and returning adult learners seeking meaningful, values-driven careers focused on helping others, advocating for equity, and creating systemic change.
- Underrepresented and first-generation college students who are often drawn to the mission and values of social work and who may benefit from a regional, supportive graduate program that centers community relevance and accessibility.

Through a flexible hybrid model, regionally focused curriculum, and future plans for full online delivery, Tennessee Tech's MSW program meets students where they are—academically, geographically, and professionally—while preparing them to become licensed, compassionate, and effective leaders in the social work profession.

Delivery Method. The MSW will be delivered in a hybrid format, combining the flexibility of online learning with the critical value of face-to-face engagement. Specifically, the program will consist of approximately 50% on-ground instruction and 50% online coursework, offering a balanced and accessible model for students across the region.

This delivery method reflects both the practical needs of today's learners—including working professionals, adult students, and those living in rural communities—and the educational standards of the social work profession, which emphasizes interpersonal skills, ethical practice, and relationship-based learning.

Face-to-face instruction will be prioritized for key components of the curriculum that benefit most from in-person interaction, such as:

- Skills-based practice courses
- Group work and role-play simulations
- Ethical decision-making and supervision
- Community-based discussions and collaborative learning

These elements are foundational to developing the professional identity, communication skills, and clinical judgment required of social workers, and they are best nurtured through guided, in-person learning experiences.

At the same time, the program recognizes the importance of long-term accessibility and flexibility for students across Tennessee and beyond. As such, Tennessee Tech is committed to developing a fully online MSW delivery option within the next 5 to 10 years. This phased approach will ensure that the online model:

- Maintains academic rigor and clinical relevance
- Incorporates interactive technologies and virtual field education strategies
- Preserves the professional values and relational focus of the social work discipline

By combining immediate hybrid accessibility with a strategic plan for high-quality online instruction, the MSW program at Tennessee Tech will meet current educational needs while expanding future access for a broader, more diverse student population of emerging social work professionals.

Alignment with State Master Plan & Institutional Mission

State Master Plan. The MSW program strongly aligns with the THEC Master Plan, particularly in its focus on increasing educational attainment, supporting workforce development in high-need fields, and expanding access to graduate education across the state—especially in rural and underserved regions.

Meeting Workforce and Community Needs. The MSW directly supports the Master Plan’s goal of preparing graduates for Tennessee’s workforce, particularly in fields that are experiencing acute shortages. According to labor market data and state agency reports, Tennessee faces a critical and growing need for licensed social workers, especially in areas such as:

- Mental health and behavioral health
- Addiction and recovery services
- Child welfare and family services
- School and community-based support systems

The Upper Cumberland region and other rural parts of the state are especially affected by these shortages. Tennessee Tech’s MSW program will play a key role in infusing professionally trained, licensed social workers into these high-demand service areas—supporting both public and nonprofit employers while improving health and social outcomes for Tennessee communities.

Expanding Graduate Access and Attainment. The Master Plan emphasizes the importance of increasing graduate and professional education, particularly for working adults and underserved populations. The MSW program’s hybrid format (50% online / 50% on-ground) will offer immediate access to students who need flexibility due to work, family, or geographic constraints. Additionally, Tennessee Tech is committed to developing a fully online MSW option within 5 to 10 years, which will significantly broaden access to social work education throughout Tennessee and beyond.

Supporting Adult Learners and Career Changers. The program is designed to be accessible to students from any undergraduate major, as well as working professionals and career changers seeking to enter or advance within the social services field. This aligns with the state’s goals for

adult learner reengagement and pathways to professional credentials, contributing directly to Tennessee's broader workforce readiness and economic development objectives.

Leveraging Regional Institutions to Serve Local Needs. As a regional public university, Tennessee Tech is uniquely positioned to serve the Upper Cumberland and surrounding areas. The MSW program reinforces the Master Plan's emphasis on place-based public institutions that develop programs responsive to local labor market needs and community priorities.

Tennessee Tech's Institutional Mission. The proposed MSW program is fully aligned with the mission and strategic priorities of Tennessee Tech, which is committed to providing high-quality education, fostering workforce development, and serving the needs of the Upper Cumberland region and the state of Tennessee through innovation, engagement, and applied learning.

Tennessee Tech's mission emphasizes producing career-ready graduates through student-centered education that blends academic excellence with real-world application. The MSW program directly supports this mission by preparing students for impactful careers in high-need fields such as mental health, addiction recovery, child and family services, and community development. The program's focus on ethical practice, clinical skills, and community-based leadership ensures that graduates are not only career-ready but also equipped to contribute meaningfully to the well-being and resilience of individuals and communities across the state.

In addition, the MSW supports Tennessee Tech's role as a regional university with a responsibility to meet the educational, social, and economic needs of the Upper Cumberland and rural Tennessee. By offering a hybrid graduate program that is both accessible and responsive to local workforce gaps, the MSW strengthens the university's engagement with community partners and expands opportunities for adult learners, working professionals, and underrepresented populations.

The program also reflects Tennessee Tech's emphasis on innovation in instruction and flexibility in program delivery, with its hybrid format (50% on-ground / 50% online) and long-term goal of fully online implementation. This delivery model expands access while maintaining the face-to-face engagement essential to professional social work education.

The MSW program supports Tennessee Tech's mission to empower students, strengthen communities, and lead as a regional academic institution, while advancing the university's strategic goals in workforce development, graduate education, and regional service.

Institutional Capacity to Deliver the Proposed Academic Program

The program will be housed in the Department of Sociology and Political Science within the College of Arts and Sciences, and will operate under the policies and quality assurance frameworks of the university and its governing board. The program will be offered in a hybrid format, which, on the one hand, will reduce the program's classroom footprint on campus and, on the other hand, utilize Tech's already robust online system. First, physical classroom space in Matthews-Daniel Hall is readily available for the in-person evening classes, and physical space in the Regions Bank Building, where the TN Tech Center for Addiction Prevention and Support (CAPS), is prepared to accommodate all faculty offices and in-person classes throughout the day.

The hybrid format of the MSW program will leverage Tennessee Tech's established Learning Management System (LMS) — currently D2L Brightspace — and supported virtual learning platforms including Zoom and Microsoft Teams. The university's IT infrastructure is well-equipped to support synchronous and asynchronous course delivery, online student support, digital library resources, and secure field placement communications.

The program will utilize existing resources within the Volpe Library and Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL). The Angelo and Jennette Volpe Library offers extensive resources to support graduate study, including access to academic databases such as JSTOR, ProQuest, PsycINFO, and Social Work Abstracts. The library provides robust interlibrary loan services, online research guides tailored to social sciences, and dedicated research support staff. The university is committed to acquiring any additional resources necessary to support the MSW curriculum. Moreover, the CITL provides comprehensive instructional design services, faculty development workshops, and one-on-one consultations to ensure that online and hybrid courses meet the highest standards of accessibility, engagement, and pedagogical effectiveness. All MSW faculty will have access to CITL's expertise in hybrid course design, online assessment strategies, and multimedia content development. Through CITL, faculty can receive ongoing training in best practices for online teaching, including course alignment, inclusive instruction, and quality assurance. This ensures that the online portion of the hybrid MSW program maintains academic rigor, consistency, and a high level of student engagement—meeting both institutional expectations and CSWE accreditation standards.

The Department currently has two faculty, but, during the fall of 2025, they will be conducting searches for two new faculty members, one in the fall of 2026, they will be conducting searches for two additional faculty members. First, of the current social work faculty dedicated to the new program, one has a PhD (sociology) and an MSW and one has an MSSW and a JD. The first search will be for a Program Director (PhD) and a Field Coordinator (PhD). The second-year searches will be for one social work PhD and one instructor with an MSW, preferably an LMSW or LCSW. An Opioid Abatement Council grant in the amount of \$2.5 million will cover the costs for start-up, accreditation, and the salary for three years for the first search and two years for the second search, as well as an Administrative Assistant for the MSW program.

MSW students will have access to the full range of Tennessee Tech's academic and student support services, including advising, tutoring, career counseling, mental health counseling, and disability services. Hybrid students will benefit from both on-campus services and online support systems, including virtual advising, online writing center consultations, and technical support. The program will utilize the current academic advisors in the College of Arts and Sciences, as well as the field coordinator within the program, to support student success and facilitate timely degree completion.

The MSW program's Field Coordinator will, in compliance with CSWE accreditation standards, utilize the strong existing relationships with regional social service agencies, schools, hospitals, and government organizations throughout the Upper Cumberland region to provide a strong practicum experience for MSW students. Additionally, the program's partnership with CAPS will allow for many MSW students to complete their practicum in the CAPS's mental health clinic providing supervised direct care to community members. These partnerships provide a robust

foundation for field placements that meet CSWE standards. In addition to overseeing placement, the field coordinator will oversee coordination of placements, supervision training, and community engagement.

A comprehensive recruitment strategy has been developed to attract a diverse and qualified student body from across Tennessee and the surrounding region. Outreach efforts will focus on:

- Partnering with regional undergraduate programs, particularly in social work, psychology, sociology, and human service-related fields, to promote the MSW pathway and offer informational sessions.
- Engaging with community colleges, private and public colleges and universities, HBCUs to expand access and support underrepresented populations.
- Marketing through digital platforms, including targeted social media campaigns, email outreach, and Google search ads aimed at prospective students interested in flexible, graduate-level human services education.
- Collaborating with local and regional employers, such as health departments, schools, and non-profit agencies, to reach working professionals seeking career advancement or licensure.
- Participating in graduate school fairs, university open houses, and statewide recruitment events organized by THEC and the Tennessee Board of Regents.

Tennessee Tech's Office of Enrollment Management and Communications and Marketing will support these efforts with data-informed campaign strategies. Dedicated graduate recruitment staff will work closely with program faculty and advisors to ensure timely, personalized engagement with applicants.

Existing Programs Offered at Public & Private Tennessee Institutions

MSW Programs. Currently, 11 public and private institutions in Tennessee offer MSW programs accredited by the [Council on Social Work Education](#) (CSWE). Seven of them are public institutions, while the other four are private, religious-based institutions. Considering the three grand regions of the state, the East region has five programs, the West region has two programs, and the Middle has four programs. Within the Middle region, the Davidson region has two programs, and the Mid-Cumberland region has two programs; however, there are no programs in the Upper Cumberland or South Central region. The closest programs to Tennessee Tech are MTSU (66 miles) to the west, UT-Chattanooga (100 miles) to the south, and UTK (103 miles) to the east.

Of the public institutions, UTK has the largest program that is nationwide in scope, and over 90% of their MSW students are in the online program. MTSU has a hybrid program, which presents a barrier for many living in the Upper Cumberland, as they are required to attend once per week on campus in Murfreesboro. Additionally, most of the students at MTSU are from the Mid-Cumberland and Davidson regions. TSU is an on-ground program in Nashville, and most of their students are from the Davidson and Mid-Cumberland regions. APSU and ETSU have online programs, which, similar to UTK, are options for students who are seeking an exclusively online degree program.

Masters of Social Work (MSW) Programs at Tennessee Public and Private Universities

| Institution | Public/Private | Degree | Program | CIP Code | Degrees Awarded | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|--------|-------------|----------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|
| | | | | | 2021-22AY | 2022-23AY | 2023-24AY |
| Austin Peay State University | Public | MSW | Social Work | 44.0701 | 27 | 26 | 21 |
| East Tennessee State University | Public | MSW | Social Work | 44.0701 | 60 | 71 | 69 |
| Middle Tennessee State University | Public | MSW | Social Work | 44.0701 | 32 | 33 | 40 |
| Tennessee State University | Public | MSW | Social Work | 44.0701 | 16 | 17 | 15 |
| University of Memphis | Public | MSW | Social Work | 44.0701 | 60 | 62 | 60 |
| University of Tennessee, Chattanooga | Public | MSW | Social Work | 44.0701 | 20 | 34 | 24 |
| University of Tennessee, Knoxville | Public | MSW | Social Work | 44.0701 | 243 | 268 | 218 |
| Southern Adventist University | Private | MSW | Social Work | 44.0701 | 40 | 31 | 21 |
| Union University | Private | MSW | Social Work | 44.0701 | 78 | 73 | 63 |
| Belmont University | Private | MSW | Social Work | 44.0701 | --- | --- | Pre-candidacy |
| King University | Private | MSW | Social Work | 44.0701 | --- | --- | --- |

Despite the number of MSW programs in Tennessee, there is currently no program based in or primarily serving the Upper Cumberland region, which consists of Cannon, Clay, Cumberland, Fentress, Jackson, Macon, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Smith, Van Buren, Warren, and White. This region is characterized by rurality, persistent health disparities, and a shortage of licensed social workers, particularly those with graduate-level training. The absence of an MSW program in the Upper Cumberland creates a geographic and economic barrier for students in the region. Individuals interested in pursuing an MSW must often relocate or commute long distances, limiting access to graduate education and contributing to regional workforce shortages in behavioral health, child welfare, substance use treatment, and integrated care services. An MSW program at Tech would directly address this educational and service gap, supporting regional workforce development while increasing access to professional training for students from rural and underserved communities.

Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Programs: Potential Pipelines for MSW Students. Students who graduate from a CSWE-accredited BSW program are eligible for the fast-track option that would be offered at Tech. Although Tennessee Tech does not currently offer a BSW program, the proposed MSW program would actively recruit qualified BSW graduates from across the state for advanced standing admission pathways. There are 17 CSWE-accredited BSW programs in Tennessee. The recruitment goal for Tech would be to identify students graduating from BSW programs who are from or want to relocate to the Upper Cumberland region. Tech's program would serve as a regional hub for recruiting BSW graduates who are committed to serving local

populations, particularly in high-need areas like child welfare, mental health, and substance use prevention and treatment.

Bachelor in Social Work (BSW) Programs in Tennessee

| Name | Public/Private | Grand Division | TN Region | Enrollment | Degrees Awarded |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| <u>APSU</u> | Public | Middle | Mid-Cumberland | 128 (2024) | 30 (2024) |
| <u>ETSU</u> | Public | East | Northeast | 179 (2021) | 53 (2021) |
| <u>King University</u> | Private | East | Northeast | 35 (2022) | 43 (2022) |
| <u>MTSU</u> | Public | Middle | Mid-Cumberland | 132 (2024) | 42 (2024) |
| <u>Southern Adventist University</u> | Private | East | TN Valley | 19 (2022) | 9 (2022) |
| <u>TSU¹²</u> | Public | Middle | Davidson | 74 (2024) | 6 (2024) |
| <u>Union University</u> | Private | West | Southwest | -- | 29 (2022) |
| <u>University of Memphis</u> | Public | West | Southwest | 182 (2024) | 56 (2024) |
| <u>UT-Chattanooga</u> | Public | East | TN Valley | 98 (2024) | 37 (2024) |
| <u>UT-Knoxville</u> | Public | East | Knox | 211 (2024) | 91 (2024) |
| <u>UT-Martin</u> | Public | West | Northwest | 141 (2024) | 21 (2024) |
| <u>Belmont University</u> | Private | Middle | Davidson | -- | 26 (2022) |
| <u>Freed-Hardeman University</u> | Private | West | Southwest | -- | 13 (2022) |
| <u>Lincoln Memorial University</u> | Private | East | Smokey Mountain | -- | 5 (2022) |
| <u>Lipscomb University</u> | Private | Middle | Mid-Cumberland | -- | 10 (2022) |
| <u>Tennessee Wesleyan University</u> | Private | East | TN Valley | 16 (2023) | 9 (2024) |
| <u>Trevecca Nazarene University</u> | Private | Middle | Mid-Cumberland | 17 (2021) | 14 (2022) |

Rationale for Tennessee Tech's Proposed MSW

While Tennessee is home to multiple MSW programs, there is no MSW program currently offered within the Upper Cumberland region, and none based at Tennessee Tech, the region's leading public university. Many of the existing programs are concentrated in urban or suburban areas (e.g., Knoxville, Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga), leaving a significant geographic and service gap in rural areas like the Upper Cumberland.

Moreover, most institutions emphasize either fully on-ground or fully online delivery. Tennessee Tech's hybrid format (50% online / 50% on-ground) provides a strategic alternative for students who require both flexibility and in-person support—particularly those who are working professionals, adult learners, or first-generation graduate students.

Tennessee Tech's proposed MSW program is uniquely positioned to:

- Serve rural and underserved students in the Upper Cumberland and surrounding areas;
- Provide regionally relevant field placements in mental health, addiction, and social services;
- Address the growing demand for licensed social workers across Tennessee's health, justice, and nonprofit systems.

By complementing rather than duplicating existing programs, Tennessee Tech's MSW will play a distinct and vital role in expanding access, diversifying the workforce, and strengthening the social service infrastructure across rural Tennessee.

Program Distinction. The proposed MSW is designed to meet statewide and CSWE standards of excellence while offering distinctive features that address the unique social, economic, and geographic challenges of Tennessee’s Upper Cumberland region and beyond.

Regionally Focused, Community-Driven. Tennessee Tech’s MSW program will be the only social work graduate program based in the Upper Cumberland, a region that faces persistent shortages of licensed clinical social workers and a high need for professionals in mental health, addiction recovery, and family support services. The program will be deeply embedded in the community, leveraging local partnerships and regional field placements to ensure graduates are practice-ready and responsive to the specific needs of rural Tennessee.

Hybrid Delivery Model with Built-in Flexibility. Unlike most programs that are either fully on-ground or fully online, Tennessee Tech’s MSW will use a 50% on-ground / 50% online hybrid format—providing the flexibility required by working professionals and rural students, while maintaining the critical face-to-face learning experiences essential to professional social work education. This model supports accessibility without sacrificing the interpersonal, relational aspects of social work training.

Long-Term Commitment to Online Expansion. While launching as a hybrid program, Tennessee Tech has a strategic plan to build a fully online MSW option within 5–10 years, expanding access to social work education for students across Tennessee and beyond, especially those in remote or underserved areas who cannot relocate or commute for graduate study.

Interdisciplinary and Inclusive. This program welcomes students from any undergraduate major, not just those with a BSW or sociology background. Whether a student holds a degree in psychology, criminal justice, education, or health sciences, they will find a pathway into professional social work through this inclusive and interdisciplinary program. This broader recruitment strategy will help attract diverse students and career changers—strengthening and diversifying Tennessee’s social services workforce.

Emphasis on High-Need Practice Areas. The curriculum will feature strong preparation in addiction treatment, mental health, trauma-informed care, reentry and justice systems, and community organization—with a focus on producing licensable professionals equipped to lead in integrated care settings, courts, schools, correctional facilities, nonprofits, and rural clinics.

Workforce-Responsive and Practice-Oriented. Rooted in Tennessee Tech’s mission of applied learning and public service, the MSW program will provide students with robust field education experiences, including opportunities to engage with regional agencies, underserved populations, and system-level challenges. Graduates will be well-prepared for licensure and leadership roles across both micro- and macro-practice domains.

Tennessee Tech’s MSW program will stand out for its regional focus, hybrid accessibility, interdisciplinary inclusiveness, and practice-ready preparation—making it a vital new contributor to Tennessee’s social work education ecosystem and a transformative resource for the Upper Cumberland and beyond.

Accreditation

The proposed MSW will seek accreditation from the CSWE, the sole accrediting body for social work education in the United States. CSWE accreditation is essential for ensuring that graduates are eligible for licensure (e.g., LMSW, LCSW) and for maintaining rigorous national standards for professional practice.

Tennessee Tech will pursue accreditation through CSWE's three-year candidacy process, which involves a structured series of benchmarks:

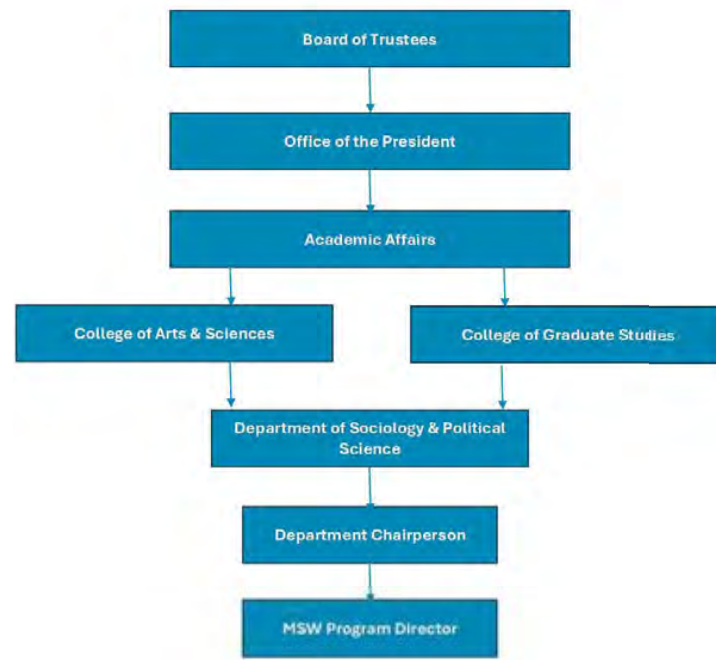
- **Pre-Candidacy (Eligibility Application):** The university will submit a detailed plan demonstrating readiness to begin the candidacy process, including curriculum design, faculty qualifications, field education models, and institutional support.
- **Candidacy Phase (Benchmarks I–III):** During this phase, the program will implement and refine its curriculum, assessment processes, and field placement structures under the guidance of a CSWE-appointed mentor. Students may begin enrolling after Benchmark I is approved.
- **Initial Accreditation:** Upon successful completion of all benchmarks and a final site visit, the program will be eligible for initial accreditation. If granted, accreditation will be retroactive to include all students enrolled during the Benchmark I phase.

Throughout the candidacy period, Tennessee Tech will adhere strictly to CSWE's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), ensuring that the program prepares students for ethical, evidence-based, and culturally competent practice across micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Tennessee Tech is fully committed to dedicating the institutional resources, faculty expertise, and administrative infrastructure necessary to achieve and sustain full CSWE accreditation. As the leading public university in the Upper Cumberland region, Tennessee Tech is well-positioned to develop a high-quality MSW program that meets national accreditation standards while addressing local and statewide workforce needs.

Administrative Structure

The administrative oversight and governance of the proposed MSW program at Tennessee Tech will follow the institution's established hierarchical structure, ensuring alignment with university policies and strategic priorities:



Section III: Feasibility Study

Introduction

Social work is a profession that extends into every area of social services – from youth to aging adults, from incarcerated populations to juvenile justice services, from mental health therapists to community organizers. While a number of MSW programs exist within Tennessee, no on-ground or hybrid programs are accessible to people living in the Upper Cumberland. The only available programs for people in the Upper Cumberland are exclusively online programs, e.g., the University of Tennessee, Western Kentucky University. Students in online programs struggle to find connection with their professors, peers, and, ultimately, their local communities. Therefore, building a hybrid MSW within the Upper Cumberland region opens options for students to stay local and connect with people and their communities through the program while providing the flexibility to accommodate family and full-time employment.

National & Regional Context

The national landscape reveals an urgent and multifaceted need for more MSW programs—particularly in regions like Tennessee's Upper Cumberland, where access to advanced social work education remains limited. Across the U.S., systemic challenges such as poverty, mental health disorders, substance use, and an aging population continue to strain social services and require a robust, highly trained workforce. In 2023, 11.1% of Americans lived in poverty, including 15.3% of children and 9.7% of seniors—populations that rely heavily on social workers for critical services ([U.S. Census Bureau](#)). Simultaneously, nearly one in four adults (23.1%) experienced mental illness ([NIH](#)), and 18.1% of adults battled a substance use disorder, contributing to over 105,000 overdose deaths in 2023 ([SAMHSA](#)), three-quarters of which involved opioids ([CDC](#)). These figures underscore the rising demand for behavioral health professionals equipped to address complex, overlapping social issues.

Compounding these challenges is the demographic shift toward an older population—61.2 million Americans aged 65+ as of 2024, a number expected to rise to 82 million by 2050 ([US Census](#)). This shift will require expanded gerontological services, elder care coordination, and mental health support—all core areas of MSW training. Meanwhile, workforce projections reveal a widening gap between demand and supply: the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) projects 67,300 new social work openings each year, with a national shortfall of approximately 74,000 MSW-trained professionals annually over the next decade. The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HRSA) further notes that, even with workforce growth, there may still be a 15% shortage of MSWs in key areas like behavioral health by 2030. These trends collectively support the creation of a regionally accessible, accredited MSW program at Tennessee Tech University—a program that can equip future professionals to meet local needs while contributing meaningfully to national social work capacity.

The demand for social workers continues to rise both nationally and regionally, driven by increasing awareness of mental health issues, the opioid epidemic, aging populations, and economic and social inequities. Nationally, according to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), employment in social work occupations is projected to grow by 7.3% by 2032, outpacing the average for all occupations. Of particular relevance to the proposed program, employment in the area of substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counseling—a key concentration area within the proposed MSW curriculum—is expected to grow by 18.8% over the next seven years ([U.S. BLS](#)). This rate of growth is categorized by the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) as "much faster than average," reflecting the urgent and growing need for professionals trained to support individuals and families affected by addiction, trauma, and mental illness.

In Tennessee, the need is even more acute. According to the [Projections Managing Partnership](#) (PMP), social work occupations across all sectors are expected to grow by nearly 20% by 2032. A breakdown of this growth highlights critical workforce needs in various subfields: child, family, and school social work is projected to increase by 17%; healthcare social work by 22%; mental health and substance abuse social work by 20%; postsecondary social work education by 18%; and social work roles in other specialized areas by 19% ([PMP](#), [BLS](#)). These projections signal a sustained and statewide need for master's-level social workers capable of addressing a broad range of complex social and behavioral issues.

Within the Upper Cumberland region—where the proposed MSW program will be based—the need for trained social workers is particularly urgent. The region is experiencing a steady population increase, with the [Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency](#) (UCHRA) projecting a 14.3% growth over the next decade. This growth coincides with pressing social challenges. Currently, the poverty rate in the region stands at nearly 17%, with approximately 23% of children living in poverty. Such statistics underscore the critical demand for social workers trained in areas like child welfare, school social work, and community resource navigation.

Moreover, [UCHRA](#) has identified the need for enhanced services to support the unsheltered population and to address widespread mental health challenges as one of the region's top five priorities. These regional priorities directly align with the MSW program's planned concentrations and community-engaged mission, particularly through its affiliation with the

CAPS. By equipping graduates with advanced clinical, advocacy, and policy skills, the proposed MSW will help meet both current and emerging demands for social work professionals in underserved communities throughout the Upper Cumberland and beyond.

Given these national, state, and regional trends, the case for a dedicated MSW program is compelling. The degree prepares graduates for clinical licensure and advanced practice in settings where demand is highest—mental health counseling, addiction recovery, school systems, elder care, public health, and community agencies. Furthermore, low wage growth and high burnout in social services agencies highlight workforce retention challenges. By building local graduate capacity through the Department of Sociology and Political Science and CAPS, the proposed MSW program offers an evidence-based, community-rooted training pipeline to address workforce shortages, improve service delivery, and strengthen social support systems in Tennessee—especially in underserved rural communities.

Economic Impact of Increasing MSWs in the Upper Cumberland Region Workforce

For this proposal, the Tennessee Tech Center for Rural Innovations (CRI) conducted an economic impact analysis of infusing MSW graduates into the Upper Cumberland Region over a 10-year period. The following is the report of the CRI's analysis:

Executive Summary

This analysis examines the potential economic impact of training and retaining MSW graduates in Tennessee, specifically in the 3N region, over a 10-year period. Projected impacts vary based on retention rates, ranging from 10 to 40 graduates per year (totaling 100 to 400 graduates over the period).

For **100 graduates retained solely in the 3N region**, the program could support **142 jobs**, generate **\$8.4 million in labor income**, and add **\$10.3 million to regional GDP**, with an estimated **\$832,000 in total tax revenue** across local and state levels.

In the **broader scenario of 400 graduates retained statewide**, impacts increase dramatically. This scenario supports **576 jobs** across Tennessee, creates **\$32.3 million in labor income**, and contributes **\$41.4 million to state GDP**, with **\$2.96 million in tax revenue**.

Intermediate retention scenarios—20% (160 graduates in 3N) and 40% (220 graduates in 3N)—show corresponding levels of economic benefits in the region, supporting between **226 and 311 jobs** locally, adding **\$13.4 to \$18.5 million in labor income**, and generating **\$1.33 to \$1.83 million in tax revenue**.

In summary, the program's potential economic contributions are substantial, with a range of impacts tied to graduate retention rates. Keeping more graduates in Tennessee not only enhances the workforce for critical social services but also contributes meaningfully to local and state economies.

Methodology

To analyze the projected economic impacts of a social work training program over a 10-year period, we assumed that all **100 graduates would remain employed within the 3N region**—a

13-county area in the Upper Cumberland region of Tennessee—for the entirety of the 10-year analysis period. The program is expected to produce **10 new graduates per year**, each entering the regional workforce and continuing employment over the 10-year span.

Additional Retention Scenarios. In addition to the base scenario (100 graduates staying within the 3N region), we evaluated two alternative retention scenarios to account for differing levels of graduate retention within the region:

1. **20% Retention Scenario:** In this scenario, it was assumed that **20% of the additional 300 graduates** (those beyond the original 100 staying in the 3N region) would also remain employed in the 3N region, resulting in a total of **160 graduates** staying locally over the 10 years.
2. **40% Retention Scenario:** Here, **40% of the additional 300 graduates** would stay in the 3N region, bringing the total to **220 graduates** employed locally over the 10-year period.

These scenarios were designed to assess the varying levels of economic impact on both the 3N region and the rest of Tennessee, depending on the proportion of graduates who remain in the local workforce.

Salary Assumptions. The projected salary for each graduate is based on the median wage for social workers with a bachelor's degree in Tennessee according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), which reports a median annual salary of \$46,050 for this group¹. Although this figure reflects a bachelor's degree level, it was used as a conservative estimate since BLS did not provide specific data for social workers with master's degrees in Tennessee.

Economic Modeling with IMPLAN. The analysis was conducted using IMPLAN, an industry-standard economic impact assessment tool that models the effects of economic changes on a given region². IMPLAN uses a system of input-output tables to simulate how direct employment additions affect local and regional economies. Specifically, IMPLAN estimates the ripple effects, including direct, indirect, and induced impacts:

- **Direct Impact:** The immediate effect of employing new social workers each year, with cumulative totals of 100, 160, and 220 new positions within the 3N region over the 10-year period for the baseline, 20%, and 40% scenarios, respectively.
- **Indirect Impact:** The increase in social work positions leads to greater demand from organizations employing these workers, as they purchase additional goods and services from local suppliers and other related industries to support their operations.
- **Induced Impact:** The broader economic effects resulting from the increased spending by social workers, who contribute to the local economy through their wages. This includes spending on housing, retail, and services, as well as the taxes they pay, further supporting public resources and community development.

Each year's graduates were modeled with employment compensation events in IMPLAN to account for the annual addition of graduates at a projected median salary. Projections were based on NAICS code 623220 - Residential Mental Health and Substance Abuse Facilities to best capture the economic effects associated with social work positions in this field. This modeling approach allowed the study to capture cumulative effects over time, illustrating how the economic footprint of the program grows as additional cohorts enter the workforce and continue employment in the region.

Economic Indicators. To understand the full scope of the program's impacts, we used the following economic indicators, which IMPLAN models for regional effects based on NAICS code 623220 - Residential Mental Health and Substance Abuse Facilities. These metrics capture direct, indirect, and induced economic effects specific to the social work and substance abuse sectors:

- **Employment:** Measures the total number of jobs supported in the region as a result of the program. This includes direct employment of social workers, jobs created in supporting industries (indirect), and jobs sustained by increased spending in the community (induced).
- **Labor Income:** The total income (wages, salaries, and benefits) generated for workers as a result of the program's economic activity, indicating increased financial stability within the workforce.
- **Value Added (GDP):** Represents the contribution to the regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and shows the program's effect on economic growth by adding value to the social services sector.
- **Output:** The overall economic activity generated, combining all spending associated with the program's impact on the local economy.

Tax Implications. The analysis also estimated the tax revenues generated at various government levels, including:

- **Sub-County (General):** General revenue generated at the municipal or local level.
- **Sub-County (Special Districts):** Revenue for specific local service districts that may include healthcare, public safety, or education programs.
- **County:** Total tax revenue collected at the county level.
- **State:** Revenue generated for the state of Tennessee, showing the impact of the program on state-level resources.

Findings

1. Baseline Scenario: 100 Graduates in Region 3N

- **Economic Impact:**
 - Employment: 142 jobs supported.
 - Labor Income: \$8.4 million.
 - Value Added (GDP): \$10.3 million.
 - Output (total economic activity): \$16.9 million.
- **Tax Impact:**
 - Total tax revenue: \$832,108.
 - Breakdown: \$57,604 (Sub-County), \$5,121 (Special Districts), \$161,312 (County), \$608,070 (State).

| Economic Indicators | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Impact | Employment | Labor Income | Value Added | Output |
| 1 - Direct | 100 | \$6,540,410.52 | \$6,897,409.40 | \$10,281,096.97 |
| 2 - Indirect | 15 | \$618,818.32 | \$966,424.29 | \$2,284,503.92 |
| 3 - Induced | 26 | \$1,232,521.16 | \$2,474,510.84 | \$4,344,904.25 |
| | 142 | \$8,391,749.99 | \$10,338,344.53 | \$16,910,505.14 |

Tax Implications

| Impact | Sub County | Special Districts | County | State | Totals |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 - Direct | \$29,976.94 | \$2,664.96 | \$84,152.11 | \$304,757.28 | \$421,551.29 |
| 2 - Indirect | \$5,271.82 | \$468.67 | \$14,748.19 | \$59,016.51 | \$79,505.19 |
| 3 - Induced | \$22,355.70 | \$1,987.43 | \$62,411.72 | \$244,296.50 | \$331,051.35 |
| | \$57,604.47 | \$5,121.06 | \$161,312.02 | \$608,070.29 | \$832,107.83 |

2. 20% Retention Scenario: 160 Graduates in Region 3N (400 Total Graduates)

- **Economic Impact:**

- Employment: 226 jobs supported in the 3N region.
- Labor Income: \$13.4 million.
- Value Added (GDP): \$16.5 million.
- Output: \$27.1 million.

- **Tax Impact:**

- Total tax revenue: \$1.33 million.
- Breakdown: \$92,167 (Sub-County), \$8,194 (Special Districts), \$258,099 (County), \$972,912 (State).

Economic Indicators

| Impact | Employment | Labor Income | Value Added | Output |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 - Direct | 160 | \$10,464,656.83 | \$11,035,855.05 | \$16,449,755.15 |
| 2 - Indirect | 24 | \$990,109.31 | \$1,546,278.86 | \$3,655,206.28 |
| 3 - Induced | 42 | \$1,972,033.86 | \$3,959,217.34 | \$6,951,846.80 |
| | 226 | \$13,426,799.99 | \$16,541,351.25 | \$27,056,808.23 |

Tax Implications

| Impact | Sub County | Special Districts | County | State | Totals |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 - Direct | \$47,963.11 | \$4,263.94 | \$134,643.38 | \$487,611.64 | \$674,482.07 |
| 2 - Indirect | \$8,434.92 | \$749.87 | \$23,597.10 | \$94,426.42 | \$127,208.31 |
| 3 - Induced | \$35,769.12 | \$3,179.89 | \$99,858.76 | \$390,874.40 | \$529,682.17 |
| | \$92,167.15 | \$8,193.69 | \$258,099.23 | \$972,912.46 | \$1,331,372.54 |

3. 40% Retention Scenario: 220 Graduates in Region 3N (400 Total Graduates)

- **Economic Impact:**

- Employment: 311 jobs supported in the 3N region.
- Labor Income: \$18.5 million.
- Value Added (GDP): \$22.7 million.
- Output: \$37.2 million.

- **Tax Impact:**

- Total tax revenue: \$1.83 million.
- Breakdown: \$126,730 (Sub-County), \$11,266 (Special Districts), \$354,886 (County), \$1.34 million (State).

Economic Indicators

| Impact | Employment | Labor Income | Value Added | Output |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 - Direct | 220 | \$14,388,903.14 | \$15,174,300.69 | \$22,618,413.33 |
| 2 - Indirect | 33 | \$1,361,400.30 | \$2,126,133.44 | \$5,025,908.63 |
| 3 - Induced | 58 | \$2,711,546.55 | \$5,443,923.84 | \$9,558,789.35 |
| | \$311.33 | \$18,461,849.99 | \$22,744,357.97 | \$37,203,111.32 |

Tax Implications

| Impact | Sub County | Special Districts | County | State | Totals |
|---------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 - Direct | \$65,949.28 | \$5,862.91 | \$185,134.64 | \$670,466.01 | \$927,412.84 |
| 2 - Indirect | \$11,598.01 | \$1,031.07 | \$32,446.01 | \$129,836.33 | \$174,911.42 |
| 3 - Induced | \$49,182.54 | \$4,372.34 | \$137,305.79 | \$537,452.30 | \$728,312.97 |
| | \$126,729.83 | \$11,266.32 | \$354,886.45 | \$1,337,754.64 | \$1,830,637.24 |

4. Full Retention Statewide: 400 Graduates in Tennessee

- **Economic Impact:**
 - Employment: 576 jobs supported statewide.
 - Labor Income: \$32.3 million.
 - Value Added (GDP): \$41.4 million.
 - Output: \$66.1 million.
- **Tax Impact:**
 - Total tax revenue: \$2.96 million.
 - Breakdown: \$524,357 (Sub-County), \$12,575 (Special Districts), \$403,284 (County), \$2.02 million (State).

Economic Indicators

| Impact | Employment | Labor Income | Value Added | Output |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 - Direct | 400 | \$21,399,969.66 | \$22,429,584.12 | \$32,812,831.15 |
| 2 - Indirect | 60 | \$3,597,118.52 | \$5,867,265.32 | \$11,340,480.60 |
| 3 - Induced | 116 | \$7,339,673.64 | \$13,149,290.52 | \$21,904,203.12 |
| | 576 | \$32,336,761.82 | \$41,446,139.96 | \$66,057,514.88 |

Tax Implications

| Impact | Sub County | Special Districts | County | State | Totals |
|---------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 - Direct | \$241,229.50 | \$5,776.34 | \$185,983.06 | \$867,776.34 | \$1,300,765.24 |
| 2 - Indirect | \$56,436.74 | \$1,353.36 | \$43,409.14 | \$244,986.10 | \$346,185.34 |
| 3 - Induced | \$226,690.63 | \$5,445.27 | \$173,891.78 | \$907,690.07 | \$1,313,717.75 |
| | \$524,356.87 | \$12,574.97 | \$403,283.98 | \$2,020,452.51 | \$2,960,668.32 |

5. 20% Scenario for Mixed Retention: 160 Graduates in 3N, 240 Statewide

- **Economic Impact:**
 - Employment: 349 jobs supported statewide.
 - Labor Income: \$18.9 million.
 - Value Added (GDP): \$24.9 million.
 - Output: \$39.0 million.

- **Tax Impact:**
 - Total tax revenue: \$1.63 million.
 - Breakdown: \$432,190 (Sub-County), \$4,381 (Special Districts), \$145,185 (County), \$1.05 million (State).

Economic Indicators

| Impact | Employment | Labor Income | Value Added | Output |
|--------------|------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 - Direct | 240 | \$10,935,312.83 | \$11,393,729.07 | \$16,363,076.00 |
| 2 - Indirect | 35 | \$2,607,009.21 | \$4,320,986.46 | \$7,685,274.32 |
| 3 - Induced | 74 | \$5,367,639.78 | \$9,190,073.18 | \$14,952,356.32 |
| | 349 | \$18,909,961.83 | \$24,904,788.71 | \$39,000,706.65 |

Tax Implications

| Impact | Sub County | Special Districts | County | State | Totals |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 - Direct | \$193,266.39 | \$1,512.40 | \$51,339.68 | \$380,164.70 | \$626,283.17 |
| 2 - Indirect | \$48,001.82 | \$603.49 | \$19,812.04 | \$150,559.68 | \$218,977.03 |
| 3 - Induced | \$190,921.51 | \$2,265.38 | \$74,033.02 | \$516,815.67 | \$784,035.58 |
| | \$432,189.72 | \$4,381.28 | \$145,184.74 | \$1,047,540.05 | \$1,629,295.79 |

6. 40% Scenario for Mixed Retention: 220 Graduates in 3N, 180 Statewide

- **Economic Impact:**
 - Employment: 318 jobs supported statewide.
 - Labor Income: \$13.9 million.
 - Value Added (GDP): \$17.1 million.
 - Output: \$28.6 million.
- **Tax Impact:**
 - Total tax revenue: \$1.13 million.
 - Breakdown: \$397,627 (Sub-County), \$1,309 (Special Districts), \$48,398 (County), \$682,698 (State).

Economic Indicators

| Impact | Employment | Labor Income | Value Added | Output |
|--------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 - Direct | 180 | \$7,011,066.52 | \$7,255,283.43 | \$10,194,417.82 |
| 2 - Indirect | 26 | \$2,235,718.22 | \$3,741,131.88 | \$6,314,571.97 |
| 3 - Induced | 58 | \$4,628,127.09 | \$7,705,366.68 | \$12,345,413.77 |
| | 38 | \$448,111.84 | \$2,160,430.74 | \$1,797,595.33 |

Tax Implications

| Impact | Sub County | Special Districts | County | State | Totals |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 - Direct | \$175,280.22 | (\$86.57) | \$848.42 | \$197,310.33 | \$373,352.40 |
| 2 - Indirect | \$44,838.73 | \$322.29 | \$10,963.13 | \$115,149.77 | \$171,273.92 |
| 3 - Induced | \$177,508.09 | \$1,072.93 | \$36,585.99 | \$370,237.77 | \$585,404.78 |
| | \$397,627.04 | \$1,308.64 | \$48,397.53 | \$682,697.88 | \$1,130,031.09 |

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions

- **Continuous Employment:** The analysis assumes that all retained graduates remain continuously employed in the social work field in the specified region or state for the entire 10-year period.
- **2024 Dollars:** All financial impacts are calculated in 2024 dollars, assuming a static economic environment without adjustments for inflation, wage increases, or market changes over the decade.
- **Bachelor's Degree Salary:** Projected salaries are based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' median wage for bachelor's degree holders in social work in Tennessee (\$46,050). This conservative estimate does not account for potentially higher wages that master's degree holders could command.

Limitations

- **Market Variability:** The analysis does not account for potential shifts in the social work labor market, such as changes in demand, funding, or employment rates in the field.
- **Salary Adjustments:** Wage growth over the 10 years is not factored in, meaning actual impacts could vary if salaries increase due to inflation, cost-of-living adjustments, or other economic factors.
- **Regional Economic Dynamics:** The analysis uses a consistent economic model, but actual regional impacts may differ based on the local economy's responsiveness to workforce changes in the mental health and substance abuse sector.

Footnotes

1. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Social Workers." *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/social-workers.htm>. Accessed October 2024.
2. IMPLAN® model, 2024 Data, using inputs provided by the user and IMPLAN Group LLC, IMPLAN System (data and software), 16905 Northcross Dr., Suite 120, Huntersville, NC 28078 www.IMPLAN.com

Supply & Demand Report

Based on the 2025 THEC Supply and Demand Report, there is clear justification for establishing a MSW program at Tennessee Tech University, particularly in light of current workforce gaps in social work-related fields, as it relates to mental health and substance abuse social workers, healthcare social workers, and child, family, and school social workers.

Despite a growing need for behavioral health services across Tennessee, mental health and substance abuse social workers are only considered in-demand in 5 regions of the state and earn a low entry-level wage of \$34,424. This role requires a master's degree, highlighting a disconnect between educational preparation and wage competitiveness. While not officially listed as "in-demand" statewide, the inclusion in five distinct regions indicates critical regional shortages. An MSW program at Tennessee Tech would be strategically positioned to fill these regional workforce gaps—especially in rural and underserved areas—by producing licensed professionals trained in evidence-based interventions, addiction recovery, and crisis response.

Tennessee reports that healthcare social workers are in demand in 9 regions, the highest among the three social work roles listed, with a typical entry-level salary of \$40,082 and a master’s degree required. These professionals are essential to hospitals, long-term care facilities, and outpatient settings, helping patients manage complex medical and psychosocial needs. Although not classified as “in-demand” on a statewide level, the presence of high regional demand signals strong localized employment potential. The MSW program at Tennessee Tech would support this need by offering preparation in healthcare social work, preparing graduates for work in care coordination, patient advocacy, and integrated behavioral health—particularly in health professional shortage areas common in the Upper Cumberland region.

Finally, although child, family, and school social workers require only a bachelor’s degree, there is still demand for them in 2 regions of the state, with a statewide entry-level wage of \$38,043. Many roles in child welfare, school systems, and family services now increasingly favor or require advanced licensure and training, especially in trauma-informed care and school-based mental health—skills best cultivated at the graduate level. Tennessee's ongoing youth mental health challenges and family service shortages suggest a need for advanced training that goes beyond undergraduate preparation. The MSW program at Tennessee Tech would provide the specialized knowledge and licensure pathways necessary for professionals to lead in these environments and drive improved outcomes for children and families.

Though these occupations may not currently be classified as "statewide in-demand" by THEC, the regional demand data underscores a strong need for a localized, advanced social work training pipeline. An MSW program at Tennessee Tech would not only expand educational access in the Upper Cumberland region but also directly support Tennessee’s evolving behavioral health, healthcare, and family service systems.

Section IV: Implementation Timeline

The following table outlines the relevant anticipated submission and approval dates for the university, THEC, SACSCOC, and CSWE that are necessary to start students in the fall of 2027 and graduate the first cohort at the end of the Spring 2030.

| Level of Approval/ Activity | Date |
|---|--------------------|
| University/THEC | |
| CAS Curriculum Committee Review | September 9 2025 |
| Submit to Graduate Studies Executive Committee (GSEC) | September 24, 2025 |
| GSEC Review | October 7, 2025 |
| Academic Council Review | November 5, 2025 |
| External Site Visit | November 7, 2025 |
| External Review Report Submitted | December 5, 2025 |
| Response to External Review Submitted | January 5, 2026 |
| TN Tech Board Meeting Review | March 2026 |
| THEC Meeting | May 14, 2026 |
| SACSCOC Substantive Change | |
| Substantive Change Prospectus Submitted | November 5, 2026 |
| SACSCOC Approval | Approx. June 2026 |

| Level of Approval/ Activity | Date |
|--|--------------------------------|
| CSWE / BOA | |
| Submit Candidacy Eligibility Application | No later than October 1, 2026 |
| Submit Benchmark I to CSWE | No later than December 1, 2026 |
| Submit Benchmark I to BOA | No later than August 1, 2027 |
| * <i>First part-time cohort begins</i> | <i>August 2027</i> |
| Benchmark I, BOA Approval | February-March 2028 |
| Submit Benchmark II to BOA | No later than August 1, 2028 |
| * <i>First full-time cohort begins</i> | <i>August 2028</i> |
| Benchmark II, BOA Approval | February-March 2029 |
| Submit Benchmark III to BOA | No later than August 1, 2029 |
| Notification of CSWE Accreditation | February-March 2030 |
| * <i>Graduate full-time cohorts</i> | <i>May 2030</i> |
| * <i>Graduate part-time cohorts</i> | <i>May 2031</i> |

Section V: Student Interest & Community Partnerships

Student Interest

Survey Overview

Since 2018, the Department of Sociology and Political Science has conducted anonymous online student surveys in the spring semester. The surveys were conducted in 2018 (N=99), 2019 (N=103), 2021 (N=67), 2022 (N=46), 2023 (N=43), and 2025 (N=34). The questions in the survey varied, to some extent, from year-to-year. The surveys were sent to all active students who have declare a major in sociology, including the general track, the concentration in criminal justice and criminology, and the concentration in social work. The surveys circulated for at least two weeks, with at least one reminder email.

Results

In 2018, 81.7% of students reported being interested in pursuing a graduate degree, with 71.37% interested in pursuing a graduate degree within the Department of Sociology and Political Science. At that time, students were more interested in an on-ground graduate degree (77.42%), followed by a hybrid program (70.96%) and then online program (62.41%). Nearly 38% (37.6%) of students reporting interest in applying to UTK's MSW. However, 73.5% stated they are likely apply to a graduate program in the Department of Sociology and Political Science at Tech instead of applying to the MSW at UTK, if we offered a graduate program. Some of the comments from students reinforced the interest in an MSW:

"MSW should absolutely be offered. I am very thankful as a SW concentration that an internship is mandatory."

"I think having a masters program at Tennessee Tech for sociology would encourage more students to stay and go to graduate school. I think they are less likely to get their masters anywhere else since they do feel more of a comfort at TTU. I have been going back and forth about grad school because I would have to relocate but I can say that if there was a Social Work Masters program at TTU I would probably not think twice about applying to it."

"A MS program in social work at TTU would be very beneficial to the students and the community. I believe we have the staff already in place to prepare students for a MS at

TTU and could add professors to accommodate a MS degree. I have been a Tech student for five years and am very satisfied with the professors in this department.”

In 2019, 72.22% of majors indicated they were interested in attending graduate school, with 64.62% indicating they would attend a graduate program within the Department of Sociology and Political Science at Tech. Similar to 2018, on-ground was the most preferred (73.34%), followed by a hybrid delivery (61.05%), and then an online program (59.48%). Just under 35% (34.74%) indicated they were considering applying to UTK’s MSW program. However, 74.08% indicated they would choose a graduate program within the Department of Sociology and Political Science over the MSW at UTK if a graduate program were offered. One student stated, “I would love to be able to obtain my MS degree in Sociology or Social Work at TTU, as opposed to transferring to another university. At the moment there aren’t any MS programs I am interested in, but if the University were to add one of the programs listed in the survey, I would be extremely interested in remaining here for graduate school.”

In 2021, 47.4% of students stated that they would pursue the MSW at TN Tech if they offered such a program, and 80.35% of students reported planning to attend graduate school. In fact, one student stated, “Per the question about a graduate degree in Social Work, I believe that adding an option for a graduate degree in this field would be extremely beneficial as an option for students to continue their education locally as a Tennessee Tech student. I would love to continue going to school here at tech if this were to be offered.” Similarly, in 2022, exactly 50% of students reported that they would pursue an MSW at TN Tech, and 67.65% reported planning to attend a graduate program. In 2023, 48.5% reported that they would pursue an MSW at TN Tech, and 71.4% reported planning to attend a graduate program. In 2025, 71.4% report planning to pursue a graduate degree.

In a brief 2025 survey specifically regarding the MSW at Tech, 88% of current sociology students indicated they would likely apply to an MSW if it were offered in the Department of Sociology and Political Science, with 75% indicating they would apply if it were offered in the fall of 2027. Although 50% would like to see an on-ground program, 75% would like to see a hybrid option, and 75% would like to see an online option.

Interpretation

The data clearly indicates that our current and past sociology majors have been very interested in and a willingness to apply for, an MSW program at Tech. Across all years in which students were surveyed, about 75% of the students expressed interest in graduate school. When asked specifically if they would attend a graduate program in the Department of Sociology and Political Science, nearly three of every four students indicated they would likely apply. The data also indicates that there is a strong preference to attend a program here instead of another universities.

The students who would logically be most likely to apply for the MSW program are those in the Social Work Concentration, which varied from 48 in 2025 to 73 in 2018. However, the student surveys indicate that around 50% of all of our majors would be interested in an MSW program within the Department of Sociology and Political Science. If this were generalized to the entire

major, this would be between 97 and 120. Even considering a more modest estimate of 30% of students, this would 58 and 72.

Student Enrollment: Sociology Majors, Fall Semester

| Year | General Track | Criminal Justice Concentration | Social Work Concentration | Total |
|------|---------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------|
| 2025 | 20 | 126 | 48 | 194 |
| 2024 | 19 | 128 | 43 | 190 |
| 2023 | 18 | 116 | 60 | 194 |
| 2022 | 27 | 127 | 62 | 234 |
| 2020 | 20 | 144 | 70 | 230 |
| 2019 | 18 | 142 | 70 | 240 |
| 2018 | 35 | 132 | 73 | 240 |

The presence of an MSW could work, also, to increase our undergraduate student enrollment in the sociology major. That is, one partial explanation in the decline in enrollment in the social work concentration since 2018 is due to the absence of a CSWE-accredited bachelor program or a CSWE-accredited MSW for those interested in a career in social work. With an MSW, students would see a clear pathway to receiving a CSWE-accredited MSW to bust their career potential.

Alumni

Survey Overview

Tennessee Tech's Crawford Alumni Center distributed a survey via email to alumni of the Department of Sociology and Political Science. The survey was administered through Qualtrics, and it included 10 questions related to having an MSW at Tennessee Tech. The survey was circulated for two weeks in July of 2025 (N=118).

Results

Of the respondents, 30% graduated from Tech within the past 10 years, with 31% of them graduating with the social work concentration and another 11% with a dual concentration in social work and criminal justice. Only 11% currently have or are currently pursuing an MSW. When asked about different areas to which an MSW would be beneficial, 97.3% believed it would be beneficial for students at Tech, 96.4% believed it would benefit the local community, 96.4% believed it would benefit the Upper Cumberland region, 95% believe it would benefit Tennessee, and 96.4% believed it would benefit society at-large. Additionally, 73% reported that they would have attended the MSW program had it been available when they graduated. Of those respondents who do not already have or are not currently pursuing an MSW, 46% reported that they would be interested in applying or attending the MSW if it launches in the fall of 2027. Finally, 96.3% believe there is a demand for MSW-trained professionals in the Upper Cumberland region, 99% believe there is a demand for MSW-trained professionals in Tennessee, and 99% believe there is a demand for MSW-trained professionals nationwide.

Regarding the program structure, 67% would like to see a fast-track option, and 81% would like to see a part-time option. 40% report a hybrid program would be most attractive to them, with the online option being most attractive (54%) and the fully on-ground being the least attractive (6%). However, when asked to rank the option that would have been most valuable for them when they graduated, 51.8% ranked the hybrid delivery as their first choice, whereas only 26.4% ranked the online option and 21.8% ranked the on-ground option as their first choice. For second choice, 46.4% selected the hybrid option, 33.6% selected the on-ground option, and 20%

selected the online option. Finally, for their third option, 1.8% selected the hybrid option, whereas 53.6% selected the online option, and 44.5% selected the on-campus option. These findings translate into the hybrid option being the most valuable option of the three, whereas the online option is slightly polarizing. The hybrid option was almost everybody's first or second choice. A larger percentage of people ranked the online option as their third choice than they did first choice. A larger percentage of people selected the on-ground only option as either their second or third choice than their first choice.

The qualitative feedback from alumni are as follows:

"Please consider allowing some classes that those of us that have already tech once or twice count towards the MSW."

"I hope this happens!"

"I believe it would be a huge benefit to all involved."

"If I was interested in pursuing this, I would certainly consider this program. I just have gone a different route in my career than I thought I was going to go in."

"Hello!! I I would love this opportunity. I was disappointed that TTU was not accredited while going through the course and had considered going to a different school entirely just because they had the masters program. If TTU gets the program, I will be able to keep my currently job here at Cookeville while continuing my education. I really hope this opportunity comes!"

"This has been a need at this university for many years. TTU students should not have to travel outside the upper cumberland area and pay other universities to complete an advanced degree when TTU is capable and willing to open access to this!"

"Would love this please make this happen"

"I highly value the MSW degree. It is a vital part of my job and working through any field of social work. I'm excited to see this program being explored at TTU and I truly hope to be part of this program in some capacity in the future."

"Most needed. Wish it was available when I graduated in 1971. Very few options then creating few social workers today"

"When I graduated, I would have loved stepping into a MSW program, and for several years after felt it was needed. However, as an LMSW I worry that having a MSW program would make local social work positions less valuable. I enjoy working in an area that is not saturated with this degree, making us more in demand. Although, the MSW program was one of the best things I've ever done and the education and perspective is wonderful. I do hope if this program comes to TTU, it is very selective, competitive, and rigorous."

"Highly needed, especially if can be offered at affordable price"

"I am looking to begin a MSW program soon. If TTU were to begin offering a MSW program that could be completed online or mostly online on the Fall of 2027, I would definitely hold off on any plans to begin before then, to enroll in TTU's program. Having completed my undergraduate and have such a wonderful and supportive staff and professors, makes completing my MSW at TTU extremely appealing."

"Having an accredited degree at the most affordable 4 year university in the state of Tennessee would open the idea for more people to pursue a social work career. Social work is a career that doesn't have huge profitable margins for graduates and throughout their career. The average social worker in the United States makes under \$60,000 a year,

but the average cost to obtain a masters degree in social work is about \$40,000-50,000 in the state of Tennessee. Allowing this university to have an accredited program that would let students get their masters in social work but also open the door for accreditation for future licensure. This would help more students in the long run obtain that degree and have more social workers in the future. I am currently starting my degree at UTK in the fall because they're the only accredited online program in the state. I live and work in Cookeville, having the program right here where I graduated and still live, would incline me to go back to Tech and get the degree I want from a university and professors that I love and trust. Social workers are a much needed career, especially right now in our political climate, and offering a possibly more affordable option to the local community would be not only beneficial but is almost needed."

"When I graduated with my undergrad, my advisor did mention that TTU was hoping to have an MSW program within 5-ish years. I am glad to see that coming to life! I am currently getting my MSW elsewhere, so it is a little late for me to benefit from this program. I know it will be great for others though!"

"A masters program would be extremely beneficial for this area. There are many people I know who would attend."

"The only reason I would not want to obtain a MSW is because I earned an MA from TTU in 2004. Had the MSW option been available that is the route I would have gone."

"I feel like this program would do so much good for the Upper Cumberland. I personally didn't pursue my masters because I got a job in mental health that didn't require it, but I could provide more help to my community, make more money and move upward with a higher degree. Many that graduate go on to work I mental health and would benefit from a flexible schedule that would allow them to balance work and their families while advancing their education."

"It has been frustrating to know I can't do much with my degree without a masters. I knew that going in and after graduating often wanted to pursue my masters but life got in the way. Had it been ready available at Tech I probably would've jumped right in."

"I feel this would be a wonderful addition to the Tennessee Tech academic programs already being offered. Several people I graduated with had to leave the Upper Cumberland after graduating due to TTU not offering any sort of MSW or MCJ program."

"This would be beneficial to the school to the community as well as at large to the state. Working in the particular field, I work in now there is such a demand to have an accreditation. This would be such a great opportunity, not only for an individual but also for companies at large."

"When I graduated most social work jobs required a masters degree. I was stuck in intro positions that didn't pay well. Although, I loved the work I was doing, it didn't make financial sense to continue to work and have to pay for child care. My children are finally all in school and I am starting my Masters in Counseling at the University of Louisiana in the Fall. It would have been great to have just continued on in a masters program when I graduated. I definitely would have taken advantage of it."

Interpretation

The survey responses demonstrate clear support for the development of a Master of Social Work (MSW) program at Tennessee Tech, especially from recent alumni and those with undergraduate

backgrounds in social work or related fields. While relatively few respondents have pursued an MSW to date, many expressed that they would have enrolled had the program been available—indicating strong unmet demand among past graduates.

Respondents overwhelmingly believe that an MSW program would have a meaningful and far-reaching impact—not only on Tennessee Tech students, but also on the local community, the Upper Cumberland region, the state, and society as a whole. This broad consensus reinforces the importance of the degree in addressing current and future workforce needs in social and human services.

There is also a significant pool of potential applicants for a future MSW cohort, particularly among those who have not yet pursued graduate study. Many indicated strong interest in applying if the program launches as planned, further supporting the enrollment projections.

Preferences regarding program structure were especially insightful. While online options initially appear most attractive, a closer look at ranking patterns suggests that hybrid delivery is viewed as the most effective and flexible format overall. The hybrid model emerged as the top or second choice for the vast majority of respondents, suggesting it offers the right balance between accessibility and engagement. In contrast, the online-only format, while appealing to some, showed signs of being polarizing, and the fully on-campus option was the least preferred overall.

Respondents also emphasized the importance of offering flexible pathways, particularly part-time and fast-track options, to accommodate the needs of working professionals and those with prior social work education.

The qualitative feedback reveals overwhelming support for establishing an MSW. Many respondents express excitement and hope, with several noting that they or people they know would seriously consider or have already planned to enroll if such a program were available—especially if it were offered online or in a flexible format. A recurring theme is the need for geographic and financial accessibility, as multiple individuals highlighted the hardship of leaving the Upper Cumberland or enrolling in more expensive out-of-area programs due to TTU not offering an MSW. Affordability, accreditation, and the ability to stay employed locally while pursuing an advanced degree are major draws. Respondents also voiced a strong emotional connection to TTU and emphasized trust in the university's faculty and student support.

Another major theme is the perceived value and necessity of the MSW degree for both individual career advancement and meeting regional workforce demands. Several respondents regret not having pursued an MSW earlier due to barriers like cost, family obligations, or lack of local access, and see Tech's potential program as a solution to longstanding gaps. Some expressed that the absence of an MSW limited their professional growth and earning potential. While one commenter expressed concern that MSW saturation might reduce job availability for those with LMSW degrees, they still supported the idea—urging the program to be rigorous and selective. Collectively, the feedback reflects a strong consensus that a Tech's MSW would be not only welcomed but highly impactful for students, employers, and the Upper Cumberland community as a whole.

Taken together, these findings underscore both the demand for and the design considerations of a successful MSW program. There is clear evidence of regional and institutional need, and strong preferences for a hybrid, flexible structure that can support diverse learners across the Upper Cumberland and beyond.

Projected Enrollment & Graduates

The projected enrollment for the proposed MSW program reflects a realistic yet ambitious growth model based on trends in similar programs across the state of Tennessee and nationwide. The program is designed to scale intentionally over five years, starting with a smaller cohort of part-time students and gradually expanding to include full-time and fast-track (advanced standing) students. By year five (2031–32), the program is projected to serve approximately 73 students.

Enrollment projections are supported by the demonstrated success of peer MSW programs across the region. For example, [Eastern Kentucky University](#) saw a rapid increase in enrollment—from 22 to 73 students—in just one year of implementation, and increasing to 90 students by year five. Similarly, [Appalachian State University](#) began with 39 students in [2007](#), increased to 70 students by 2012 and then 80 by 2015. The steady increase in enrollment in MSW can be observed in other peer institutions, although data from year one is sparse. [UNC-Wilmington](#) has a hybrid program that started in [2004](#). The available data shows a year-over-year increase from 85 students in 2015 to 126 students in 2024. Similarly, [Western Carolina University's](#) hybrid program that started in [2006](#) saw a year-over-year increase from 75 students in 2015 to 150 students in 2024.

Likewise, MSW programs at institutions such as Middle Tennessee State University, the University of Memphis, and East Tennessee State University have seen steady growth due to increasing demand for graduate-level social work education and the need for licensed clinical social workers across the region. Although data for the MSW program at the [University of Memphis](#) are not available since its inception in 2011, 118 students were enrolled in 2015 when only an on-ground option was available. The enrollment increased to 142 in 2018 with the introduction of an online program; however, 103 were in the fulltime, fully on-ground program and 39 were parttime, which included enrollment in the online program. They have maintained between 87 and 92 fulltime students and 24 to 38 parttime students between 2018 and 2024 (111-130 students, total). ETSU began an MSW program in [2003](#). Available data indicates 62 students were enrolled in the fall of [2004](#), 66 in [2008](#), 104 by [2012](#), 163 by [2019](#) in the on-ground program. Data regarding ETSU's MSW program growth after the introduction of an online program in 2022 are publicly unavailable. MTSU, TSU, and APSU were part of a [CSWE-accredited collaborative MSW](#) program until 2021. They have since split into independent CSWE-accredited MSW programs, which led to significant restructuring and recruitment strategies. Trend data indicates that MTSU's MSW grew from 64 students in the 2020-2021 academic year to 93 students in the 2021-2022 academic year under independent CSWE-accreditation, with enrollment growing to 98 in 2023-2024. Additionally, [APSU's](#) enrollment stay generally constant with 50 student in 2021 to 48 in 2022. TSU enrollment trends are not publicly available.

Nationally, the number of students enrolling in MSW programs has grown significantly over the past decade. Between 2010 and 2022, [CSWE data](#) indicates MSW enrollment experienced a 77% increase nationwide. According to the [CSWE](#), hybrid and online MSW programs have experienced particularly strong growth due to their flexibility and accessibility, especially for working professionals and students in rural or underserved areas.

The hybrid format of the proposed MSW program at Tennessee Tech—designed to include both in-person and online components—will position it to serve a broad population across the Upper Cumberland region and beyond. The program’s flexible delivery and multiple tracks (part-time, full-time, and fast-track) will appeal to traditional students, career-changers, and professionals seeking licensure or career advancement. Additionally, Tennessee Tech does not currently offer a CSWE-accredited BSW program, creating a clear demand among alumni and community members for a graduate-level pathway in social work. This unmet need, combined with the region’s growing behavioral health and human services workforce demands and state and national trends in enrollment in MSW programs, supports a projected enrollment of 73 students by year five. This enrollment forecast is well-aligned with both institutional capacity and external demand. The program is structured for sustainable growth and long-term viability, while also addressing critical workforce needs in the state and region.

| Projected Enrollment | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Year | Academic Year | Projected Total Enrollment, Fall Semester | Projected Full-Time (Old+New) | Projected Part-Time (Old+New) | Projected Fast-Track (FT) | Projected Attrition | Projected Graduates (FT+PT) |
| 1 | 2027-28 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 1 | -- |
| 2 | 2028-29 | 29 | 10 | 19 (9+10) | 0 | 2 | -- |
| 3 | 2029-30 | 52 | 24 (9+15) | 28 (18+10) | 2 | 2 | 11 (11+0) |
| 4 | 2030-31 | 69 | 32 (12+20) | 37 (27+10) | 2 | 2 | 23 (14+9) |
| 5 | 2031-32 | 79 | 42 (17+25) | 37 (27+10) | 3 | 2 | 28 (20+9) |

Community & Industry Partners

The proposed MSW program emerges from a strong foundation of community engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration within the Department of Sociology and Political Science and CAPS. Recognizing the critical need for advanced social work practitioners in Tennessee and the surrounding region—particularly in areas related to addiction, behavioral health, and community resilience—our faculty have worked closely with a broad network of community and industry partners to ensure the program is responsive, workforce-aligned, and regionally grounded.

Community stakeholders—including mental health agencies, substance use treatment centers, hospitals, school districts, nonprofit organizations, and municipal governments—have expressed strong support for the MSW program and a shared interest in strengthening the pipeline of qualified, licensed clinical social workers. The interdisciplinary orientation of the proposed program, shaped by the academic strengths of sociology, criminal justice, and CAPS’s focus on prevention and recovery services, has resonated with partners who face increasingly complex social and systemic challenges.

Partners such as Volunteer Behavioral Healthcare System, Cookeville Regional Medical Center, Health Connect America, Power of Putnam, Dekalb Prevention Coalition, and the Department of Children’s Services have articulated a persistent demand for MSW-level social workers,

particularly those with specialized knowledge in substance use disorders, trauma-informed care, public policy, and rural practice. These organizations have also offered letters of support and committed to serve as field placement sites, guest speakers, advisory board members, and future employers of program graduates. The MSW curriculum will be designed in consultation with these partners, with a strong emphasis on applied learning, ethical practice, and community-based solutions. Moreover, in accordance with CSWE accreditation requirements, the program will have a Field Coordinator whose job description includes growing the list of placement options and creating new placement opportunities for MSW students. The program will also draw upon CAPS's existing relationships with organizations engaged in addiction prevention and recovery services to offer specialized field placements, training opportunities, and continuing education options for working professionals. Ultimately, the Department of Sociology and Political Science have relationships and placement opportunities at more than 50 organizations throughout the Upper Cumberland region (14 counties), alone (See Appendix C).

Through sustained partnerships, the MSW program will not only expand access to graduate education in social work but will also play a vital role in addressing systemic inequities, workforce shortages, and service gaps in Tennessee's human services infrastructure. This collaboration ensures that the program is not only academically rigorous but deeply embedded in and accountable to the communities it is designed to serve.

Section VI: Curriculum

The MSW curriculum will be designed to provide a comprehensive and rigorous educational experience that reflects the breadth, depth, theory, and practice required for advanced professional social work. Delivered in a hybrid format—combining online coursework with in-person instruction and field experiences—the program offers flexibility while maintaining strong academic rigor and community engagement. Rooted in the standards of the CSWE, the curriculum integrates foundational and advanced coursework in human behavior, social policy, research, and social work practice across micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Students complete at least 900 hours of supervised field education, applying theory in real-world settings aligned with their chosen specialization: Advanced Generalist or Substance Abuse and Mental Health. The curriculum supports articulation for advanced standing students holding accredited BSW degrees and aligns with Tennessee Tech's academic policies, ensuring a structured, coherent path to graduation, licensure readiness, and professional leadership in diverse and high-need settings.

Goals & Outcomes

The proposed MSW program will be designed to address critical workforce and service needs in the Upper Cumberland region and beyond. The program's overarching mission is to prepare competent, ethical, and versatile social work professionals who are equipped to work across micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. With two specialized tracks—Advanced Generalist Practice and Substance Abuse and Mental Health—the program will meet pressing regional demands in mental health, substance use, child welfare, and social service delivery, while also cultivating leadership and advocacy skills to foster systemic change. The program will be fully accredited by the CSWE and will meet all CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS).

Goals, Objectives, & Assessment Plan. The program will focus on five goals consistent with CSWE competencies and the university mission. The program goals, along with corresponding objectives, assessment methods, timelines, and responsible parties are outlined in the following table:

| Obj. # | Objective | Assessment Method | Timeline | Responsible Party |
|--|---|---|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>Goal 1: Prepare graduates to demonstrate ethical and professional behavior in diverse practice settings.</i> | | | | |
| 1.1 | By the end of the program, 90% of students will score proficient or higher on their final field evaluation in the competency related to ethical and professional behavior. | Final field evaluation ratings on ethical/professional behavior competency | End of each student's program | Field Instructors & Field Coordinator |
| 1.2 | Each year, at least 85% of graduating students will report confidence in applying ethical decision-making frameworks on the exit survey. | Exit survey measuring student confidence in ethical decision-making | Annually at graduation | Program Director & Assessment Committee |
| 1.3 | By the end of their first year, at least 90% of MSW students will successfully complete a professional development workshop or module on ethical conduct, boundaries, and professional communication, as measured by a post-training assessment score of 80% or higher. | Post-training assessment after professional development workshop/module | End of first academic year | MSW Faculty & Program Director |
| <i>Goal 2: Equip students with the knowledge and skills for advanced generalist and clinical practice across micro, mezzo, and macro systems.</i> | | | | |
| 2.1 | By year three of program implementation, the MSW program will maintain at least 90% completion rate of required field hours (900 hours) for all students, demonstrating engagement in multi-level practice. | Tracking field hour completion via field placement reports | Annually, starting Year 3 | Field Coordinator |
| 2.2 | Each academic year, 100% of MSW students will complete at least one assignment or project specifically assessing competence in macro-level social work practice (e.g., policy analysis, program development, or community engagement). | Review of assignment/project submissions demonstrating macro-level competence | Annually | Course Faculty & Program Director |
| 2.3 | By graduation, at least 90% of MSW students will demonstrate competence in advanced generalist or clinical practice through successful completion of a comprehensive exam, as evaluated by a standardized rubric with a minimum score of 80%. | Evaluation of comprehensive exam using a standardized rubric | At graduation | Faculty; Program Director |
| <i>Goal 3: Develop graduates who promote human rights and advance social, economic, and environmental justice.</i> | | | | |
| 3.1 | By graduation, 90% of students will demonstrate competency in identifying and addressing systemic oppression and | Capstone projects and field evaluations reviewed for justice competency | At graduation | Faculty & Field Supervisors |

| Obj. # | Objective | Assessment Method | Timeline | Responsible Party |
|---|--|---|------------------------------------|---|
| | inequality through capstone projects or field evaluations. | | | |
| 3.2 | By the end of each academic year, at least one community-based learning project addressing social justice issues will be incorporated into the curriculum of each specialization track. | Curriculum review documenting incorporation of community-based learning projects | Annually | Program Curriculum Committee & Program Director |
| <i>Goal 4: Foster the use of evidence-informed practice and critical thinking to guide intervention and evaluate outcomes.</i> | | | | |
| 4.1 | Within their final year, 95% of students will complete a research-based assignment that evaluates the effectiveness of a social work intervention, policy, or program. | Grading of research-based assignments on intervention effectiveness | During final academic year | Faculty |
| 4.2 | At least 80% of alumni surveyed within one year of graduation will report that the program effectively prepared them to integrate research into practice. | Alumni survey on preparedness to integrate research into practice | Annually, 1 year post-graduation | Program Director & Alumni Relations |
| 4.3 | By the end of each academic year, at least 90% of MSW students will demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate and apply peer-reviewed research in practice-related coursework, as measured by a minimum score of 80% on a faculty-scored evidence-based practice assignment. | Faculty assessment of evidence-based practice assignments | Annually | Course Faculty |
| <i>Goal 5: Strengthen the regional social work workforce by preparing graduates to serve in rural and underserved areas.</i> | | | | |
| 5.1 | By the end of year five, at least 60% of field placements will be located in rural or underserved communities within the Upper Cumberland region. | Field placement location tracking reports | Annually, starting Year 5 | Field Coordinator |
| 5.2 | Each year, at least 75% of graduates will report employment in a social work-related field within six months of graduation, with emphasis on service to high-need populations. | Graduate employment survey focused on social work-related fields | Annually, 6 months post-graduation | Program Director & Alumni Relations |
| 5.3 | By the end of each academic year, at least 85% of MSW students will participate in classroom or field-based learning activities focused on the unique needs, barriers, and service delivery models relevant to rural and underserved populations, as documented through course syllabi and student reflection assignments. | Review of course syllabi and student reflections documenting rural-focused learning | Annually | Faculty & Program Curriculum Committee |
| <i>Goal 6: Cultivate culturally responsive social work practice to serve diverse populations effectively.</i> | | | | |
| 6.1 | By graduation, 90% of students will demonstrate cultural competence through field evaluations and coursework assessments focused on working with diverse populations. | Field evaluations and coursework assessments for cultural competence | At graduation | Field Supervisors & Faculty |

| Obj. # | Objective | Assessment Method | Timeline | Responsible Party |
|--|--|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 6.2 | Each academic year, 100% of students will complete at least one assignment or project that requires application of cultural humility and responsiveness in practice. | Grading of assignments/projects requiring cultural humility application | Annually | Faculty |
| 6.3 | By the end of their second year, 95% of students will participate in workshops or seminars on equity, diversity, and inclusion, achieving a post-training assessment score of 85% or higher. | Post-training assessments after equity, diversity, and inclusion workshops | End of second academic year | Program Director & Faculty |
| <i>Goal 7: Enhance students' ability to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.</i> | | | | |
| 7.1 | By program completion, 90% of students will achieve proficiency in engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation competencies as measured by field supervisor evaluations. | Field supervisor evaluations assessing core social work process competencies | At program completion | Field Supervisors & Field Coordinator |
| 7.2 | Each year, 100% of students will complete practice simulations or role-plays designed to assess their skills in these core social work processes, with at least 85% scoring proficient or higher. | Performance in practice simulations or role-plays with scoring rubrics | Annually | Faculty & Simulation Coordinator |
| 7.3 | Within the final semester, 90% of students will successfully complete a comprehensive exam demonstrating application of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation skills, as measured by a standardized faculty-developed rubric. | Faculty evaluation of comprehensive exam responses using a standardized rubric | Final semester | Faculty; Program Director |
| <i>Goal 8: Prepare graduates to promote leadership, policy advocacy, and systemic change in social work practice.</i> | | | | |
| 8.1 | By graduation, 90% of students will complete a policy analysis or advocacy project demonstrating understanding of policy impact on social welfare, scored at 80% or higher. | Grading of policy analysis or advocacy projects | At time of graduation | Faculty |
| 8.2 | Annually, 85% of students will participate in leadership development activities such as workshops, seminars, or field experiences focused on macro practice. | Participation tracking for leadership development activities | Annually | Program Director & Field Coordinator |
| 8.3 | Within one year of graduation, at least 75% of alumni will report involvement in leadership or advocacy roles in their workplaces, as measured by alumni surveys. | Alumni survey on leadership and advocacy role involvement | Annually, 1-year post-graduation | Program Director & Alumni Relations |

Assessment & Evaluation Schedule. The program-related assessment and evaluation schedule below reflects the university, THEC, SACSCOC, and CSWE required components.

| Evaluation Component | Activity Description | Schedule / Cycle | Responsible Party |
|---|---|---|---|
| Student Evaluations (IDEA forms) | Course-level teaching quality feedback gathered from students | Every semester for each course | Faculty, Department Chair |
| Course-Level Assessment of SLOs | Direct and indirect SLO assessment across curriculum (e.g., comprehensive exam, field evaluations) | Collected annually, reviewed for continuous improvement | Faculty, Assessment Committee, Program Director |
| Field Education Evaluation | Evaluation of student performance in field placements across micro, mezzo, and macro settings | Each semester of field education | Field Coordinator, Field Instructors |
| Comprehensive Exam | Summative evaluation of student competencies across CSWE domains, required for graduation and used to assess program outcomes. | Administered in final semester | Program Director; MSW Faculty Committee |
| Faculty Annual Performance Review | Evaluation of teaching, research/scholarship, advising, service; submission of Annual Report | Annually | Faculty, Department Chair, Dean |
| Alumni and Employer Surveys | Feedback on program effectiveness, graduate success, employer satisfaction | Annually | Program Director, Alumni Relations |
| Program Evaluation | Comprehensive self-study, external review, and action planning within university framework | Every 7 years | Program Director, Dept. Chair, Dean, Institutional Research |
| THEC Quality Assurance Funding (QAF) Major Field Test | Implementation of a field-based or comprehensive exam for state funding metrics | Aligned with each QAF cycle (approx. every 5 years) | Program Director, Office of Provost, Institutional Research |
| Integration with THEC QAF Metrics | Incorporate performance indicators tied to funding (e.g., student retention, test performance) | Reported each QAF cycle | Program Director, Institutional Research, Provost's Office |
| SACSCOC Accreditation Reporting | Compliance with institutional accreditation standards; annual metrics such as licensure/pass rates | Annual reports | Accreditation Coordinator, Program Director, Provost's Office |
| CSWE Accreditation Reaffirmation | Comprehensive self-study, submission of reaffirmation documents, and peer review site visit per CSWE standards for maintaining program accreditation. | Every 8 years | MSW Program Director; CSWE Accreditation Liaison |

Student Learning Outcomes. Upon successful completion of the MSW program, graduates will be able to exhibit the following student learning outcomes (SLOs), compliant with CSWE Competencies.

| SLO # | CSWE Competency | Student Learning Outcome | Assessment Method | Timeline | Responsible Party |
|--------------|---|--|--|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| SLO 1 | C1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior | Students will apply ethical standards, use professional judgment, and demonstrate professional behavior in | Final field evaluations; ethics case analysis; professionalism workshops contextualized to specialization (e.g., clinical boundaries in SAMHT) | End of each academic year | Field Coordinator; Faculty |

| SLO # | CSWE Competency | Student Learning Outcome | Assessment Method | Timeline | Responsible Party |
|---------------|--|---|---|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | field and classroom settings. | | | |
| SLO 2 | C2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice | Students will demonstrate cultural humility and responsiveness to the unique identities and experiences of diverse populations. | Field supervisor evaluations; coursework on cultural competence; reflection papers relevant to specialization (e.g., addressing stigma in SAMHT or rural diversity in AGPT) | Ongoing; Graduation | Faculty; Field Supervisors |
| SLO 3 | C3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice | Students will analyze and respond to structural oppression through advocacy and applied practice. | Comprehensive exam; field documentation; community engagement activities tied to specialization (e.g., opioid equity in SAMH, housing advocacy in AGP) | Annually | Faculty; Program Director |
| SLO 4 | C4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice | Students will use evidence-based approaches and research findings to guide clinical and macro interventions. | Research-based assignments; evidence-based practice papers aligned with specialization areas | Each academic year | Faculty |
| SLO 5 | C5: Engage in Policy Practice | Students will engage in policy analysis and advocacy that impacts individual and community well-being. | Policy analysis project; macro-practice assignments in both specializations | Annually | Faculty |
| SLO 6 | C6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Students will demonstrate professional engagement skills across system levels and populations. | Field evaluations; simulated interviews and engagement exercises customized to specialization context | Final year | Field Coordinator; Faculty |
| SLO 7 | C7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Students will conduct comprehensive assessments using appropriate tools, theories, and cultural considerations. | Field documentation; case assessments; specialization-specific assessment assignments (e.g., biopsychosocial assessments in SAMH) | Ongoing | Faculty; Field Supervisors |
| SLO 8 | C8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Students will plan and implement interventions using advanced generalist or clinical frameworks. | Practice simulations; intervention planning assignments; field supervisor evaluation | Final semester | Faculty; Field Coordinator |
| SLO 9 | C9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Students will apply evaluation strategies to assess and improve practice outcomes. | Comprehensive exam; research-based program evaluation; applied evaluation activities by specialization | Final year | Faculty; Program Director |
| SLO 10 | Cross-Cutting (Comp. 1–9) and Mission-Based | Students will apply advanced knowledge and skills to address the needs of rural and | Rural/underserved field placements; community-based learning; specialization-informed service reflection | Each academic year | Field Coordinator; Program Director |

| SLO # | CSWE Competency | Student Learning Outcome | Assessment Method | Timeline | Responsible Party |
|-------|-----------------|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| | | underserved communities in the Upper Cumberland region. | | | |

Academic Program Requirements

The MSW program consists of a minimum of 60 credit hours and is designed to meet all accreditation standards established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The curriculum includes foundation and advanced coursework in human behavior, social policy, research methods, and social work practice across micro, mezzo, and macro levels, with two specialization tracks during students’ concentration (i.e., second) year: Advanced Generalist Track (AGT) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Track (SAMHT). All students complete a minimum of 900 hours of supervised field education in approved community agencies, as required by CSWE – 400 hours during foundation year and 500 hours during concentration year. The program will have a hybrid delivery format in which students will complete no more than 50% of their coursework in an online format and the remaining 50% will be in-person, on-ground. The program will offer both full-time and part-time options, with an advanced standing track available for students who hold a CSWE-accredited Bachelor of Social Work (BSW). Students must also complete a comprehensive exam that demonstrates mastery of core competencies and readiness for professional practice.

Existing & New Courses

Since the Department of Sociology and Political Science has not had a graduate program, all of the courses for the MSW program will be new courses. The table below outlines the courses that will be offered in the MSW Program, the delivery method, level of the course, i.e., foundation, concentration, or elective, and the credit hours (CH) for each course. The delivery method of the courses will be either online or on-ground. Although some of the courses will be online each time they are offered or in-person each time they are offered, some courses are designated “on-ground /online,” which indicates the delivery method will determine prior to the semester in which it will be offered. A total of 27 new courses will be added to the Graduate Catalog.

Comprehensive List of MSW Courses

| Course Type | Course Number, Title, Delivery, & Description | CH |
|-------------|--|----|
| Foundation | SW 6000: Social Work Practice (on-ground) This course covers generalist practice methods with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. This course introduces the student to the profession of social work, its history, ethical code, and theories related to interpersonal practice with an emphasis on social justice, trauma-informed care, and interprofessional practice. The course will allow students to compare evidence-based interventions and models of social work practice with clients/client systems in the context of social work values, attention to cultural competence, and professional engagement with clients. | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 5125: Human Behavior and Social Environment I (on-ground/online) This course orients students to theoretical content on the person-in-environment focus in social work practice. An ecological model with a lifespan approach is utilized to explore the periods from conception through late adulthood to understand individuals as they develop throughout the life cycle. Theoretical perspectives will be connected to issues that present at each life stage. Students will use this knowledge to develop an understanding of client functioning and to design appropriate interventions for common psychosocial problems. | 3 |

| Course Type | Course Number, Title, Delivery, & Description | CH |
|-------------|---|----|
| Foundation | SW 5150: Human Behavior and Social Environment II (on-ground/online) This second course in the HBSE sequence applies the basic framework for creating and organizing knowledge of human behavior and the social environment acquired in HBSE I to the understanding of group, organizational, community, and global systems. Attention is given to discrimination, oppression, the impact of technology, and poverty at each system level. | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6050: Research Methods in Social Work (on-ground) This foundation course is designed to help students gain an understanding of and appreciation for the use of research in evidence-based practices. Students are introduced to quantitative and qualitative concepts and skills underlying a systematic approach to social work research, including basic research terminology, scientific methods, and the value of research in social work. Students will learn about historical and present-day inequities in research and how to apply ethics and social work values to engage in ethical research. Students will apply these ethics and values to problem formulation, measurement, design, sampling, data gathering, analytic techniques, and use of analytic software. | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6150: Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work (on-ground) Prerequisite: SW 6050: Research Methods in Social Work This course introduces students to the principles and application of evidence-based practice (EBP) in social work. Students will critically examine how research evidence, clinical expertise, and client values intersect to inform ethical and effective decision-making. Emphasis is placed on developing skills to formulate answerable practice questions, search for and evaluate empirical evidence, and apply research findings to real-world social work contexts. Students will also explore barriers and facilitators to implementing EBP, including issues of cultural relevance, organizational context, and social justice. Through case analysis, applied assignments, and critical reflection, students will strengthen their ability to integrate evidence into practice and to advocate for interventions that improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities. | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6100: Poverty, Inequality, & Social Justice (online) This course critically examines the structural, economic, and social dimensions of poverty and inequality in the United States and globally, with a focus on their implications for social work practice. Students will explore historical and contemporary theories of poverty, the role of social policy, and the intersections of race, class, gender, and other identities in shaping experiences of disadvantage. Emphasis will be placed on analyzing systemic barriers, understanding the lived realities of marginalized populations, and evaluating policy and practice interventions designed to promote equity and social justice. Through readings, case studies, and applied projects, students will strengthen their capacity to advocate for social change, advance human rights, and engage in practice that challenges oppression and fosters inclusion. | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 5175: Introduction to Social Welfare Policy (on-ground/online) This course provides a foundational overview of social welfare policy in the United States, with attention to its historical development, philosophical underpinnings, and impact on diverse populations. Students will examine the values, political ideologies, and economic forces that shape social policy, as well as the role of government, advocacy groups, and social movements in influencing policy outcomes. Emphasis is placed on understanding how social welfare policies address issues such as poverty, inequality, health, housing, and child welfare, and how these policies intersect with race, class, gender, and other dimensions of identity. Students will learn to critically analyze policies using frameworks that assess effectiveness, equity, and social justice, and will develop skills to advocate for policy reforms that advance human rights and improve the well-being of vulnerable and marginalized populations. | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6900: Practicum IA (online) Prerequisites: 15 hours, SW 5000-level/6000-level 200 hours. This practicum is the initial supervised field experience designed to integrate classroom learning with professional social work practice. Students will engage in direct practice activities within an approved agency or community setting, developing foundational competencies in engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation with individuals, families, groups, and communities. Emphasis is placed on applying social work values and | 3 |

| Course Type | Course Number, Title, Delivery, & Description | CH |
|----------------------|--|----|
| | ethics, demonstrating cultural humility, practicing self-reflection, and building professional relationships in diverse practice environments. Students will also begin to connect theory and evidence-based practice to real-world contexts, strengthening their ability to think critically and respond ethically to complex client needs. Field education is conducted in partnership with seminar support, providing structured opportunities for feedback, discussion, and integration of practice experiences with academic content. | |
| Foundation | SW 6910: Practicum IB (online) Prerequisites: SW 6900: Practicum IA 200 hours. This practicum is the initial supervised field experience designed to integrate classroom learning with professional social work practice. Students will engage in direct practice activities within an approved agency or community setting, developing foundational competencies in engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation with individuals, families, groups, and communities. Emphasis is placed on applying social work values and ethics, demonstrating cultural humility, practicing self-reflection, and building professional relationships in diverse practice environments. Students will also begin to connect theory and evidence-based practice to real-world contexts, strengthening their ability to think critically and respond ethically to complex client needs. Field education is conducted in partnership with seminar support, providing structured opportunities for feedback, discussion, and integration of practice experiences with academic content. | 3 |
| Foundation/ SAMHT | SW 6200: Psychopathology in SW Practice (on-ground/online) This course provides an in-depth study of mental disorders as they relate to social work practice across diverse populations and settings. Students will examine the classification, etiology, and symptomatology of major mental health conditions, with particular emphasis on the DSM-5-TR framework. Attention is given to the interplay of biological, psychological, social, cultural, and environmental factors in the development and expression of psychopathology. Students will critically analyze the use of diagnostic systems, considering issues of bias, stigma, and social justice in mental health assessment and treatment. The course emphasizes culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and strengths-based approaches to understanding and addressing mental disorders. Through case studies, applied assignments, and integration of evidence-based interventions, students will develop competencies in assessment, diagnosis, and collaborative treatment planning within the scope of social work values and ethics. | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7000: Social Work Practice with Individuals (on-ground) Prerequisites: Practicum IA & IB This course provides an introduction to the knowledge, values, and skills essential for direct social work practice with individuals. Students will learn to apply engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation strategies grounded in evidence-based practice and the profession's ethical standards. Emphasis is placed on building therapeutic relationships, utilizing active listening and interviewing techniques, and tailoring interventions to diverse cultural, socioeconomic, and developmental contexts. The course explores a range of practice theories and models, including strengths-based, person-in-environment, and cognitive-behavioral approaches, while attending to issues of power, privilege, and oppression in the helping relationship. Through role plays, case studies, and applied assignments, students will develop beginning-level competencies for working effectively with individuals across the lifespan in various social work settings. | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7010: Social Work Practice with Groups (on-ground) Prerequisites: SW 6900: Practicum IA & SW 6910: Practicum IB This course prepares students to apply social work knowledge, values, and skills in the facilitation of groups across diverse practice settings. Emphasis is placed on understanding group dynamics, stages of group development, and the use of evidence-based models for therapeutic, support, psychoeducational, and task-oriented groups. Students will learn to plan, lead, and evaluate groups while fostering inclusion, mutual aid, and empowerment among members. Attention is given to the ethical responsibilities of group practice, the impact of diversity and cultural identity on group processes, and strategies for addressing conflict, | 3 |

| Course Type | Course Number, Title, Delivery, & Description | CH |
|---------------|---|----|
| | resistance, and power imbalances. Through experiential learning, role plays, and case studies, students will develop beginning competencies in group facilitation, assessment, and evaluation, strengthening their ability to use groups as a vehicle for change and social justice in social work practice. | |
| Concentration | SW 7110: Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice (on-ground/online) Prerequisites: SW 6900: Practicum IA & SW 6910: Practicum IB This course examines the principles, theories, and skills of trauma-informed practice in social work with individuals, families, and communities. Students will develop an understanding of the prevalence and impact of trauma across the lifespan, including the biological, psychological, and social effects of adverse childhood experiences, violence, systemic oppression, and collective trauma. Emphasis is placed on creating safe, collaborative, and empowering helping relationships that recognize resilience and avoid re-traumatization. Students will critically evaluate evidence-based and emerging interventions for trauma, including strengths-based, cognitive-behavioral, and somatic approaches, while integrating cultural humility and social justice perspectives. Through case analysis, experiential learning, and applied assignments, students will strengthen competencies in trauma assessment, intervention, and advocacy, preparing them to practice ethically and effectively in diverse settings where trauma is a central concern. | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7900: Practicum IIA (online) Prerequisites: 12 hours, Concentration Coursework 250 hours. This advanced field practicum provides students with an in-depth, supervised practice experience in their chosen concentration area of social work. Building upon the foundation-level practicum, students will refine and integrate advanced competencies in engagement, assessment, intervention, evaluation, and professional leadership. Emphasis is placed on applying evidence-based models, specialized practice theories, and trauma-informed, culturally responsive approaches within complex organizational and community settings. Students will deepen their ability to critically analyze practice situations, navigate ethical dilemmas, and advocate for social and economic justice. Field assignments are structured to promote increasing autonomy, advanced skill development, and professional identity formation. Practicum learning is supported by concurrent seminar sessions designed to facilitate reflection, integration of classroom knowledge, and peer learning. | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7910: Practicum IIB (online) Prerequisites: 12 hours, Concentration Coursework 250 hours. This advanced field practicum provides students with an in-depth, supervised practice experience in their chosen concentration area of social work. Building upon the foundation-level practicum, students will refine and integrate advanced competencies in engagement, assessment, intervention, evaluation, and professional leadership. Emphasis is placed on applying evidence-based models, specialized practice theories, and trauma-informed, culturally responsive approaches within complex organizational and community settings. Students will deepen their ability to critically analyze practice situations, navigate ethical dilemmas, and advocate for social and economic justice. Field assignments are structured to promote increasing autonomy, advanced skill development, and professional identity formation. Practicum learning is supported by concurrent seminar sessions designed to facilitate reflection, integration of classroom knowledge, and peer learning. | 3 |
| Con./ AGT | SW 7015: Social Work Practice with Communities & Organizations (on-ground) Prerequisites: SW 6900: Practicum IA & SW 6910: Practicum IB This course prepares students to apply social work knowledge, skills, and values in community and organizational practice settings. Emphasis is placed on understanding theories of community development, organizational change, and systems thinking as they relate to advancing social and economic justice. Students will learn strategies for community organizing, coalition building, program planning, policy advocacy, and capacity development, with attention to power, privilege, and structural inequality. The course highlights the role of social workers as facilitators, leaders, and advocates working to strengthen organizations and empower communities. Through case studies, experiential learning, and applied projects, | 3 |

| Course Type | Course Number, Title, Delivery, & Description | CH |
|-------------|---|----|
| | students will develop competencies in assessing community needs, designing and implementing interventions, evaluating outcomes, and promoting sustainable change in partnership with diverse populations. | |
| Con./ AGT | SW 7125: Social Policy Analysis (on-ground/online) Prerequisites: SW 6900: Practicum IA & SW 6910: Practicum IB This course provides advanced study of the methods and frameworks used to analyze social welfare policies and programs. Students will develop skills to critically evaluate the formulation, implementation, and outcomes of policies that affect individuals, families, and communities. Emphasis is placed on understanding the political, economic, and social forces that shape policy decisions, as well as the role of advocacy and research in influencing change. Students will apply policy analysis models to examine contemporary issues such as poverty, health care, housing, immigration, and child welfare, with attention to equity, human rights, and social justice. Through case studies, applied assignments, and policy briefs, students will strengthen their ability to assess policy effectiveness, identify unintended consequences, and advocate for reforms that promote inclusion and social well-being. | 3 |
| Con./ AGT | SW 7100: Grant Writing & Fund Development (online) Prerequisites: SW 6900: Practicum IA & SW 6910: Practicum IB This course introduces students to the principles and practices of grant writing and fund development as essential skills for advancing social work practice, programs, and organizations. Students will learn to identify funding opportunities, develop compelling proposals, and align projects with the priorities of public and private funders. Emphasis is placed on writing clear problem statements, measurable objectives, program designs, budgets, and evaluation plans. The course also explores broader strategies of fund development, including donor relations, fundraising campaigns, and ethical considerations in resource acquisition. Through hands-on assignments, peer review, and analysis of successful proposals, students will strengthen their ability to secure funding that supports innovative services and promotes social and economic justice for diverse communities. | 3 |
| Con./ SAMHT | SW 7020: Social Work Practice with Families (on-ground) Prerequisites: SW 6900: Practicum IA & SW 6910: Practicum IB This course focuses on the knowledge, values, and skills required for effective social work practice with families in diverse contexts. Students will examine theories of family development, systems perspectives, and culturally responsive approaches to family intervention. Emphasis is placed on engagement, assessment, and intervention strategies that strengthen family functioning, promote resilience, and address challenges such as trauma, conflict, and systemic oppression. The course explores evidence-based models of family practice, including structural, solution-focused, and cognitive-behavioral approaches, while highlighting the importance of cultural humility, social justice, and ethical decision-making. Through case studies, role plays, and applied projects, students will develop competencies in working collaboratively with families to support well-being across the lifespan. | 3 |
| Con./ SAMHT | SW 7200: Assessment & Evaluation of Clinical Practice (on-ground) Prerequisites: SW 6900: Practicum IA & SW 6910: Practicum IB This course prepares students to systematically assess client needs and evaluate clinical social work practice using evidence-informed methods. Students will develop skills in conducting comprehensive biopsychosocial-spiritual assessments, formulating diagnostic impressions, and identifying appropriate interventions for diverse populations. Emphasis is placed on the integration of standardized assessment tools, culturally responsive approaches, and clinical judgment. Students will also examine approaches to evaluating practice effectiveness, including goal attainment scaling, single-case designs, and outcome measurement. Ethical issues, cultural considerations, and the importance of client participation in assessment and evaluation are emphasized throughout. Through case analysis, applied assignments, and practice simulations, students will strengthen competencies in linking assessment to intervention and using evaluation to improve practice outcomes and advance social justice. | 3 |
| Con./ SAMHT | SW 7210: Social Work Practice in Addictions (on-ground) Prerequisites: Practicum IA & IB | 3 |

| Course Type | Course Number, Title, Delivery, & Description | CH |
|-------------|--|----|
| | This course provides an in-depth exploration of social work practice with individuals, families, and communities affected by substance use and addictive behaviors. Students will examine the biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors that contribute to addiction, as well as the impact of stigma, trauma, and systemic inequities. Emphasis is placed on evidence-based and emerging interventions, including motivational interviewing, cognitive-behavioral approaches, harm reduction, and recovery-oriented systems of care. Students will also gain skills in screening, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning while critically analyzing the ethical and policy dimensions of addiction services. Special attention is given to culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices that promote resilience, recovery, and social justice. Through case studies, applied exercises, and reflective practice, students will develop competencies to work effectively across diverse practice settings addressing addiction. | |
| Con./ SAMHT | SW 7220: Substance Abuse & Recovery (on-ground/online) Prerequisites: Practicum IA & IB This course explores the nature, causes, and consequences of substance use disorders, as well as pathways to treatment and recovery. Students will examine the biological, psychological, social, and cultural dimensions of addiction, with attention to how trauma, inequality, and systemic oppression shape experiences of substance use. Emphasis is placed on evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies, including harm reduction, motivational interviewing, medication-assisted treatment, and recovery-oriented systems of care. The course highlights the role of social workers in supporting individuals, families, and communities across the continuum of care, from prevention to long-term recovery. Students will critically analyze policies and service delivery systems that impact access to treatment and recovery supports, while developing culturally responsive and strengths-based approaches to practice. Through case studies, applied assignments, and engagement with recovery narratives, students will strengthen their ability to integrate research, practice, and advocacy in addressing substance use and promoting recovery. | 3 |
| Elective | SW 5000: Rural Social Work (online) This course examines the unique challenges and opportunities of social work practice in rural communities. Students will explore the demographic, economic, cultural, and geographic factors that shape service delivery and client experiences in rural contexts. Emphasis is placed on the strengths and resilience of rural populations, the impact of limited resources and social services, and the importance of collaboration, innovation, and advocacy in addressing community needs. Topics include health disparities, poverty, substance use, mental health access, ethical dilemmas in small communities, and the role of social workers as generalist practitioners. Students will analyze policies affecting rural areas, evaluate strategies for community engagement and capacity building, and develop culturally responsive and contextually appropriate approaches to practice. Through case studies, applied projects, and reflective learning, students will strengthen competencies for advancing equity and social justice in rural settings. | 3 |
| Elective | SW 5010: School Social Work (online) This course provides an overview of social work practice in K–12 educational settings, with a focus on promoting the academic, social, and emotional well-being of children and adolescents. Students will examine the historical and contemporary role of school social workers, relevant laws and policies, and the ways schools intersect with families and communities. Emphasis is placed on assessment, prevention, intervention, and advocacy strategies that address issues such as poverty, trauma, bullying, absenteeism, behavioral challenges, and special education needs. Students will learn to collaborate with teachers, administrators, families, and community partners to foster safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments. Attention is given to cultural humility, ethical decision-making, and the advancement of equity and social justice in schools. Through case studies, applied projects, and experiential learning, students will strengthen their ability to deliver effective services and advocate for systemic change within educational systems. | 3 |
| Elective | SW 5015: Medical Social Work (online) This course examines the role of social workers in healthcare settings, focusing on the | 3 |

| Course Type | Course Number, Title, Delivery, & Description | CH |
|-------------|---|----|
| | integration of psychosocial care with medical treatment. Students will explore the impact of illness, disability, and health disparities on individuals and families, and learn to provide assessment, intervention, and advocacy within interdisciplinary healthcare teams. Emphasis is placed on culturally responsive and trauma-informed practice, ethical decision-making, and addressing barriers to care such as poverty, stigma, and systemic inequities. Topics include chronic illness, end-of-life care, mental health in medical settings, patient and family support, and healthcare policy and reform. Through case studies, role plays, and applied assignments, students will develop competencies in patient advocacy, care coordination, crisis intervention, and linking clients with community resources. The course prepares students to practice effectively in hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, and other health-related environments. | |
| Elective | SW 5020: Forensic Social Work (online) This course explores the intersection of social work and the legal system, preparing students for practice in forensic settings. Students will examine the roles of social workers in criminal justice, child welfare, mental health courts, corrections, and related environments where legal and clinical issues converge. Emphasis is placed on assessment, intervention, case management, and expert testimony in cases involving abuse, neglect, trauma, substance use, and violence. Students will also study relevant laws, ethical dilemmas, and the impact of systemic inequality, racism, and oppression within legal systems. The course highlights evidence-based and trauma-informed practices that promote rehabilitation, human rights, and restorative justice. Through case studies, applied exercises, and critical analysis, students will develop competencies in working with justice-involved individuals, families, and communities, while advocating for equitable and humane policies. | 3 |
| Elective | SW 5025: Social Work with Children & Youth (online) This course examines theories, practices, and policies relevant to social work with children and adolescents in diverse settings. Students will explore developmental, ecological, and trauma-informed perspectives to understand the unique needs and strengths of young people. Emphasis is placed on assessment, engagement, and intervention strategies that promote safety, resilience, and well-being across contexts such as child welfare, schools, juvenile justice, and community-based programs. Students will learn to apply evidence-based models, address issues of poverty, abuse, neglect, mental health, and systemic oppression, and collaborate effectively with families, caregivers, and interdisciplinary teams. The course also highlights the importance of advocacy and policy practice to improve outcomes for children and youth. Through case studies, applied projects, and reflective practice, students will strengthen their competencies in direct practice and systemic intervention with young populations. | 3 |

Program of Study

The MSW program consists of a minimum of 60 credit hours and is designed to meet all accreditation standards established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The curriculum includes foundation and advanced coursework in human behavior, social policy, research methods, and social work practice across micro, mezzo, and macro levels, with two specialization tracks during students' concentration (i.e., second) year: Advanced Generalist Track (AGT) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Track (SAMHT). All students complete a minimum of 900 hours of supervised field education in approved community agencies, as required by CSWE – 400 hours during foundation year and 500 hours during concentration year. The program will have a hybrid delivery format in which students will complete no more than 50% of their coursework in an online format and the remaining 50% will be in-person, on-ground. The program will offer both full-time and part-time options, with an advanced standing track available for students who hold a CSWE-accredited Bachelor of Social Work (BSW).

Students must also complete a comprehensive exam that demonstrates mastery of core competencies and readiness for professional practice.

The MSW program will offer two specialization tracks to prepare students for advanced professional practice: the Advanced Generalist Track and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Track. The Advanced Generalist Track provides broad-based training across micro, mezzo, and macro levels, equipping students with the flexibility to work in diverse roles and settings, including clinical practice, community development, and policy advocacy. This track emphasizes integrated practice skills, leadership, and systems thinking, particularly in rural and underserved communities. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Track offers focused preparation for working with individuals and families affected by mental health disorders and substance use. Students in this track receive specialized training in assessment, treatment planning, trauma-informed care, and interdisciplinary collaboration, preparing them for roles in behavioral health agencies, addiction recovery programs, and integrated care settings.

Advanced Generalist Track. The table below shows the courses in the MSW degree program for Advanced Generalist Track (AGT). The AGT is designed for students seeking a versatile and comprehensive social work education that prepares them for practice across a wide range of settings and populations. This track emphasizes the integration of clinical skills, community engagement, and systems-level thinking, making it ideal for those who wish to work in both direct practice and leadership roles. It is especially well-suited for individuals planning to serve in rural or underserved areas, where social workers often take on multiple roles across micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice.

Planned Courses for Advanced Generalist Track (AGT)

| Course Type | Course Number and Title | CH |
|---------------|--|----|
| Foundation | SW 6000: Social Work Practice | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 5125 HBSE I | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 5150 HBSE II | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6050: Research Methods in Social Work | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6150: Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6100: Poverty, Inequality, & Social Justice | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 5175 Introduction to Social Welfare Policy | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6900: Practicum IA | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6910: Practicum IB | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7000: Social Work Practice with Individuals | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7010: Social Work Practice with Groups | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7110: Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7900: Practicum IIA | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7910: Practicum IIB | 3 |
| Con./ AGT | SW 7015: Social Work Practice with Communities & Organizations | 3 |
| Con./ AGT | SW 7125: Social Policy Analysis | 3 |
| Con./ AGT | SW 7100: Grant Writing & Fund Development | 3 |
| Electives | SW 5000-5099 or approved course* | 9 |
| Total | | 60 |

* Substance Abuse and Mental Track course can fulfill elective requirements for AGT

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Track. The table below shows the courses in the MSW degree program for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Track (SAMHT). The SAMHT is designed for students pursuing a clinical path with a focus on treating individuals affected by

mental health conditions and substance use disorders. This track provides specialized training in clinical assessment, evidence-based interventions, trauma-informed care, and recovery-oriented practices. It prepares students for roles in behavioral health settings such as mental health agencies, addiction treatment programs, hospitals, and integrated care teams, where they will apply advanced clinical skills to support clients and improve outcomes in high-need populations.

Planned Courses for Substance Abuse & Mental Health Track (SAMAT)

| Course Type | Course Number and Title | CH |
|-------------------|---|----|
| Foundation | SW 6000: Social Work Practice | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 5125 HBSE I | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 5150 HBSE II | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6050: Research Methods in Social Work | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6150: Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6100: Poverty, Inequality, & Social Justice | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 5175 Introduction to Social Welfare Policy | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6900: Practicum IA | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6910: Practicum IB | 3 |
| Foundation/ SAMHT | SW 6200: Psychopathology in SW Practice | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7000: Social Work Practice with Individuals | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7010: Social Work Practice with Groups | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7110: Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7900: Practicum IIA | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7910: Practicum IIB | 3 |
| Con./ SAMHT | SW 7020: Social Work Practice with Families | 3 |
| Con./ SAMHT | SW 7200: Assessment & Evaluation of Clinical Practice | 3 |
| Con./ SAMHT | SW 7210: Social Work Practice in Addictions | 3 |
| Con./ SAMHT | SW 7220: Substance Abuse & Recovery | 3 |
| Electives | SW 5000-5099 or approved course* | 3 |
| Total | | 60 |

* Advanced Generalist Track courses can fulfill elective requirements for SAMHT.

Program Options. The proposed MSW program is structured to support a streamlined and efficient course delivery model for full-time students, part-time, and advanced standing students, enabling degree completion in one, two, or four years, depending upon qualifications (e.g., advanced standing) or full-time or part-time, while minimizing the need to offer multiple sections of the same course within an academic year. With the exception of one course (Psychopathology in SW Practice), which will be offered twice annually to accommodate both fulltime and parttime students, all other courses are scheduled to be taught once per year. This design not only maximizes faculty resources and instructional consistency but also ensures that students can complete their coursework and field education requirements in a timely and cohesive manner. The program includes a blend of online and in-person learning, organized across four semesters (fall & spring x 2) for full-time times, eight semesters 12 semesters (fall, spring, & summer x 4) for part-time students, and two semesters for advanced standing students (fall & spring).

Full-Time MSW Program. The Full-Time MSW Program is designed for students who wish to complete their graduate education in a traditional, two-year timeframe. This option allows for immersive study and consistent progression through the curriculum, including both foundational and advanced coursework. Students will engage in classroom instruction alongside two field placements totaling at least 900 hours, preparing them for professional licensure and advanced

practice across micro, mezzo, and macro levels. The full-time format is ideal for students who are able to commit to a structured, intensive academic schedule (i.e., 15 hours per semester) and are seeking to enter the workforce as licensed social workers as quickly as possible. The curriculum for the Full-Time Program in each track is as follows:

| Full-Time Program Structure | | | |
|--|-----------|--|-----------|
| 1. Advanced Generalist Track, Fulltime (60 Hours) | | | |
| Foundation Year 1 | | Concentration Year 2 | |
| First Semester | CH | First Semester | CH |
| Social Work Practice | 3 | SW Practice w/ Individuals | 3 |
| HBSE I | 3 | SW Practice w/ Groups | 3 |
| Research Methods in Social Work | 3 | SW Practice w/in Organizations & Communities | 3 |
| Introduction to Social Welfare Policy | 3 | SW Elective | 3 |
| Poverty, Inequality, & Social Justice | 3 | SW Elective | 3 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>15</i> |
| Second Semester | CH | Second Semester | CH |
| HBSE II | 3 | Social Policy Analysis | 3 |
| Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work | 3 | Grant Writing & Fund Development | 3 |
| SW Elective | 3 | Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice | 3 |
| Practicum IA | 3 | Practicum IIA | 3 |
| Practicum IB | 3 | Practicum IIB | 3 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>15</i> |
| Total | 30 | Total | 30 |
| 2. Substance Abuse & Mental Health Track, Full-Time | | | |
| Foundation Year 1 | | Concentration Year 2 | |
| First Semester | CH | First Semester | CH |
| Social Work Practice | 3 | SW Practice w/ Individuals | 3 |
| HBSE I | 3 | SW Practice w/ Groups | 3 |
| Research Methods in Social Work | 3 | Assessment & Evaluation of Clinical Practice | 3 |
| Introduction to Social Welfare Policy | 3 | Substance Abuse & Recovery | 3 |
| Poverty, Inequality, & Social Justice | 3 | SW Elective | 3 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>15</i> |
| Second Semester | CH | Second Semester | CH |
| HBSE II | 3 | SW Practice in Addictions | 3 |
| Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work | 3 | SW Practice w/ Families | 3 |
| Psychopathology in SW Practice | 3 | Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice | 3 |
| Practicum IA | 3 | Practicum IIA (Clinical Focus) | 3 |
| Practicum IB | 3 | Practicum IIB (Clinical Focus) | 3 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>15</i> |
| Total | 30 | Total | 30 |

Part-Time MSW Program. The Part-Time MSW Program offers a flexible pathway for students balancing graduate education with work, family, or other commitments. Spread over four years, this option maintains the same rigorous academic and field education requirements as the full-time program but allows for a reduced course load each semester. Specifically, it requires six hours in fall and spring semesters and three hours in the summer semesters. It is especially well-suited for working professionals or students who need additional flexibility in their schedules. Part-time students will receive the same high-quality instruction and field placement support, ensuring they graduate fully prepared for clinical practice, leadership, and licensure. The curriculum for the Full-Time Program in each track is as follows:

Part-Time Program Structure**1. Advanced Generalist Track, Part-Time (60 Hours)****Foundation Year 1****First Semester**

Social Work Practice

CH

3

HBSE I

3

Subtotal

6

Second Semester**CH**

HBSE II

3

Poverty, Inequality, & Social Justice

3

Subtotal

6

Summer Semester**CH**

SW Elective

3

Subtotal

3

Total**15****Foundation Year 2****First Semester****CH**

Research Methods in Social Work

3

Introduction to Social Welfare Policy

3

Subtotal

6

Second Semester**CH**

Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work

3

Practicum IA

3

Subtotal

6

Summer Semester**CH**

Practicum IB

3

Subtotal

3

Total**15****Concentration Year 3****First Semester****CH**

SW Practice w/ Individuals

3

SW Practice w/ Groups

3

Subtotal

6

Second Semester**CH**

Social Policy Analysis

3

Grant Writing & Fund Development

3

Subtotal

15

Summer Semester**CH**

SW Elective

3

Subtotal

15

Total**30****Concentration Year 3****First Semester****CH**

SW Practice w/ Communities & Organizations

3

SW Elective

3

Subtotal

6

Second Semester**CH**

Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice

3

Practicum IIA

15

Subtotal

15

Summer Semester**CH**

Practicum IIB

3

Subtotal

15

Total**30****2. Substance Abuse & Mental Health Track, Part-Time (60 Hours)****Foundation Year 1****First Semester****CH**

Social Work Practice

3

HBSE I

3

Subtotal

6

Second Semester**CH**

HBSE II

3

Poverty, Inequality, & Social Justice

3

Subtotal

6

Summer Semester**CH**

Psychopathology in SW Practice

3

Subtotal

3

Total**15****Foundation Year 2****First Semester****CH**

Research Methods in Social Work

3

Introduction to Social Welfare Policy

3

Subtotal

6

Second Semester**CH**

Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work

3

Practicum IA

3

Subtotal

6

Summer Semester**CH**

Practicum IB

3

Subtotal

3

Total**30****Concentration Year 3****First Semester****CH**

SW Practice w/ Individuals

3

SW Practice w/ Groups

3

Subtotal

6

Second Semester**CH**

SW Practice in Addictions

3

SW Practice w/ Families

3

Subtotal

15

Summer Semester**CH**

SW Elective

3

Subtotal

15

Total**30****Concentration Year 3****First Semester****CH**

Assessment & Evaluation of Clinical Practice

3

Substance Abuse & Recovery

3

Subtotal

6

Second Semester**CH**

Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice

3

Practicum IIA

15

Subtotal

15

Summer Semester**CH**

Practicum IIB

3

Subtotal

15

Total**30**

Advanced Standing MSW Program. The Advanced Standing MSW Program is available to students who hold a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree from a CSWE-accredited program. This accelerated option allows qualified students to bypass foundation coursework (30 hours) and enter directly into the concentration curriculum, completing their MSW in as little as one year of full-time study or two years part-time. Advanced standing students engage in specialized coursework and field education aligned with their chosen track—either Advanced Generalist or Substance Abuse and Mental Health—and are prepared for immediate entry into professional roles requiring advanced clinical and organizational practice skills. The curriculum for the Full-Time Program in each track is as follows:

Advanced Standing Program Structure

1. Advanced Generalist Track, Advanced Standing (30 Hours)

Concentration Year 1

| <i>First Semester</i> | <i>CH</i> | <i>Second Semester</i> | <i>CH</i> |
|--|------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| SW Practice w/ Individuals | 3 | Social Policy Analysis | 3 |
| SW Practice w/ Groups | 3 | Grant Writing & Fund Development | 3 |
| SW Practice w/in Organizations & Communities | 3 | Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice | 3 |
| SW Elective | 3 | Practicum IIA | 3 |
| SW Elective | 3 | Practicum IIB | 3 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>15</i> |
| Total 30 | | | |

2. Substance Abuse & Mental Health Track, Advanced Standing

Concentration Year 1

| <i>First Semester</i> | <i>CH</i> | <i>Second Semester</i> | <i>CH</i> |
|--|------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| SW Practice w/ Individuals | 3 | SW Practice in Addictions | 3 |
| SW Practice w/ Groups | 3 | SW Practice w/ Families | 3 |
| Assessment & Evaluation of Clinical Practice | 3 | Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice | 3 |
| Substance Abuse & Recovery | 3 | Practicum IIA | 3 |
| Psychopathology in SW Practice | 3 | Practicum IIB | 3 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>15</i> |
| Total 30 | | | |

Section VII: Projected Costs & Revenues for the Proposed Program

Costs

The total projected cost for implementing the program involves \$4,356,183 over the first six years in reoccurring expenditures. The majority of this cost is faculty (\$2,438,986) and staff (\$1,731,197). The remaining six-year total of reoccurring expenditures are in marketing (\$60,000), cost for space (\$60,000), and EMR software for the faculty and students in the CAPS clinic (\$66,000). Approximately \$347,500 in start-up, one-time expenditure. These expenditures include \$46,500 for the CSWE accreditation process, \$50,000 in equipment, \$36,000 in information technology, and \$190,000 in facilities, and \$25,000 for expenses related to hiring. All of the one-time expenditures and the first three years of the reoccurring expenses will be paid for through a grant that was awarded July 1, 2025. The remaining reoccurring costs will be paid for through tuition dollars. See the THEC Financial Projection Form for details.

Reoccurring Expenditures. The projected costs to deliver the proposed MSW program will primarily involve personnel expenses associated with new and existing faculty. First, the CSWE requires at least four faculty members with 51% commitment to the MSW program, and the majority of the faculty members must have doctorate degrees. Therefore, a doctorate-level

faculty as Program Director, one full-time MSW-level Lecturer as Field Director, and two doctorate-level faculty to support instruction, advising, and curriculum development. In addition, instructional coverage will be supplemented by allocating 25% of the time of one existing Lecturer and CAPS's Clinical Supervisor (Mr. Matt Silvey) and 50% of the time of one tenured professor to the program (Dr. Steve Seiler). These commitments will ensure appropriate faculty-to-student ratios, support specialized course delivery, and uphold program quality, with associated costs incorporated into the institution's long-term budget planning.

Additionally, to support the successful implementation and ongoing operations of the proposed MSW program, the projected costs will include the addition of one full-time Administrative Assistant and two mental health therapists for CAPS's mental health clinic. First, the administrative assistant will provide essential administrative support to faculty, assist with student services coordination, manage departmental communications, and help ensure compliance with accreditation and reporting requirements. The position is critical to maintaining the efficiency and effectiveness of program operations and has been included in the projected budget to ensure sustained administrative capacity as the program grows. Second, in partnership with CAPS, the program will support two fulltime mental health therapists for the mental health clinic who will also provide MSW supervision, as needed, and assist with the MSW program instructional and non-instructional needs.

To ensure a strong student enrollment, \$10,000, annually, will support marketing activities, ensuring focused and effective recruitment efforts aimed at fostering enrollment and program growth. The marketing strategy for the MSW program within is designed to attract both recent graduates and working professionals throughout the Upper Cumberland region and beyond. Emphasis will be placed on promoting the program's flexible enrollment options, including part-time, full-time, and fast-track pathways, to accommodate diverse student needs and career goals. Marketing efforts will target prospective students currently residing in the Upper Cumberland region, as well as those from the region who are attending other institutions or working in other geographic areas. Outreach initiatives will encourage these individuals to consider relocating to the Upper Cumberland to take advantage of the MSW program's quality education and community connections. A multi-faceted approach will be employed, utilizing digital marketing campaigns on social media, targeted email communications, virtual and in-person information sessions, collaboration with local organizations and employers, and traditional marketing materials such as brochures and flyers distributed at regional events.

The "other" reoccurring costs rent for classroom spaces in the Regions Bank building (\$16,000 annually), electronic medical records cloud-based system for CAPS's mental health services (\$12,000 per year), and a \$5,000 general operating budget per year.

Non-Reoccurring Expenditures. First, the projected costs for obtaining accreditation for the proposed MSW program through the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) are estimated at \$13,900 and will be fully funded through an external grant. These costs include a \$5,000 Application Fee for Candidacy, a \$2,500 Benchmark II Fee, a \$2,500 Benchmark III Fee, and an estimated \$3,900 for the site visit, including travel and lodging expenses for CSWE-appointed reviewers. When calculating travel, room and board for site visits, and internal costs, the total cost for the entire accreditation process is estimated to be \$46,500.

Second, to support the successful launch and operation of the MSW, equipment costs have been projected to include the purchase of computers for new personnel (\$50,000). Specifically, computers will be provided to each of the four new faculty hires, two mental health therapists, as well as an Administrative Assistant (described in “Anticipated New Faculty & Instructional Staff” and “Non-Instructional Staff” below). These equipment acquisitions are essential to ensure that faculty and staff have the technological resources necessary for instruction, research, program administration, and student support.

Third, \$36,000 will cover costs with installation of routers and switches for internet in the new areas of the Regions Bank building.

Fourth, in addition to CAPS maintaining its current space for its programmatic agenda the in the Regions Bank building, it will accommodate three classrooms, six faculty offices, space for the administrative assistant. All of the classroom spaces are equipped to support interactive instruction, small group work, and applied learning opportunities. Renovations to the space will take place in 2026 to update the spaces, the classrooms, and rearrange CAPS staff to accommodate the MSW program. The costs for renovations are estimated to be \$190,000.

Additional “other” costs are associated with the program are expenses related to job searches (\$25,000) to cover costs associated with advertising/recruitment and bringing candidates to campus (i.e., travel, local accommodation, candidate dinners).

Tuition

Tuition per credit hour is \$666, including program service fees, for in-state residents. A fulltime CSWE-accredited program is 30 hours per academic year (15 hours per semester, assuming fall and spring semesters only). This translates into \$19,980 per student, per academic year. Additionally, a part-time student in a CSWE-accredited program is 15 hours per academic year (6 hours in the fall and spring and 3 hours in the summer), which translates into \$9,990 per student, per year. Tuition increases, on average, approximately 4% per year. Therefore, the calculations presented are based upon a 4% tuition increase per year. With the proposed program anticipated to begin in the fall of 2027, the conservative estimate assumes only a 4% tuition increase between the current tuition cost (2025) and the 2027 tuition cost. Moreover, the estimates are based solely on in-state tuition cost, as this is our target demographic for the program.

Grants

The Tennessee Opioid Abatement Council (OAC) awarded CAPS and the Department of Sociology and Political Science a three-year grant in the amount of \$2,575,043 to build the MSW program through the Department of Sociology and Political Science in conjunction with building a free community mental health clinic through CAPS. The planning year and years one and two of the MSW program will be largely supported by this grant. The Financial Projection Form reflects the approved grant budget.

Other

No other funding sources have been identified at this time.

Revenue

The cost of sustaining the MSW program, as well as supporting the CAPS clinic, will be paid for through the combination of the OAC grant and tuition from the MSW program. The six-year financial projection indicate Considering only the program income without any other one-time expenses or other expenditures not accounted for here, by the end of year five (planning year + program years 1-5), the program would have an estimated six-year net income of \$1,835,774. The program is designed to sustain itself and the CAPS clinic without increasing the faculty and staff proposed here while also being below the CSWE's maximum student-faculty ratio.

Planning Year (2026-2027): The planning year will focus on CSWE accreditation, faculty and non-instructional staff hires, and infrastructure development. The expenditures for this planning year are estimated to be \$742,080, with no revenue. However, the approved OAC grant budget for this year is \$840,742, which would a net income of \$98,662 by the end of the year.

Program Year #1 (2027-2028): The program will begin accepting students in the fall of 2027. To make sure the program is fully accredited by the time students graduate (spring of 3030), the program will only accept part-time students. We anticipate at least 10 students being accepted into the program in its first year, in which we assume tuition per credit hour is \$692.64 ($\$666 \times .04$). This translates into \$10,389 ($\$692 \times 15 \text{ CH}$) per part-time student per year. With 10 students, revenue from tuition for year 1 be \$103,896. Expenditures for this year are estimated to be \$751,995; however, revenue from tuition in addition to the approved OAC budget for this year will be \$953,740, which would result in a net income of \$201,745.

Program Year #2 (2028-2029): In addition to part-time students, the program will begin accepting fulltime students. We anticipate at least 10 students beginning the fulltime program and 10 new students beginning the parttime program. Assuming, losing one student to attrition, the program would have 19 parttime students. The tuition for 10 fulltime students ($\$21,610 \times 10 = \$216,104$) and 19 parttime students ($\$10,805 \times 19 = \$205,298$) produces \$421,402 in tuition revenue for the year. Adding this to the OAC grant budget for the year (\$884,457), the total revenue for the year would be \$1,305,859. The expenditures for year two are anticipated to be \$787,093, which leaves a net income of \$518,766.

Program Year #3 (2029-2030): This will be the first year with a spring graduating class of fulltime students who started in the fall of 2028 and who started in 2029 on the fast-track option. This will also be the first year after the end of the OAC grant. Therefore, revenue will be based solely on tuition dollars. We anticipate accepting 15 new fulltime students (two of which we anticipate to be in the fast-track program) and, projecting losing one fulltime to attrition, we would have 24 fulltime students ($\$22,474 \times 24 = \$539,398$). Assuming losing one parttime student to attrition and accepting 10 new parttime students, the program would have 28 parttime students ($\$11,237 \times 28 = \$314,648$). This would produce an annual revenue of \$854,046. The expenditures for year three are anticipated to be \$763,782, which would leave a net income of \$90,265.

Program Year #4 (2030-2031): We anticipate 14 fulltime (including two fast-track) and nine parttime students to graduate in the spring of 2031. We expect to have 20 new fulltime students (with two in the fast-track program) in the fall of 2030. With nine students from the fall 2028

class and two students from the fall 2029 fast-track class graduating in the spring of 2030 and anticipating losing one fulltime student to attrition, the program would have 32 fulltime students ($\$23,373.91 \times 32 = \$747,965.12$). For the parttime program, expecting to lose one student to attrition, we would have 27 returning students and we anticipate 10 new students to begin the program ($\$11,686.96 \times 37 = \$432,417.52$). Therefore, we anticipate a revenue of 1,180,382.64. With expected expenditures to be \$850,243, we anticipate having a net income of \$330,140.

Program Year #5 (2031-2032): We anticipate having 25 new fulltime (including three fast-track) and 10 new parttime students begin in the fall of 2031. With 14 fulltime students graduating and losing one fulltime student to attrition, we would have 17 returning fulltime students. Including new fulltime students, we would have 42 fulltime students ($\$24,308.86 \times 42 = \$1,020,972.12$). With nine students from the first parttime cohort graduating in the spring of 2031 and losing one to attrition, we would have 26 returning parttime students. With the 10 new students, the parttime enrollment would be at 37 ($\$12,154 \times 37 = \$449,713$). This would produce an annual revenue of \$1,470,686. Subtracting the estimated \$874,490 in expenditures, the net income for year five would be \$596,196.

Section VIII: Institutional Resources

Faculty Resources

Current faculty resources and the expected hire of three Professors and one Lecturer will ensure a high-quality academic and experiential learning in the MSW program.

Current Faculty

The MSW program will be sustained largely through new faculty hires – a Program Director (PhD; Associate/Full Professor), a Field Director (LMSW/LCSW; Lecturer), and two Assistant Professors (PhD). Each of the new faculty members will be primarily assigned to the MSW program. Dr. Steve Seiler and Mr. Matt Silvey will oversee the initial CSWE accreditation and the entire hiring process. Dr. Seiler will have a 50% commitment to the MSW program, and Mr. Silvey will have a 25% commitment to the MSW Program.

Faculty List

| Faculty Name | Title | Degree | Contribution |
|---------------------|--------------|---------------|--|
| Steve Seiler | Professor | PhD, MSW | Will oversee the full CSWE accreditation process, ensuring compliance with all Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) and managing required reports, assessments, and site visits; will serve as the primary liaison between CAPS and the MSW program, facilitating communication, planning, and resource coordination; will maintain an active teaching role within the MSW program, contributing to curriculum development and instruction in areas aligned with their expertise. Teach one course. (50%) |
| Matthew Silvey | Lecturer | MSSW, JD | Will play a key role in supporting the development and accreditation of the MSW program by overseeing the CSWE accreditation process, including the coordination of self-studies, assessment plans, and compliance with EPAS; will contribute to the MSW program through teaching, curriculum development, and student mentorship in their area of expertise. Teach one course. (25%) |

| Faculty Name | Title | Degree | Contribution |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---|
| New Position | Associate/Full Professor | PhD, MSW (LMSW/LCSW) | Will provide academic and administrative leadership for the MSW program, overseeing curriculum development, faculty coordination, and program assessment; will also manage the CSWE accreditation process and serve as the primary liaison between the program, university leadership, and external stakeholders. Program Director & teach 2 courses. (100%) |
| New Position | Assistant Professor | PhD, MSW (LMSW/LCSW) | Will be responsible for delivering high-quality instruction in social work courses aligned with their area of expertise, contributing to curriculum development, and engaging in scholarly research; will also participate in student advising, serve on departmental and program committees, and support the program's mission through service, community engagement, and ongoing professional development. Teach four courses. (100%) |
| New Position | Assistant Professor | PhD, MSW (LMSW/LCSW) | Will be responsible for delivering high-quality instruction in social work courses aligned with their area of expertise, contributing to curriculum development, and engaging in scholarly research; will also participate in student advising, serve on departmental and program committees, and support the program's mission through service, community engagement, and ongoing professional development. Teach four courses. (100%) |
| New Position | Lecturer | MSW (LMSW/LCSW) | Will oversee all aspects of the field education program, including the development, placement, and evaluation of student internships in compliance with CSWE standards, and will work closely with community partners, students, and faculty to ensure high-quality, supervised practice experiences that integrate classroom learning with real-world application. Field Director and teach two courses. (100%) |

Anticipated New Faculty & Instructional Staff

Establishing the proposed MSW program within the Department of Sociology and Political Science will require a strategic investment in faculty to meet instructional and accreditation needs. Key hires will include a Program Director with a PhD at the associate or full professor rank, a Field Director at the lecturer level, and two assistant professors. These new faculty members will play a central role in curriculum development, student advising, and delivering coursework that aligns with CSWE accreditation standards. To support the program's launch and initial accreditation efforts, one tenured professor will dedicate 50% of their time, and an existing lecturer will contribute at a 25% effort. This combination of new hires and current faculty engagement ensures a strong foundation for academic quality and program sustainability, with all personnel-related expenses factored into the institution's long-term financial planning.

The first three years of the four new positions, the reclassification of Mr. Silvey, and the 50% time of the professor will be fully covered by grant. The university will cover costs once the grant expires, and financial projections indicate the positions will be sustained through revenue from tuition.

Non-Instructional Staff

To ensure the effective launch and long-term success of the proposed MSW program, the projected budget includes funding for three key support positions: one full-time Administrative Assistant and two licensed mental health therapists for the university's CAPS clinic. The Administrative Assistant will play a vital role in day-to-day operations, providing support to faculty, coordinating student services, managing departmental communication, and assisting with compliance and reporting tied to accreditation. This role is integral to maintaining operational efficiency as the program scales. In collaboration with CAPS, the program will also fund two full-time therapists who will serve dual roles—delivering clinical services through the mental health clinic and supporting the MSW program through supervision and instructional or co-curricular involvement as needed. These positions not only expand clinical capacity but also enrich the educational experience for MSW students.

All three positions will be fully funded through the initial grant. Once the grant period concludes, the university will assume financial responsibility, with projections indicating that ongoing support for these roles will be sustained through tuition revenue generated by the program.

Student Support Services

Tennessee Tech offers a robust network of student support services designed to promote academic success, well-being, and career readiness. Campus-wide, students benefit from centralized resources including the Student Success Centers in each college for advising and academic coaching, the Center for Career Development for employment support and internships, the Counseling and Mental Health Center, the Accessible Education Center for disability accommodations, the Volpe Library for research support, and additional services such as tutoring, health services, multicultural affairs, financial aid, and many more. Within the College of Arts and Sciences, students have access to a dedicated Student Success Center located in Henderson Hall (Room 202), staffed by professional advisors who guide students from sophomore year through graduation in departments including Sociology, Political Science, and others. These advisors assist with degree planning, academic goal setting, and connecting students to key campus resources and success coaching, fostering both academic progress and personal development. At the Department of Sociology and Political Science, departmental faculty provide personalized mentorship, individualized academic advising, and career support—catering to students pursuing paths in social work, criminal justice, government, graduate study, and beyond. The department also offers access to academic enrichment through student organizations, including the pre-law club, Model UN, and honor societies like Pi Sigma Alpha (for Political Science), each providing tutoring, professional networking, and development opportunities. This layered support structure—spanning university-wide services, college-level advising, and department-specific mentorship—ensures that MSW students receive comprehensive guidance and resources at every step of their academic journey.

Equipment

The proposed MSW program will largely benefit from existing university resources, including well-equipped office spaces, classrooms with modern instructional technology, and access to computer labs and campus-wide IT support. Current facilities within the Department of Sociology and Political Science, as well as shared university spaces, are sufficient to meet the needs of the program's instructional, administrative, and advising functions. Dedicated

classrooms with multimedia capabilities and access to online learning platforms will support both in-person and hybrid course delivery.

While the core infrastructure is already in place, additional equipment costs are anticipated—primarily the purchase of computers for new personnel, including faculty, therapists, and an administrative assistant. Overall, the existing physical and technological resources provide a strong foundation for the successful implementation and long-term operation of the MSW program.

Information Technology

The MSW program will benefit from robust institutional support for information technology. The University's Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL) will provide faculty with comprehensive instructional technology support, including training and assistance with the university's learning management system (D2L), video conferencing platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, and best practices in online and hybrid pedagogy. These services are available to all faculty at no additional cost to the program.

In addition, the College of Arts and Sciences Information Technology Services (ITS) unit will provide direct support for all program-related software and hardware. This includes installation, maintenance, and troubleshooting of faculty and staff computing equipment, as well as ensuring access to necessary academic software. ITS will also assist with integration of technology into classrooms and offices to support both in-person and virtual instruction.

Library Resources

The Angelo and Jennette Volpe Library is well-equipped to support the academic and research needs of graduate students and faculty in the MSW program. The library provides access to a wide range of discipline-specific resources essential to graduate-level study in social work, as well as individualized research support services.

Graduate students and faculty will benefit from full access to leading academic databases in the social work and related fields, including PsycINFO, Social Work Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, APA PsycArticles, ProQuest Social Science Database, and JSTOR. These databases provide comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed literature in areas such as clinical practice, social policy, mental health, and human behavior.

The library's electronic journal collection includes key titles in the field, such as *Social Work*, *Journal of Social Work Education*, *Clinical Social Work Journal*, *Social Service Review*, *Child & Family Social Work*, and *Families in Society*, ensuring students and faculty have access to current research and best practices in the profession.

In addition to online resources, the Volpe Library offers a robust suite of support services for graduate students, including one-on-one research consultations, interlibrary loan, citation management tools (e.g., EndNote, Zotero), thesis and dissertation support, and instructional workshops on advanced research strategies. These services are designed to enhance student success and are available at no additional cost to the program.

Given the strength of current holdings and support infrastructure, no additional library acquisitions or resources are anticipated for the implementation of the MSW program.

Facilities

The MSW program will utilize existing campus facilities to support program delivery with no anticipated need for new construction or renovation. Multiple classroom options are available during evening hours to accommodate the scheduling needs of part-time and working students. Primarily, evening classes can be held in Matthews-Daniel Hall, which offers classroom spaces equipped with the necessary technology to support both in-person and hybrid instruction. Additionally, classroom spaces across campus can be reserved as needed to ensure sufficient capacity.

In support of the MSW program, CAPS will continue operating from its existing location in the Regions Bank building while also expanding its use of the space to include three classrooms, six faculty offices, and a dedicated area for the program's administrative assistant. These classrooms are already equipped to facilitate active learning, including interactive instruction, group collaboration, and practice-based education. To further enhance functionality and better align the space with the needs of the MSW program, renovations are planned for 2026. These updates will involve improvements to classroom environments, office reconfigurations, and adjustments to the current CAPS layout to integrate new faculty and staff.

Other Resources

The College of Graduate Studies provides support for graduate programs, graduate faculty, and graduate students.

Section IX: Appendices

Appendix A: Letters of Support



Center for Addiction Prevention & Support

TENNESSEE TECH

Center for Addiction Prevention and Support
Tennessee Tech University
3301 Regions Bank Building
10 West Broad Street
Cookeville, TN 38501
Email: sseiler@tntech.edu

Tennessee Higher Education Commission
404 James Robertson Parkway
Suite 1900
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Members of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission,

On behalf of the Tennessee Tech Center for Addiction Prevention and Support (CAPS), I write to express our enthusiastic support for the proposed creation of a Master of Social Work (MSW) program within the Department of Sociology and Political Science at Tennessee Tech University.

The need for qualified, professionally trained social workers in the Upper Cumberland region of Tennessee has never been greater. Our region faces persistent challenges related to substance misuse, addiction, poverty, and limited access to behavioral health resources. These complex and interrelated issues demand a robust and sustainable pipeline of mental health professionals who are not only well-educated but also deeply connected to the communities they serve.

CAPS is proud to partner with the Department of Sociology and Political Science in the development and long-term support of the MSW program. We are fully committed to hosting this program within our space at the Regions Bank building in Cookeville, ensuring that faculty and students have access to a real-world learning environment that is grounded in the realities of behavioral healthcare delivery.

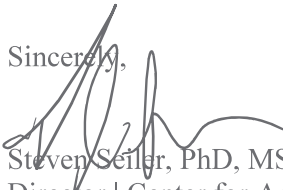
As part of this partnership, we are also working with faculty to support the establishment of a free mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) clinic within CAPS. This clinic will serve as both a vital community resource and a dynamic training ground for MSW students. CAPS is committed to providing direct supervision for MSW practicum students under the guidance of our licensed Clinical Supervisor. In fact, the success of this clinic is intrinsically linked to the

integration of MSW students, who will play a central role in providing direct care services to clients.

This partnership is more than a collaboration—it is a shared mission to transform the mental health landscape of the Upper Cumberland region. The launch of the MSW program will have a profound impact on individuals, families, and communities, and CAPS is honored to contribute our full support and resources to this effort.

Thank you for your consideration of this important and timely proposal. We look forward to a continued and deepening partnership with the Department of Sociology and Political Science as we work together to meet the pressing social work and mental health needs of our region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven Seiler', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Steven Seiler, PhD, MSW, CPS I
Director | Center for Addiction Prevention & Support
Tennessee Tech University
3301 Regions Bank Building
10 West Broad Street
Cookeville, TN 38501
Email: sseiler@tntech.edu

Department of Social Work

Academic Classroom Building Suite 130

MTSU Box 139

Murfreesboro TN 37132

Office: (615) 898 - 2868 • Fax: (615) 898 - 5428



July 16, 2025

Dr. Steven Seiler
Professor / MSW Program Coordinator
Department of Sociology and Political Science
Tennessee Tech University Cookeville, TN 38505

Dear Dr. Seiler,

On behalf of the Department of Social Work at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for the development of a Master of Social Work (MSW) program at Tennessee Technological University. This initiative represents a vital step toward strengthening the professional social work infrastructure in the Upper Cumberland and throughout Middle Tennessee.

As a fellow educator and program committed to preparing ethical, evidence-based practitioners, we are keenly aware of the critical and growing need for MSW-trained social workers in rural and underserved regions – including the Upper Cumberland. The increasing prevalence of mental health issues, substance use disorders, and socioeconomic disparities in the Upper Cumberland calls for a robust and localized response. An MSW program based at Tennessee Tech would directly address this need by building a sustainable pipeline of qualified, committed professionals trained to meet the unique challenges of the region.

In particular, a local MSW program would significantly enhance workforce capacity in addiction prevention and treatment—a priority not only in the Upper Cumberland but across Tennessee. With social workers serving at the forefront of prevention coalitions, harm reduction efforts, and recovery services, it is essential that they have access to high-quality, graduate-level education that reflects the realities of the communities they serve.

MSW-trained social workers bring critical value not only to behavioral health and substance use services but to a wide variety of fields across the region, including healthcare, child welfare, criminal justice, housing, education, and policy advocacy. The development of a new MSW program at Tennessee Tech will add depth and diversity to the state's social work education landscape, complementing the important

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Department of Social Work

Academic Classroom Building Suite 130

MTSU Box 139

Murfreesboro TN 37132

Office: (615) 898 - 2868 • Fax: (615) 898 - 5428



work already being done at institutions like MTSU, the University of Tennessee, and Tennessee State University.

At MTSU, we understand the importance of cultivating regional partnerships and supporting localized educational pathways. We view the addition of Tennessee Tech's MSW program not as competition, but as an essential ally in meeting the broad and urgent social work needs of Tennesseans. Together, our programs can support the professional development of future social workers while ensuring services are available and accessible across urban and rural communities alike.

We offer our full support for this initiative and are open to collaboration, shared learning, and mutual support as Tennessee Tech establishes its MSW program. We commend your commitment to academic excellence and community engagement, and we look forward to the contributions your future graduates will make to the profession.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vickie Harden".

Vickie Harden, Ph.D.
Interim Chair, MSW Program Coordinator
Department of Social Work
Middle Tennessee State University



July 7, 2025

The Honorable Members
Tennessee Higher Education Commission
Parkway Towers, Suite 1900
404 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243

Subject: Letter of Support for Tennessee Technological University's Proposed Master of Social Work (MSW) Program

Dear Commissioners,

As the Executive Director of the Upper Cumberland Development District (UCDD) and the Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency (UCHRA), I am writing to express my strongest possible support for Tennessee Technological University's proposal to establish a Master of Social Work (MSW) program. This initiative represents a critical investment in the health, stability, and future prosperity of our region.

Through our work at UCDD and UCHRA, we administer a wide array of state and federal programs designed to serve the diverse needs of the 14 counties in the Upper Cumberland region. The success of these programs is entirely dependent on a dedicated and highly-qualified workforce. The creation of an MSW program at Tennessee Tech would directly address one of our most significant operational challenges by creating a reliable pipeline of graduates equipped with the advanced skills necessary to make an immediate impact.

It is our direct experience that the Upper Cumberland region does not currently have a sufficient number of qualified social work professionals to meet the existing and future needs of our many regional organizations. This shortage is not a minor inconvenience; it is a persistent barrier to providing the highest standard of care. Too often, my agencies and others are forced to fill key roles with individuals who, while dedicated, lack the specific master's-level training and certifications required for these demanding positions.

This skills gap is most acutely felt when serving our most vulnerable populations. Whether we are working to protect children from harm, support the independence and dignity of our seniors, or guide individuals struggling with substance use disorders toward recovery, the need for master's-level social workers is paramount. The complex challenges these populations face require the sophisticated assessment, intervention, and case management skills that are the hallmark of an MSW education.



The establishment of a local MSW program at Tennessee Tech would be transformative. It would not only allow us to fill critical vacancies but also to elevate the standard of care across the entire region. It would provide a pathway for local residents to advance their education and careers without leaving the Cumberland, ensuring that our communities are served by professionals who understand our unique regional culture and challenges.

We stand ready to partner with Tennessee Tech to make this program a success, through offering field placements, guest lectures, and employment opportunities for graduates. We urge you to give this proposal your full and enthusiastic approval.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to the future of Tennessee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Farley", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mark Farley
Executive Director
Upper Cumberland Development District
Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency



July 17, 2025

Dear Dr. Seiler,

On behalf of the Putnam County Regional Office of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS), I am pleased to offer this letter of support for the Department of Sociology and Political Science at Tennessee Tech University as you pursue the development of a Master of Social Work (MSW) program.

The need for highly trained, MSW-prepared social workers in our region, and throughout the state cannot be overstated. At DCS, we continue to experience challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified professionals who possess the advanced clinical skills, ethical grounding, and leadership capabilities that MSW training provides. These professionals play a vital role in our efforts to protect children, support families, and build safer communities.

A local, accessible MSW program at Tennessee Tech would be a game changer for workforce development in our region. It would not only expand educational access for students in the Upper Cumberland and surrounding areas but also help strengthen the pipeline of well-prepared social workers entering child welfare and other human service roles. The availability of MSW graduates who are both academically prepared and locally invested would significantly enhance our ability to meet staffing needs and improve outcomes for the children and families we serve.

The competencies developed through MSW education particularly in areas such as trauma-informed care, mental health, substance use treatment, and systems-level practice are essential in the day-to-day work we do at DCS. These skills are also highly valued by our partner agencies across health care, behavioral health, education, and justice sectors. A regional MSW program would have a wide-reaching impact, benefiting not only DCS but also the broader network of service providers working to meet the complex needs of Tennessee communities.

We are also committed to supporting this effort by serving as a field education partner and providing practicum placements to MSW students to the extent we are able. We recognize the mutual benefit of these partnerships, which allow students to gain practical experience while contributing meaningfully to our mission.

We commend Tennessee Tech for your vision and leadership in addressing this critical need and look forward to collaborating with you in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Felicia Harris

Felicia Harris
Executive Director
Regional Operations

Tennessee Higher Education Commission
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue
9th Floor
Nashville, TN 37243



To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Putnam County School System (PCSS), I am writing in strong support of Tennessee Tech University's proposal to establish a Master of Social Work (MSW) program. As a leader in K-12 education in the Upper Cumberland region, I can attest to the urgent and ongoing need for highly trained social workers in our schools and throughout the broader community.

In recent years, we have seen a significant increase in the social, emotional, and mental health needs of our students and families. School-based social workers are critical to meeting these needs, yet there is a persistent shortage of MSW-level professionals in our region. This shortage limits our ability to fully support student well-being and academic success.

A locally accessible MSW program at Tennessee Tech would be a game-changer for PCSS and surrounding districts. It would open a much-needed pathway for aspiring social workers in the Upper Cumberland to receive high-quality graduate training without leaving the area. This in turn would strengthen the pipeline of qualified professionals who understand the unique challenges and strengths of our communities and are more likely to stay and serve in this region long-term.

MSW-level training equips professionals with the skills necessary to address complex family dynamics, trauma, mental health conditions, and systems-level barriers that impact students. In our school system, social workers play a vital role in crisis response, behavioral support, family outreach, and community coordination. The knowledge and clinical competencies gained through a graduate-level program are essential to that work. Additionally, PCSS is willing to support practicum placements for MSW students to the extent that we are able.

We commend Tennessee Tech for taking this important step to invest in the future of social work in our region, and we urge the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to support the approval of this vital program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Trey Upchurch", followed by a blue checkmark.

Trey Upchurch, Ed.D.
Coordinated School Health
Putnam County School System

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shelia Barker, LCSW".

Shelia Barker, LCSW
Coordinated School Health
Putnam County Schools



Upper Cumberland Council on Children and Youth
1100 England Dr.
Cookeville, TN 38501
931-250-7289
Kristi.Paling@tn.gov

July 9, 2025

Dr. Steven Seiler, PhD, MSW, CPS I
MSW Program Coordinator / Professor

Department of Sociology and Political Science
Tennessee Tech University
Cookeville, TN 38505

Dear Dr. Seiler,

On behalf of the Upper Cumberland Council on Children and Youth (UCCCY), I am writing to offer our full support for Tennessee Tech University's proposal to establish a Master of Social Work (MSW) program. This initiative represents a critically needed step toward strengthening the professional infrastructure that supports the children, youth, and families of the Upper Cumberland region.

As an organization that brings together professionals, agencies, and advocates working to improve the well-being of young people, we are acutely aware of the shortage of MSW-trained social workers in our region. Many agencies struggle to recruit and retain qualified professionals, particularly those with advanced clinical and systems-level training. These shortages impact a wide range of services—from mental health and child welfare to school-based support and juvenile justice.

A locally based MSW program at Tennessee Tech would be transformative for our region. By offering accessible, high-quality graduate education close to home, the program would expand the pipeline of qualified social workers who are already connected to and invested in our communities. Importantly, it would reduce the geographic and financial barriers that prevent many capable students from pursuing graduate education. To this point, when seeking an advanced degree, my first preference was to obtain a Masters in Social Work. However, the only accessible programs at the time were on campus at the University of Knoxville or Western Kentucky University. Due to life circumstances and full-time employment pursuing this degree was not a viable option. This dilemma played out for many other graduate students as well.

Kristi Paling • State Office Building • 1100 England Dr • Cookeville, TN 38501
Office: (931)-646-0955 Cell: (931)-250-7289



MSW-level training is particularly critical in the work UCCCY, and our partners do every day. Our network includes mental health providers, school counselors, nonprofit agencies, public health professionals, and state service workers—all of whom depend on social workers with strong ethical grounding, clinical skills, and leadership capacity. According to the 2025 Kids Count Data Book (a 50-state report developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation) released by the Sycamore Institute, Tennessee ranks 37th in overall child well-being. Data from two of the four targeted domains, Health, and Family and Community rank 41st and 43rd respectively. The Sycamore Institute reported the concerning statistics could influence how policymakers approach state youth mental health efforts. These sobering statistics indicate a need for additional resources in our communities and speaks directly to the need for additional professionals to positively impact outcomes for our youth and community members. A regional MSW program would help equip future professionals to respond to complex challenges such as childhood trauma, substance use, family instability, and systemic inequality.

We also want to express our commitment to supporting the proposed program beyond the planning stage. UCCCY is ready and willing to assist with MSW practicum placements through our broad network of partner organizations across the Upper Cumberland. These placements would provide valuable hands-on experience for students while directly benefiting the agencies and communities we serve.

Thank you for your leadership in addressing this critical regional need. We look forward to continuing our collaboration and strongly support the establishment of an MSW program at Tennessee Tech.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristi Paling".

Kristi Paling, MA
Regional Coordinator
Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth



606 E Spring St.

Cookeville, TN 38501

July 10, 2025

Dr. Steven Seiler

MSW Program Coordinator / Professor

Department of Sociology and Political Science

Tennessee Tech University

Cookeville, TN 38505

Dear Dr. Seiler,

On behalf of Health Connect America (HCA), I am writing to express our strong support for Tennessee Tech University's initiative to develop a Master of Social Work (MSW) program to serve the Upper Cumberland region. As a behavioral health provider with deep roots across this area—including offices in Cookeville, Crossville, and Sparta—we see every day the growing need for MSW-trained professionals who can meet the complex needs of children, families, and communities.

The Upper Cumberland faces significant challenges in behavioral health, family systems, substance use, and trauma-related care. Many of our communities are rural and underserved, with limited access to qualified clinical providers. As a result, organizations like HCA must navigate a persistent shortage of licensed social workers, particularly those with the training and credentials necessary to deliver therapeutic services, lead treatment teams, and support long-term client outcomes.

A locally based MSW program at Tennessee Tech would be a game-changer for workforce development in our region. By offering accessible, high-quality graduate training in social work, the program would help build a sustainable pipeline of professionals who are already part of or familiar with the Upper Cumberland's communities and service networks. This regional investment would not only benefit HCA but would strengthen the entire behavioral health and social services ecosystem—impacting schools, courts, nonprofits, and public agencies alike.

606 E Spring St., Cookeville, TN 38501

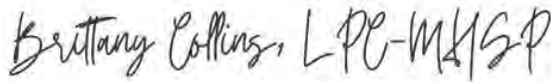
931.526.6042

The value of MSW-level training is directly tied to the services we provide at HCA. From trauma-informed therapy and crisis intervention to family reunification and behavioral planning, our staff must be well-prepared to work with clients in highly vulnerable circumstances. Advanced social work education equips professionals with the clinical, ethical, and systems-level skills needed to respond with competence and compassion—and to grow into leadership roles across the field.

We also want to express our willingness to potentially serve as an internship site for MSW students from Tennessee Tech. With a variety of service lines and locations, we are well-positioned to support high-quality field placements that offer real-world learning experiences and mentorship.

Health Connect America is committed to supporting this important initiative and working in partnership with Tennessee Tech to prepare the next generation of social work professionals. Thank you for your leadership, and we look forward to the successful launch of this much-needed program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brittany Collins, LPC-MHSP". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brittany Collins, LPC-MHSP

Program Director – Cookeville, Sparta, & Crossville

Shane Farris

Volunteer Behavioral Health Care Services
Cookeville, TN, 38506
931-267-3966

July 14, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of a Master of Social Work (MSW) program at Tennessee Technological University. As someone deeply involved in the work of Volunteer Behavioral Health Care Services (VBHCS) and closely connected to VBHCS, I can attest to the growing need for MSW-trained professionals in our region and the critical role they play in meeting the behavioral health and social service needs of our communities.

The Upper Cumberland region faces a significant shortage of licensed and highly trained social workers, a gap that has far-reaching consequences for individuals and families seeking support. VBHC, along with many agencies in our area, struggles to recruit and retain MSW-level staff—a challenge that limits service capacity and impacts the quality of care. The demand for professionals with advanced training in clinical practice, case management, trauma-informed care, and policy advocacy continues to rise as the complexity of client needs grows.

A local MSW program at Tennessee Tech would be a pivotal step in addressing this workforce gap. By offering accessible, high-quality graduate education close to home, the university could significantly strengthen the pipeline of qualified professionals prepared to serve in our communities. Such a program would not only benefit students from the Upper Cumberland but also increase the likelihood that they remain in the region post-graduation, building a more sustainable and stable social services workforce.

MSW training is essential to the work we do at VBHC and within our broader network of behavioral health, healthcare, education, and social service partners. The advanced clinical skills, ethical foundation, and systems-level thinking that MSW graduates bring are indispensable in delivering effective, evidence-based care and driving systemic change. Whether in direct client services, interdisciplinary teams, or leadership roles, MSW-trained professionals are instrumental to improving outcomes and advancing equity in our communities.

I encourage you to consider the far-reaching benefits of launching an MSW program at Tennessee Tech. Such an initiative would be a transformative investment in the well-being of the Upper Cumberland region and a critical support to agencies like VBHC that are committed to serving its people.

Sincerely,

Shane Farris

Campus Director, VBHCS



July 18, 2025

Dr. Steven Seiler
Professor / MSW Program Coordinator
Department of Sociology and Political Science
Tennessee Tech University
Cookeville, TN 38505

Dear Dr. Seiler,

On behalf of the Prevention Alliance of Tennessee (PAT), I am writing to express strong support for the proposed Master of Social Work (MSW) program at Tennessee Tech University. As a statewide organization committed to advancing substance use prevention and behavioral health through community-based coalitions and professional development, we see the growing need for well-trained, master's-level social workers across Tennessee—particularly in rural and underserved regions.

MSW-trained professionals play a vital role in our field. From direct community engagement and mental health support to policy development and systems coordination, social workers with advanced training are essential to the success of prevention efforts across the state. Many of our member coalitions and partnering agencies report persistent difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified social workers, particularly those licensed or prepared for clinical or supervisory roles. A local MSW program at Tennessee Tech would significantly strengthen the professional pipeline and expand access to high-quality, regionally relevant graduate education.

The work of the Prevention Alliance of Tennessee is deeply aligned with the core competencies emphasized in MSW training, including trauma-informed practice, public health collaboration, program evaluation, and equity-driven community advocacy. As substance use and mental health challenges continue to grow in complexity and scope, so does the need for social workers who are academically prepared and experienced. An MSW program rooted in the Department of Sociology and Political Science—and bolstered by the interdisciplinary expertise of Tennessee Tech—would add tremendous value to our field and the broader behavioral health workforce.

We are also eager to support this program by helping connect MSW students with meaningful practicum opportunities. Through our statewide network of coalitions and prevention partners, PAT is well positioned to help identify field placement sites that can offer students firsthand experience in prevention science, coalition development, youth engagement, public health partnerships, and community-based systems work. We would welcome collaboration with Tennessee Tech in designing practicum experiences that support student development while addressing real-world needs across Tennessee.

In closing, we believe the proposed MSW program is not only timely, but necessary. PAT is proud to support this initiative and stands ready to serve as a partner in its success. Together, we can help grow a highly skilled, mission-driven workforce that will strengthen prevention and behavioral health systems for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steph Strutner".

Stephanie A. Strutner, MPH, CPSII
CEO



Clarksville · Columbia · Cookeville · Gallatin · Murfreesboro · Nashville · Oak Ridge · Tullahoma

July 17, 2025

Dr. Steven Seiler
Professor / MSW Program Coordinator
Department of Sociology and Political Science
Tennessee Tech University
Cookeville, TN 38505

Dear Dr. Seiler:

On behalf of the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland, particularly the Cookeville office as well as our entire 48-county service area, I am writing to express our strong support for the development of a Master of Social Work (MSW) program within the Department of Sociology and Political Science at Tennessee Tech University.

There is a critical and growing need for MSW-trained social workers both within our organization and across the Upper Cumberland region. As the demands on civil legal service providers continue to increase—particularly in the areas of housing, domestic violence, public benefits, elder law, and healthcare access—social workers play a vital role in addressing the complex and interrelated needs of our clients. The presence of licensed, master's-level social workers enhances our ability to respond holistically to the social, emotional, and systemic challenges that often accompany legal issues.

A local MSW program at Tennessee Tech would be a transformative resource for our region by strengthening the pipeline of qualified, culturally competent, and community-oriented professionals equipped to work in settings like ours. This program would not only support the Legal Aid Society's efforts to better serve our clients but would also meet urgent needs across the broader network of social service and nonprofit agencies in the Upper Cumberland.

MSW training is essential to the type of multidisciplinary, trauma-informed care that Legal Aid and our partner agencies strive to provide. Social workers trained in case management, advocacy, mental health support, and systems navigation significantly enhance the quality of services we can deliver to vulnerable populations. Having access to a well-prepared, local workforce with MSW-level skills would allow our agency—and many others in the region—to expand our capacity and improve client outcomes.

We are also enthusiastic about the opportunity to collaborate directly with Tennessee Tech's MSW program through practicum placements. The Legal Aid Society would be glad to serve as a host site for MSW practicum students, providing them with meaningful, hands-on learning experiences while benefiting from their contributions to our work. We are committed to working closely with your program to ensure these placements are impactful, educational, and aligned with both CSWE standards and the needs of our community.

Dr. Steven Seiler
Professor / MSW Program Coordinator
July 17, 2025
Page Two

We commend Tennessee Tech for responding to this regional and statewide need, and we are proud to support the establishment of the MSW program. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or to further discuss partnership opportunities. I can be reached at my direct number of 931-771-9184 or by email at RMOSES@LAS.ORG.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rachel M. Moses". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rachel" being more prominent and the last name "Moses" following in a similar style.

Rachel M. Moses
Attorney at Law

POWER *of* PUTNAM

25 West Broad Street, Suite 9 • Cookeville, TN 38501
(931) 520-7531 • www.powerofputnam.org

July 15, 2025

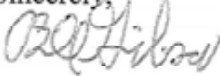
Dr. Steven Seiler
Professor / MSW Program Coordinator
Department of Sociology and Political Science
Tennessee Tech University
Cookeville, TN 38505

Dear Dr. Seiler,

On behalf of Power of Putnam, I am pleased to offer this letter of strong support for the development of a Master of Social Work (MSW) program at Tennessee Tech University. As a long-standing coalition dedicated to substance use prevention, recovery support, and community health improvement in the Upper Cumberland region, we witness daily the urgent need for MSW-trained professionals who are prepared to lead both prevention and treatment efforts in our communities. From coordinating wraparound services for individuals and families in crisis to implementing evidence-based strategies to reduce risk factors and promote protective factors, social workers play a vital role in our mission. Yet, we regularly face a shortage of licensed, clinically trained social workers equipped to handle the complexity of behavioral health and substance use issues in our region.

A locally based MSW program at Tennessee Tech would significantly strengthen the professional pipeline of qualified social workers into both prevention and treatment roles. The hybrid format, in particular, offers an accessible path for individuals who are already working in the field or who are rooted in our rural communities but lack the means to relocate for graduate education. By training students locally and grounding them in the unique social and cultural context of the Upper Cumberland, this program would increase the likelihood that graduates remain in the region and contribute meaningfully to long-term workforce stability in behavioral health and community services.

Power of Putnam also recognizes the importance of hands-on learning and is committed to supporting practicum placements for MSW students where appropriate. Our organization and our network of community partners can offer valuable field experiences in prevention planning, coalition-building, client services, and policy advocacy. We are excited by the prospect of collaborating with Tennessee Tech to mentor emerging professionals and invest in the next generation of social workers who will help advance health and resilience across the region.

Sincerely,

Bill Gibson
Executive Director

Need information on addiction or a referral? Please call the Tennessee REDLINE: 1-800-889-9789.



This project is funded under a grant contract with the State of Tennessee
Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.



DeKalb County Prevention Coalition
722 S. Congress Blvd. Room 120
Office: 615-215-2024
Email: dekalbtnprevention@gmail.com

July, 18,2025

Dr. Steven Seiler
Professor / MSW Program Coordinator
Department of Sociology and Political Science
Tennessee Tech University
Cookeville, TN 38505

Dear Dr. Seiler,

On behalf of the DeKalb County Prevention Coalition, I am pleased to offer our full support for the proposed Master of Social Work (MSW) program within the Department of Sociology and Political Science at Tennessee Technological University. Our organization, which serves on the front lines of substance use prevention, mental health awareness, and community education in DeKalb County, sees firsthand the growing need for highly trained social workers across the Upper Cumberland region.

MSW-trained professionals are vital to our mission and to the broader system of care that supports individuals and families struggling with behavioral health challenges. In our coalition's work—whether we are coordinating with local schools, supporting recovery services, or advocating for youth mental health—there is a consistent demand for licensed, clinically trained social workers who can lead programming, offer counseling, and connect individuals to services. Unfortunately, our rural region continues to face a significant shortage of qualified professionals, especially those equipped with the level of training an MSW provides.

Establishing a local MSW program at Tennessee Tech would directly address this workforce gap. By offering accessible graduate education in social work, Tech would not only expand opportunities for residents of the Upper Cumberland to enter the profession but also ensure that graduates are prepared to serve in rural and underserved communities like ours. A strong

regional MSW pipeline would allow organizations like ours to recruit locally, retain talent, and build sustainable human services capacity over time.

The type of advanced training offered in an MSW program—including trauma-informed care, program evaluation, community organizing, and systems-level thinking—is directly aligned with the work we do and the needs we encounter in the field. Furthermore, our network of partners—from school districts and health departments to court systems and recovery providers—would greatly benefit from a more robust pool of professionally trained social workers who understand the unique social and economic context of our region.

We are also excited about the opportunity to serve as a practicum site for MSW students. The DeKalb County Prevention Coalition is prepared to mentor and supervise graduate students in hands-on learning experiences related to community prevention, behavioral health education, coalition building, and public policy. We welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with Tennessee Tech to shape meaningful, applied training that supports students' professional growth while increasing our region's capacity to meet urgent social needs.

We believe that Tennessee Tech's proposed MSW program is timely, necessary, and deeply aligned with the needs of our community. The DeKalb County Prevention Coalition stands ready to support the program in any way we can—as a field partner, advocate, and collaborator.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Matthews, B.S, CPS II
DeKalb Prevention Coalition Director



necessary to assess, diagnose, and treat complex behavioral health conditions while maintaining a strong foundation in ethics, cultural competence, and systems level thinking. These skills are not only critical within our agency, but also across the broader network of community mental health and recovery organizations we collaborate with.

We are also pleased to affirm our commitment to supporting practicum placements for MSW students at Tennessee Tech. As a field site, we can offer meaningful clinical training experiences under the supervision of licensed professionals, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world therapeutic settings. We believe that this collaboration will be mutually beneficial—enhancing service delivery while investing in the next generation of social workers.

We commend your department for responding to the region's needs with this forward-thinking program and are eager to support its successful launch and implementation. Please do not hesitate to contact us for future partnership opportunities.

Kind Regards,



Lisa Lovell LCSW
Personal Growth Counseling and Wellness
Director of Public Relations and Field Placement Supervisor

Amber McClurkan, LCSW

39 WEST BROAD STREET SUITE 2C
COOKEVILLE, TN 38501
931-881-8129
AMBERMCCLURKAN@GMAIL.COM

July 14, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of the development of a Master of Social Work program at Tennessee Technological University.

I obtained a Bachelor of Science in Sociology from Tennessee Tech in 2013. The faculty and staff in the sociology department offered a comprehensive and challenging curriculum, partnered with continual support throughout my studies, for which I remain grateful.

Cookeville, Tennessee, the home of Tennessee Tech, is a fast-growing micropolitan area. As I considered applying to MSW programs in 2017, I wished Tennessee Tech had an MSW program, so I could learn while completing a field placement in Cookeville, where I planned to live and work in the long term. Additionally, while pursuing supervision during the licensure period, I was unable to find an available supervisor in Cookeville. An MSW program at Tennessee Tech would enable more LMSWs to stay and work in Cookeville, thereby strengthening the profession in the area.

As an LCSW providing counseling services in Cookeville, I often feel the strain of the limitations of local social service agencies and mental health services to support my clients. I believe an MSW program would be mutually beneficial to students and the community, as it allows students in field placements to further the NASW core values of service and social justice by enabling agencies to provide services to citizens of the region who may not otherwise receive the support they deserve.

Students who receive an MSW education will certainly benefit by gaining competence and confidence in their social work practice. I appreciate the emphasis the social work profession places on the importance of human relationships. Receiving an education that emphasizes cultural humility, the dignity and worth of

all persons, service, and integrity will have a profoundly positive impact on students and those around them, both on campus and in the community.

Sincerely,

Amber McClurkan, LCSW

July 08, 2025

Tennessee Higher Education Commission
404 James Robertson Parkway, Suite 1900
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of a Master of Social Work (MSW) program at Tennessee Technological University (TTU) in Cookeville. As a licensed clinical social worker practicing in the Upper Cumberland region, I have witnessed firsthand the growing need for highly trained, graduate-level social workers in our communities.

The Upper Cumberland faces numerous challenges, including high rates of poverty, limited access to mental and behavioral health care, and a shortage of qualified professionals who are trained to navigate complex systems of care. Despite the urgent need, our region continues to struggle with recruiting and retaining MSW-prepared social workers-largely due to a lack of accessible, affordable graduate education options.

A local MSW program at TTU would be a critical step forward in strengthening the professional pipeline for this area. By offering a high-quality program that is rooted in the needs of rural and underserved communities, TTU would help prepare a workforce that is both locally invested and regionally relevant.

Just as importantly, I urge the Commission and the university to prioritize affordability and accessibility in the program's design. The financial burden of graduate education is a major concern for students entering the social work profession, which has a historically modest earning potential relative to the cost of advanced degrees. To attract and support a diverse student population-including working professionals, parents, and first-generation college students-it is essential that the program be both competitively priced and accessible in flexible formats. Incorporating an online or hybrid option would go a long way toward expanding access, especially for students living in more remote counties across the region who may not be able to attend in-person classes due to transportation, job, or family constraints. By removing geographic and economic barriers, TTU can lead the way in cultivating a more equitable and sustainable pathway to professional licensure and leadership in the field.


An MSW program at Tennessee Tech would not only meet the needs of local students and agencies, but also elevate the social work profession at a time when its role in public health, education, justice, and community resilience has never been more vital. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Melinda Morris, LCSW

Melinda Morris, LCSW
3269 Lindenwood Drive
Cookeville, TN 38506
melinda.morris927@gmail.com
(931) 397-2353

Appendix B: THEC Financial Projection Form

|  | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Institution | Tennessee Tech University | | | | | |
| Program Name | Master of Social Work (MSW) | | | | | |
| Projected One-Time Expenditures | | | | | | |
| Category | Planning | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| Faculty & Instructional Staff | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Non-Instructional Staff | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Graduate Assistants | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Accreditation | \$12,500 | \$24,000 | \$10,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Consultants | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Equipment | \$20,000 | \$20,000 | \$10,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Information Technology | \$12,000 | \$12,000 | \$12,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Library resources | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Marketing | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Facilities | \$150,000 | \$40,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Travel | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Other | \$10,000 | \$5,000 | \$10,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total One-Time Expenditures | \$204,500 | \$101,000 | \$42,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Projected Recurring Expenditures | | | | | | |
| Category | Planning | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| Faculty & Instructional Staff | \$227,200 | \$332,564 | \$418,368 | \$430,067 | \$507,777 | \$523,010 |
| Non-Instructional Staff | \$268,380 | \$276,431 | \$284,725 | \$291,715 | \$300,466 | \$309,480 |
| Graduate Assistants | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Accreditation | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Consultants | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Equipment | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Information Technology | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Library | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Marketing | \$10,000 | \$10,000 | \$10,000 | \$10,000 | \$10,000 | \$10,000 |
| Facilities | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Travel | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Other | \$32,000 | \$32,000 | \$32,000 | \$32,000 | \$32,000 | \$21,000 |
| Total Recurring Expenditures | \$537,580 | \$650,995 | \$745,093 | \$763,782 | \$850,243 | \$863,490 |
| Grand Total (One-Time and Recurring) | \$742,080 | \$751,995 | \$787,093 | \$763,782 | \$850,243 | \$863,490 |
| Projected Revenue | | | | | | |
| Category | Planning | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| Tuition | \$0 | \$103,896 | \$421,402 | \$854,047 | \$1,180,383 | \$1,470,686 |
| Grants | \$840,742 | \$849,844 | \$884,457 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Other | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total Revenues | \$840,742 | \$953,740 | \$1,305,859 | \$854,047 | \$1,180,383 | \$1,470,686 |

**Years 6 and 7 should only be included for doctoral programs*

Appendix C: Community Partners / Potential MSW Practicum Sites

| | |
|--|--|
| 13th Judicial District Office of the District Attorney | Legal Aid Society of Middle TN & the Cumberlands |
| 13 th Judicial District Public Defender's Office | Lifecare Family Services |
| 13 th Judicial District Recovery Courts | Livingston Regional Hospital |
| Amedisys Home Health Care | Mediation Services of Putnam County |
| Area Agency on Aging & Disability | NHC Homecare |
| Avalon Hospice | NHC of Cookeville |
| Board of Probation and Parole (Adult) | Omni Family of Services |
| Cannon County Substance Abuse Coalition | Overton County Anti-Drug Coalition |
| Caris Healthcare | Overton County Nursing Home |
| CASA Court Appointed Special Advocates | Pacesetters |
| TN Tech Center for Addiction Prevention & Support (CAPS) | Personal Growth Counseling |
| Cedar Recovery | Power of Putnam |
| Chance Residential Center | Prevention Alliance of Tennessee (PAT) |
| Charter Senior Living of Cookeville | Project RAISE (Rural Access to Interventions in School Environments) |
| Child Advocacy Center, Upper Cumberland | Psychiatric Solutions |
| Clarvida (formerly Camelot) | Putnam County School System |
| Clay County Anti-Drug Coalition | Putnam County Senior Citizen Center |
| Coalition for Healthy and Safe Campus Communities (CHASCo) | Ridgeview Behavioral Health Services (Fentress County) |
| Community Mediation Center / VORP | Senior Centers- All UC Counties |
| Cookeville Regional Medical Center | Signature Healthcare |
| Cookeville Rescue Mission | Smith County Wellness Alliance |
| Cornerstone of Recovery/Bradford Health Services | Stephens Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse |
| Cumberland Mountain Mental Health Center | Tennessee Health Department (Offices serving all Upper Cumberland counties) |
| Cumberland Prevention Coalition | TN Department of Human Services (Offices in all 14 UC Counties) |
| DeKalb Prevention Coalition | TN Tech Center for Counseling & Mental Health Wellness |
| Department of Children's Services (14 UC Locations) | Upper Cumberland Commission on Children and Youth |
| Genesis House | Upper Cumberland Development District |
| Genesis House | Upper Cumberland Family Justice Center |
| Gentiva Hospice | Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency |
| Grove Healing Collective | Veteran's Affairs Clinic, Cookeville |
| Health Connect America, Inc. (UC Locations: Cookeville, Crossville, Sparta) | Volunteer Behavioral Healthcare System (UC Clinics: Cookeville, Livingston, Lafayette, McMinnville) |
| Heart of the Cumberland | Youth Village |
| Highland Rim Home Health Agency | |
| Highlands Residential Services | |
| Hope Adoption Center | |
| Insight Counseling Centers | |

Appendix D: Course Syllabi**Comprehensive Course List**

| Course Type | Course Number and Title | CH |
|-------------------|--|----|
| Foundation | SW 6000: Social Work Practice | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 5125: HBSE I | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 5150: HBSE II | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6050: Research Methods in Social Work | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6150: Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6100: Poverty, Inequality, & Social Justice | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 5175: Introduction to Social Welfare Policy | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6900: Practicum IA | 3 |
| Foundation | SW 6910: Practicum IB | 3 |
| Foundation/ SAMHT | SW 6200: Psychopathology in SW Practice | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7000: Social Work Practice with Individuals | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7010: Social Work Practice with Groups | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7110: Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7900: Practicum IIA | 3 |
| Concentration | SW 7910: Practicum IIB | 3 |
| Con./ AGT | SW 7015: Social Work Practice with Communities & Organizations | 3 |
| Con./ AGT | SW 7125: Social Policy Analysis | 3 |
| Con./ AGT | SW 7100: Grant Writing & Fund Development | 3 |
| Con./ SAMHT | SW 7020: Social Work Practice with Families | 3 |
| Con./ SAMHT | SW 7200: Assessment & Evaluation of Clinical Practice | 3 |
| Con./ SAMHT | SW 7210: Social Work Practice in Addictions | 3 |
| Con./ SAMHT | SW 7220: Substance Abuse & Recovery | 3 |
| Elective | SW 5000: Rural Social Work | 3 |
| Elective | SW 5010: School Social Work | 3 |
| Elective | SW 5015: Medical Social Work | 3 |
| Elective | SW 5020: Forensic Social Work | 3 |
| Elective | SW 5025: Social Work with Children and Youth | 3 |
| Total | | 60 |

Foundation Courses

Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 6000: Social Work Practice
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Admitted into MSW Program

Texts and Resources

Kirst-Ashman, K. K., & Hull, G. H. (2018). *Understanding generalist practice* (8th ed.). Cengage Learning.

National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *NASW Code of Ethics*. NASW Press.

Supplemental readings and peer-reviewed journal articles will be provided via the course learning platform.

Course Welcome and Description

This foundational course covers generalist practice methods with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. It introduces students to the profession of social work, including its history, ethical code, and major theories of interpersonal practice. Emphasis is placed on social justice, trauma-informed care, interprofessional collaboration, and cultural competence. The course also prepares students to compare and apply evidence-based interventions and models of social work practice with diverse clients and systems. Through class discussions, case studies, and applied assignments, students will develop professional engagement skills while grounding their work in social work values, ethics, and a commitment to equitable practice.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate foundational knowledge of generalist social work practice across multiple system levels, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. They will be able to apply core social work values, ethics, and the NASW Code of Ethics to practice situations, with particular attention to cultural competence, social justice, and trauma-informed care. Students will critically analyze theoretical models and evidence-based interventions while integrating interprofessional collaboration into practice. They will also strengthen professional engagement skills and develop the ability to compare and evaluate practice methods that align with the mission of social work.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
C5 – Engage in Policy Practice
C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Apply the NASW Code of Ethics to practice situations and demonstrate professionalism.
Integrate cultural humility and competence into generalist practice with diverse populations.
Advocate for social justice in practice with individuals, families, and communities.
Critically apply evidence-based models and interventions to practice settings.
Examine how policy impacts practice and advocate for changes that promote equity.
Demonstrate engagement skills across multiple system levels.
Conduct generalist assessments that identify strengths, needs, and resources.
Implement generalist interventions that align with evidence-based practice.
Critically reflect on practice outcomes and make adjustments to improve service effectiveness.

Major Teaching Methods

This in-person course combines lecture, discussion, and experiential learning to integrate theoretical knowledge with applied practice. Lectures and readings provide students with foundational knowledge of generalist social work practice, ethics, and theory. Case studies, role plays, and simulations allow students to apply engagement, assessment, and intervention skills across diverse practice settings. Small group projects foster collaboration and peer learning, while reflective journaling encourages critical self-awareness. Guest speakers and interprofessional panels expose students to real-world practice, enhancing their ability to integrate classroom learning with professional application.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will require the use of iLearn. All assignments and important class updates will be posted to our course page. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to a working computer and internet to complete your work on time. For general computing issues or iLearn/email/TTU-connected software problems, you must contact the Tech Helpdesk promptly for assistance.

Topics to be Covered

- History and mission of the social work profession
- NASW Code of Ethics and ethical decision-making
- Cultural competence, diversity, and anti-oppressive practice
- Generalist practice framework
- Engagement strategies with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

- Assessment and planning in social work practice
- Evidence-based interventions across systems
- Trauma-informed care
- Interprofessional collaboration
- Policy practice and advocacy
- Evaluation of practice and reflective social work

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|--|--|---|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to Social Work Practice | NASW Code of Ethics | Syllabus review; discussion of social work values | C1 |
| Week 2: History & Mission of Social Work | Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Ch. 1 | Reflection Journal #1 | C1, C3 |
| Week 3: Ethics in Practice | NASW Code of Ethics | Case-based ethical decision-making exercise | C1 |
| Week 4: Diversity, Oppression, and Cultural Competence | Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Ch. 2 | Role play; Reflection Journal #2 | C2, C3 |
| Week 5: Generalist Practice Framework | Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Ch. 3 | Class discussion; Reading Response #1 | C6 |
| Week 6: Engagement with Clients and Systems | Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Ch. 4 | Skills role plays | C6 |
| Week 7: Assessment in Generalist Practice | Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Ch. 5 | Mock client assessment | C7 |
| Week 8: Planning and Goal Setting | Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Ch. 6 | Small group project | C7, C8 |
| Week 9: Intervention Strategies | Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Ch. 7 | Practice intervention design; Reflection Journal #3 | C8 |
| Week 10: Evaluation of Practice | Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Ch. 8 | Evaluation workshop | C9 |
| Week 11: Trauma-Informed Practice | Selected journal article | Case study analysis; Reflection Journal #4 | C2, C3 |
| Week 12: Interprofessional Practice | Interprofessional collaboration readings | Simulation activity | C6 |
| Week 13: Policy and Advocacy in Practice | Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Ch. 9 | Policy advocacy assignment | C3, C5 |
| Week 14: Integration and Reflection | Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Ch. 10 | Final Paper due; reflection circle | All |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Class Participation and Role Plays | 15% |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

| | |
|--|-----|
| Reflection Journals (4) | 20% |
| Reading Responses (2) | 10% |
| Case Analysis (Ethics or Trauma Focus) | 15% |
| Group Project: Intervention Plan | 15% |
| Final Paper/Presentation | 25% |

Class Participation and Role Plays (15%)

Description: Active participation in class discussions, skills practice, and group activities.

Purpose: Develops professional communication and practice skills.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C6.

2. Reflection Journals (20%)

Description: Four short reflections connecting course content to professional development.

Purpose: Encourages critical self-reflection and integration of values and cultural competence.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

3. Reading Responses (10%)

Description: Written responses analyzing assigned readings.

Purpose: Builds critical thinking and the ability to apply research to practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C4, C6.

4. Case Analysis (15%)

Description: Written case study focusing on ethical decision-making or trauma-informed practice.

Purpose: Develops applied assessment and analysis skills.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C7.

5. Group Project: Intervention Plan (15%)

Description: Collaborative development of an evidence-based intervention plan for a practice scenario.

Purpose: Builds teamwork, planning, and intervention skills.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C6, C7, C8.

6. Final Paper/Presentation (25%)

Description: Comprehensive paper and oral presentation synthesizing course content and applied practice.

Purpose: Demonstrates integration of ethics, theory, and practice methods.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C4, C6, C8, C9.

Grading Scale

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
| B | 79.5-89.4 |
| C | 69.5-79.4 |
| D | 59.5-69.4 |
| F | 59.4 & below |

Course Policies

Student Academic Integrity Policy

Maintaining high standards of academic integrity in every class is critical to the reputation of Tennessee Tech, its students, faculty, alumni, and the employers of Tennessee Tech graduates. Academic integrity is at the foundation of the educational process and the key to student success. Students with academic integrity are committed to honesty, ethical behavior, and avoiding violations of academic integrity. All students are required to read and understand Policy 216: Student Academic Integrity. Please see the Academic Integrity website (<https://www.tntech.edu/provost/academicintegrity/>) for more information.

Attendance Policy

Students who are unable to attend class for an extended period due to an emergency/extenuating circumstance (i.e., medical illness, hospitalization, death in the family/bereavement, military or legal obligation), may contact the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at studentaffairs@tntech.edu to request an absence notification.

Class Participation

Active participation is essential in this graduate-level online course and is a critical component of your professional development as a social worker. Students are expected to engage meaningfully in weekly discussion boards, respond to peers, and contribute thoughtful, evidence-based reflections that connect course content to real-world practice. Consistent participation demonstrates your commitment to collaborative learning, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue—core values of ethical social work practice. Failure to regularly participate may significantly impact your final grade and your ability to meet CSWE competencies.

Assignments and Related Policy

All assignments must be submitted through the course's online learning management system by the specified deadlines. Late submissions will incur a grade penalty of 10% per day unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor due to extenuating circumstances. Assignments are designed to reinforce key course concepts and contribute to 55% of the final grade, with clear guidelines and grading rubrics provided for each. Timed quizzes and the final comprehensive exam must be completed within the designated time frames and are weighted accordingly. Students are responsible for ensuring their submissions are complete and properly uploaded; technical issues should be reported promptly to avoid penalties.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

AI policy statement: Not Permitted in this Course

In this course, Generative AI resources are not permitted. Students are expected to do all coursework themselves, as an individual or collectively, as designated by the instructor per assignment. The use of a Generative AI Tool to complete coursework constitutes academic misconduct for this course.

Disability Accommodation

Students with a disability requiring accommodations should contact the accessible education center (AEC). An accommodation request (AR) should be completed as soon as possible, preferably by the end of the first week of the course. The AEC is located in the Roaden University Center, room 112; phone 931-372-6119. For details, view Tennessee Tech's policy 340 – [services for students with disabilities at policy central](#).

Additional Resources

Technical Help

If you are experiencing technical problems, visit the [myTech IT Helpdesk](#) for assistance. If you are having trouble with one of the instructional technologies (i.e. Zoom, Teams, Qualtrics, Respondus, or any technology listed [here](#)) visit the [Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning](#) (CITL) website or call 931-372-3675 for assistance.

Tutoring

The university provides free tutoring to all Tennessee Tech students through the Learning Center within the Volpe Library. Tutoring is available for any class or subject, as well as writing, test prep, study skills, and resume support. Appointments are scheduled, so contact the [Learning Center website](#) for more information.

Counseling and Health Services

Tennessee Tech offers support for student well-being through two key services. The Center for Counseling and Mental Health Wellness provides brief, solution-focused therapy to help students navigate personal and social challenges. Health Services delivers accessible, high-quality, and affordable medical care to promote overall wellness. Visit their respective websites to learn more or schedule an appointment.

Emergency Preparedness Protocols

Each student must take personal responsibility for following any University protocol related to pandemics, natural disasters, and other public health and safety events. Students are expected to follow all directives published by Tennessee Tech on its [Environmental Health & Safety webpage](#).

Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 5125: Human Behavior in the Social Environment I (on-ground/online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name
Office
Telephone Number
Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites
Admitted into MSW Program

Texts and Resources

Hutchison, E. D. (2023). *Dimensions of human behavior: The changing life course* (7th ed.). Sage.
Rogers, A. T. (2019). *Human behavior in the social environment: Perspectives on development and the life course* (5th ed.). Routledge.
National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *NASW Code of Ethics*. NASW Press.
Additional peer-reviewed journal articles and case studies will be provided by the instructor.

Course Welcome and Description

This course orients students to theoretical content on the person-in-environment focus in social work practice. An ecological model with a lifespan approach is utilized to explore the periods from conception through late adulthood to understand individuals as they develop throughout the life cycle. Theoretical perspectives will be connected to issues that present at each life stage. Students will use this knowledge to develop an understanding of client functioning and to design appropriate interventions for common psychosocial problems.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will understand theoretical frameworks and ecological perspectives on human development across the lifespan. They will be able to apply knowledge of person-in-environment and developmental theories to analyze client functioning at various stages, from conception through late adulthood. Students will learn to identify psychosocial challenges, risk and protective factors, and the impact of systemic inequities on human development. They will also develop the ability to design culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate interventions that address common psychosocial problems.

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Students will be able to...

Apply ethical principles in analyzing client development and functioning.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

CSWE Competency Alignment

C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Critically assess the role of culture, identity, and diversity in human development.

Identify systemic inequities across the lifespan and apply strategies to promote justice.

Use developmental theories and research to inform practice interventions.

Apply ecological and lifespan models to assess and understand clients in context.

Conduct biopsychosocial assessments using person-in-environment and developmental perspectives.

Design interventions that address psychosocial problems in culturally and developmentally responsive ways.

Major Teaching Methods

On ground: This course integrates lectures, assigned readings, and seminar-style discussions with applied learning activities such as case analyses, role plays, and reflective journaling. Students will critically engage with developmental theories, analyze case studies, and apply concepts to real-world psychosocial issues. Experiential exercises, peer dialogue, and research application will help students connect theory to practice.

Online: Major teaching methods for this course include asynchronous online lectures, interactive discussion forums, and applied learning through case studies and multimedia content.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will require the use of iLearn. All assignments and important class updates will be posted to our course page. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to a working computer and internet to complete your work on time. For general computing issues or iLearn/email/TTU-connected software problems, you must contact the Tech Helpdesk promptly for assistance.

Topics to be Covered

- Introduction to HBSE and person-in-environment perspective
- Ecological and systems theories
- Prenatal and infant development
- Early and middle childhood
- Adolescent development
- Young, middle, and late adulthood
- Diversity and cultural influences across the lifespan
- Risk, resilience, and protective factors
- Psychosocial problems and interventions
- Integration of theory into practice

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|--|--------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to HBSE and Person-in-Environment | Hutchison, Ch. 1 | Syllabus review; discussion on person-in-environment | C1 |
| Week 2: Ecological Systems Theory | Rogers, Ch. 2 | Reflection Journal #1 | C6 |
| Week 3: Prenatal Development | Hutchison, Ch. 2 | Case vignette analysis | C7 |
| Week 4: Infancy and Early Childhood | Rogers, Ch. 3 | Role plays; Reflection Journal #2 | C6, C7 |
| Week 5: Middle Childhood | Hutchison, Ch. 4 | Field observation report | C7 |
| Week 6: Adolescence | Rogers, Ch. 5 | Developmental analysis paper draft | C2 |
| Week 7: Young Adulthood | Hutchison, Ch. 6 | Reflection Journal #3 | C3 |
| Week 8: Midterm Integration Seminar | Hutchison & Rogers | Midterm self-assessment | All |
| Week 9: Middle Adulthood | Rogers, Ch. 7 | Reading Response | C4 |
| Week 10: Late Adulthood | Hutchison, Ch. 8 | Reflection Journal #4 | C2, C3 |
| Week 11: Diversity and Development | Selected peer-reviewed article | Group discussion | C2 |
| Week 12: Risk, Resilience, and Protective Factors | Hutchison, Ch. 9 | Risk/resilience mapping activity | C3, C6 |
| Week 13: Psychosocial Problems Across the Lifespan | Selected readings | Case analysis presentations | C7, C8 |
| Week 14: Integration and Application to Practice | Course summary readings | Final Paper due | All |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|---|---------------|
| Class Participation & Engagement | 15% |
| Reflection Journals (4) | 15% |
| Reading Response | 10% |
| Developmental Case Analysis (Midterm) | 20% |
| Case Presentation | 20% |
| Final Paper (Comprehensive Lifespan Analysis) | 20% |

Class Participation & Engagement (15%)**Description:** Active participation in discussions, role plays, and applied exercises.**Purpose:** Builds professional communication and integration of theory with practice.**Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies:** C1, C6.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Four journals reflecting on developmental stages, diversity, and psychosocial issues.

Purpose: Encourages critical self-reflection and integration of classroom content.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Reading Response (10%)

Description: One short written response analyzing assigned readings.

Purpose: Strengthens research-informed practice application.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C4.

Developmental Case Analysis (20%)

Description: Written analysis of a case study from a developmental perspective.

Purpose: Builds assessment and application of theoretical models.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C6, C7.

Case Presentation (20%)

Description: Oral and written presentation of a psychosocial problem and intervention.

Purpose: Enhances synthesis of theory and practice with diverse populations.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C2, C7, C8.

Final Paper: Comprehensive Lifespan Analysis (20%)

Description: A paper applying ecological and developmental theories to a client system across the lifespan.

Purpose: Demonstrates integration of theory, practice, and ethical considerations.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: All (C1–C8).

Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
| B | 79.5-89.4 |
| C | 69.5-79.4 |
| D | 59.5-69.4 |
| F | 59.4 & below |

Course Policies

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Maintaining high standards of academic integrity in every class is critical to the reputation of Tennessee Tech, its students, faculty, alumni, and the employers of Tennessee Tech graduates. Academic integrity is at the foundation of the educational process and the key to student success. Students with academic integrity are committed to honesty, ethical behavior, and avoiding violations of academic integrity. All students are required to read and understand Policy 216: Student Academic Integrity. Please see the Academic Integrity website (<https://www.tntech.edu/provost/academicintegrity/>) for more information.

Attendance Policy

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Class Participation

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Assignments and Related Policy

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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 5150: Human Behavior in the Social Environment II (on-ground/online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name
Office
Telephone Number
Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Admitted into MSW Program
Human Behavior in the Social Environment I

Texts and Resources

Hutchison, E. D. (2023). *Dimensions of human behavior: Person and environment* (7th ed.). Sage.
Netting, F. E., Kettner, P. M., McMurtry, S. L., & Thomas, M. L. (2020). *Social work macro practice* (7th ed.). Pearson.
National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *NASW Code of Ethics*. NASW Press.
Selected peer-reviewed journal articles provided by the instructor.

Course Welcome and Description

This second course in the HBSE sequence applies the basic framework for creating and organizing knowledge of human behavior and the social environment acquired in HBSE I to the understanding of group, organizational, community, and global systems. Attention is given to discrimination, oppression, the impact of technology, and poverty at each system level. Students will explore the dynamic interactions between individuals and larger systems, critically examining how social, political, and economic structures shape opportunities and outcomes.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will demonstrate an understanding of human behavior within group, organizational, community, and global systems using a person-in-environment perspective. They will analyze the impact of systemic oppression, discrimination, poverty, and technological change on social systems and client well-being. Students will apply theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence to critically assess these systems, design interventions, and advocate for social justice. They will strengthen competencies in analyzing social environments, addressing systemic inequities, and promoting human rights within larger systems of practice.

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Students will be able to...

Apply ethical principles in analyzing macro-level systems and professional practice.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

CSWE Competency Alignment

C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

C5 – Engage in Policy Practice

C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Assess how diversity, culture, and identity shape experiences within larger systems.

Critically analyze systemic oppression and advocate for equity across system levels.

Use research and theory to assess and intervene at group, organizational, and community levels.

Evaluate the impact of policy on client systems and design advocacy strategies.

Demonstrate engagement skills in working with groups and communities.

Conduct assessments of organizations, communities, and social systems.

Design interventions addressing inequities at group, organizational, and community levels.

Evaluate the effectiveness of macro interventions and propose improvements.

Major Teaching Methods

On ground: This course combines lectures, seminar discussions, and applied exercises with experiential learning. Students will engage in critical analysis of case studies, participate in group projects, and design community assessments and interventions. Assignments emphasize integration of theory, research, and practice. Peer dialogue, role plays, and reflective writing will support professional development and application of knowledge to real-world systemic issues.

Online: Major teaching methods for this course include asynchronous online lectures, interactive discussion forums, and applied learning through case studies and multimedia content. Students will engage in critical analysis of case studies, participate in group projects, and design community assessments and interventions. Assignments emphasize integration of theory, research, and practice. Peer dialogue, role plays, and reflective writing will support professional development and application of knowledge to real-world systemic issues.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

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Topics to be Covered

- Review of person-in-environment and ecological frameworks
- Theories of group dynamics and organizational behavior
- Social identity, oppression, and discrimination in groups

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

- Organizational structures and power
- Community development and social capital
- Globalization, technology, and systemic change
- Poverty and economic inequality
- Human rights and justice in macro systems
- Policy analysis and advocacy strategies
- Community organizing and empowerment
- Program evaluation and systems change

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|---|-------------------------|---|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to HBSE II | Hutchison, Ch. 1 | Syllabus review; person-in-environment discussion | C1 |
| Week 2: Theories of Groups and Organizations | Netting et al., Ch. 2 | Reflection Journal #1 | C6, C7 |
| Week 3: Group Dynamics and Social Identity | Hutchison, Ch. 3 | Case vignette analysis | C2 |
| Week 4: Organizational Theories and Structures | Netting et al., Ch. 4 | Reflection Journal #2 | C7 |
| Week 5: Communities and Social Capital | Hutchison, Ch. 5 | Community mapping project | C7, C8 |
| Week 6: Global Systems and Social Development | Selected article | Midterm Essay Draft | C3 |
| Week 7: Technology, Globalization, and Social Work | Hutchison, Ch. 7 | Reflection Journal #3 | C4 |
| Week 8: Midterm Integration Seminar | Hutchison & Netting | Midterm Exam / Essay | All |
| Week 9: Poverty and Economic Inequality | Peer-reviewed article | Reading Response | C3 |
| Week 10: Discrimination, Oppression, and Resistance | Hutchison, Ch. 8 | Reflection Journal #4 | C2, C3 |
| Week 11: Policy Impacts on Groups and Communities | Netting et al., Ch. 6 | Group policy analysis | C5 |
| Week 12: Advocacy and Community Organizing | Hutchison, Ch. 9 | Advocacy plan draft | C5, C8 |
| Week 13: Program Evaluation in Macro Practice | Selected article | Evaluation project presentations | C9 |
| Week 14: Integration and Application | Course summary readings | Final Paper due | All |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|---|---------------|
| Class Participation & Seminar Engagement | 15% |
| Reflection Journals (4) | 15% |
| Reading Response | 10% |
| Midterm Essay (System-Level Analysis) | 20% |
| Group Policy Analysis Project | 20% |
| Final Paper (Macro-Level Intervention Plan) | 20% |

Class Participation & Seminar Engagement (15%)

Description: Active participation in seminar discussions, group projects, and applied exercises.

Purpose: Develops professional communication and collaborative learning.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C6.

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Four journals reflecting on systemic issues, discrimination, oppression, and justice.

Purpose: Encourages integration of course content with professional self-reflection.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C2, C3.

Reading Response (10%)

Description: Short written response analyzing a reading or case study.

Purpose: Strengthens the application of research and theory to practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C4.

Midterm Essay: System-Level Analysis (20%)

Description: Written essay analyzing a group, organization, or community system using course frameworks.

Purpose: Strengthens system-level assessment and critical thinking.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C7.

Group Policy Analysis Project (20%)

Description: Collaborative project analyzing a policy's impact on groups or communities.

Purpose: Develops policy practice skills and collective advocacy strategies.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C5, C8.

Final Paper: Macro-Level Intervention Plan (20%)

Description: A comprehensive paper proposing an intervention addressing systemic inequities at the organizational, community, or global level.

Purpose: Demonstrates integration of theory, policy, and practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: All (C1–C9).

Grading Scale

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
| B | 79.5-89.4 |
| C | 69.5-79.4 |
| D | 59.5-69.4 |
| F | 59.4 & below |

Course Policies

Student Academic Integrity Policy

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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 6050: Research Methods in Social Work
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Admitted into MSW Program

Texts and Resources

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. R. (2016). *Research methods for social work* (9th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Additional peer-reviewed articles and readings provided via the course learning platform.
Access to SPSS. (Instructions for free access provided on iLearn)

Course Welcome and Description

This foundational course is designed to help students gain an understanding of and appreciation for the use of research in evidence-based practices. Students are introduced to quantitative and qualitative concepts and skills underlying a systematic approach to social work research, including basic research terminology, scientific methods, and the value of research in social work. Students will learn about historical and present-day inequities in research and how to apply ethics and social work values to engage in ethical research. Students will apply these ethics and values to problem formulation, measurement, design, sampling, data gathering, analytic techniques, and use of analytic software.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of quantitative and qualitative research approaches in social work and apply them to evidence-based practice. They will gain competence in developing research questions, formulating hypotheses, designing studies, and applying ethical principles to all phases of research. Students will critically analyze historical and present-day inequities in research, applying social work values to promote justice and equity in the production of knowledge. They will also learn to conduct sampling, data collection, measurement, and analysis, including the use of analytic software, and interpret findings to inform practice, policy, and service delivery.

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Students will be able to...

Apply ethical principles and the NASW Code of Ethics to the design and conduct of research.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

CSWE Competency Alignment

C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Critically examine how diversity, inequity, and systemic oppression influence research.
Promote equity in research practices and advocate for inclusive methodologies.
Design and conduct research projects that integrate theory, evidence, and practice.
Use research tools and data to assess needs and evaluate interventions across system levels.
Employ analytic techniques and software to evaluate outcomes of social work practice.

Major Teaching Methods

This in-person course blends lectures, group discussions, and applied practice with analytic tools. Lectures provide foundational knowledge of research methods, while discussions and critical reflections encourage students to examine ethical dilemmas, historical inequities, and systemic issues in research. Applied exercises, including role plays, case analyses, and data collection simulations, allow students to practice research skills in a hands-on way. Students will also use analytic software to apply quantitative techniques, while qualitative research activities such as interviews deepen understanding of diverse approaches. Guest speakers and collaborative projects provide exposure to real-world applications of research in social work.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

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Topics to be Covered

- Introduction to social work research
- Research ethics and social work values
- Historical inequities in research
- Quantitative vs. qualitative approaches
- Problem formulation and research questions
- Measurement and variables
- Sampling strategies
- Research design
- Data collection methods (surveys, interviews, observation)
- Qualitative research approaches
- Quantitative data analysis and software use
- Data interpretation and reporting findings
- Application of research to evidence-based practice

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|--|--|--|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to Social Work Research | Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 1 | Syllabus review; discussion on role of research | C1, C4 |
| Week 2: Ethics in Social Work Research | Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 2; NASW Code of Ethics | Case analysis on ethical dilemmas; Reflection Journal #1 | C1, C3 |
| Week 3: Historical Inequities and Social Justice in Research | Selected articles | Critical reflection; group discussion | C2, C3 |
| Week 4: Quantitative vs. Qualitative Approaches | Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 3 | Class debate; Reading Response #1 | C4 |
| Week 5: Problem Formulation and Research Questions | Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 4 | Research proposal brainstorming | C4 |
| Week 6: Measurement and Variables | Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 5 | Measurement exercise; Reflection Journal #2 | C4 |
| Week 7: Sampling Methods | Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 6 | Sampling activity | C4 |
| Week 8: Research Design | Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 7 | Design mini-project | C4 |
| Week 9: Data Collection Methods | Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 8 | Observation and survey practice | C4, C7 |
| Week 10: Qualitative Research in Social Work | Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 9 | Interview activity; Reflection Journal #3 | C2, C4 |
| Week 11: Quantitative Analysis and Software Introduction | Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 10 | SPSS/R lab session | C9 |
| Week 12: Data Analysis and Interpretation | Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 11 | Group data analysis project | C4, C9 |
| Week 13: Presenting Research Findings | Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 12 | Student presentations | C4, C9 |
| Week 14: Integration and Reflection | Review articles; course summary | Final Paper due; reflection circle | All |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Class Participation and Activities | 15% |
| Reflection Journals (3) | 15% |
| Reading Responses (2) | 10% |
| Research Proposal | 20% |
| Group Data Analysis Project | 20% |
| Final Paper/Presentation | 20% |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Class Participation and Activities (15%)

Description: Active engagement in discussions, group work, and applied class exercises.

Purpose: Builds professional communication and critical analysis of research ethics and methods.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Short reflective pieces on ethics, social justice, and inequities in research.

Purpose: Promotes critical self-awareness and understanding of systemic issues in research.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Reading Responses (10%)

Description: Written analyses of course readings linking theory to research applications.

Purpose: Reinforces comprehension and ability to critique methodologies.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C4.

Research Proposal (20%)

Description: Development of a written research proposal including problem formulation, research design, sampling, and ethical considerations.

Purpose: Strengthens skills in planning and conceptualizing research.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C3, C4.

Group Data Analysis Project (20%)

Description: Students work in groups to collect or analyze sample data using SPSS or R, then present results.

Purpose: Builds practical skills in data analysis, teamwork, and interpretation.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C4, C7, C9.

Final Paper/Presentation (20%)

Description: Comprehensive paper and presentation synthesizing course learning through an applied research project.

Purpose: Demonstrates mastery of research concepts, methods, and application to social work practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C4, C7, C9.

Grading Scale

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|--------------|--------------|
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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 6150: Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Research Methods in Social Work

Texts and Resources

Gambrill, E. (2018). *Evidence-based practice in social work: A critical stance*. Oxford University Press.

National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *NASW Code of Ethics*. NASW Press.

Additional peer-reviewed articles and case studies provided by the instructor.

Course Welcome and Description

This course builds upon foundational knowledge from Research Methods in Social Work by focusing on the application of research within real-world social work practice settings. Designed as an alternative to a traditional Advanced Research Methods course, this class emphasizes the principles and implementation of evidence-based practice (EBP) across the micro (individuals and families), mezzo (groups and organizations), and macro (communities and systems) levels. Students will deepen their understanding of how to formulate practice-relevant questions, locate and critically appraise empirical evidence, and integrate that evidence with clinical judgment and client preferences. The course emphasizes the practical skills needed to apply research findings ethically and effectively in diverse practice environments. Special attention will be given to the barriers and facilitators of implementing EBP, such as organizational culture, resource limitations, cultural relevance, and systemic inequality. Through applied assignments, case-based learning, and critical reflection, students will strengthen their ability to use research to inform practice decisions, evaluate interventions, and advocate for evidence-informed changes that promote social and economic justice at all levels of practice.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to apply the principles of evidence-based practice (EBP) across micro, mezzo, and macro levels of social work. They will develop the ability to formulate clear, answerable practice questions relevant to clinical, organizational, and policy contexts, and critically identify, appraise, and synthesize empirical research to inform ethical and effective decision-making. Students will learn to translate and adapt research findings to meet the

needs of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, with careful attention to cultural relevance, social justice, and contextual appropriateness. The course will also prepare students to analyze organizational and systemic barriers to implementing EBP and to develop strategies for advancing evidence-informed practice through advocacy, leadership, and collaboration. Through this work, students will strengthen their critical thinking and reflective practice skills, ultimately enhancing their capacity to use evidence to improve outcomes for diverse and marginalized populations.

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Apply ethical principles when integrating evidence into practice.

Evaluate how cultural context and client values shape EBP decision-making.

Critically analyze systemic barriers to EBP and advocate for equitable interventions.

Formulate practice questions, search for evidence, and apply findings to practice.

Collaborate with clients and stakeholders in applying evidence-informed decisions.

Conduct assessments informed by empirical evidence and client perspectives.

Implement evidence-based interventions tailored to client needs and contexts.

Evaluate the outcomes of evidence-informed interventions and adjust practice accordingly.

Major Teaching Methods

This course employs a blend of lectures, seminar discussions, and applied exercises to integrate theory and practice. Students will engage in guided workshops on research searching and appraisal, participate in case-based discussions, and reflect on practice experiences through journaling. Emphasis is placed on experiential learning, critical reflection, and collaboration, with students applying EBP principles to real-world scenarios.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will require the use of iLearn. All assignments and important class updates will be posted to our course page. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to a working computer and internet to complete your work on time. For general computing issues or iLearn/email/TTU-connected software problems, you must contact the Tech Helpdesk promptly for assistance.

Topics to be Covered

- Foundations of Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) in Social Work: Definitions, Principles, and Relevance Across Practice Levels

- The Role of the Social Work Practitioner in the EBP Process: Ethical Responsibilities and Professional Judgment
- Formulating Practice-Relevant and Policy-Oriented Questions Using the PICO Framework
- Locating, Appraising, and Synthesizing Research Evidence Across Diverse Sources
- Integrating Research Evidence with Client Values, Lived Experiences, and Practitioner Expertise
- Addressing Cultural Relevance, Intersectionality, and Client Diversity in the Application of EBP
- Identifying and Navigating Organizational, Structural, and Policy-Level Barriers to EBP Implementation
- Ethical and Justice-Oriented Approaches to Evidence-Informed Practice
- Evaluating the Effectiveness and Equity of Evidence-Based Interventions
- Applying EBP Across Micro (clinical), Mezzo (organizational), and Macro (community/policy) Contexts
- Collaborating with Clients, Communities, and Stakeholders in Evidence-Informed Decision-Making
- Advocating for Systems Change Through the Use of Evidence and Evaluation Data

Course Schedule

| Week | Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs / Competencies |
|---------------|--|---|---|---------------------|
| Week 1 | Introduction to EBP in Social Work: What, Why, and For Whom? | Gambrill, Ch. 1 | Syllabus review, course expectations, introductory discussion | C1 |
| Week 2 | Foundations of the EBP Process and Practitioner Roles | Gambrill, Ch. 2; iLearn article | Reflection Journal #1: Role of practitioner in EBP | C1, C4 |
| Week 3 | Asking the Right Questions: PICO and Beyond | Gambrill, Ch. 3 | In-class PICO practice; group activity | C4 |
| Week 4 | Searching for Evidence: Strategies and Databases | iLearn articles on research databases and grey literature | Guided database search workshop | C4 |
| Week 5 | Evaluating and Appraising Research | Gambrill, Ch. 4 | Critical appraisal worksheet using real articles | C4, C7 |
| Week 6 | Integrating Evidence with Clinical Expertise | iLearn article (e.g., clinical decision-making) | Reflection Journal #2: Practitioner expertise in action | C6 |
| Week 7 | Centering Client Values and Cultural Relevance | Gambrill, Ch. 5; iLearn article on cultural competence | Case analysis: cultural humility and evidence use | C2 |
| Week 8 | Midterm Integration Seminar | Review prior readings | Midterm Essay: Applying EBP to a real-world scenario (micro/mezzo/macro) | C1–C9 |
| Week 9 | Barriers and Facilitators to Implementing EBP | Gambrill, Ch. 6; iLearn article | Reflection Journal #3: EBP challenges in practice | C3, C4 |

| Week | Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs / Competencies |
|----------------|---|---|--|---------------------|
| Week 10 | Organizational and Policy Contexts of EBP | Gambrill, Ch. 7; iLearn article on macro barriers | Draft Advocacy Plan: Promoting EBP in your field | C3, C6 |
| Week 11 | Ethics, Power, and Accountability in EBP | NASW Code of Ethics; Gambrill, Ch. 8 | Seminar discussion: Ethical dilemmas in applying EBP | C1 |
| Week 12 | Evaluating Outcomes and Sustaining EBP | iLearn article on practice evaluation | Evaluation Project Workshop | C9 |
| Week 13 | Student Case Presentations: EBP in Action | Student-selected sources | Oral Presentations: Micro, mezzo, or macro cases | C6, C7, C8 |
| Week 14 | Integration and Application: Final Reflections and Future Use | Gambrill, Ch. 9; course summary readings | Final Paper Due: EBP in your professional context | C1–C9 |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment | Weight | CSWE Competencies |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Reflection Journals (3 total) | 15% (5% each) | C1, C2, C3, C4 |
| PICO Practice Exercise | 5% | C4 |
| Critical Appraisal Worksheet | 10% | C4, C7 |
| Midterm Essay | 20% | C1–C9 |
| Advocacy Plan Draft | 10% | C3, C5, C6 |
| Evaluation Project Workshop | 10% | C9 |
| Case Presentation | 10% | C6, C7, C8 |
| Final Paper: EBP Application | 20% | C1–C9 |

Reflection Journals (3 Total) – 15% (5% each)

Purpose: To promote critical thinking and personal reflection about the application of EBP principles in real-world practice across micro, mezzo, and macro contexts.

Description: Students will respond to prompts that require them to reflect on course concepts (e.g., practitioner role, cultural relevance, ethical considerations) and connect them to their values, professional goals, and field experiences.

Competencies: C1 (Ethical Behavior), C2 (Diversity), C3 (Justice), C4 (Practice-Informed Research)

PICO Practice Exercise – 5%

Purpose: To build student proficiency in developing focused, answerable practice questions—a foundational step in EBP.

Description: Students will create and refine PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) questions in small groups based on real or hypothetical practice scenarios.

Competencies: C4 (Practice-Informed Research)

Critical Appraisal Worksheet – 10%

Purpose: To strengthen students' ability to critically evaluate the quality, validity, and applicability of empirical research.

Description: Students will select a peer-reviewed article relevant to their practice area and complete a structured appraisal covering research design, methodology, bias, and relevance to practice.

Competencies: C4 (Practice-Informed Research), C7 (Assessment)

Midterm Essay – 20%

Purpose: To synthesize learning and apply the EBP process to a comprehensive practice scenario.

Description: Students will choose a micro, mezzo, or macro-level case example and walk through each step of the EBP process, including formulating a question, locating evidence, integrating it with context, and considering ethical and cultural dimensions.

Competencies: C1–C9 (Comprehensive application)

Advocacy Plan Draft – 10%

Purpose: To apply EBP principles to organizational or policy-level challenges, and build skills in promoting systems-level change.

Description: Students will identify a barrier to EBP implementation (e.g., policy, funding, organizational culture) and draft a brief advocacy plan using evidence to support their recommendations.

Competencies: C3 (Justice), C5 (Policy), C6 (Engagement)

Evaluation Project Workshop – 10%

Purpose: To introduce students to basic concepts of practice evaluation and prepare them to assess the effectiveness of evidence-informed interventions.

Description: In workshop format, students will design a simple evaluation plan for a social work intervention, including goals, outcomes, data collection strategies, and use of findings.

Competencies: C9 (Evaluation)

Case Presentation – 10%

Purpose: To practice applying EBP principles in an oral, collaborative format and receive feedback on practice scenarios.

Description: Students will present a real or hypothetical case involving the integration of research, clinical expertise, and client values. Presentations must address barriers, ethical considerations, and implementation strategies.

Competencies: C6 (Engagement), C7 (Assessment), C8 (Intervention)

Final Paper: EBP Application – 20%

Purpose: To demonstrate mastery of course concepts and ability to apply the EBP framework in a chosen practice setting.

Description: Students will submit a final paper (8–10 pages) applying the full EBP process to a case or issue of their choosing, incorporating relevant research, contextual analysis, and personal reflection on their role as a practitioner.

Competencies: C1–C9 (Comprehensive integration)

Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
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| F | 59.4 & below |

Course Policies

Student Academic Integrity Policy

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Class Participation

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Assignments and Related Policy

All assignments must be submitted through the course's online learning management system by the specified deadlines. Late submissions will incur a grade penalty of 10% per day unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor due to extenuating circumstances. Assignments are designed to reinforce key course concepts and contribute to 55% of the final grade, with clear guidelines and grading rubrics provided for each. Timed quizzes and the final comprehensive exam must be completed within the designated time frames and are weighted accordingly. Students are responsible for ensuring their submissions are complete and properly uploaded; technical issues should be reported promptly to avoid penalties.

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 6100: Poverty, Inequality, & Social Justice
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Admitted into MSW Program

Texts and Resources

Rank, M. R., Eppard, N., & Bullock, H. E. (2021). *Poorly understood: What America gets wrong about poverty*. Oxford University Press.

Iceland, J. (2019). *Poverty in America: A handbook* (3rd ed.). University of California Press.

Additional peer-reviewed journal articles, policy briefs, and reports will be provided by the instructor.

Course Welcome and Description

This course critically examines the structural, economic, and social dimensions of poverty and inequality in the United States and globally, with a focus on their implications for social work practice. Students will explore historical and contemporary theories of poverty, the role of social policy, and the intersections of race, class, gender, and other identities in shaping experiences of disadvantage. Emphasis will be placed on analyzing systemic barriers, understanding the lived realities of marginalized populations, and evaluating policy and practice interventions designed to promote equity and social justice. Through online readings, case studies, discussion forums, and applied projects, students will strengthen their capacity to advocate for social change, advance human rights, and engage in practice that challenges oppression and fosters inclusion.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to analyze poverty and inequality using historical, theoretical, and social policy perspectives. They will critically assess how race, class, gender, and other intersecting identities shape experiences of disadvantage, and they will evaluate systemic barriers to equity. Students will demonstrate the ability to apply social work values and ethics to assess, critique, and advocate for policy and practice interventions that address structural inequalities. They will also strengthen their advocacy and communication skills by engaging in online forums, case analyses, and applied projects designed to promote human rights, social justice, and inclusion.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

C5 – Engage in Policy Practice

C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Apply ethical frameworks to analyze systemic poverty and inequality in social work practice.

Examine the intersections of race, class, gender, and other identities in shaping poverty and inequality.

Develop advocacy strategies to promote equity and social justice in local and global contexts.

Critically evaluate research on poverty and inequality to inform practice interventions.

Assess and critique social policies related to poverty and inequality, and propose reforms.

Collaborate in online projects to identify and address community needs related to inequality.

Major Teaching Methods

This course is delivered online and uses a combination of asynchronous modules, interactive discussion forums, and occasional synchronous sessions (via Zoom or Teams) for collaborative activities. Teaching methods include guided readings, multimedia resources (podcasts, documentaries, and recorded lectures), online discussion boards, case-based learning, and group projects. Peer-to-peer interaction is emphasized through structured online forums and collaborative assignments, ensuring students engage critically with one another and with course material. The online format provides flexibility while maintaining high expectations for active participation, critical analysis, and reflective practice.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will require the use of iLearn. All assignments and important class updates will be posted to our course page. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to a working computer and internet to complete your work on time. For general computing issues or iLearn/email/TTU-connected software problems, you must contact the Tech Helpdesk promptly for assistance.

Topics to be Covered

- Historical and contemporary theories of poverty
- Structural inequality and systemic oppression
- Intersections of race, class, gender, and other identities
- Social welfare policy responses to poverty and inequality
- Housing, health, and child welfare inequalities
- Global perspectives on poverty and inequality
- Frameworks for policy and practice analysis
- Advocacy strategies for promoting equity and social justice

Course Schedule

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

| Week / Topic | Key Readings/Media | Assignments/Activities | SLOs |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to Poverty & Inequality | Rank et al., Ch. 1 | Online icebreaker discussion; Syllabus quiz | C1 |
| Week 2: Historical Perspectives on Poverty | Rank et al., Ch. 2 | Reflection Journal #1 (online submission) | C1, C2 |
| Week 3: Theories of Poverty | Rank et al., Ch. 3 | Small-group online discussion board | C4 |
| Week 4: Structural Inequality & Race, Class, Gender | Desmond, <i>Evicted</i> , Ch. 1–2 | Case analysis forum | C2, C3 |
| Week 5: Lived Realities of Marginalized Populations | Selected articles, podcast | Reflection Journal #2 | C2 |
| Week 6: Poverty and Policy in the U.S. | Rank et al., Ch. 4 | Policy brief outline (uploaded online) | C5 |
| Week 7: Midterm Module – Policy & Inequality | Review readings | Midterm Policy Critique Paper | C1–C5 |
| Week 8: Global Dimensions of Inequality | UN & World Bank reports | Online discussion (global focus) | C3 |
| Week 9: Housing & Homelessness | Desmond, <i>Evicted</i> , Ch. 3–6 | Reflection Journal #3 | C3 |
| Week 10: Health & Inequality | Selected health policy readings | Policy debate in discussion forum | C5 |
| Week 11: Child Welfare & Inequality | Rank et al., Ch. 5 | Group project collaboration via LMS | C6 |
| Week 12: Policy Frameworks for Analysis | Rank et al., Ch. 6 | Applied framework exercise (uploaded) | C4, C5 |
| Week 13: Advocacy & Social Justice Practice | Supplemental readings | Group presentations (online video submission) | C3, C6 |
| Week 14: Course Integration & Final Reflections | Course summary readings | Final Policy Advocacy Paper | All |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|--|---------------|
| Online Participation & Discussion Forums | 20% |
| Reflection Journals (3) | 15% |
| Midterm Policy Critique Paper | 20% |
| Policy Brief (Applied Assignment) | 20% |
| Group Project & Online Presentation | 15% |
| Final Policy Advocacy Paper | 10% |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Online Participation & Discussion Forums (20%)

Description: Students will engage in weekly discussion boards, responding to prompts and providing peer feedback.

Purpose: Fosters critical reflection and collaborative dialogue in an online setting.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C1, C2, C6.

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Three journals submitted online, connecting readings to practice and analyzing personal learning.

Purpose: Encourages integration of course content with social work values.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Midterm Policy Critique Paper (20%)

Description: Written analysis of a current U.S. or global policy related to poverty/inequality, uploaded through LMS.

Purpose: Develops skills in policy critique and research-informed practice.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C4, C5.

Policy Brief (20%)

Description: Students prepare a policy brief addressing a systemic barrier to equity, including recommendations.

Purpose: Builds applied writing and advocacy skills.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C3, C5.

Group Project & Online Presentation (15%)

Description: Collaborative project analyzing a policy issue and presenting advocacy strategies via video or narrated slides.

Purpose: Develops collaborative practice and advocacy in an online format.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C3, C6.

Final Policy Advocacy Paper (10%)

Description: Individual paper integrating course learnings into a comprehensive advocacy strategy.

Purpose: Demonstrates mastery of course objectives.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: All (C1–C6).

Grading Scale

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 5175: Introduction to Social Welfare Policy (on-ground/online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Admitted into MSW Program

Texts and Resources

Jansson, B. S. (2021). *Becoming an effective policy advocate: From policy practice to social justice* (9th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Popple, P. R., & Leighninger, L. (2020). *Social work, social welfare, and American society* (12th ed.). Pearson.

Supplemental readings (policy briefs, government reports, journal articles) provided by instructor.

Course Welcome and Description

This course provides a foundational overview of social welfare policy in the United States, with attention to its historical development, philosophical underpinnings, and impact on diverse populations. Students will examine the values, political ideologies, and economic forces that shape social policy, as well as the role of government, advocacy groups, and social movements in influencing policy outcomes. Emphasis is placed on understanding how social welfare policies address issues such as poverty, inequality, health, housing, and child welfare, and how these policies intersect with race, class, gender, and other dimensions of identity. Students will learn to critically analyze policies using frameworks that assess effectiveness, equity, and social justice, and will develop skills to advocate for policy reforms that advance human rights and improve the well-being of vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to articulate the historical and philosophical foundations of U.S. social welfare policy and critically evaluate the influence of political ideologies, economic systems, and advocacy movements on policy development. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze and critique social policies using frameworks of equity, effectiveness, and social justice. They will connect policies to their impact on marginalized and vulnerable populations and strengthen their skills in advocating for reforms that promote inclusion, human rights, and social well-being.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

C5 – Engage in Policy Practice

C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Apply social work values and ethics in analyzing and advocating for policy reforms.

Assess how policies affect diverse groups differently based on race, class, gender, and other identities.

Critique policies for equity and advocate for reforms that advance justice.

Use research evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of social policies.

Critically analyze policies and develop advocacy strategies to influence change.

Collaborate with stakeholders in identifying policy needs and community impacts.

Major Teaching Methods

On ground: This course utilizes a mix of lectures, interactive discussions, and case-based learning to develop both theoretical knowledge and applied skills. Students will engage in group projects, policy critiques, and advocacy planning exercises. The teaching approach emphasizes active participation, critical reflection, and peer-to-peer collaboration to build professional competence in analyzing and shaping social welfare policies.

Online: Major teaching methods for this course include asynchronous online lectures, interactive discussion forums, and applied learning through case studies and multimedia content. Students will engage in collaborative assignments, reflective writing, and structured peer feedback to deepen their understanding of course material.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

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Topics to be Covered

- Historical development of U.S. social welfare policy
- Philosophical foundations and political ideologies
- Economic forces and policy outcomes
- Role of government, advocacy groups, and social movements
- Poverty, inequality, health, housing, and child welfare policies
- Intersectionality in policy outcomes
- Frameworks for policy analysis (effectiveness, equity, social justice)
- Advocacy strategies and policy practice for reform

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to Social Welfare Policy | Popple & Leighninger, Ch. 1 | Syllabus review; discussion | C1 |
| Week 2: Historical Foundations of Social Policy | Jansson, Ch. 2 | Reflection Journal #1 | C1, C3 |
| Week 3: Philosophical Underpinnings | Popple & Leighninger, Ch. 3 | Class debate | C2 |
| Week 4: Political Ideologies & Policy Development | Jansson, Ch. 4 | Case study analysis | C5 |
| Week 5: Economic Forces in Social Policy | Popple & Leighninger, Ch. 4 | Reflection Journal #2 | C4 |
| Week 6: Role of Government & Advocacy Groups | Jansson, Ch. 5 | Policy brief outline | C5 |
| Week 7: Social Movements & Policy Change | Selected articles | Midterm Paper due | C3, C5 |
| Week 8: Poverty & Inequality | Popple & Leighninger, Ch. 7 | Case example discussion | C2, C3 |
| Week 9: Health & Housing Policies | Selected readings | Reflection Journal #3 | C4 |
| Week 10: Child Welfare & Family Policy | Popple & Leighninger, Ch. 8 | Policy critique draft | C2, C5 |
| Week 11: Intersectionality in Policy Impact | Jansson, Ch. 7 | Group presentations prep | C2 |
| Week 12: Policy Analysis Frameworks | Jansson, Ch. 8 | In-class framework exercise | C4, C5 |
| Week 13: Advocacy & Policy Practice | Popple & Leighninger, Ch. 9 | Group presentations | C5, C6 |
| Week 14: Integration & Future Directions | Summary readings | Final Policy Analysis Paper due | All |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|--|---------------|
| Class Participation & Seminar Engagement | 15% |
| Reflection Journals (3) | 15% |
| Midterm Paper: Historical/Philosophical Analysis | 20% |
| Policy Brief/Policy Critique | 20% |
| Group Presentation: Policy Advocacy Strategy | 15% |
| Final Policy Analysis Paper | 15% |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Class Participation & Seminar Engagement (15%)

Description: Active participation in discussions, case studies, and group exercises.

Purpose: Strengthens critical engagement with policy issues and peer learning.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C1, C6.

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Three short journals connecting readings to policy practice.

Purpose: Encourages self-reflection and integration of theory into practice.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Midterm Paper: Historical/Philosophical Analysis (20%)

Description: Written paper analyzing the historical and philosophical underpinnings of a U.S. social policy.

Purpose: Builds understanding of contextual influences on policy development.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C1, C4.

Policy Brief/Policy Critique (20%)

Description: Critical analysis of a current policy using equity, effectiveness, and justice frameworks.

Purpose: Strengthens skills in applied policy analysis.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C3, C5.

Group Presentation: Policy Advocacy Strategy (15%)

Description: Group project presenting an advocacy strategy to reform or improve a policy.

Purpose: Builds collaboration and policy practice skills.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C5, C6.

Final Policy Analysis Paper (15%)

Description: Comprehensive analysis of a contemporary policy issue and reform proposal.

Purpose: Demonstrates mastery of policy analysis frameworks and advocacy skills.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: All (C1–C6).

Grading Scale

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|--------------|--------------|
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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Active participation is essential in this graduate-level online course and is a critical component of your professional development as a social worker. Students are expected to engage meaningfully in weekly discussion boards, respond to peers, and contribute thoughtful, evidence-based reflections that connect course content to real-world practice. Consistent participation demonstrates your commitment to collaborative learning, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue—core values of ethical social work practice. Failure to regularly participate may significantly impact your final grade and your ability to meet CSWE competencies.

Assignments and Related Policy

All assignments must be submitted through the course's online learning management system by the specified deadlines. Late submissions will incur a grade penalty of 10% per day unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor due to extenuating circumstances. Assignments are designed to reinforce key course concepts and contribute to 55% of the final grade, with clear guidelines and grading rubrics provided for each. Timed quizzes and the final comprehensive exam must be completed within the designated time frames and are weighted accordingly. Students are responsible for ensuring their submissions are complete and properly uploaded; technical issues should be reported promptly to avoid penalties.

AI policy statement: Not Permitted in this Course

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Additional Resources

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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 6900: Practicum IA (online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name
Office
Telephone Number
Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Admitted into MSW Program
15 hours, SW 5000-level/6000-level

Texts and Resources

Birkenmaier, J., & Berg-Weger, M. (2017). *The practicum companion for social work: Integrating class and field work* (4th ed.). Pearson.
National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *NASW Code of Ethics*. NASW Press.
Field Education Manual (provided by the program).
Additional readings as assigned by field instructor or seminar faculty.

Course Welcome and Description

This 200-hour practicum is the initial supervised field experience designed to integrate classroom learning with professional social work practice. Students will engage in direct practice activities within an approved agency or community setting, developing foundational competencies in engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation with individuals, families, groups, and communities. Emphasis is placed on applying social work values and ethics, demonstrating cultural humility, practicing self-reflection, and building professional relationships in diverse practice environments. Students will also begin to connect theory and evidence-based practice to real-world contexts, strengthening their ability to think critically and respond ethically to complex client needs. Field education is conducted in partnership with seminar support, providing structured opportunities for feedback, discussion, and integration of practice experiences with academic content.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this practicum, students will demonstrate beginning-level competence in applying social work knowledge, values, and skills in professional practice settings. They will engage clients through effective communication, apply ethical decision-making, and demonstrate cultural humility in diverse practice contexts. Students will strengthen their ability to assess client needs, implement appropriate interventions, and evaluate outcomes. They will also practice professional self-reflection, connect theory and evidence-based practice to fieldwork, and build collaborative relationships with supervisors, colleagues, and clients. Through field

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

seminar, they will integrate field experiences with classroom learning and strengthen their critical thinking and advocacy skills in preparation for advanced practice.

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Apply the NASW Code of Ethics in practice; engage in professional conduct and supervision.
Recognize how culture, identity, and difference shape practice; apply cultural humility.
Identify systemic barriers in field settings and advocate for equitable services.
Apply evidence-based practices in interventions; reflect on practice through research.
Build professional relationships and demonstrate effective engagement skills.
Conduct biopsychosocial assessments and identify client needs and strengths.
Apply intervention strategies within field setting; collaborate with clients and systems.
Collect and reflect on outcomes of interventions; integrate feedback to improve practice.

Major Teaching Methods

This course integrates experiential fieldwork with reflective seminar instruction. Students spend structured hours in approved agency or community settings, where they engage in supervised social work practice activities. Fieldwork is supplemented by weekly online seminar meetings, which provide opportunities for case discussion, skills practice, feedback, and integration of field and classroom learning. Teaching methods include reflective journaling, role plays, case presentations, peer discussion, and guided supervision. This combination ensures that students gain professional experience while critically reflecting on their practice, ethics, and development.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will require the use of iLearn. All assignments and important class updates will be posted to our course page. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to a working computer and internet to complete your work on time. For general computing issues or iLearn/email/TTU-connected software problems, you must contact the Tech Helpdesk promptly for assistance.

Topics to be Covered

- Orientation to field education and professional roles
- Social work values, ethics, and professional conduct
- Cultural humility and diversity in practice
- Client engagement and relationship building

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

- Assessment methods in social work
- Intervention planning and evidence-based practice
- Advocacy, human rights, and social justice in practice
- Supervision and professional development
- Evaluation of practice outcomes
- Integration of classroom learning with fieldwork

Course Schedule (Seminar + Field)

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Week 1: Orientation to Field & Professional Expectations | Field Manual; NASW Code of Ethics | Learning agreement development | C1 |
| Week 2: Professional Role & Ethics in Practice | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 1 | Reflection Journal #1 | C1 |
| Week 3: Cultural Humility & Diversity in Field Settings | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 2 | Case vignette discussion | C2 |
| Week 4: Engagement Skills | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 3 | Role plays; Reflection Journal #2 | C6 |
| Week 5: Assessment in Practice | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 4 | Field activity report | C7 |
| Week 6: Intervention Planning | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 5 | Midterm self-evaluation draft | C8 |
| Week 7: Advocacy & Human Rights in Practice | Selected article | Reflection Journal #3 | C3 |
| Week 8: Midterm Integration Seminar | Student-selected cases | Midterm Evaluation (student + supervisor) | All |
| Week 9: Evidence-Based Practice in Field | Peer-reviewed article | Reading Response #1 | C4 |
| Week 10: Evaluation of Practice Outcomes | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 6 | Reflection Journal #4 | C9 |
| Week 11: Professional Use of Supervision | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 7 | Supervision plan | C1 |
| Week 12: Critical Reflection on Practice | Selected article | Group discussion | C2, C3 |
| Week 13: Case Presentations | Student-selected | Student presentations | C6, C7, C8 |
| Week 14: Final Integration & Next Steps | Field Manual review | Final Evaluation; Final Reflection Paper due | All |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|--|---------------|
| Class Participation & Field Seminar Engagement | 15% |
| Reflection Journals (4) | 15% |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|---|--------|
| Reading Response | 10% |
| Midterm Evaluation (Student + Supervisor) | 20% |
| Case Presentation | 20% |
| Final Evaluation & Reflection Paper | 20% |

Class Participation & Seminar Engagement (15%)

Description: Active participation in weekly seminar discussions and field integration activities.

Purpose: Builds professional communication and reflective practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C6.

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Four journals reflecting on practice experiences, cultural humility, and ethical issues.

Purpose: Encourages self-awareness and professional growth.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Reading Response (10%)

Description: One short written analysis of assigned readings linking theory to fieldwork.

Purpose: Promotes integration of classroom knowledge with practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C4.

Midterm Evaluation (20%)

Description: Student and supervisor evaluation of performance at midterm.

Purpose: Provides structured feedback on progress in field learning.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: All competencies (C1–C9).

Case Presentation (20%)

Description: Oral and written presentation of a client case from field placement.

Purpose: Develops assessment, intervention, and evaluation skills.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C6, C7, C8.

Final Evaluation & Reflection Paper (20%)

Description: Final supervisor evaluation plus a reflection paper integrating field experiences with professional growth.

Purpose: Demonstrates mastery of foundational competencies in generalist practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: All competencies (C1–C9).

Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
| B | 79.5-89.4 |
| C | 69.5-79.4 |
| D | 59.5-69.4 |
| F | 59.4 & below |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Course Policies

Student Academic Integrity Policy

Maintaining high standards of academic integrity in every class is critical to the reputation of Tennessee Tech, its students, faculty, alumni, and the employers of Tennessee Tech graduates. Academic integrity is at the foundation of the educational process and the key to student success. Students with academic integrity are committed to honesty, ethical behavior, and avoiding violations of academic integrity. All students are required to read and understand Policy 216: Student Academic Integrity. Please see the Academic Integrity website (<https://www.tntech.edu/provost/academicintegrity/>) for more information.

Attendance Policy

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Class Participation

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Assignments and Related Policy

All assignments must be submitted through the course's online learning management system by the specified deadlines. Late submissions will incur a grade penalty of 10% per day unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor due to extenuating circumstances. Assignments are designed to reinforce key course concepts and contribute to 55% of the final grade, with clear guidelines and grading rubrics provided for each. Timed quizzes and the final comprehensive exam must be completed within the designated time frames and are weighted accordingly. Students are responsible for ensuring their submissions are complete and properly uploaded; technical issues should be reported promptly to avoid penalties.

AI policy statement: Not Permitted in this Course

In this course, Generative AI resources are not permitted. Students are expected to do all coursework themselves, as an individual or collectively, as designated by the instructor per assignment. The use of a Generative AI Tool to complete coursework constitutes academic misconduct for this course.

Disability Accommodation

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Additional Resources

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Emergency Preparedness Protocols

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 6910: Practicum IB (online) Semester,
Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

SW 6900: Practicum IA

Texts and Resources

Birkenmaier, J., & Berg-Weger, M. (2017). *The practicum companion for social work: Integrating class and field work* (4th ed.). Pearson.

National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *NASW Code of Ethics*. NASW Press.

Field Education Manual (provided by the program).

Additional readings as assigned by field instructor or seminar faculty.

Course Welcome and Description

This 200-hour practicum is designed to further integrate classroom learning with professional social work practice. Building on foundational skills from Practicum IA, students will engage more independently in direct practice activities within approved agency or community settings. They will refine competencies in engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation with individuals, families, groups, and communities while deepening their application of social work values, ethics, and cultural humility. Greater emphasis is placed on applying theory and evidence-based practice to complex cases, strengthening advocacy skills, and critically analyzing organizational and community contexts. Field education is conducted in partnership with seminar support, providing structured opportunities for supervision, peer feedback, and integration of practice experiences with advanced academic content.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this practicum, students will demonstrate increased independence and confidence in applying social work knowledge, values, and skills in professional practice settings. They will strengthen their competencies in ethical decision-making, cultural humility, and professional communication while managing more complex client systems. Students will refine assessment, intervention, and evaluation skills and demonstrate the ability to connect evidence-based practice to real-world challenges. They will enhance their advocacy and leadership abilities, critically evaluate organizational and community contexts, and integrate classroom theories into practice. Students will also use supervision more effectively and deepen their professional identity as generalist social workers.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

CSWE Competency Alignment

- C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
- C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
- C5 – Engage in Policy Practice
- C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

- Consistently apply ethical standards and professional behavior with increased independence.
- Critically evaluate how diversity and systemic inequities impact practice and outcomes.
- Advocate for client and community rights, addressing barriers to equity and justice.
- Apply evidence-based practice and use research to improve interventions.
- Identify and respond to policy barriers within field settings.
- Independently establish professional engagement and maintain collaborative relationships.
- Conduct thorough, strengths-based assessments integrating multiple perspectives.
- Implement and adapt interventions to complex client needs.
- Apply systematic evaluation to assess practice outcomes and suggest improvements.

Major Teaching Methods

This course continues the experiential model of field education, combining supervised agency-based practice with integrative field seminar. Students will take on more complex cases and responsibilities in their field placements while developing independence in ethical decision-making, assessment, intervention, and evaluation. Weekly online seminar meetings provide opportunities for case presentations, peer learning, and feedback from faculty and field liaisons. Reflective journaling and supervision sessions promote self-awareness, professional growth, and integration of theory with practice. Applied assignments encourage students to engage critically with organizational, community, and policy contexts.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

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Topics to be Covered

- Orientation to Field Practicum II
- Ethical decision-making and professional identity

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

- Diversity, power, and privilege in practice
- Advanced engagement skills
- Complex biopsychosocial assessments
- Intervention planning and implementation
- Advocacy and policy in practice
- Evidence-based practice and research application
- Evaluation of practice outcomes
- Organizational and community context in field practice
- Leadership development in social work
- Case presentations and integration of learning
- Transition to advanced practice

Course Schedule (Seminar + Field)

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|--|---------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Week 1: Orientation to Practicum II & Advanced Expectations | Field Manual | Learning agreement update | C1 |
| Week 2: Professional Identity & Ethical Practice | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 1 | Reflection Journal #1 | C1 |
| Week 3: Diversity & Power in Practice | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 2 | Case vignette analysis | C2 |
| Week 4: Advanced Engagement Skills | Selected article | Role plays; Reflection Journal #2 | C6 |
| Week 5: Complex Assessment Methods | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 4 | Field activity report | C7 |
| Week 6: Intervention Planning & Implementation | Peer-reviewed article | Midterm self-evaluation draft | C8 |
| Week 7: Advocacy and Policy in Field Contexts | Selected reading | Reflection Journal #3 | C3, C5 |
| Week 8: Midterm Integration Seminar | Student-selected | Midterm Evaluation (student + supervisor) | All |
| Week 9: Evidence-Based Practice in Complex Cases | Peer-reviewed research | Reading Response #1 | C4 |
| Week 10: Evaluation of Practice | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 6 | Reflection Journal #4 | C9 |
| Week 11: Organizational & Community Contexts | Selected article | Group discussion | C3, C5 |
| Week 12: Leadership in Field Practice | Peer-reviewed article | Leadership self-assessment | C6, C8 |
| Week 13: Case Presentations | Student-selected | Oral and written case presentations | C6, C7, C8 |
| Week 14: Final Integration & Transition to Advanced Practice | Field Manual | Final Evaluation; Final Reflection Paper due | All |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|--|---------------|
| Class Participation & Field Seminar Engagement | 15% |
| Reflection Journals (4) | 15% |
| Reading Response | 10% |
| Midterm Evaluation (Student + Supervisor) | 20% |
| Case Presentation | 20% |
| Final Evaluation & Reflection Paper | 20% |

Class Participation & Seminar Engagement (15%)

Description: Active engagement in seminar discussions and peer learning.

Purpose: Strengthens professional communication and critical reflection.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C6.

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Four journals reflecting on practice experiences, advocacy efforts, and professional development.

Purpose: Builds reflective capacity and integration of values with practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Reading Response (10%)

Description: Short written response analyzing an assigned article and applying it to field context.

Purpose: Strengthens evidence-based application in practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C4.

Midterm Evaluation (20%)

Description: Student and supervisor evaluation of performance.

Purpose: Provides structured assessment of growth and areas for continued development.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: All competencies (C1–C9).

Case Presentation (20%)

Description: Formal presentation of a complex client case demonstrating engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

Purpose: Strengthens integration of theory, practice, and critical analysis.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C6, C7, C8.

Final Evaluation & Reflection Paper (20%)

Description: Supervisor evaluation and written reflection synthesizing practicum learning.

Purpose: Demonstrates mastery of generalist-level competencies and readiness for advanced fieldwork.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: All competencies (C1–C9).

Grading Scale

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 6200: Psychopathology in Social Work Practice (on-ground/online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Admitted into MSW Program

Texts and Resources

American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed., text rev.; DSM-5-TR). American Psychiatric Publishing.

Corcoran, J., & Walsh, J. (2015). *Clinical assessment and diagnosis in social work practice* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Sue, D., Sue, D. W., Sue, D. M., & Sue, S. (2021). *Understanding abnormal behavior* (12th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Supplemental peer-reviewed journal articles and case studies provided by the instructor.

Course Welcome and Description

This course provides an in-depth study of mental disorders as they relate to social work practice across diverse populations and settings. Students will examine the classification, etiology, and symptomatology of major mental health conditions, with particular emphasis on the DSM-5-TR framework. Attention is given to the interplay of biological, psychological, social, cultural, and environmental factors in the development and expression of psychopathology. Students will critically analyze the use of diagnostic systems, considering issues of bias, stigma, and social justice in mental health assessment and treatment. The course emphasizes culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and strengths-based approaches to understanding and addressing mental disorders. Through case studies, applied assignments, and integration of evidence-based interventions, students will develop competencies in assessment, diagnosis, and collaborative treatment planning within the scope of social work values and ethics.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to critically analyze mental disorders through the lens of the DSM-5-TR while integrating social work values, ethics, and cultural responsiveness. They will demonstrate an understanding of the interplay between biological, psychological, social, cultural, and systemic factors influencing psychopathology. Students will strengthen their ability to conduct biopsychosocial assessments, identify diagnostic impressions, and formulate treatment planning strategies that are evidence-based, trauma-informed, and strengths-focused.

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They will also critically evaluate the limitations and potential biases of diagnostic systems, applying advocacy and social justice perspectives to practice with diverse populations.

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Apply ethical standards when conducting assessments and using diagnostic systems.

Recognize and address cultural factors in diagnosing and treating mental health conditions.

Critique bias and stigma in diagnostic systems and advocate for equitable mental health care.

Apply evidence-based interventions to clinical practice.

Build therapeutic relationships with clients experiencing mental health challenges.

Conduct comprehensive biopsychosocial assessments to inform diagnostic impressions.

Design trauma-informed, strengths-based treatment plans for diverse clients.

Assess and evaluate the effectiveness of evidence-based interventions.

Major Teaching Methods

On ground: This course combines lectures, seminar discussions, and applied exercises with experiential learning. Students will engage in diagnostic case analyses, role plays, and treatment planning activities. The course emphasizes peer dialogue, reflective writing, and integration of evidence-based interventions into practice. Applied learning will support students in developing critical thinking and clinical reasoning skills, while ensuring culturally responsive and ethically grounded practice.

Online: Major teaching methods for this course include asynchronous online lectures, interactive discussion forums, and applied learning through case studies and multimedia content. Students will engage in collaborative assignments, reflective writing, and structured peer feedback to deepen their understanding of course material.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

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Topics to be Covered

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

- Introduction to psychopathology in social work
- DSM-5-TR framework and diagnostic criteria
- Anxiety, mood, trauma-related, and personality disorders
- Schizophrenia spectrum and neurodevelopmental disorders
- Substance-related and addictive disorders
- Cultural humility, stigma, and bias in diagnosis
- Trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches
- Evidence-based interventions in mental health practice
- Ethical dilemmas in assessment and diagnosis
- Collaborative treatment planning and evaluation

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to Psychopathology in Social Work | Corcoran & Walsh, Ch. 1 | Syllabus review; ethical case study | C1 |
| Week 2: DSM-5-TR Framework | APA DSM-5-TR, Intro | Reflection Journal #1 | C1, C7 |
| Week 3: Anxiety Disorders | Sue et al., Ch. 5 | Case vignette analysis | C7 |
| Week 4: Depressive and Bipolar Disorders | DSM-5-TR, Mood Disorders | Reflection Journal #2 | C7, C8 |
| Week 5: Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders | Corcoran & Walsh, Ch. 6 | Trauma-informed assessment activity | C2, C8 |
| Week 6: Personality Disorders | DSM-5-TR, Personality Disorders | Midterm Essay Draft | C7 |
| Week 7: Schizophrenia Spectrum Disorders | Sue et al., Ch. 12 | Reflection Journal #3 | C7, C8 |
| Week 8: Midterm Integration Seminar | Selected readings | Midterm Paper due | All |
| Week 9: Neurodevelopmental Disorders | DSM-5-TR, Ch. 1 | Case presentation prep | C7 |
| Week 10: Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders | Sue et al., Ch. 11 | Reflection Journal #4 | C6, C8 |
| Week 11: Bias, Stigma, and Culture in Diagnosis | Corcoran & Walsh, Ch. 10 | Advocacy plan draft | C2, C3 |
| Week 12: Evidence-Based Interventions | Selected articles | Group role plays | C4, C8 |
| Week 13: Collaborative Treatment Planning | DSM-5-TR | Treatment plan presentations | C6, C7, C8 |
| Week 14: Integration and Application | Course summary readings | Final Paper due | All |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|--|---------------|
| Class Participation & Seminar Engagement | 15% |
| Reflection Journals (4) | 15% |
| Midterm Paper: Diagnostic Case Analysis | 20% |
| Treatment Plan Project | 20% |
| Case Presentation | 15% |
| Final Paper: Integration of Diagnosis and Intervention | 15% |

Class Participation & Engagement (15%)

Description: Active participation in discussions, case studies, and role plays.

Purpose: Encourages collaborative learning and integration of theoretical knowledge with practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C6.

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Four journals reflecting on diagnostic categories, ethical dilemmas, and cultural considerations.

Purpose: Builds critical thinking and integration of social work values in psychopathology practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Midterm Paper: Diagnostic Case Analysis (20%)

Description: Written analysis of a case applying DSM-5-TR diagnostic criteria and social work perspectives.

Purpose: Strengthens assessment and diagnostic reasoning.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C7.

Treatment Plan Project (20%)

Description: Development of a comprehensive, evidence-based treatment plan for a selected disorder.

Purpose: Builds intervention skills and integration of culturally responsive, trauma-informed approaches.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C8.

Case Presentation (15%)

Description: Student presentation of a mental health case, including assessment, diagnosis, and treatment recommendations.

Purpose: Develops oral communication and application of evidence-based practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C6, C7, C8.

Final Paper: Integration of Diagnosis and Intervention (15%)

Description: A paper critically analyzing the intersection of diagnostic systems, cultural context, and evidence-based interventions.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Purpose: Demonstrates mastery of course content and ability to integrate diagnosis with practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: All (C1–C9).

Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
| B | 79.5-89.4 |
| C | 69.5-79.4 |
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Course Policies

Student Academic Integrity Policy

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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Concentration Courses

Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 7000: Social Work Practice with Individuals (on-ground)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Practicum IA & IB

Texts and Resources

Hepworth, D. H., Rooney, R. H., Rooney, G. D., & Strom-Gottfried, K. (2017). *Direct social work practice: Theory and skills* (10th ed.). Cengage Learning.

National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *NASW Code of Ethics*. NASW Press.

Additional journal articles and case studies will be provided via the course learning platform.

Course Welcome and Description

This course provides students with knowledge, values, and skills essential for direct social work practice with individuals. Students will learn to apply engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation strategies grounded in evidence-based practice and the profession's ethical standards. Emphasis is placed on building therapeutic relationships, utilizing active listening and interviewing techniques, and tailoring interventions to diverse cultural, socioeconomic, and developmental contexts. The course explores a range of practice theories and models, including strengths-based, person-in-environment, and cognitive-behavioral approaches, while attending to issues of power, privilege, and oppression in the helping relationship. Through role plays, case studies, and applied assignments, students will develop beginning-level competencies for working effectively with individuals across the lifespan in various social work settings.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to demonstrate competencies in direct social work practice with individuals. They will apply engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation skills rooted in evidence-based practice and social work values. Students will learn to establish therapeutic relationships, conduct interviews, and implement interventions that are responsive to diverse cultural, socioeconomic, and developmental contexts. They will integrate strengths-based, person-in-environment, and cognitive-behavioral perspectives into practice while critically analyzing power, privilege, and oppression in the helping relationship. Students will also reflect on their professional identity and commitment to ethical, culturally competent, and socially just practice.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Apply ethical standards in practice and demonstrate professional behavior with clients.

Deliver culturally responsive practice by recognizing diversity in clients' backgrounds and experiences.

Identify and challenge systemic barriers, power, and privilege in direct practice with individuals.

Apply evidence-based models such as CBT and strengths-based practice to individual work.

Establish professional engagement and rapport with clients.

Conduct comprehensive assessments using the person-in-environment framework.

Implement interventions such as CBT, motivational interviewing, and solution-focused approaches.

Apply evaluation techniques to assess the effectiveness of interventions with individuals.

Major Teaching Methods

This in-person course integrates lectures, role plays, case studies, and applied assignments to teach direct practice with individuals. Lectures and readings provide foundational theories and frameworks, while role plays and skills practice allow students to develop engagement, interviewing, and intervention skills. Case studies and small group discussions give students opportunities to apply ethical principles, analyze diversity and power, and consider trauma-informed approaches. Reflection journals and applied projects promote critical self-awareness, while guest speakers and practice simulations expose students to real-world applications of individual social work practice.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

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Topics to be Covered

- Social work values, ethics, and professional identity
- Engagement and building therapeutic relationships
- Active listening and interviewing skills
- Person-in-environment framework
- Strengths-based approaches

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

- Cognitive-behavioral therapy in social work practice
- Cultural humility and responsiveness
- Power, privilege, and oppression in the helping relationship
- Trauma-informed practice with individuals
- Planning, goal setting, and intervention strategies
- Evaluation of individual practice outcomes

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to Social Work with Individuals | Hepworth, Ch. 1; NASW Code of Ethics | Syllabus review; reflection on social work values | C1 |
| Week 2: Professional Identity and Ethics | Hepworth, Ch. 2 | Case study on ethical dilemmas; Reflection Journal #1 | C1 |
| Week 3: Engagement and Building Rapport | Hepworth, Ch. 3 | Role play practice; peer feedback | C6 |
| Week 4: Active Listening and Interviewing | Hepworth, Ch. 4 | Interview simulation; Reflection Journal #2 | C6 |
| Week 5: Cultural Responsiveness in Practice | Hepworth, Ch. 5; selected article | Group discussion; Reading Response #1 | C2, C3 |
| Week 6: Person-in-Environment Framework | Hepworth, Ch. 6 | Assessment workshop | C7 |
| Week 7: Strengths-Based Practice | Hepworth, Ch. 7 | Case vignette analysis | C4, C7 |
| Week 8: Cognitive-Behavioral Approaches | Hepworth, Ch. 8; CBT article | CBT intervention role play | C4, C8 |
| Week 9: Power, Privilege, and Oppression in the Helping Relationship | Peer-reviewed article | Reflection Journal #3 | C2, C3 |
| Week 10: Trauma-Informed Practice | Selected article | Trauma-informed role play; class discussion | C2, C3, C7 |
| Week 11: Planning and Goal Setting | Hepworth, Ch. 9 | Case planning exercise | C7, C8 |
| Week 12: Implementing Interventions | Hepworth, Ch. 10 | Intervention workshop | C8 |
| Week 13: Evaluation of Practice with Individuals | Hepworth, Ch. 11 | Practice evaluation activity; Reflection Journal #4 | C9 |
| Week 14: Integration and Reflection | Hepworth, Ch. 12; course summary | Final Paper due; reflection circle | All |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|--|---------------|
| Class Participation and Role Plays | 15% |
| Reflection Journals (4) | 15% |
| Reading Responses (2) | 10% |
| Skills Demonstration (Interview/Engagement) | 20% |
| Case Analysis (Assessment & Intervention Plan) | 20% |
| Final Paper/Presentation | 20% |

Class Participation and Role Plays (15%)

Description: Active participation in class discussions, skills practice, and role plays.

Purpose: Builds professional engagement and communication skills.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C6.

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Four written reflections connecting readings and practice experiences.

Purpose: Develops critical reflection on values, ethics, and cultural responsiveness.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Reading Responses (10%)

Description: Two short responses to assigned readings.

Purpose: Strengthens critical analysis and integration of evidence into practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C4.

Skills Demonstration: Interview/Engagement (20%)

Description: Recorded or live demonstration of an interview with a client role-play.

Purpose: Assesses engagement, listening, and interviewing skills.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C6, C7.

Case Analysis (20%)

Description: Written analysis of a client case, including assessment, intervention, and evaluation plan.

Purpose: Builds ability to apply practice models and tailor interventions to client needs.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C7, C8.

Final Paper/Presentation (20%)

Description: A comprehensive paper and presentation synthesizing course learning and applied practice with individuals.

Purpose: Demonstrates integration of theories, evidence-based practice, and ethical standards.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C4, C8, C9.

Grading Scale

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 7010: Social Work Practice with Groups (on-ground)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name
Office
Telephone Number
Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites
Practicum IA & IB

Texts and Resources

Toseland, R. W., & Rivas, R. F. (2017). *An introduction to group work practice* (8th ed.). Pearson.

National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *NASW Code of Ethics*. NASW Press.
Additional peer-reviewed articles and case studies will be provided via the course learning platform.

Course Welcome and Description

This course prepares students to apply social work knowledge, values, and skills in the facilitation of groups across diverse practice settings. Emphasis is placed on understanding group dynamics, stages of group development, and the use of evidence-based models for therapeutic, support, psychoeducational, and task-oriented groups. Students will learn to plan, lead, and evaluate groups while fostering inclusion, mutual aid, and empowerment among members. Attention is given to the ethical responsibilities of group practice, the impact of diversity and cultural identity on group processes, and strategies for addressing conflict, resistance, and power imbalances. Through experiential learning, role plays, and case studies, students will develop beginning competencies in group facilitation, assessment, and evaluation, strengthening their ability to use groups as a vehicle for change and social justice in social work practice.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of group dynamics and group development in social work practice. They will acquire beginning skills in planning, leading, and evaluating groups using evidence-based models tailored to diverse client needs. Students will be able to facilitate groups in a way that promotes inclusion, mutual aid, and empowerment, while recognizing and addressing cultural differences, conflict, and power imbalances. They will integrate social work values and ethical standards into group practice and will strengthen their capacity to use groups as a mechanism for client support, education, therapeutic change, and advocacy for social justice.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Apply professional ethics and responsibilities in planning and facilitating groups.

Recognize and integrate cultural differences in group processes and leadership.

Use groups as tools to promote equity, empowerment, and justice.

Apply evidence-based group models to practice and evaluate effectiveness.

Build rapport and foster inclusion and mutual aid among group members.

Assess group needs, dynamics, and stages of development.

Facilitate therapeutic, support, psychoeducational, and task groups effectively.

Use evaluation strategies to assess group outcomes and improve practice.

Major Teaching Methods

This course employs in-person, experiential, and collaborative teaching strategies. Lectures and readings provide students with theoretical and conceptual foundations in group practice, while role plays, simulations, and case studies allow them to apply group facilitation skills in a safe and supportive environment. Students will engage in group planning, leadership, and evaluation exercises that mimic real-world scenarios. Reflective writing assignments promote self-awareness and critical analysis of power, privilege, and diversity in group processes. Group projects encourage peer collaboration and foster mutual aid, modeling the dynamics of effective group work.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will require the use of iLearn. All assignments and important class updates will be posted to our course page. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to a working computer and internet to complete your work on time. For general computing issues or iLearn/email/TTU-connected software problems, you must contact the Tech Helpdesk promptly for assistance.

Topics to be Covered

- Introduction to group work in social work practice
- Social work values and ethics in group practice
- Group dynamics and stages of group development
- Group leadership and facilitation skills
- Diversity, cultural identity, and inclusion in groups
- Evidence-based models for group practice (therapeutic, support, psychoeducational, task)

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

- Planning and preparing for groups
- Managing group conflict, resistance, and power dynamics
- Evaluation of group work practice
- Using groups for social justice and advocacy

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|---|--|---|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to Group Work in Social Work | Toseland & Rivas, Ch. 1 | Syllabus review; discussion on group roles | C1 |
| Week 2: Social Work Values & Ethics in Groups | Toseland & Rivas, Ch. 2; NASW Code of Ethics | Ethical dilemma exercise; Reflection Journal #1 | C1 |
| Week 3: Stages of Group Development | Toseland & Rivas, Ch. 3 | Group dynamics role play | C6 |
| Week 4: Group Dynamics and Leadership | Toseland & Rivas, Ch. 4 | Leadership style self-assessment | C6 |
| Week 5: Diversity and Cultural Identity in Groups | Toseland & Rivas, Ch. 5 | Case vignette analysis; Reflection Journal #2 | C2, C3 |
| Week 6: Evidence-Based Group Models | Toseland & Rivas, Ch. 6 | Reading Response #1 | C4 |
| Week 7: Planning and Preparing for Groups | Toseland & Rivas, Ch. 7 | Group planning activity | C7 |
| Week 8: Facilitation Skills in Group Work | Toseland & Rivas, Ch. 8 | Facilitation role play | C6, C8 |
| Week 9: Therapeutic and Support Groups | Selected article | Case study analysis; Reflection Journal #3 | C8 |
| Week 10: Psychoeducational and Task-Oriented Groups | Selected article | Group presentation on intervention models | C4, C8 |
| Week 11: Conflict, Resistance, and Power in Groups | Toseland & Rivas, Ch. 9 | Simulation of group conflict | C2, C3, C8 |
| Week 12: Evaluation of Group Practice | Toseland & Rivas, Ch. 10 | Evaluation workshop; Reflection Journal #4 | C9 |
| Week 13: Student Group Facilitation Projects | Student-selected | Group facilitation presentations | C6, C8 |
| Week 14: Integration and Reflection | Course summary | Final Paper due; reflection circle | All |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|--|---------------|
| Class Participation and Role Plays | 15% |
| Reflection Journals (4) | 15% |
| Reading Response | 10% |
| Skills Demonstration: Group Facilitation | 20% |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|--|--------|
| Group Project: Group Planning & Evaluation | 20% |
| Final Paper/Presentation | 20% |

Class Participation and Role Plays (15%)

Description: Active participation in discussions, role plays, and group facilitation practice.

Purpose: Builds applied skills in group leadership and collaborative learning.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C6.

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Four reflective journals connecting course topics to personal and professional development.

Purpose: Encourages self-reflection and awareness of diversity and power in groups.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C2, C3.

Reading Response (10%)

Description: Short analysis of assigned readings.

Purpose: Strengthens critical analysis and evidence-informed group practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C4.

Skills Demonstration: Group Facilitation (20%)

Description: Facilitation of a mock group activity with peer and instructor feedback.

Purpose: Develops group leadership, conflict management, and facilitation skills.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C6, C7, C8.

Group Project: Group Planning & Evaluation (20%)

Description: Collaborative project designing a group plan with evaluation methods.

Purpose: Strengthens competencies in planning and evaluating group practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C7, C9.

Final Paper/Presentation (20%)

Description: A comprehensive paper and presentation synthesizing theory, practice, and evaluation in group work.

Purpose: Demonstrates integration of group practice knowledge with evidence-based and ethical principles.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C4, C6, C9.

Grading Scale

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Additional Resources

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 7110: Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice (on-ground/online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name
Office
Telephone Number
Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites
Practicum IA & IB

Texts and Resources

SAMHSA. (2014). *Trauma-informed care in behavioral health services* (Treatment Improvement Protocol Series 57). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
Knight, C. (2017). *Trauma-informed practice and care: Implications for field instruction*. Clinical Social Work Journal, 45(1), 25–36.
Bloom, S. L. (2013). *Creating sanctuary: Toward the evolution of sane societies* (Rev. ed.). Routledge.
Additional peer-reviewed articles and resources will be provided via the course learning platform.

Course Welcome and Description

This course examines the principles, theories, and skills of trauma-informed practice in social work with individuals, families, and communities. Students will develop an understanding of the prevalence and impact of trauma across the lifespan, including the biological, psychological, and social effects of adverse childhood experiences, violence, systemic oppression, and collective trauma. Emphasis is placed on creating safe, collaborative, and empowering helping relationships that recognize resilience and avoid re-traumatization. Students will critically evaluate evidence-based and emerging interventions for trauma, including strengths-based, cognitive-behavioral, and somatic approaches, while integrating cultural humility and social justice perspectives. Through case analysis, experiential learning, and applied assignments, students will strengthen competencies in trauma assessment, intervention, and advocacy, preparing them to practice ethically and effectively in diverse settings where trauma is a central concern.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to articulate principles of trauma-informed practice and apply them across diverse social work contexts. They will gain knowledge of the prevalence and impact of trauma across the lifespan and critically evaluate how systemic oppression, inequality, and collective trauma shape client experiences. Students will develop

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skills in assessment, intervention, and advocacy that integrate evidence-based and emerging trauma treatments, such as strengths-based, CBT, and somatic approaches. They will also strengthen their ability to foster resilience, cultural humility, and safe, collaborative relationships that avoid re-traumatization.

| CSWE Competency Alignment | Students will be able to... |
|---|---|
| C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior | Apply ethical standards and professional conduct in trauma-informed care. |
| C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice | Deliver culturally responsive trauma interventions that recognize client resilience. |
| C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice | Identify and address systemic oppression and inequities impacting trauma survivors. |
| C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice | Critically evaluate and apply evidence-based and emerging trauma interventions. |
| C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Establish safe, collaborative, and empowering helping relationships. |
| C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Conduct trauma-informed assessments that consider biopsychosocial and cultural factors. |
| C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Implement trauma-specific interventions (CBT, strengths-based, somatic, etc.). |
| C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Use outcome measures to evaluate effectiveness of trauma interventions. |

Major Teaching Methods

On-ground: This in-person course employs lectures, experiential learning, and applied practice methods. Lectures and readings introduce theoretical frameworks and principles of trauma-informed practice, while experiential activities such as role plays and case studies allow students to practice therapeutic skills. Reflection journals encourage self-awareness of professional values, ethical practice, and cultural humility. Group projects and applied assignments foster collaboration and deepen understanding of systemic issues, resilience, and empowerment. Guest speakers and recovery narratives supplement classroom learning with real-world perspectives on trauma and healing.

Online: Major teaching methods for this course include asynchronous online lectures, interactive discussion forums, and applied learning through case studies and multimedia content. Students will engage in collaborative assignments, reflective writing, and structured peer feedback to deepen their understanding of course material.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will require the use of iLearn. All assignments and important class updates will be posted to our course page. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to a working computer and internet to complete your work on time. For general computing issues or

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iLearn/email/TTU-connected software problems, you must contact the Tech Helpdesk promptly for assistance.

Topics to be Covered

- Introduction to trauma-informed practice
- Adverse childhood experiences and developmental trauma
- Biological, psychological, and social effects of trauma
- Collective trauma and systemic oppression
- Principles of trauma-informed care
- Creating safe and empowering relationships Strengths-based approaches to trauma intervention
- Cognitive-behavioral trauma interventions
- Somatic and emerging trauma therapies
- Cultural humility and diversity in trauma-informed care
- Ethical issues in trauma practice
- Evaluation of trauma-specific interventions
- Advocacy and social justice in trauma-informed practice

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to Trauma-Informed Practice | SAMHSA TIP 57 (Ch. 1) | Syllabus review; reflection on trauma-informed values | C1 |
| Week 2: Prevalence and Impact of Trauma | SAMHSA TIP 57 (Ch. 2) | Case vignette analysis; Reflection Journal #1 | C2 |
| Week 3: Adverse Childhood Experiences and Developmental Trauma | Peer-reviewed ACEs article | Discussion; Reading Response #1 | C2, C7 |
| Week 4: Biological and Psychological Effects of Trauma | Bloom (Ch. 1–2) | Lecture/discussion; Reflection Journal #2 | C7 |
| Week 5: Social and Collective Trauma | Knight (2017) | Case analysis on systemic oppression | C3 |
| Week 6: Principles of Trauma-Informed Care | SAMHSA TIP 57 (Ch. 3) | Group activity; Reflection Journal #3 | C1, C6 |
| Week 7: Building Safe and Collaborative Relationships | Bloom (Ch. 3) | Role play exercises | C6 |
| Week 8: Strengths-Based Approaches | Selected article | Case vignette practice | C4, C7 |
| Week 9: Cognitive-Behavioral Approaches to Trauma | Peer-reviewed CBT article | Intervention workshop; Reflection Journal #4 | C4, C8 |
| Week 10: Somatic and Emerging Interventions | Peer-reviewed somatic therapy article | Skills practice | C4, C8 |

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| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Week 11: Cultural Humility and Diversity in Trauma Practice | Bloom (Ch. 4); selected articles | Class discussion; case analysis | C2, C3 |
| Week 12: Ethical Issues in Trauma Practice | NASW Code of Ethics excerpts | Ethical dilemma exercise | C1 |
| Week 13: Evaluation of Trauma Interventions | SAMHSA TIP 57 (Ch. 4) | Evaluation project presentations | C9 |
| Week 14: Integration and Reflection | Course summary; selected readings | Final Paper due; closing reflection | All |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|---|---------------|
| Class Participation and Role Plays | 15% |
| Reflection Journals (4) | 15% |
| Reading Responses (2) | 10% |
| Case Analysis (Trauma Assessment & Intervention Plan) | 20% |
| Skills Demonstration (Trauma-Informed Interview/Engagement) | 20% |
| Final Paper/Presentation | 20% |

Class Participation and Role Plays (15%)

Description: Active participation in class activities, role plays, and group work.

Purpose: Builds applied practice skills in trauma-informed communication and engagement.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C6.

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Four reflective journals connecting trauma content to professional values and personal insights.

Purpose: Develops self-awareness and integration of trauma-informed principles.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Reading Responses (10%)

Description: Two critical analyses of assigned readings.

Purpose: Strengthens research-informed practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C4.

Case Analysis: Trauma Assessment & Intervention Plan (20%)

Description: Written case analysis focusing on trauma assessment and intervention strategies.

Purpose: Develops ability to apply trauma-informed assessment and intervention planning.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C7, C8.

Skills Demonstration: Trauma-Informed Interview (20%)

Description: Recorded or live demonstration of a trauma-informed interview.

Purpose: Assesses ability to implement safe, collaborative, and culturally responsive practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C6, C7, C8.

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Final Paper/Presentation (20%)

Description: Comprehensive paper and presentation synthesizing course learning and practice application.

Purpose: Demonstrates mastery of trauma-informed principles and evidence-based practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C4, C9.

Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
| B | 79.5-89.4 |
| C | 69.5-79.4 |
| D | 59.5-69.4 |
| F | 59.4 & below |

Course Policies

Student Academic Integrity Policy

Maintaining high standards of academic integrity in every class is critical to the reputation of Tennessee Tech, its students, faculty, alumni, and the employers of Tennessee Tech graduates. Academic integrity is at the foundation of the educational process and the key to student success. Students with academic integrity are committed to honesty, ethical behavior, and avoiding violations of academic integrity. All students are required to read and understand Policy 216: Student Academic Integrity. Please see the Academic Integrity website (<https://www.tntech.edu/provost/academicintegrity/>) for more information.

Attendance Policy

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Class Participation

Active participation is essential in this graduate-level online course and is a critical component of your professional development as a social worker. Students are expected to engage meaningfully in weekly discussion boards, respond to peers, and contribute thoughtful, evidence-based reflections that connect course content to real-world practice. Consistent participation demonstrates your commitment to collaborative learning, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue—core values of ethical social work practice. Failure to regularly participate may significantly impact your final grade and your ability to meet CSWE competencies.

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Assignments and Related Policy

All assignments must be submitted through the course's online learning management system by the specified deadlines. Late submissions will incur a grade penalty of 10% per day unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor due to extenuating circumstances. Assignments are designed to reinforce key course concepts and contribute to 55% of the final grade, with clear guidelines and grading rubrics provided for each. Timed quizzes and the final comprehensive exam must be completed within the designated time frames and are weighted accordingly. Students are responsible for ensuring their submissions are complete and properly uploaded; technical issues should be reported promptly to avoid penalties.

AI policy statement: Not Permitted in this Course

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Disability Accommodation

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 7900: Practicum IIA (online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

12 Hours, concentration coursework

Texts and Resources

Birkenmaier, J., & Berg-Weger, M. (2017). *The practicum companion for social work: Integrating class and field work* (4th ed.). Pearson.

National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *NASW Code of Ethics*. NASW Press.

Field Education Manual (provided by the program).

Additional readings as assigned by field instructor or seminar faculty.

Course Welcome and Description

This 250-hour advanced field practicum provides students with an in-depth, supervised practice experience in their chosen concentration area of social work. Building upon the foundation-level practicum, students will refine and integrate advanced competencies in engagement, assessment, intervention, evaluation, and professional leadership. Emphasis is placed on applying evidence-based models, specialized practice theories, and trauma-informed, culturally responsive approaches within complex organizational and community settings. Students will deepen their ability to critically analyze practice situations, navigate ethical dilemmas, and advocate for social and economic justice. Field assignments are structured to promote increasing autonomy, advanced skill development, and professional identity formation. Practicum learning is supported by concurrent seminar sessions designed to facilitate reflection, integration of classroom knowledge, and peer learning.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this practicum, students will demonstrate advanced competence in professional social work practice within their concentration area. They will refine their ability to engage clients and systems, conduct complex assessments, design and implement interventions, and evaluate outcomes with increased autonomy. Students will apply evidence-based models and specialized practice theories, integrating trauma-informed and culturally responsive approaches into practice. They will critically analyze ethical dilemmas and systemic inequities, strengthening their leadership, advocacy, and professional identity. Through supervised practice

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and seminar learning, students will integrate classroom knowledge with real-world contexts, preparing for advanced practice and leadership in the field.

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

C5 – Engage in Policy Practice

C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Consistently apply ethical decision-making and professional conduct in advanced practice.

Deliver culturally responsive and trauma-informed interventions in diverse contexts.

Advocate for clients and communities to address systemic barriers to equity.

Apply research evidence to specialized practice and contribute practice insights to knowledge building.

Analyze and advocate for policies affecting practice settings and client systems.

Demonstrate advanced engagement and relationship-building skills.

Conduct comprehensive assessments incorporating theory, evidence, and context.

Apply advanced intervention strategies tailored to client and system needs.

Implement systematic evaluation of interventions and integrate findings into practice.

Major Teaching Methods

This course combines advanced supervised field practice with weekly integrative seminar sessions. In the field, students take on increasingly autonomous responsibilities, engaging in advanced assessment, intervention, evaluation, and advocacy. Online seminar sessions provide structured opportunities for critical reflection, peer discussion, and integration of classroom knowledge with field experiences. Teaching methods include case presentations, supervision, applied assignments, reflective journaling, and leadership activities. The course is designed to deepen professional identity, critical thinking, and ethical decision-making.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

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Topics to be Covered

- Orientation to advanced field practicum
- Professional identity and advanced ethics

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- Trauma-informed and culturally responsive practice
- Advanced engagement and communication skills
- Complex assessments in specialized practice
- Advanced intervention strategies
- Policy advocacy in practice settings
- Evidence-based practice integration
- Evaluation methods in advanced practice
- Organizational and community context in field settings
- Leadership and professional development
- Case presentations and integration of learning
- Transition to Concentration Practicum II

Course Schedule (Seminar + Field)

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|---|---------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Week 1: Orientation to Advanced Practicum | Field Manual | Learning agreement update | C1 |
| Week 2: Advanced Ethical Practice & Professional Identity | NASW Code of Ethics | Reflection Journal #1 | C1 |
| Week 3: Trauma-Informed and Culturally Responsive Practice | Selected article | Case vignette discussion | C2 |
| Week 4: Advanced Engagement Strategies | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 3 | Role plays; Reflection Journal #2 | C6 |
| Week 5: Complex Assessments in Specialized Settings | Peer-reviewed article | Field activity report | C7 |
| Week 6: Advanced Intervention Models | Selected reading | Midterm self-evaluation draft | C8 |
| Week 7: Advocacy & Policy in Practice Settings | Jansson, selected chapter | Reflection Journal #3 | C3, C5 |
| Week 8: Midterm Integration Seminar | Student-selected cases | Midterm Evaluation (student + supervisor) | All |
| Week 9: Evidence-Based Specialized Practice | Peer-reviewed research | Reading Response #1 | C4 |
| Week 10: Evaluation Methods in Advanced Practice | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 6 | Reflection Journal #4 | C9 |
| Week 11: Organizational & Community Contexts | Selected article | Group discussion | C3, C5 |
| Week 12: Leadership in Advanced Social Work Practice | Peer-reviewed article | Leadership self-assessment | C6, C8 |
| Week 13: Case Presentations | Student-selected | Oral and written case presentations | C6, C7, C8 |
| Week 14: Final Integration & Transition to Advanced Practice II | Field Manual | Final Evaluation; Final Reflection Paper due | All |

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Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|---|---------------|
| Class Participation & Seminar Engagement | 15% |
| Reflection Journals (4) | 15% |
| Reading Response | 10% |
| Midterm Evaluation (Student + Supervisor) | 20% |
| Case Presentation | 20% |
| Final Evaluation & Reflection Paper | 20% |

Class Participation & Seminar Engagement (15%)

Description: Active engagement in weekly seminar discussions and field integration activities.

Purpose: Strengthens professional communication, leadership, and critical reflection.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C6.

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Four journals reflecting on practice experiences, ethical dilemmas, advocacy, and professional development.

Purpose: Encourages advanced self-reflection and integration of values with specialized practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Reading Response (10%)

Description: Short written analysis of an assigned research article or reading relevant to concentration.

Purpose: Strengthens integration of research and advanced practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C4.

Midterm Evaluation (20%)

Description: Joint evaluation by student and supervisor of mid-semester performance.

Purpose: Provides structured feedback on progress toward advanced competencies.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: All competencies (C1–C9).

Case Presentation (20%)

Description: Formal presentation of a complex client or community case demonstrating advanced practice skills.

Purpose: Enhances ability to synthesize assessment, intervention, and evaluation in practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C6, C7, C8.

Final Evaluation & Reflection Paper (20%)

Description: Supervisor evaluation and a written paper synthesizing practicum learning.

Purpose: Demonstrates mastery of advanced practice competencies and professional identity.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: All competencies (C1–C9)

Grading Scale

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 7910: Practicum IIA (online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name
Office
Telephone Number
Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

12 hours, concentration coursework

Texts and Resources

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National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *NASW Code of Ethics*. NASW Press.

Field Education Manual (provided by the program).

Additional readings as assigned by field instructor or seminar faculty.

Course Welcome and Description

This 250-hour culminating practicum provides students with an advanced, supervised practice experience in their concentration area of social work. Building on Concentration Field Practicum I, students will demonstrate mastery of advanced social work competencies, integrating engagement, assessment, intervention, evaluation, and professional leadership at a high level of autonomy. Emphasis is placed on leadership development, advanced evidence-based practice, and the integration of policy, research, and practice to address systemic issues. Students will critically analyze complex practice situations, implement innovative interventions, and evaluate outcomes within diverse organizational and community contexts. Practicum learning is supported by concurrent seminar sessions, which provide space for critical reflection, peer consultation, and integration of field experiences with professional identity formation.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this practicum, students will demonstrate advanced professional identity and practice readiness. They will integrate classroom knowledge, evidence-based practice, and field experience to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate at an advanced level with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students will demonstrate leadership and advocacy in practice settings, addressing systemic inequities and advancing human rights and social justice. They will refine their ability to use research to inform practice and evaluate interventions, while deepening their critical reflection, supervision use, and self-awareness. This practicum prepares students to enter professional social work practice as competent, ethical, and culturally responsive practitioners.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

C5 – Engage in Policy Practice

C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Consistently demonstrate advanced ethical decision-making and professional leadership.

Integrate cultural humility and trauma-informed practice across complex cases.

Lead advocacy efforts addressing systemic inequities.

Integrate research evidence into advanced interventions and critically evaluate outcomes.

Apply policy advocacy within agencies and communities to influence change.

Demonstrate advanced relational and facilitation skills across systems.

Conduct comprehensive, theory-informed assessments for complex cases.

Lead and implement advanced, evidence-based interventions.

Systematically evaluate practice outcomes and propose improvements.

Major Teaching Methods

This practicum combines supervised advanced fieldwork with seminar support. Students assume higher levels of independence and leadership within their field placements, applying advanced practice skills and integrating evidence-based interventions. Online seminar sessions provide structured opportunities for peer learning, professional consultation, and critical reflection. Assignments encourage students to evaluate practice, develop advocacy strategies, and reflect on professional growth. Teaching methods include applied assignments, case presentations, reflective journaling, and leadership exercises.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will require the use of iLearn. All assignments and important class updates will be posted to our course page. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to a working computer and internet to complete your work on time. For general computing issues or iLearn/email/TTU-connected software problems, you must contact the Tech Helpdesk promptly for assistance.

Topics to be Covered

- Orientation to advanced field and leadership roles
- Professional identity and leadership development
- Diversity, equity, and trauma-informed practice
- Advanced engagement, assessment, and intervention skills

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

- Policy practice and advocacy in advanced settings
- Evidence-based practice integration and innovation
- Evaluation of advanced practice outcomes
- Organizational change and systems advocacy
- Leadership in interdisciplinary contexts
- Case consultations and peer-led learning
- Capstone presentations and professional transition

Course Schedule (Seminar + Field)

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|--|---------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Week 1: Orientation to Advanced Practicum II | Field Manual | Learning agreement update | C1 |
| Week 2: Professional Identity & Leadership | NASW Code of Ethics | Reflection Journal #1 | C1 |
| Week 3: Advanced Diversity & Social Justice Practice | Peer-reviewed article | Seminar discussion | C2, C3 |
| Week 4: Leadership in Complex Practice Contexts | Selected article | Leadership role play | C6 |
| Week 5: Advanced Assessment & Complex Cases | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 5 | Field activity report | C7 |
| Week 6: Advanced Intervention Models | Peer-reviewed research | Midterm self-evaluation draft | C8 |
| Week 7: Advocacy & Policy Leadership | Jansson, selected chapter | Reflection Journal #2 | C3, C5 |
| Week 8: Midterm Integration Seminar | Student-selected | Midterm Evaluation (student + supervisor) | All |
| Week 9: Evidence-Based Innovation in Practice | Research article | Reading Response | C4 |
| Week 10: Evaluating Advanced Practice Outcomes | Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, Ch. 6 | Reflection Journal #3 | C9 |
| Week 11: Organizational Change & Systems Advocacy | Selected article | Group activity | C3, C5 |
| Week 12: Capstone Case Consultations | Student-selected cases | Case consultation workshop | C6, C7 |
| Week 13: Capstone Case Presentations | Student presentations | Oral/written presentations | C6, C7, C8 |
| Week 14: Final Integration & Professional Transition | Course summary | Final Evaluation; Capstone Reflection Paper due | All |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|--|---------------|
| Class Participation & Seminar Engagement | 15% |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|--|---------------|
| Reflection Journals (3) | 15% |
| Reading Response | 10% |
| Midterm Evaluation (Student + Supervisor) | 20% |
| Capstone Case Presentation | 20% |
| Final Evaluation & Capstone Reflection Paper | 20% |

Class Participation & Seminar Engagement (15%)

Description: Active engagement in seminar discussions and peer-led case consultations.

Purpose: Strengthens professional leadership and collaborative learning.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C6.

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Three journals reflecting on advanced practice, leadership, and advocacy efforts.

Purpose: Encourages integration of self-reflection with professional identity formation.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Reading Response (10%)

Description: Written response analyzing a peer-reviewed article related to specialized practice.

Purpose: Strengthens integration of research into advanced practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C4.

Midterm Evaluation (20%)

Description: Evaluation completed collaboratively by student and supervisor.

Purpose: Provides structured assessment of advanced competencies and leadership development.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: All competencies (C1–C9).

Capstone Case Presentation (20%)

Description: Formal presentation of an advanced case, integrating engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

Purpose: Demonstrates mastery of advanced practice competencies.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C6, C7, C8.

Final Evaluation & Capstone Reflection Paper (20%)

Description: Final supervisor evaluation plus a reflective paper synthesizing professional growth and transition to practice.

Purpose: Culminates practicum learning, demonstrating readiness for professional practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: All competencies (C1–C9).

Grading Scale

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
| B | 79.5-89.4 |
| C | 69.5-79.4 |
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Course Policies

Student Academic Integrity Policy

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Assignments and Related Policy

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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 7015: Social Work Practice with Communities & Organizations (on-ground)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name
Office
Telephone Number
Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites
Practicum IA & IB

Texts and Resources

Weil, M., Reisch, M., & Ohmer, M. L. (2013). *The handbook of community practice* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
Netting, F. E., Kettner, P. M., McMurtry, S. L., & Thomas, M. L. (2016). *Social work macro practice* (6th ed.). Pearson.
National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *NASW Code of Ethics*. NASW Press.
Additional peer-reviewed articles and case studies will be provided via the course learning platform.

Course Welcome and Description

This course prepares students to apply social work knowledge, skills, and values in community and organizational practice settings. Emphasis is placed on understanding theories of community development, organizational change, and systems thinking as they relate to advancing social and economic justice. Students will learn strategies for community organizing, coalition building, program planning, policy advocacy, and capacity development, with attention to power, privilege, and structural inequality. The course highlights the role of social workers as facilitators, leaders, and advocates working to strengthen organizations and empower communities. Through case studies, experiential learning, and applied projects, students will develop competencies in assessing community needs, designing and implementing interventions, evaluating outcomes, and promoting sustainable change in partnership with diverse populations.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to demonstrate competence in community and organizational practice through the application of systems theory, community development, and organizational change models. They will learn to design and implement interventions that address community needs, promote equity, and strengthen organizational capacity. Students will critically analyze power, privilege, and structural inequalities in community and organizational contexts, and advocate for policy and structural changes that promote human rights and social

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

justice. They will also develop leadership and facilitation skills that enable them to collaborate with diverse stakeholders and promote sustainable community change.

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
 C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
 C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
 C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
 C5 – Engage in Policy Practice
 C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
 C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
 C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
 C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Apply ethical standards in community and organizational practice.
 Incorporate cultural humility and responsiveness in organizational and community engagement.
 Advocate for social and economic justice in community and organizational contexts.
 Apply research and evidence-based practices in community and organizational interventions.
 Advocate for and influence policies that support community empowerment and organizational capacity.
 Demonstrate engagement and facilitation skills with community and organizational stakeholders.
 Conduct assessments of community needs, organizational dynamics, and available resources.
 Design and implement interventions for communities and organizations.
 Evaluate the outcomes of community and organizational interventions.

Major Teaching Methods

This in-person course utilizes lectures, case studies, experiential learning, and group projects to integrate theory and practice in community and organizational settings. Lectures and readings provide theoretical and conceptual frameworks, while experiential learning through role plays, simulations, and applied projects allow students to develop leadership, organizing, and advocacy skills. Reflection journals promote critical analysis of power, privilege, and structural inequality. Group projects foster peer collaboration and prepare students to design, implement, and evaluate real-world community and organizational interventions.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will require the use of iLearn. All assignments and important class updates will be posted to our course page. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to a working computer and internet to complete your work on time. For general computing issues or iLearn/email/TTU-connected software problems, you must contact the Tech Helpdesk promptly for assistance.

Topics to be Covered

- Introduction to community and organizational practice

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

- Ethical responsibilities in macro practice
- Theories of community development and systems thinking
- Organizational change models
- Power, privilege, and structural inequality in community contexts
- Community organizing and coalition building
- Program planning and capacity development
- Policy advocacy in community practice
- Leadership in communities and organizations
- Intervention models in macro practice
- Evaluation of community and organizational interventions
- Promoting sustainable community change

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|--|-----------------------|---|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to Community & Organizational Practice | Weil et al., Ch. 1 | Syllabus review; discussion on social work values | C1 |
| Week 2: Ethical and Professional Responsibilities | NASW Code of Ethics | Ethical dilemma activity; Reflection Journal #1 | C1 |
| Week 3: Theories of Community Development | Weil et al., Ch. 2 | Case study analysis | C4, C7 |
| Week 4: Organizational Theories & Systems Thinking | Netting et al., Ch. 1 | Group discussion; Reflection Journal #2 | C4, C7 |
| Week 5: Power, Privilege, and Structural Inequality | Selected article | Critical reflection; Reading Response #1 | C2, C3 |
| Week 6: Community Organizing & Coalition Building | Weil et al., Ch. 3 | Group simulation activity | C6, C8 |
| Week 7: Program Planning and Capacity Building | Netting et al., Ch. 4 | Program planning workshop | C7, C8 |
| Week 8: Policy Advocacy in Community Practice | Netting et al., Ch. 5 | Policy advocacy role play | C3, C5 |
| Week 9: Leadership in Community and Organizational Contexts | Weil et al., Ch. 5 | Leadership assessment | C6 |
| Week 10: Intervention Models in Community Practice | Netting et al., Ch. 6 | Group project planning | C8 |
| Week 11: Evaluating Community and Organizational Interventions | Netting et al., Ch. 7 | Evaluation exercise; Reflection Journal #3 | C9 |
| Week 12: Case Studies in Community Practice | Selected case studies | Group case analysis | C6, C7 |
| Week 13: Student Group Projects | Student-selected | Project presentations | C8, C9 |
| Week 14: Integration and Reflection | Course summary | Final Paper due; reflection circle | All |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|--|---------------|
| Class Participation and Role Plays | 15% |
| Reflection Journals (3) | 15% |
| Reading Response (1) | 10% |
| Community/Organizational Case Analysis | 20% |
| Group Project: Program Planning & Evaluation | 20% |
| Final Paper/Presentation | 20% |

Class Participation and Role Plays (15%)

Description: Active engagement in discussions, simulations, and group work.

Purpose: Builds applied facilitation, leadership, and collaboration skills.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C6.

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Three journals connecting theories and practice to ethical and cultural issues in macro practice.

Purpose: Encourages critical reflection on diversity, equity, and justice in communities.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Reading Response (10%)

Description: One written response analyzing key course readings.

Purpose: Strengthens integration of theory and evidence-based practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C4.

Case Analysis (20%)

Description: Written analysis of a community or organizational case study, with recommendations for intervention.

Purpose: Builds assessment, analysis, and intervention design skills.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C6, C7, C8.

Group Project: Program Planning & Evaluation (20%)

Description: Collaborative project designing a community program with evaluation strategies.

Purpose: Strengthens group collaboration and skills in planning and evaluating macro practice interventions.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C7, C8, C9.

Final Paper/Presentation (20%)

Description: A comprehensive paper and presentation integrating course learning, theory, and practice.

Purpose: Demonstrates mastery of community and organizational practice knowledge and application.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C3, C5, C8, C9.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Grading Scale

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|--------------|--------------|
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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 7125: Social Policy Analysis (on-ground/online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name
Office
Telephone Number
Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites
Practicum IA & IB

Texts and Resources

Karger, H. J., & Stoesz, D. (2018). *American social welfare policy: A pluralist approach* (8th ed.). Pearson.

Jansson, B. S. (2018). *Becoming an effective policy advocate: From policy practice to social justice* (8th ed.). Cengage Learning.

National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *NASW Code of Ethics*. NASW Press.

Additional peer-reviewed articles and policy reports will be provided via the course learning platform.

Course Welcome and Description

This course provides advanced study of the methods and frameworks used to analyze social welfare policies and programs. Students will develop skills to critically evaluate the formulation, implementation, and outcomes of policies that affect individuals, families, and communities. Emphasis is placed on understanding the political, economic, and social forces that shape policy decisions, as well as the role of advocacy and research in influencing change. Students will apply policy analysis models to examine contemporary issues such as poverty, health care, housing, immigration, and child welfare, with attention to equity, human rights, and social justice. Through case studies, applied assignments, and policy briefs, students will strengthen their ability to assess policy effectiveness, identify unintended consequences, and advocate for reforms that promote inclusion and social well-being.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to apply advanced methods and frameworks for analyzing social policies, including evaluation of their formulation, implementation, and outcomes. They will understand the role of political, economic, and social forces in shaping policies and assess the implications for individuals, families, and communities. Students will critically evaluate policies through the lens of equity, human rights, and social justice, and identify unintended consequences that reinforce inequality. They will also develop advocacy

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

skills, using research to promote policy reforms and drafting policy briefs that communicate effectively to stakeholders.

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

C5 – Engage in Policy Practice

C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Apply professional and ethical standards to policy analysis and advocacy.

Analyze the impact of policy on diverse populations and address inequities.

Advocate for policies that promote equity and justice.

Apply research methods to analyze the effectiveness of social policies.

Develop policy briefs and advocacy strategies that influence change.

Collaborate with stakeholders to assess policy impact.

Assess community needs and evaluate the policy environment.

Evaluate the outcomes of policies and identify unintended consequences.

Major Teaching Methods

On-ground: This in-person course employs lectures, case studies, simulations, and applied projects to integrate theory and practice in social policy analysis. Lectures and readings provide theoretical and conceptual frameworks, while case studies and policy simulations allow students to practice real-world application of analysis and advocacy skills. Reflection journals and reading responses encourage critical self-awareness and integration of knowledge with professional values. Group projects promote collaboration and provide opportunities for applied advocacy. Guest speakers and current policy debates provide experiential insight into policy practice.

Online: Major teaching methods for this course include asynchronous online lectures, interactive discussion forums, and applied learning through case studies and multimedia content. Students will engage in collaborative assignments, reflective writing, and structured peer feedback to deepen their understanding of course material.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

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Topics to be Covered

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

- Introduction to policy analysis in social work
- Theories and frameworks for policy evaluation
- Political, economic, and social forces in policy development
- Policy formulation and implementation
- Evaluating policy outcomes and unintended consequences
- Policy advocacy and the role of research
- Poverty and economic justice policies
- Health care policy
- Housing and homelessness policy
- Immigration policy
- Child welfare policy
- Human rights and social justice in policy practice
- Developing and presenting policy briefs

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|--|------------------------|--|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to Policy Analysis | Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 1 | Syllabus review; discussion on role of policy in social work | C1 |
| Week 2: Theories and Frameworks of Policy Analysis | Jansson, Ch. 2 | Reflection Journal #1 | C4 |
| Week 3: Political, Economic, and Social Forces in Policy | Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 3 | Case study analysis | C2, C3 |
| Week 4: Policy Formulation and Implementation | Jansson, Ch. 4 | Group activity; Reflection Journal #2 | C4, C5 |
| Week 5: Policy Outcomes and Evaluation | Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 5 | Evaluation exercise | C7, C9 |
| Week 6: Policy Advocacy and Research | Jansson, Ch. 6 | Advocacy workshop | C5 |
| Week 7: Poverty and Economic Justice | Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 7 | Case study analysis; Reading Response #1 | C2, C3 |
| Week 8: Health Care Policy | Selected policy report | Reflection Journal #3 | C5 |
| Week 9: Housing Policy | Peer-reviewed article | Group debate | C2, C3 |
| Week 10: Immigration Policy | Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 8 | Policy mapping activity | C2, C3 |
| Week 11: Child Welfare Policy | Selected article | Case analysis; Reflection Journal #4 | C7, C9 |
| Week 12: Human Rights and Social Justice in Policy | Jansson, Ch. 9 | Class discussion; advocacy strategy planning | C3 |
| Week 13: Student Policy Brief Presentations | Student-selected | Group presentations | C1, C5 |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|------|
| Week 14: Integration and Reflection | Course summary | Final Paper due; reflection circle | All |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|---|--------|
| Class Participation and Discussions | 15% |
| Reflection Journals (4) | 15% |
| Reading Response (1) | 10% |
| Case Analysis (Policy Issue) | 20% |
| Policy Brief & Presentation | 20% |
| Final Paper (Comprehensive Policy Analysis) | 20% |

Class Participation and Discussions (15%)

Description: Active participation in class activities, discussions, and group analysis.

Purpose: Builds applied skills in policy engagement and analysis.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C6.

Reflection Journals (15%)

Description: Four journals analyzing course content and policy issues.

Purpose: Encourages critical reflection on equity, justice, and advocacy.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Reading Response (10%)

Description: One written response analyzing assigned readings.

Purpose: Strengthens critical thinking and research-informed policy practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C4.

Case Analysis (20%)

Description: Written case analysis of a policy issue, with recommendations for reform.

Purpose: Builds assessment and evaluation skills.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C7, C9.

Policy Brief & Presentation (20%)

Description: Development of a policy brief and presentation to stakeholders.

Purpose: Strengthens advocacy skills and the ability to communicate effectively.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C3, C5.

Final Paper: Comprehensive Policy Analysis (20%)

Description: A final paper applying advanced frameworks to analyze a contemporary policy.

Purpose: Demonstrates mastery of policy analysis and advocacy skills.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C4, C5, C9.

Grading Scale

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 7100: Grant Writing & Fund Development (online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Practicum IA & IB

Texts and Resources

Geever, J. C. (2016). *The complete book of grant writing: Learn to write grants like a professional*. Sourcebooks.

Lyon, B. A., & Weitz, R. (2018). *Funded! Essentials of grant writing for the human services* (2nd ed.). Pearson.

Additional materials will be provided on iLearn.

Course Welcome and Description

This course introduces students to the principles and practices of grant writing and fund development as essential skills for advancing social work practice, programs, and organizations. Students will learn to identify funding opportunities, develop compelling proposals, and align projects with the priorities of public and private funders. Emphasis is placed on writing clear problem statements, measurable objectives, program designs, budgets, and evaluation plans. The course also explores broader strategies of fund development, including donor relations, fundraising campaigns, and ethical considerations in resource acquisition. Through online modules, peer review, and analysis of successful proposals, students will strengthen their ability to secure funding that supports innovative services and promotes social and economic justice for diverse communities.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will demonstrate the ability to identify funding sources, analyze funder priorities, and craft competitive grant proposals that align with community and organizational needs. They will develop skills in drafting problem statements, measurable objectives, program designs, budgets, and evaluation plans. Students will also gain experience in peer reviewing grant drafts and exploring broader strategies for fund development, such as donor relations and fundraising campaigns. Through critical reflection and applied assignments, students will integrate social work values of equity and justice into resource acquisition efforts that strengthen services for vulnerable and marginalized populations.

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

C5 – Engage in Policy Practice

C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Apply ethical principles to fundraising and grant proposal development.

Design proposals that reflect the needs of diverse and marginalized communities.

Secure resources through grant writing that advance justice and inclusion.

Use evidence to strengthen problem statements and evaluate program outcomes.

Align proposals with social policies and advocacy efforts that improve services.

Collaborate with peers and community partners in developing funding strategies.

Develop evaluation frameworks that assess program effectiveness.

Major Teaching Methods

This course is delivered online through asynchronous modules, interactive discussion boards, and scheduled synchronous workshops. Students will engage with multimedia lectures, case examples, and sample proposals to build applied knowledge. Teaching methods emphasize active learning, including collaborative assignments, peer review, and project-based assessments. Online tools such as discussion forums, peer feedback platforms, and cloud-based collaboration will facilitate continuous engagement. Reflective journals and applied assignments ensure students integrate ethical, culturally responsive, and justice-oriented perspectives into grant writing and fund development.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will require the use of iLearn. All assignments and important class updates will be posted to our course page. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to a working computer and internet to complete your work on time. For general computing issues or iLearn/email/TTU-connected software problems, you must contact the Tech Helpdesk promptly for assistance.

Topics to be Covered

- Introduction to grant writing and fund development
- Identifying funding opportunities and sources
- Writing problem statements and needs assessments
- Developing goals, objectives, and program designs
- Evidence-based practice and proposal writing
- Budgets and budget narratives
- Donor relations and fundraising campaigns
- Ethical issues in fundraising and resource acquisition
- Proposal writing style, clarity, and persuasion
- Collaboration and peer review in grant writing

- Designing evaluation plans
- Preparing and submitting competitive proposals

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings/Media | Assignments/Activities | SLOs |
|--|---------------------------|--|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to Grant Writing & Fund Development | Karsh & Fox, Ch. 1 | Online discussion: role of grants in social work | C1 |
| Week 2: Identifying Funding Sources | Geever, Ch. 2 | Funding opportunity search exercise | C6 |
| Week 3: Problem Statements & Needs Assessments | Karsh & Fox, Ch. 3 | Reflection Journal #1 | C2, C4 |
| Week 4: Goals, Objectives & Program Design | Geever, Ch. 3 | Draft program design posted for feedback | C4, C8 |
| Week 5: Evidence-Based Approaches in Proposals | Selected journal article | Online discussion: integrating research | C4 |
| Week 6: Budgets & Budget Narratives | Geever, Ch. 5 | Budget assignment (Excel upload) | C9 |
| Week 7: Midterm Module – Proposal Integration | Karsh & Fox, Ch. 4 | Midterm Draft Proposal | C1–C5 |
| Week 8: Donor Relations & Fundraising Campaigns | Selected readings | Role-play activity via Zoom breakout rooms | C2, C6 |
| Week 9: Ethical Issues in Fund Development | Geever, Ch. 6 | Reflection Journal #2 | C1, C3 |
| Week 10: Writing for Impact | Karsh & Fox, Ch. 7 | Peer feedback on draft proposals (LMS upload) | C1, C4 |
| Week 11: Collaboration & Proposal Development | Selected readings | Group forum discussion | C6 |
| Week 12: Developing Evaluation Plans | Geever, Ch. 4 | Draft evaluation section submission | C9 |
| Week 13: Peer Review & Revision | Peer proposals | Peer review submission | C1, C4 |
| Week 14: Final Proposal & Course Wrap-Up | Course summary readings | Final Proposal Submission | All |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Online Participation & Forums | 15% |
| Reflection Journals (2) | 10% |
| Midterm Draft Proposal | 20% |
| Budget & Evaluation Plan Assignment | 15% |
| Peer Review of Proposal | 10% |

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Final Grant Proposal | 30% |
| Total | 100% |

Online Participation & Forums (15%)

Description: Students must actively contribute to weekly forums and synchronous workshops.

Purpose: Encourages dialogue, collaboration, and critical reflection in an online environment.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C1, C6.

Reflection Journals (10%)

Description: Two online journals connecting ethical, cultural, or social justice considerations to grant writing.

Purpose: Promotes integration of professional values into applied practice.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C1, C2, C3.

Midterm Draft Proposal (20%)

Description: Students submit a draft proposal including problem statement, goals, and program design.

Purpose: Provides opportunity for instructor and peer feedback before final submission.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C4, C5, C6.

Budget & Evaluation Plan Assignment (15%)

Description: Students design a realistic budget and evaluation plan.

Purpose: Builds practical program planning and evaluation competencies.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C9.

Peer Review of Proposal (10%)

Description: Students provide structured feedback on peers' proposals through LMS.

Purpose: Enhances critical analysis and collaboration.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: C1, C4.

Final Grant Proposal (30%)

Description: Complete, polished grant proposal addressing all required components.

Purpose: Demonstrates mastery of grant writing and resource development.

Linked SLOs & Competencies: All (C1–C9).

Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
| B | 79.5-89.4 |
| C | 69.5-79.4 |
| D | 59.5-69.4 |
| F | 59.4 & below |

Course Policies

Student Academic Integrity Policy

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Attendance Policy

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Class Participation

Active participation is essential in this graduate-level online course and is a critical component of your professional development as a social worker. Students are expected to engage meaningfully in weekly discussion boards, respond to peers, and contribute thoughtful, evidence-based reflections that connect course content to real-world practice. Consistent participation demonstrates your commitment to collaborative learning, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue—core values of ethical social work practice. Failure to regularly participate may significantly impact your final grade and your ability to meet CSWE competencies.

Assignments and Related Policy

All assignments must be submitted through the course's online learning management system by the specified deadlines. Late submissions will incur a grade penalty of 10% per day unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor due to extenuating circumstances. Assignments are designed to reinforce key course concepts and contribute to 55% of the final grade, with clear guidelines and grading rubrics provided for each. Timed quizzes and the final comprehensive exam must be completed within the designated time frames and are weighted accordingly. Students are responsible for ensuring their submissions are complete and properly uploaded; technical issues should be reported promptly to avoid penalties.

AI policy statement: Not Permitted in this Course

In this course, Generative AI resources are not permitted. Students are expected to do all coursework themselves, as an individual or collectively, as designated by the instructor per assignment. The use of a Generative AI Tool to complete coursework constitutes academic misconduct for this course.

Disability Accommodation

Students with a disability requiring accommodations should contact the accessible education center (AEC). An accommodation request (AR) should be completed as soon as possible, preferably by the end of the first week of the course. The AEC is located in the Roaden

University Center, room 112; phone 931-372-6119. For details, view Tennessee Tech's policy 340 – [services for students with disabilities at policy central](#).

Additional Resources

Technical Help

If you are experiencing technical problems, visit the [myTech IT Helpdesk](#) for assistance. If you are having trouble with one of the instructional technologies (i.e. Zoom, Teams, Qualtrics, Respondus, or any technology listed [here](#)) visit the [Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning](#) (CITL) website or call 931-372-3675 for assistance.

Tutoring

The university provides free tutoring to all Tennessee Tech students through the Learning Center within the Volpe Library. Tutoring is available for any class or subject, as well as writing, test prep, study skills, and resume support. Appointments are scheduled, so contact the [Learning Center website](#) for more information.

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Tennessee Tech offers support for student well-being through two key services. The Center for Counseling and Mental Health Wellness provides brief, solution-focused therapy to help students navigate personal and social challenges. Health Services delivers accessible, high-quality, and affordable medical care to promote overall wellness. Visit their respective websites to learn more or schedule an appointment.

Emergency Preparedness Protocols

Each student must take personal responsibility for following any University protocol related to pandemics, natural disasters, and other public health and safety events. Students are expected to follow all directives published by Tennessee Tech on its [Environmental Health & Safety webpage](#).

Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 7020: Social Work Practice with Families (on-ground)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Practicum 1A & IB

Texts and Resources

Nichols, M. P., & Davis, S. D. (2020). *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods* (12th ed.). Pearson.

Walsh, F. (2016). *Strengthening Family Resilience* (3rd ed.). Guilford Press.

Additional peer-reviewed articles and resources provided via the course learning platform.

Course Welcome and Description

This course focuses on the knowledge, values, and skills required for effective social work practice with families in diverse contexts. Students will examine theories of family development, systems perspectives, and culturally responsive approaches to family intervention. Emphasis is placed on engagement, assessment, and intervention strategies that strengthen family functioning, promote resilience, and address challenges such as trauma, conflict, and systemic oppression. The course explores evidence-based models of family practice, including structural, solution-focused, and cognitive-behavioral approaches, while highlighting the importance of cultural humility, social justice, and ethical decision-making. Through case studies, role plays, and applied projects, students will develop competencies in working collaboratively with families to support well-being across the lifespan.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of family development theories and systems perspectives while applying engagement, assessment, and intervention strategies that strengthen family resilience and functioning. They will integrate evidence-based models of family practice—including structural, solution-focused, and cognitive-behavioral approaches—into their work with families, while critically analyzing the role of trauma, oppression, and systemic inequities in shaping family well-being. Students will also develop skills in culturally responsive, ethical, and socially just practice and will collaborate effectively with families and interdisciplinary professionals to promote healthy relationships and outcomes across the lifespan.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

| Outcome CSWE Competency Alignment | | Students Will Be Able To... |
|--|--|--|
| SLO 1 | Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior | Demonstrate skills in culturally responsive, ethical, and socially just practice with families across diverse contexts. |
| SLO 2 | Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice | Demonstrate skills in culturally responsive, ethical, and socially just practice with families across diverse contexts. |
| SLO 3 | Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice | Critically analyze the role of trauma, oppression, and systemic inequities in family well-being, advocating for socially just interventions. |
| SLO 4 | Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice | Demonstrate knowledge of family development theories and systems perspectives, applying research-informed frameworks to family practice. |
| SLO 5 | Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Collaborate with families and interdisciplinary professionals to promote healthy relationships and outcomes across the lifespan. |
| SLO 6 | Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Apply engagement, assessment, and intervention strategies that strengthen family resilience and functioning. |
| SLO 7 | Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Integrate evidence-based family practice models (structural, solution-focused, CBT) into social work practice with families. |

Major Teaching Methods

This in-person course integrates theory with applied practice through a variety of interactive and experiential teaching strategies. Faculty-led lectures provide the foundational knowledge necessary for understanding theories of family development and models of intervention, while class discussions allow students to critically analyze concepts and share diverse perspectives. Case studies and applied projects are used to connect theoretical frameworks with real-world practice, giving students the opportunity to examine complex family dynamics and consider culturally responsive approaches. Role plays and skills practice sessions are incorporated regularly, enabling students to apply engagement, assessment, and intervention strategies in a supportive classroom environment. Small group activities foster collaboration, problem-solving, and peer learning, while guest speakers and practitioner panels bring insights from professional practice across diverse family settings. Together, these methods create a learning environment that emphasizes both the acquisition of knowledge and the development of practical skills for effective family-centered social work practice.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will require the use of iLearn. All assignments and important class updates will be posted to our course page. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to a working computer and internet to complete your work on time. For general computing issues or

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

iLearn/email/TTU-connected software problems, you must contact the Tech Helpdesk promptly for assistance.

Topics to be Covered

- Introduction to Family Practice in Social Work
- Theories of Family Development and Systems Perspectives
- Cultural Humility and Culturally Responsive Practice with Families
- Family Engagement and Assessment Strategies
- Structural Family Therapy: Roles, Boundaries, and Hierarchies
- Solution-Focused Family Practice and Strengths-Based Approaches
- Cognitive-Behavioral Approaches in Family Therapy
- Trauma-Informed Practice and Addressing Family Conflict
- Systemic Oppression and its Impact on Families
- Ethical Issues and Social Justice in Family Interventions
- Family Practice Across the Lifespan (children, adolescents, blended families, aging)
- Interdisciplinary Collaboration with Schools, Healthcare, and Community Systems
- Evidence-Based Models of Family Practice
- Advocacy and Policy Implications for Family Well-being
- Future Directions in Family-Centered Social Work Practice

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|---|--|---|--|
| Week 1: Introduction to Social Work Practice with Families | Nichols & Davis, Ch. 1 | Syllabus review; genogram icebreaker | Demonstrate knowledge of family systems perspectives (SLO 1) |
| Week 2: Theories of Family Development and Systems Perspectives | Nichols & Davis, Ch. 2; Walsh, Ch. 1 | Lecture/discussion; case vignettes; Reading Response #1 | Apply theoretical frameworks to family practice (SLO 1) |
| Week 3: Cultural Humility and Culturally Responsive Practice | Walsh, Ch. 2; article on cultural humility | Cultural identity role play; discussion; Reflection Journal #2 | Demonstrate culturally responsive practice (SLO 5) |
| Week 4: Engagement and Assessment in Family Work | Nichols & Davis, Ch. 3 | Mock family intake interviews; Family Case Analysis assigned | Develop engagement and assessment skills (SLO 2) |
| Week 5: Structural Family Therapy Approaches | Nichols & Davis, Ch. 4 | Structural mapping exercise; video case analysis; Reflection Journal #3 | Integrate structural family practice model (SLO 3) |
| Week 6: Solution-Focused Family Interventions | Nichols & Davis, Ch. 5 | Solution-focused role plays; Reading Response #2 | Apply solution-focused strategies (SLO 3) |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|--|---|--|--|
| Week 7: Cognitive-Behavioral Family Therapy | Nichols & Davis, Ch. 6 | Case-based practice; group discussion; Family Case Analysis due | Apply CBT family interventions (SLO 3) |
| Week 8: Addressing Trauma and Conflict in Families | Walsh, Ch. 5 | Case simulation; debrief on managing conflict; Reflection Journal #4 | Analyze impact of trauma on families (SLO 4) |
| Week 9: Systemic Oppression and Family Well-being | Article on systemic oppression and families | Policy discussion; Intervention Project assigned | Examine systemic oppression in family well-being (SLO 4) |
| Week 10: Ethics and Social Justice in Family Interventions | NASW Code of Ethics; Nichols & Davis, Ch. 7 | Ethical dilemma case study; debate; Reflection Journal #5 | Apply ethical decision-making and social justice frameworks (SLO 5) |
| Week 11: Families Across the Lifespan | Walsh, Ch. 6 | Small group case studies by family stage; Reading Response #3 | Apply practice strategies across the lifespan (SLO 6) |
| Week 12: Collaboration with Schools, Healthcare, and Community Systems | Selected articles on interprofessional practice | Guest speaker panel; interprofessional role play; Intervention Project due | Demonstrate interdisciplinary collaboration (SLO 6) |
| Week 13: Student Case Presentations | Student-selected case materials | Student-led presentations; peer feedback; Final Paper assigned | Present and justify family intervention plans (SLOs 2, 3, 6) |
| Week 14: Integration, Reflection, and Future Directions | Walsh, Ch. 9 | Final reflection circle; course evaluations; Final Paper/Presentation due; Reflection Journal #6 | Integrate theory, practice, and social justice in family practice (All SLOs) |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|---|---------------|
| Participation and Role Plays – Active engagement in class discussions, role plays, and skill-building exercises | 15% |
| Family Case Analysis – Written case study analyzing a family system using a theoretical framework | 20% |
| Intervention Project – Development of a family intervention plan applying evidence-based models | 20% |
| Reflection Journal – Weekly reflections connecting theory, practice, and personal insights | 15% |
| Final Paper/Presentation – Comprehensive analysis of a family practice issue with applied recommendations | 30% |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Participation and Role Plays (15%)

Description:

Students are expected to actively contribute to class discussions, role plays, and skill-building exercises. Participation includes preparedness, respectful engagement with peers, and demonstration of professional behavior in an in-person classroom setting.

Purpose:

This assignment develops students' ability to apply knowledge in real-time practice scenarios and to demonstrate professional values and ethics in collaborative learning environments.

CSWE Competency Alignment:

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior; C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice; C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

Family Case Analysis (20%)

Description:

Students will complete a written analysis of a provided or chosen case study of a family system. The analysis will include theoretical application, assessment strategies, and identification of family strengths and challenges.

Purpose:

This assignment allows students to apply systems theory and family development concepts to assess real-world family dynamics and to connect theory to practice.

CSWE Competency Alignment:

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice; C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

Intervention Project (20%)

Description:

Students will design a family intervention plan using evidence-based approaches (structural, solution-focused, cognitive-behavioral). The plan should include goals, methods, and strategies for collaboration with family members.

Purpose:

This assignment strengthens students' ability to develop interventions that address family needs while promoting resilience and well-being.

CSWE Competency Alignment:

C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice; C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

Reflection Journal (15%)

Description:

Students will submit weekly reflections connecting course readings, classroom activities, and personal insights to their developing professional practice. Reflections should address ethical dilemmas, cultural humility, and systemic considerations.

Purpose:

Reflection journals encourage self-awareness and critical thinking about how values, biases, and lived experiences shape practice with families.

CSWE Competency Alignment:

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior; C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice; C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice.

Final Paper / Presentation (30%)

Description:

Students will prepare a comprehensive paper and class presentation analyzing a family practice issue of their choice. The project should integrate theory, research, intervention strategies, and implications for culturally responsive and socially just practice.

Purpose:

This capstone assignment provides students the opportunity to synthesize knowledge and skills gained throughout the course and to demonstrate competency in evidence-based family practice.

CSWE Competency Alignment:

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice; C5 – Engage in Policy Practice; C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities; C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
| B | 79.5-89.4 |
| C | 69.5-79.4 |
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Course Policies

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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 7200: Assessment & Evaluation of Clinical Practice (on-ground)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name
Office
Telephone Number
Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites
Practicum IA & IB

Texts and Resources

Corcoran, J., & Walsh, J. (2015). *Clinical assessment and diagnosis in social work practice* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed., text rev.; DSM-5-TR). American Psychiatric Publishing.

Bloom, M., Fischer, J., & Orme, J. G. (2009). *Evaluating practice: Guidelines for the accountable professional* (6th ed.). Pearson.

Additional peer-reviewed articles and resources provided on iLearn.

Course Welcome and Description

This course prepares students to systematically assess client needs and evaluate clinical social work practice using evidence-informed methods. Students will develop skills in conducting comprehensive biopsychosocial-spiritual assessments, formulating diagnostic impressions, and identifying appropriate interventions for diverse populations. Emphasis is placed on the integration of standardized assessment tools, culturally responsive approaches, and clinical judgment. Students will also examine approaches to evaluating practice effectiveness, including goal attainment scaling, single-case designs, and outcome measurement. Ethical issues, cultural considerations, and the importance of client participation in assessment and evaluation are emphasized throughout. Through case analysis, applied assignments, and practice simulations, students will strengthen competencies in linking assessment to intervention and using evaluation to improve practice outcomes and advance social justice.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to demonstrate competence in conducting biopsychosocial-spiritual assessments and in using culturally responsive, evidence-informed methods to formulate diagnostic impressions. They will be able to identify and apply appropriate standardized tools, integrate client perspectives into the assessment and evaluation process, and link assessment findings to intervention planning. Students will develop the ability to evaluate practice effectiveness through methods such as goal attainment scaling, single-case design, and

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

outcome measurement, while applying ethical reasoning and cultural humility. In doing so, students will strengthen their capacity to connect assessment to intervention, critically analyze practice effectiveness, and advocate for equitable, just, and client-centered social work practice.

| Outcomes | CSWE Competency Alignment | Students Will Be Able To... |
|-----------------|--|---|
| SLO 1 | Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior | Apply ethical standards and professional judgment in clinical assessment and evaluation. |
| SLO 2 | Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice | Conduct culturally responsive assessments that integrate client perspectives and address diverse needs. |
| SLO 3 | Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice | Evaluate how systemic oppression impacts access to assessment and evaluation services and advocate for equitable practices. |
| SLO 4 | Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice | Apply evidence-informed tools and evaluation methods to improve practice outcomes. |
| SLO 5 | Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Collaborate with clients and systems to integrate assessment results into intervention planning. |
| SLO 6 | Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Conduct biopsychosocial-spiritual assessments and formulate diagnostic impressions. |
| SLO 7 | Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Use assessment findings to inform intervention strategies. |
| SLO 8 | Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Employ evaluation strategies (goal attainment scaling, single-case design, outcome measurement) to assess practice effectiveness. |

Major Teaching Methods

This course is taught in-person and employs interactive and experiential strategies to integrate knowledge with practice. Lectures provide theoretical foundations and frameworks for assessment and evaluation, while class discussions promote critical analysis of ethical, cultural, and systemic considerations. Role plays, practice simulations, and case studies are used extensively to provide hands-on experience with biopsychosocial-spiritual assessments, diagnostic impressions, and evaluation methods. Small group activities foster collaboration and peer feedback, while applied projects connect classroom learning with real-world practice. These methods are designed to reinforce CSWE competencies, with a particular emphasis on ethical practice, culturally responsive assessment, and evidence-informed evaluation.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will require the use of iLearn. All assignments and important class updates will be posted to our course page. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to a working

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

computer and internet to complete your work on time. For general computing issues or iLearn/email/TTU-connected software problems, you must contact the Tech Helpdesk promptly for assistance.

Topics to be Covered

- Introduction to assessment and evaluation in clinical social work
- Biopsychosocial-spiritual assessment
- Diagnostic impressions and clinical judgment
- Standardized assessment tools and evidence-informed measures
- Cultural humility and responsiveness in assessment
- Linking assessment to intervention planning
- Goal attainment scaling and evaluation design
- Single-case designs in social work practice
- Outcome measurement approaches
- Ethical issues in assessment and evaluation
- Client participation in evaluation planning
- Application of assessment and evaluation to diverse populations
- Integration of evaluation results into practice improvement

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|---|---|---|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to Assessment and Evaluation in Clinical Social Work | Nichols & Davis, Ch. 1; NASW Code of Ethics | Syllabus review; discussion of assessment frameworks | C1, C7 |
| Week 2: Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Assessment | Corcoran & Walsh, Ch. 2 | Case vignette analysis; role play assessment interviews | C2, C7 |
| Week 3: Diagnostic Impressions and Clinical Judgment | DSM-5-TR excerpts | Diagnostic case formulation; Reflection Journal #1 | C1, C7 |
| Week 4: Standardized Assessment Tools | Selected articles on standardized measures | Practice using standardized tools; Reading Response #1 | C4, C7 |
| Week 5: Cultural Responsiveness in Assessment | Walsh, Ch. 3 | Cultural humility exercise; Reflection Journal #2 | C2, C3 |
| Week 6: Linking Assessment to Intervention | Nichols & Davis, Ch. 5 | Intervention planning workshop; Family case practice | C6, C8 |
| Week 7: Evaluation Methods: Goal Attainment Scaling | Academic article on GAS | Design a goal attainment scale for a client scenario | C4, C9 |
| Week 8: Single-Case Design in Social Work | Bloom et al., Ch. 4 | Small group design activity; Reflection Journal #3 | C4, C9 |
| Week 9: Outcome Measurement Approaches | Selected journal articles | Workshop on outcomes and data collection | C4, C9 |

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| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Week 10: Ethics and Evaluation in Social Work | NASW Standards for Evaluation | Debate: ethics of outcome measurement; Reflection Journal #4 | C1, C3 |
| Week 11: Client Participation in Assessment and Evaluation | Articles on participatory approaches | Role play involving client-centered evaluation planning | C2, C6 |
| Week 12: Case Analysis Workshop | DSM-5-TR excerpts; case studies | Case analysis peer review; Evaluation Project due | C7, C9 |
| Week 13: Student Evaluation Project Presentations | Student-selected | Student presentations of evaluation projects | C4, C9 |
| Week 14: Integration and Reflection | Walsh, Ch. 9 | Final reflection circle; Final Paper due | All |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|--|---------------|
| Class Participation and Practice Simulations | 15% |
| Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Assessment | 20% |
| Case Analysis and Diagnostic Formulation | 20% |
| Evaluation Project (GAS, single-case design, or outcome measurement) | 20% |
| Final Paper/Presentation | 25% |

Class Participation and Practice Simulations (15%)

Description: Active participation in discussions, group activities, and role plays simulating assessment and evaluation processes.

Purpose: Reinforces knowledge through experiential learning and supports skill-building in ethical, culturally responsive practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C6.

2. Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Assessment (20%)

Description: Completion of a comprehensive assessment of a case study client, addressing biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions.

Purpose: Builds skills in holistic, culturally competent assessment.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C2, C7.

3. Case Analysis and Diagnostic Formulation (20%)

Description: Written analysis of a case including diagnostic impression, risk factors, and intervention implications.

Purpose: Strengthens clinical reasoning and diagnostic formulation.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C7, C8.

4. Evaluation Project (20%)

Description: Design an evaluation framework using goal attainment scaling, single-case design, or outcome measures for a client or program.

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Purpose: Enhances students' ability to evaluate practice effectiveness and connect evaluation to intervention.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C3, C4, C9.

5. Final Paper/Presentation (25%)

Description: Comprehensive paper and oral presentation integrating assessment and evaluation of a clinical case, including ethical and cultural considerations.

Purpose: Synthesizes knowledge of assessment and evaluation while demonstrating readiness for advanced practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C4, C6, C9.

Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
| B | 79.5-89.4 |
| C | 69.5-79.4 |
| D | 59.5-69.4 |
| F | 59.4 & below |

Course Policies

Student Academic Integrity Policy

Maintaining high standards of academic integrity in every class is critical to the reputation of Tennessee Tech, its students, faculty, alumni, and the employers of Tennessee Tech graduates. Academic integrity is at the foundation of the educational process and the key to student success. Students with academic integrity are committed to honesty, ethical behavior, and avoiding violations of academic integrity. All students are required to read and understand Policy 216: Student Academic Integrity. Please see the Academic Integrity website (<https://www.tntech.edu/provost/academicintegrity/>) for more information.

Attendance Policy

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Class Participation

Active participation is essential in this graduate-level online course and is a critical component of your professional development as a social worker. Students are expected to engage meaningfully in weekly discussion boards, respond to peers, and contribute thoughtful, evidence-based reflections that connect course content to real-world practice. Consistent participation demonstrates your commitment to collaborative learning, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue—core values of ethical social work practice. Failure to regularly participate may significantly impact your final grade and your ability to meet CSWE competencies.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Assignments and Related Policy

All assignments must be submitted through the course's online learning management system by the specified deadlines. Late submissions will incur a grade penalty of 10% per day unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor due to extenuating circumstances. Assignments are designed to reinforce key course concepts and contribute to 55% of the final grade, with clear guidelines and grading rubrics provided for each. Timed quizzes and the final comprehensive exam must be completed within the designated time frames and are weighted accordingly. Students are responsible for ensuring their submissions are complete and properly uploaded; technical issues should be reported promptly to avoid penalties.

AI policy statement: Not Permitted in this Course

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Additional Resources

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Counseling and Health Services

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Emergency Preparedness Protocols

Each student must take personal responsibility for following any University protocol related to pandemics, natural disasters, and other public health and safety events. Students are expected to

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follow all directives published by Tennessee Tech on its [Environmental Health & Safety webpage](#).

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 7210: Social Work Practice in Addictions (on-ground)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Practicum IA & IB

Texts and Resources

Miller, W. R., & Rollnick, S. (2013). *Motivational interviewing: Helping people change* (3rd ed.). Guilford Press.

Capuzzi, D., & Stauffer, M. D. (2020). *Addiction counseling: A practical approach* (3rd ed.). American Counseling Association.

Additional peer-reviewed articles and resources will be provided via iLearn

Course Welcome and Description

This course provides an in-depth exploration of social work practice with individuals, families, and communities affected by substance use and addictive behaviors. Students will examine the biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors that contribute to addiction, as well as the impact of stigma, trauma, and systemic inequities. Emphasis is placed on evidence-based and emerging interventions, including motivational interviewing, cognitive-behavioral approaches, harm reduction, and recovery-oriented systems of care. Students will also gain skills in screening, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning while critically analyzing the ethical and policy dimensions of addiction services. Special attention is given to culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices that promote resilience, recovery, and social justice. Through case studies, applied exercises, and reflective practice, students will develop competencies to work effectively across diverse practice settings addressing addiction.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to critically analyze the biological, psychological, and social determinants of addiction while integrating culturally responsive and trauma-informed perspectives into practice. They will gain competence in screening, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning, and in applying evidence-based interventions such as motivational interviewing, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and harm reduction approaches. Students will strengthen their ability to critically evaluate addiction services, considering ethical dilemmas, systemic inequities, and policy contexts. In doing so, they will develop the knowledge, values,

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and skills necessary to promote resilience, recovery, and social justice in work with individuals, families, and communities affected by addiction.

CSWE Competency Alignment

C1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

C2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

C3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

C4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

C5 – Engage in Policy Practice

C6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

C9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Students will be able to...

Apply ethical reasoning in addressing complex issues in addiction practice, including confidentiality, stigma, and boundaries.

Deliver culturally responsive and trauma-informed care to clients with diverse backgrounds affected by addiction.

Advocate for equitable access to addiction treatment and recovery resources across systems of care.

Apply evidence-based interventions (MI, CBT, harm reduction) to addiction treatment and evaluate their effectiveness.

Critically examine the ethical and policy dimensions of addiction services and advocate for systemic change.

Collaborate with clients, families, and communities to strengthen recovery-oriented systems of care.

Conduct screenings, biopsychosocial assessments, and diagnostic evaluations for substance use disorders.

Implement evidence-based interventions tailored to diverse populations experiencing addiction.

Design and apply evaluation strategies to assess effectiveness of addiction treatment interventions.

Major Teaching Methods

This in-person course emphasizes active, experiential, and applied learning. Faculty-led lectures provide foundational knowledge of addiction theories and interventions, while discussions encourage students to critically analyze systemic inequities, stigma, and ethical issues. Case studies and role plays allow students to practice skills in assessment, motivational interviewing, CBT, and harm reduction. Small group exercises foster collaboration, peer feedback, and interdisciplinary learning, while guest speakers provide real-world perspectives from addiction practice. Applied projects and reflective writing assignments deepen students' capacity to integrate evidence-based approaches with culturally responsive, trauma-informed social work practice.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

This course will require the use of iLearn. All assignments and important class updates will be posted to our course page. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to a working computer and internet to complete your work on time. For general computing issues or iLearn/email/TTU-connected software problems, you must contact the Tech Helpdesk promptly for assistance.

Topics to be Covered

- Theories of addiction and recovery
- Biological, psychological, and social dimensions of addiction
- Stigma, trauma, and systemic inequities in addiction services
- Screening, assessment, and diagnostic impressions
- Treatment planning in addiction practice
- Motivational interviewing
- Cognitive-behavioral approaches to addiction
- Harm reduction strategies
- Recovery-oriented systems of care
- Trauma-informed addiction practice
- Ethical issues in addiction services
- Policy advocacy and systems change in addiction practice

Course Schedule

| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|---|---|---|-------------|
| Week 1: Introduction to Addiction in Social Work | White (Ch. 1–2) | Syllabus review; discussion of stigma and definitions | C1, C2 |
| Week 2: Biological, Psychological, and Social Dimensions of Addiction | Selected journal article; White (Ch. 3) | Case vignette analysis; Reflection Journal #1 | C2, C4 |
| Week 3: Theories of Addiction and Recovery | White (Ch. 4–5) | Debate: disease vs. choice models | C4, C5 |
| Week 4: Screening and Assessment in Addiction Practice | Miller & Rollnick (Ch. 2) | Practice screening tools; Reading Response #1 | C7 |
| Week 5: Diagnostic Impressions and Treatment Planning | DSM-5-TR excerpts | Case analysis; Reflection Journal #2 | C1, C7 |
| Week 6: Motivational Interviewing | Miller & Rollnick (Ch. 3–5) | Role play practice; peer feedback | C4, C8 |
| Week 7: Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions | Selected CBT article | Group intervention planning exercise | C4, C8 |
| Week 8: Harm Reduction Approaches | Selected harm reduction articles | Policy discussion; Reflection Journal #3 | C3, C5 |
| Week 9: Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care | White (Ch. 6–7) | Guest speaker panel; Reading Response #2 | C6 |
| Week 10: Trauma-Informed Practice in Addiction Services | Peer-reviewed article | Simulation exercise; Reflection Journal #4 | C2, C3 |

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| Week / Topic | Key Readings | Assignments / Activities | SLOs |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Week 11: Ethical Issues in Addiction Services | NASW Code of Ethics excerpts | Ethical dilemma case study; class debate | C1, C5 |
| Week 12: Policy and Systems Change in Addiction Practice | White (Ch. 8); selected policy briefs | Policy advocacy workshop; Evaluation Project due | C3, C5 |
| Week 13: Student Case Presentations | Student-selected | Student-led presentations; peer review | C6, C8 |
| Week 14: Integration and Reflection | White (Ch. 9); course summary | Final reflection circle; Final Paper due | All |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment / Assessment | Weight |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Class Participation and Role Plays | 15% |
| Screening & Assessment Exercise | 20% |
| Case Analysis and Treatment Plan | 20% |
| Evaluation/Policy Project | 20% |
| Final Paper/Presentation | 25% |

Class Participation and Role Plays (15%)

Description: Active participation in class discussions, role plays, and small group exercises.

Purpose: Builds applied practice skills in assessment, motivational interviewing, CBT, and harm reduction.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C6.

2. Screening & Assessment Exercise (20%)

Description: Conduct a simulated screening and assessment, including biopsychosocial elements and preliminary diagnostic impressions.

Purpose: Strengthens competence in assessment and diagnostic skills for addiction practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C2, C7.

3. Case Analysis and Treatment Plan (20%)

Description: Written analysis of a client case, including treatment goals, evidence-based interventions, and culturally responsive considerations.

Purpose: Develops skills in linking assessment to intervention and in applying trauma-informed practice.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C7, C8.

4. Evaluation/Policy Project (20%)

Description: Students will design an evaluation project (measuring effectiveness of an intervention) or a policy analysis focused on addiction services.

Purpose: Enhances ability to evaluate practice and advocate for systemic improvements.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C3, C4, C5, C9.

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5. Final Paper/Presentation (25%)

Description: A comprehensive research paper and class presentation integrating assessment, intervention, ethics, and policy implications in addiction practice.

Purpose: Synthesizes course learning and demonstrates readiness for advanced practice in addiction social work.

Linked SLOs & CSWE Competencies: C1, C4, C6, C8, C9

Grading Scale

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|--------------|--------------|
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follow all directives published by Tennessee Tech on its [Environmental Health & Safety webpage](#).

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 7220: Substance Abuse & Recovery (3 Credit Hours, Online/On-Ground)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Admitted into MSW Program

Completion of Practicum IA & Practicum IIA

Permission from Program Director

Texts and Resources

Capuzzi, D., & Stauffer, M. D. (2020). *Foundations of Addictions Counseling* (4th ed.). Pearson. ISBN: 9780135168627

Daley, D. C. (2020). *Substance Use Disorders: A Guide to the Use of Language, Interventions, and Treatment Planning*.

Course Welcome and Description

This advanced MSW-level course explores the multifaceted nature of substance use and recovery across diverse populations and settings. Students will examine the biological, psychological, social, and cultural foundations of substance use disorders (SUDs), with particular attention to the effects of trauma, inequality, stigma, and systemic oppression. Evidence-based treatment models—including harm reduction, motivational interviewing, cognitive-behavioral therapies, medication-assisted treatment, and recovery-oriented systems of care—are introduced and critically examined.

Social work's role in prevention, treatment, and recovery is emphasized, including interdisciplinary collaboration and policy advocacy. Students will engage with real-world case studies, recovery narratives, and applied assignments to develop clinical, advocacy, and systems-level competencies necessary for practice with individuals, families, and communities affected by substance use. The course reinforces the use of trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and strengths-based approaches across the continuum of care.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to analyze the biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors that contribute to substance use and recovery, recognizing the complex interplay of individual and systemic influences. They will apply evidence-based, trauma-informed, and recovery-oriented models of prevention and treatment while demonstrating culturally responsive and ethically sound practices in working with individuals and families

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affected by substance use. Students will examine how systemic oppression and social determinants impact access to services and recovery outcomes and will engage in interdisciplinary collaboration to support recovery-oriented systems of care. Additionally, they will be prepared to advocate for equitable and effective substance use policies and service delivery, and to integrate research, lived experience, and practice knowledge in advancing recovery at both individual and community levels.

| SLO # CSWE Competency Alignment | Students Will Be Able To... |
|---|---|
| 1 Competency 4: Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice | Analyze multiple dimensions of substance use and recovery using research-based and theoretical knowledge. |
| 2 Competency 8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities | Apply evidence-based interventions and trauma-informed practices to promote recovery across diverse populations. |
| 3 Competency 2: Engage diversity and difference in practice | Demonstrate cultural humility and ethical awareness in clinical and community-based work with SUD-affected populations. |
| 4 Competency 3: Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice | Evaluate how systems of oppression and social determinants impact substance use, treatment access, and recovery. |
| 5 Competency 6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities | Collaborate with interdisciplinary teams and service systems to support recovery-oriented care. |
| 6 Competency 5: Engage in policy practice | Critically analyze and advocate for just and effective substance use policies and services. |
| 7 Competency 1: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior | Integrate ethical standards, clinical skills, and lived experience to support individual and systemic recovery efforts. |

Major Teaching Methods

Online: Major teaching methods for this course include asynchronous online lectures, interactive discussion forums, and applied learning through case studies and multimedia content. Students will engage in collaborative assignments, reflective writing, and structured peer feedback to deepen their understanding of course material. Emphasis is placed on experiential learning, including the analysis of real-world scenarios and policy applications relevant to substance abuse and recovery, with a focus on diverse treatment settings, harm reduction approaches, recovery-oriented systems of care, and the social work role across the continuum of prevention, intervention, and advocacy.

On-Ground: Major teaching methods for this on-ground course include in-person lectures, classroom discussions, and applied learning through case studies, role plays, and multimedia content. Students will engage in collaborative group work, reflective writing, and structured peer feedback to deepen their understanding of key concepts. Emphasis is placed on experiential learning, including the analysis of real-world scenarios and policy applications relevant to substance abuse and recovery. The course focuses on diverse treatment settings, harm reduction approaches, recovery-oriented systems of care, and the social worker's role across the continuum of prevention, intervention, and advocacy.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Online: This course will be delivered fully online using iLearn. Students are expected to log in regularly to access weekly modules, participate in discussions, complete assignments, and review course announcements. All instructional materials—including readings, recorded lectures, case studies, and assessments—will be organized within the iLearn platform. Students must have access to a reliable internet connection and a compatible device to engage fully with course content. Technical support for iLearn is available through the university's Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL).

On-Ground: This course will be delivered in person with supplemental use of iLearn for instructional materials, assignment submissions, and communication. Students are expected to regularly access iLearn to download readings, review lecture slides and multimedia content, submit assignments, participate in occasional online discussions, and stay updated on course announcements. While class sessions will take place on campus, iLearn will serve as the central hub for course resources and materials. Students should have access to a reliable internet connection and a compatible device to fully engage with the online components of the course. Technical support for iLearn is available through the university's Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL).

Topics to be Covered

Introduction to Forensic Social Work

- History, definitions, and scope of practice
- Roles and settings (e.g., courts, corrections, child welfare, mental health)

The U.S. Legal System and Social Work Interface

- Civil vs. criminal law
- Key legal concepts and terminology relevant to social work practice

Ethical and Legal Considerations in Forensic Social Work

- Confidentiality, informed consent, and mandated reporting
- Navigating dual roles and professional boundaries

Forensic Assessment and Evaluation

- Biopsychosocial and risk assessments in legal contexts
- Competency, risk of harm, and criminal responsibility evaluations

Trauma-Informed Practice in Forensic Settings

- Understanding complex trauma and its legal implications
- Vicarious trauma and practitioner self-care

Substance Use Disorders and Co-occurring Diagnoses

- Assessment and intervention within justice systems
- Drug courts and diversion programs

Mental Health Courts and Alternative Sentencing

- Therapeutic jurisprudence
- Treatment vs. incarceration models

Child Welfare and Family Court Involvement

- Child abuse, neglect, custody, and reunification
- Forensic interviewing and child advocacy

Working in Correctional and Reentry Settings

- Roles of social workers in jails, prisons, and probation/parole
- Reentry planning, housing, employment, and stigma

Expert Testimony and Courtroom Skills

- Preparing reports and affidavits
- Providing expert witness testimony

Systemic Inequality and Structural Racism in Legal Systems

- Racial disparities in policing, sentencing, and incarceration

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- Disproportionate impacts on marginalized communities
- Restorative Justice and Rehabilitation Models**
 - Victim-offender mediation
 - Community-based alternatives to incarceration
- Policy Practice in Forensic Social Work**
 - Analyzing laws, policies, and reform movements
 - Advocacy strategies and coalition building
- Cultural Competence and Diversity in Forensic Settings**
 - Working with justice-involved populations across cultures
 - Addressing biases and promoting equity
- Ethical Use of Technology and Digital Records in Legal Practice**
 - Digital confidentiality and case documentation
 - Telehealth in correctional and court settings

Course Schedule

| Week | Topic | Key Activities/Assignments |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Introduction to Substance Use, Addiction, and Recovery | Syllabus quiz; recovery narrative discussion |
| 2 | Biological, Psychological, and Social Theories of Addiction | Discussion forum; article analysis |
| 3 | Trauma, Oppression, and Social Determinants of Substance Use | Reflective journal; case vignette |
| 4 | Screening, Assessment, and Diagnosis (DSM-5-TR, ASAM) | Screening tool application assignment |
| 5 | Evidence-Based Treatment Models: CBT, MI, Contingency Management | Skills lab; motivational interviewing practice |
| 6 | Harm Reduction and Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care | Policy brief topic selection; harm reduction case analysis |
| 7 | Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) and Integrated Behavioral Health | MAT infographic or educational handout |
| 8 | Cultural Humility, Intersectionality, and Special Populations | Group presentation development |
| 9 | Family Systems and Co-occurring Disorders | Case study analysis |
| 10 | Peer Support and Lived Experience in Recovery | Guest speaker reflection; group discussion |
| 11 | Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Service Integration | Group presentations |
| 12 | Ethical Issues in Substance Use Practice | Ethical dilemma paper due |
| 13 | Substance Use Policy, Criminalization, and Social Justice | Draft policy brief submission |
| 14 | Advocacy in Action: Policy and Community Engagement Strategies | Peer review of policy brief |
| 15 | Final Integration and Practice Applications | Final policy brief and reflection due |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment | Weight | CSWE Competencies |
|---|--------|-------------------|
| Participation & Weekly Discussions | 15% | C1, C2, C3, C4 |
| Case Study Analysis | 15% | C3, C6, C7 |
| Motivational Interviewing Practice & Reflection | 10% | C2, C8 |
| Harm Reduction Application Exercise | 10% | C3, C5, C8 |
| Ethical Dilemma Paper | 15% | C1, C2 |
| Group Presentation: Special Populations & Cultural Humility | 10% | C2, C6 |

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| Assignment | Weight | CSWE Competencies |
|------------------------------|--------|-------------------|
| Policy Brief (Final Project) | 25% | C3, C5, C6 |

Class Participation & Weekly Discussion Reflections (10%)

Purpose: Foster consistent engagement with course content, encourage peer dialogue, and support critical thinking through in-class discussions and short written reflections.

CSWE Competencies Addressed: C1, C2, C4, C6

Case Study Analysis: Trauma & Substance Use (15%)

Purpose: Students will analyze a complex case scenario involving co-occurring trauma and substance use. They will identify risk and protective factors, assess social determinants of health, and propose a trauma-informed intervention strategy.

CSWE Competencies Addressed: C2, C3, C4, C8

Motivational Interviewing Practice & Reflection (10%)

Purpose: In a paired or small-group format, students will conduct a simulated motivational interviewing (MI) session, then submit a reflection analyzing their use of MI techniques and client engagement strategies.

CSWE Competencies Addressed: C6, C7, C8

Harm Reduction Strategy Application (10%)

Purpose: Students will research and apply harm reduction principles to a specific population (e.g., youth, LGBTQ+, rural clients, people who use opioids). This includes identifying barriers to care and developing client-centered service recommendations.

CSWE Competencies Addressed: C3, C5, C8

Ethical Dilemma Paper (15%)

Purpose: Students will select a real-world or hypothetical scenario that presents an ethical dilemma in substance use practice (e.g., confidentiality, mandated treatment, dual relationships). The paper will apply the NASW Code of Ethics and ethical decision-making models.

CSWE Competencies Addressed: C1, C2, C6

Group Presentation: Cultural Humility & Special Populations (10%)

Purpose: In small groups, students will prepare and deliver a presentation exploring how substance use and recovery are experienced within a specific marginalized population (e.g., Indigenous communities, immigrants, veterans).

CSWE Competencies Addressed: C2, C6, C8

Policy Brief: Substance Use Policy & Advocacy (20%)

Purpose: Students will develop a professional policy brief that addresses a current issue in substance use policy (e.g., access to MAT, decriminalization, recovery housing). The brief should include background research, policy recommendations, and advocacy strategies.

CSWE Competencies Addressed: C3, C5, C6

Final Exam: Integration of Practice & Theory (10%)

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Purpose: A comprehensive written exam covering key concepts from the course, including models of addiction, treatment approaches, systemic issues, ethical frameworks, and policy impacts.

CSWE Competencies Addressed: C1, C3, C4, C8

Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
| B | 79.5-89.4 |
| C | 69.5-79.4 |
| D | 59.5-69.4 |
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Course Policies

Student Academic Integrity Policy

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Class Participation

Active participation is essential in this graduate-level online course and is a critical component of your professional development as a social worker. Students are expected to engage meaningfully in weekly discussion boards, respond to peers, and contribute thoughtful, evidence-based reflections that connect course content to real-world practice. Consistent participation demonstrates your commitment to collaborative learning, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue—core values of ethical social work practice. Failure to regularly participate may significantly impact your final grade and your ability to meet CSWE competencies.

Assignments and Related Policy

All assignments must be submitted through the course's online learning management system by the specified deadlines. Late submissions will incur a grade penalty of 10% per day unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor due to extenuating circumstances. Assignments are designed to reinforce key course concepts and contribute to 55% of the final grade, with clear guidelines and grading rubrics provided for each. Timed quizzes and the final comprehensive exam must be completed within the designated time frames and are weighted accordingly.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Students are responsible for ensuring their submissions are complete and properly uploaded; technical issues should be reported promptly to avoid penalties.

AI policy statement: Not Permitted in this Course

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Disability Accommodation

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Additional Resources

Technical Help

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Tutoring

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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Elective Courses

Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 5000: Rural Social Work (3 Credit Hours, Online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Admitted into MSW Program

Texts and Resources

Dudley, J. R. (2017). Rural Social Work: Building and Sustaining Community Capacity. Routledge.

Additional readings on iLearn

Course Welcome and Description

This course examines the unique challenges and opportunities of social work practice in rural communities. Students will explore the demographic, economic, cultural, and geographic factors that shape service delivery and client experiences in rural contexts. Emphasis is placed on the strengths and resilience of rural populations, the impact of limited resources and social services, and the importance of collaboration, innovation, and advocacy in addressing community needs. Topics include health disparities, poverty, substance use, mental health access, ethical dilemmas in small communities, and the role of social workers as generalist practitioners. Students will analyze policies affecting rural areas, evaluate strategies for community engagement and capacity building, and develop culturally responsive and contextually appropriate approaches to practice. Through case studies, applied projects, and reflective learning, students will strengthen competencies for advancing equity and social justice in rural settings.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

The primary objectives of this course are to equip students with a deep understanding of the unique social, economic, cultural, and geographic factors that influence social work practice in rural communities. Students will develop the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct comprehensive assessments, design culturally responsive interventions, and advocate effectively within resource-limited and often underserved rural settings. Emphasizing strengths-based and community-centered approaches, the course fosters competencies in addressing health disparities, poverty, substance use, and mental health challenges specific to rural populations. Additionally, students will explore ethical dilemmas particular to small communities and learn to navigate professional roles with integrity and cultural humility. Through analysis of policies and engagement with evidence-based practices, learners will be prepared to promote social justice,

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

build community capacity, and contribute meaningfully to interdisciplinary collaboration in rural social work practice.

| Outcomes CSWE Competency Alignment | | Students Will Be Able To... |
|---|--|---|
| SLO 1 | Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior | Apply ethical decision-making and professional conduct within rural social work practice, navigating confidentiality and dual relationships in small communities. |
| SLO 2 | Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice | Recognize and respect cultural, economic, and demographic diversity unique to rural populations in service delivery. |
| SLO 3 | Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice | Identify systemic barriers and advocate for social justice in rural communities, addressing poverty, health disparities, and resource limitations. |
| SLO 4 | Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice | Analyze and apply evidence-based strategies relevant to rural social work practice and program evaluation. |
| SLO 5 | Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice | Critically evaluate policies impacting rural areas and advocate for policy reform that promotes equitable access to services. |
| SLO 6 | Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Develop culturally responsive, community-informed interventions tailored to rural settings. |
| SLO 7 | Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Conduct comprehensive assessments considering rural context and resources. |
| SLO 8 | Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Implement innovative and collaborative interventions to meet rural client and community needs. |

Major Teaching Methods

Major teaching methods for this course include asynchronous online lectures, interactive discussion forums, and applied learning through case studies and multimedia content. Students will engage in collaborative assignments, reflective writing, and structured peer feedback to deepen their understanding of course material. Emphasis is placed on experiential learning, including the analysis of real-world scenarios and policy applications relevant to rural social work practice, focusing on challenges and opportunities within rural communities such as limited resources, geographic isolation, and community-based service delivery.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will be delivered fully online using iLearn. Students are expected to log in regularly to access weekly modules, participate in discussions, complete assignments, and review course announcements. All instructional materials—including readings, recorded lectures, case studies, and assessments—will be organized within the iLearn platform. Students must have access to a reliable internet connection and a compatible device to engage fully with course content. Technical support for iLearn is available through the university's Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL).

Topics to be Covered

- Characteristics and demographics of rural communities
- Strengths and resilience in rural populations

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

- Health and mental health disparities in rural areas
- Poverty, substance use, and social determinants of health
- Ethical dilemmas unique to rural social work practice
- Resource limitations and access to social services
- Collaboration, networking, and interagency coordination
- Community engagement, capacity building, and empowerment
- Policy issues affecting rural social work and rural populations
- Culturally responsive practice and diversity in rural contexts
- Innovations and technology in rural service delivery

Course Schedule

| Week | Topic | Key Activities/Assignments |
|------|---|--|
| 1 | Introduction to Rural Social Work | Discussion board: Defining rural practice |
| 2 | Demographics and Community Characteristics | Reflection journal on rural community assets |
| 3 | Strengths, Resilience, and Rural Culture | Case study analysis |
| 4 | Health and Mental Health Disparities | Quiz 1; Discussion forum |
| 5 | Poverty and Substance Use in Rural Areas | Policy brief assignment introduced |
| 6 | Ethical Challenges in Rural Social Work | Ethics case reflection |
| 7 | Resource Scarcity and Service Access | Collaborative group assignment |
| 8 | Community Engagement and Capacity Building | Midterm paper due |
| 9 | Social Justice and Advocacy in Rural Settings | Discussion board: Advocacy strategies |
| 10 | Rural Policy Analysis | Policy brief draft due |
| 11 | Culturally Responsive Practice | Role play reflection assignment |
| 12 | Interagency Collaboration and Networking | Group project planning |
| 13 | Technology and Innovations in Rural Practice | Quiz 2 |
| 14 | Sustainability and Program Evaluation | Final project introduction |
| 15 | Future Directions and Course Wrap-up | Final project due |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment/Assessment | Weight |
|---|--------|
| 1. Weekly Discussion Posts & Peer Replies | 15% |
| 2. Reflection Journals | 10% |
| 3. Case Study Analysis Paper | 15% |
| 4. Midterm Paper: Rural Community Assessment | 15% |
| 5. Policy Brief & Advocacy Memo | 15% |
| 6. Role Play Reflection | 10% |
| 7. Quizzes (2 total) | 10% |
| 8. Final Project: Community Intervention Proposal | 10% |

Weekly Discussion Posts & Peer Replies (15%)

Description: Students will post weekly responses (300–400 words) to discussion prompts based on course readings, multimedia content, or case examples focused on rural social work issues. Additionally, they will respond to at least two peers' posts (150–200 words each) to foster

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

dialogue and peer learning.

Purpose: This assignment encourages ongoing critical engagement with course materials, facilitates collaborative learning, and helps students practice articulating rural social work concepts in a professional manner.

CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C6

Reflection Journals (10%)

Description: Students will submit reflective journals (approx. 2 pages) at designated intervals throughout the course. These reflections focus on personal insights related to rural practice, ethical dilemmas, cultural responsiveness, and the strengths and challenges of rural communities.

Purpose: Reflection deepens self-awareness, supports integration of theory and practice, and promotes critical thinking about professional identity in rural contexts.

CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C8

Case Study Analysis Paper (15%)

Description: Students will analyze a detailed rural social work case in a 6–8 page paper. This includes assessment of client and community factors, ethical issues, and a culturally appropriate intervention plan aligned with rural social work principles.

Purpose: Develops critical clinical reasoning and culturally responsive intervention planning tailored to rural populations.

CSWE Competencies: C6, C7, C8, C2

Midterm Paper: Rural Community Assessment (15%)

Description: A 7–10 page comprehensive assessment of a rural community's demographics, economic conditions, social structures, and available services. The paper identifies community strengths, gaps, and social work intervention opportunities.

Purpose: Builds skills in macro-level assessment and community analysis to inform effective, contextually relevant social work interventions.

CSWE Competencies: C4, C5, C7, C3

Policy Brief & Advocacy Memo (15%)

Description: Students will select a rural policy issue and create a 3–4 page policy brief outlining the issue, impact on rural populations, and evidence-based recommendations. A one-page advocacy memo directed to a policymaker or agency leader will accompany the brief.

Purpose: Enhances policy analysis and advocacy skills to promote social justice and systemic change in rural settings.

CSWE Competencies: C3, C5, C1

Role Play Reflection (10%)

Description: After participating in or observing a simulated rural social work scenario, students will write a 2–3 page reflection focusing on communication skills, ethical challenges, and collaborative strategies used in the role play.

Purpose: Facilitates experiential learning, professional skill development, and ethical decision-making in rural social work contexts.

CSWE Competencies: C1, C6, C8

Quizzes (10%)

Description: Two online quizzes assessing comprehension of key course content including rural demographics, social determinants of health, ethics, policies, and intervention strategies.

Purpose: Measures foundational knowledge and reinforces key concepts critical to effective rural social work practice.

CSWE Competencies: C1, C4, C5

Final Project: Community Intervention Proposal (10%)

Description: Students will submit a 6–8 page proposal for a community-based intervention addressing a specific rural social issue. The project will include needs assessment, goals, intervention strategies, resources, collaboration plans, and evaluation methods.

Purpose: Demonstrates integration of course learning by applying assessment, planning, and advocacy skills to real-world rural social work challenges.

CSWE Competencies: C3, C5, C6, C7, C8

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 5010: School Social Work (3 Credit Hours, Online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Admitted into MSW Program

Texts and Resources

Dudley, J. R. (2017). *Rural Social Work: Building and Sustaining Community Capacity*.
Routledge.

Additional readings on iLearn

Course Welcome and Description

This course provides an in-depth exploration of social work practice in K–12 educational settings, emphasizing the promotion of academic, social, and emotional well-being of children and adolescents. Students will examine the historical and contemporary roles of school social workers, relevant laws, policies, and the intersection of schools with families and communities. The course emphasizes assessment, prevention, intervention, and advocacy strategies addressing issues such as poverty, trauma, bullying, absenteeism, behavioral challenges, and special education. Students will learn to collaborate with educators, administrators, families, and community partners to foster safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments. Cultural humility, ethical decision-making, and the advancement of equity and social justice in schools will be central themes. Through case studies, applied projects, and experiential learning, students will develop competencies in delivering effective services and advocating for systemic change within educational systems.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to analyze the roles and responsibilities of school social workers across diverse K–12 settings, applying biopsychosocial assessment tools and tailored intervention strategies to support the unique needs of school-aged children and adolescents. They will navigate the relevant laws, policies, and ethical frameworks that guide school social work practice, while addressing systemic barriers such as poverty, trauma, and discrimination that impact student well-being and academic success. Students will also demonstrate effective collaboration with families, educators, administrators, and community resources to foster supportive environments. Additionally, they will advocate for equitable policies and systemic changes that promote social justice and inclusive education, and develop

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and evidence-based approaches to their practice within educational settings.

| SLO # | CSWE Competency Alignment | Students Will Be Able To... |
|-------|--|--|
| SLO 1 | Competency 1: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior | Analyze the roles and responsibilities of school social workers in diverse K–12 settings and uphold professional standards. |
| SLO 2 | Competency 2: Engage diversity and difference in practice | Develop culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and evidence-based approaches tailored to the needs of school-aged children and adolescents. |
| SLO 3 | Competency 3: Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice | Address systemic barriers including poverty, trauma, and discrimination impacting student well-being and academic success. |
| SLO 4 | Competency 4: Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice | Apply research and evidence-based knowledge to assessment and intervention strategies in school social work. |
| SLO 5 | Competency 5: Engage in policy practice | Navigate relevant laws, policies, and ethical frameworks guiding school social work practice, and advocate for equitable policy changes. |
| SLO 6 | Competency 6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities | Collaborate effectively with families, educators, administrators, and community resources to support students. |
| SLO 7 | Competency 7: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities | Apply biopsychosocial assessment tools and develop intervention strategies tailored to school-aged children and adolescents. |
| SLO 8 | Competency 8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities | Implement trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and evidence-based intervention strategies in school settings. |

Major Teaching Methods

Major teaching methods for this course include asynchronous online lectures, interactive discussion forums, and applied learning through case studies and multimedia content. Students will engage in collaborative assignments, reflective writing, and structured peer feedback to deepen their understanding of course material. Emphasis is placed on experiential learning, including the analysis of real-world scenarios and policy applications relevant to school social work practice, focusing on challenges and opportunities within K–12 educational settings such as student diversity, family engagement, systemic barriers, and the creation of safe and inclusive learning environments.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will be delivered fully online using iLearn. Students are expected to log in regularly to access weekly modules, participate in discussions, complete assignments, and review course announcements. All instructional materials—including readings, recorded lectures, case studies, and assessments—will be organized within the iLearn platform. Students must have access to a reliable internet connection and a compatible device to engage fully with course content. Technical support for iLearn is available through the university's Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL).

Topics to be Covered

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

- Introduction to School Social Work: History, roles, and professional identity
- Educational Systems and Structures: Understanding K–12 environments
- Relevant Laws and Policies: IDEA, FERPA, Section 504, and special education regulations
- Biopsychosocial Assessment in Schools: Tools and techniques for children and adolescents
- Mental Health Issues in School Settings: Identification and intervention strategies
- Addressing Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Behavioral Challenges and Classroom Management Support
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention
- Family Engagement and Collaboration with Caregivers
- Cultural Humility and Diversity in Schools
- Ethical Decision-Making and Confidentiality in School Social Work
- Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Working with teachers, administrators, counselors, and community partners
- School-Based Prevention and Intervention Programs
- Advocacy and Policy Practice in Education
- Supporting Students with Disabilities and Special Education Needs
- Crisis Intervention and Safety Planning in Schools
- Promoting Equity and Social Justice in Educational Settings
- Program Development and Evaluation in School Social Work
- Use of Data and Research to Inform Practice
- Contemporary Issues and Future Trends in School Social Work

Course Schedule

| Week | Topic | Key Activities/Assignments |
|------|---|---|
| 1 | Introduction to School Social Work: History, Roles, and Educational Systems | Introductory discussion forum; reflective journal on professional identity and educational environments |
| 2 | Relevant Laws and Policies (IDEA, FERPA, Section 504) | Policy brief assignment; group discussion on legal and ethical implications |
| 3 | Biopsychosocial Assessment in Schools | Applied assessment exercise; peer review of assessment tools |
| 4 | Mental Health Issues and Trauma-Informed Practice in Schools | Multimedia case study analysis; trauma-informed intervention plan; discussion post |
| 5 | Behavioral Challenges and Classroom Management Support | Role play simulation; collaborative problem-solving activity |
| 6 | Bullying Prevention and Intervention | Research paper on bullying policies; online quiz |
| 7 | Family Engagement and Collaboration with Caregivers | Family collaboration project; discussion forum |
| 8 | Cultural Humility, Diversity, and Ethical Decision-Making | Reflective writing on cultural competence; ethical dilemma case analysis; peer feedback session |
| 9 | Midterm Exam and Course Review | Midterm exam; course content review session |
| 10 | Interdisciplinary Collaboration and School-Based Programs | Group presentation on teamwork strategies; program design proposal |
| 11 | Advocacy and Policy Practice in Education | Advocacy project & policy brief assignment |
| 12 | Supporting Students with Disabilities and Special Education | Case study analysis; role play reflection |
| 13 | Crisis Intervention and Safety Planning | Crisis response plan; discussion forum |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

| Week | Topic | Key Activities/Assignments |
|------|---|--|
| 14 | Promoting Equity, Social Justice, and Use of Data in Schools | Research-based policy analysis; data interpretation exercise; reflection journal |
| 15 | Contemporary Issues, Future Trends, and Final Project Presentations | Final project presentations; course wrap-up discussion |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment/Assessment | Weight |
|---|--------|
| Discussion Forums & Reflective Journals | 15% |
| Policy Brief Assignment | 10% |
| Applied Biopsychosocial Assessment Exercise | 10% |
| Case Study Analyses (2 total) | 15% |
| Role Play & Simulation Activities | 10% |
| Midterm Exam | 15% |
| Advocacy Project & Policy Brief | 15% |
| Final Project Presentation & Report | 10% |

Discussion Forums & Reflective Journals (15%)

Purpose: To facilitate critical thinking, self-reflection, and engagement with course materials and peers. Students analyze key concepts, share insights, and integrate personal experiences related to school social work.

CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C6, C8

Policy Brief Assignment (10%)

Purpose: To develop understanding of relevant laws, policies, and ethical frameworks impacting school social work. Students research, summarize, and critically assess a policy affecting educational settings.

CSWE Competencies: C1, C3, C5

Applied Biopsychosocial Assessment Exercise (10%)

Purpose: To practice biopsychosocial assessment techniques tailored for school-aged children and adolescents. Students apply assessment tools to case scenarios and develop appropriate care plans.

CSWE Competencies: C7, C8

Case Study Analyses (2 total) (15%)

Purpose: To enhance skills in analyzing complex school social work cases, including mental health issues, trauma, behavioral challenges, and family dynamics. Critical thinking and application of evidence-based interventions are emphasized.

CSWE Competencies: C2, C7, C8

Role Play & Simulation Activities (10%)

Purpose: To develop practical skills in communication, collaboration, crisis intervention, and

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

ethical decision-making within school settings through simulated scenarios.

CSWE Competencies: C1, C6, C8

Midterm Exam (15%)

Purpose: To evaluate students' comprehensive knowledge of course content including laws, policies, assessment, intervention, and ethical frameworks.

CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3, C5, C7

Advocacy Project & Policy Brief (15%)

Purpose: To build advocacy skills by identifying a systemic issue in school social work, developing a policy or advocacy plan, and proposing actionable strategies to promote equity and social justice.

CSWE Competencies: C3, C5, C6

Final Project Presentation & Report (10%)

Purpose: To integrate and synthesize course learning into a comprehensive project addressing a real-world school social work challenge. Students present findings and intervention strategies, demonstrating professional communication and evidence-based practice.

CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C6, C8

Grading Scale

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|--------------|--------------|
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Additional Resources

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Counseling and Health Services

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Tennessee Tech offers support for student well-being through two key services. The Center for Counseling and Mental Health Wellness provides brief, solution-focused therapy to help students navigate personal and social challenges. Health Services delivers accessible, high-quality, and affordable medical care to promote overall wellness. Visit their respective websites to learn more or schedule an appointment.

Emergency Preparedness Protocols

Each student must take personal responsibility for following any University protocol related to pandemics, natural disasters, and other public health and safety events. Students are expected to follow all directives published by Tennessee Tech on its [Environmental Health & Safety webpage](#).

Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 5015: Medical Social Work (3 Credit Hours, Online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Admitted into MSW Program

Texts and Resources

Gehlert, S., & Browne, T. (Eds.). (2019). Handbook of Health Social Work (3rd ed.). Wiley.

Additional readings on iLearn

Course Welcome and Description

This course examines the role of social workers in healthcare settings, focusing on the integration of psychosocial care with medical treatment. Students will explore the impact of illness, disability, and health disparities on individuals and families, and learn to provide assessment, intervention, and advocacy within interdisciplinary healthcare teams. Emphasis is placed on culturally responsive and trauma-informed practice, ethical decision-making, and addressing barriers to care such as poverty, stigma, and systemic inequities. Topics include chronic illness, end-of-life care, mental health in medical settings, patient and family support, and healthcare policy and reform. Through case studies, role plays, and applied assignments, students will develop competencies in patient advocacy, care coordination, crisis intervention, and linking clients with community resources. The course prepares students to practice effectively in hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, and other health-related environments.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to analyze the role of social workers within interdisciplinary healthcare teams across a variety of medical settings, including hospitals, clinics, and long-term care facilities. They will develop the skills to conduct comprehensive biopsychosocial assessments and create care plans that are responsive to the complex medical, psychological, and social needs of patients and their families. Students will apply trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and ethically sound practices in their interventions, ensuring that care is both person-centered and contextually appropriate. They will also examine and address systemic barriers and health disparities that impact access to quality healthcare, particularly among marginalized and underserved populations. Additionally, students will learn to coordinate care and facilitate connections to appropriate medical, behavioral health, and community resources. Through this course, students will strengthen their ability to advocate for patients'

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rights, autonomy, and equitable treatment, while also interpreting and applying healthcare policy, legislation, and reform efforts. Emphasis will be placed on fostering effective interdisciplinary collaboration and professional communication in complex and dynamic healthcare environments.

Outcome CSWE Competency Alignment

| | |
|-------|--|
| SLO 1 | Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior |
| SLO 2 | Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice |
| SLO 3 | Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice |
| SLO 4 | Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice |
| SLO 5 | Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice |
| SLO 6 | Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities |
| SLO 7 | Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities |
| SLO 8 | Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities |

Students Will Be Able To...

Demonstrate ethical decision-making and maintain professional behavior in complex medical settings.

Provide culturally responsive care in diverse healthcare environments.

Identify and challenge systemic barriers and inequities in healthcare delivery.

Integrate evidence-based interventions to improve health and psychosocial outcomes.

Analyze healthcare policy and advocate for reform that promotes access, equity, and quality of care.

Build therapeutic relationships and work collaboratively with patients, families, and care teams.

Conduct biopsychosocial-spiritual assessments within medical contexts.

Implement trauma-informed, strengths-based interventions and facilitate care coordination.

Major Teaching Methods

Major teaching methods for this course include asynchronous online lectures, interactive discussion forums, and applied learning through case studies and multimedia content. Students will engage in collaborative assignments, reflective writing, and structured peer feedback to deepen their understanding of course material. Emphasis is placed on experiential learning, including the analysis of real-world scenarios and policy applications relevant to medical social work practice in healthcare settings such as hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, and community health programs.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

This course will be delivered fully online using iLearn. Students are expected to log in regularly to access weekly modules, participate in discussions, complete assignments, and review course announcements. All instructional materials—including readings, recorded lectures, case studies, and assessments—will be organized within the iLearn platform. Students must have access to a reliable internet connection and a compatible device to engage fully with course content. Technical support for iLearn is available through the university's Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL).

Topics to be Covered

- Introduction to Medical Social Work Practice
- Interdisciplinary Healthcare Teams
- Psychosocial Impact of Illness and Disability
- Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Assessments
- Cultural Humility and Diversity in Healthcare

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- Trauma-Informed Practice in Medical Settings
- Healthcare Ethics and End-of-Life Decision-Making
- Social Determinants of Health & Health Equity
- Mental Health and Chronic Illness
- Crisis Intervention in Acute Care
- Patient Advocacy and Advance Care Planning
- Healthcare Policy, Insurance, and the Affordable Care Act
- Long-Term Care, Rehabilitation, and Hospice
- Palliative Care and Grief Counseling
- Professional Boundaries, Burnout, and Self-Care in Healthcare

Course Schedule

| Week | Topic | Key Readings | Assignments/Activities | SLOs / Competencies |
|------|--|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Introduction to Medical Social Work | Gehlert & Browne, Ch. 1 & 2 | Intro Discussion Post: Your experiences/views of health and illness | SLO 1, 6 / C1, C6 |
| 2 | Roles of Social Workers in Healthcare Settings | Gehlert & Browne, Ch. 3 | Discussion: Interdisciplinary teams and the role of MSWs | SLO 1, 8 / C1, C6, C8 |
| 3 | Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Assessment | Gehlert & Browne, Ch. 5 | Practice assessment activity (posted case vignette) | SLO 2, 7 / C7 |
| 4 | Ethical Issues in Medical Social Work | NASW Code of Ethics; Reamer (iLearn) | Quiz #1: Roles, Ethics, Assessment | SLO 3 / C1 |
| 5 | Trauma-Informed Practice in Medical Settings | Gehlert & Browne, Ch. 11; SAMHSA Brief (iLearn) | Reflective Journal: Trauma-informed care in practice | SLO 3, 8 / C8 |
| 6 | Diversity, Equity & Cultural Humility in Healthcare | Gehlert & Browne, Ch. 6; Article on cultural competence (iLearn) | Discussion: Barriers to care and cultural humility | SLO 3 / C2, C3 |
| 7 | Chronic Illness & Disability | Gehlert & Browne, Ch. 8 | Case Study Analysis Paper Due | SLO 2, 4 / C4, C7 |
| 8 | End-of-Life, Palliative, and Hospice Care | Gehlert & Browne, Ch. 13 | Group Discussion: Advance care planning & ethics | SLO 3, 6 / C1, C3, C6 |
| 9 | Crisis Intervention in Acute Care Settings | Gehlert & Browne, Ch. 12 | Scenario response activity | SLO 2, 8 / C6, C8 |
| 10 | Mental Health in Medical Settings | Gehlert & Browne, Ch. 10 | Discussion: Integration of physical and mental health | SLO 2, 4 / C4, C6 |
| 11 | Health Disparities and Social Determinants of Health | Article packet (iLearn) | Advocacy Blog Post: Barriers to equitable care | SLO 3, 5 / C3, C5 |
| 12 | Health Insurance & Healthcare Access | Readings on ACA and Medicaid (iLearn) | Quiz #2: Policy, disparities, ethics | SLO 4, 5 / C5 |
| 13 | Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Communication | Gehlert & Browne, Ch. 4 | Interdisciplinary Team Role Play Reflection Due | SLO 1, 8 / C6, C8 |
| 14 | Healthcare Policy & Reform | NASW Health Policy Agenda (iLearn) | Policy Brief & Advocacy Memo Due | SLO 5 / C5 |
| 15 | Future Directions in Medical Social Work & Final Project | No assigned reading | Final Project: Patient-Centered Portfolio Due | All SLOs / All Competencies |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment/Assessment | Weight |
|---|--------|
| 1. Weekly Discussion Posts & Peer Responses | 15% |
| 2. Case Study Analysis Paper | 15% |
| 3. Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Assessment & Care Plan | 15% |
| 4. Policy Brief & Advocacy Memo | 15% |
| 5. Interdisciplinary Team Role Play Reflection | 10% |
| 6. Quizzes (2 total) | 10% |
| 7. Final Project: Patient-Centered Portfolio | 20% |
| Total | 100% |

Weekly Discussion Posts & Peer Responses (15%)

Description:

Each week, students will respond to a discussion prompt related to course readings, case studies, or current healthcare issues. Initial posts should be 300–400 words and demonstrate critical thinking and application of concepts. Students must also reply thoughtfully to at least two classmates (150–200 words each).

Purpose:

Fosters ongoing engagement, peer learning, and the integration of theory with practice.

CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3, C4

Case Study Analysis Paper (15%)

Length: 5–7 pages

Description:

Students will analyze a complex medical case scenario involving physical illness, psychosocial stressors, and systemic barriers. The paper will include identification of ethical concerns, culturally responsive strategies, and potential interventions grounded in trauma-informed care.

Purpose:

Demonstrates analytical and clinical reasoning, connecting classroom knowledge to real-world situations.

CSWE Competencies: C1, C2, C3, C4, C6, C7, C8

Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Assessment & Care Plan (15%)

Description:

Students will complete a comprehensive assessment of a client scenario provided by the instructor, incorporating medical, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. A care plan will be developed outlining specific interventions, goals, resources, and collaboration strategies.

Purpose:

Builds core skills in assessment and person-centered care planning.

CSWE Competencies: C6, C7, C8

Policy Brief & Advocacy Memo (15%)

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Length: 3–4 page brief + 1-page memo

Description:

Students will select a healthcare policy issue (e.g., Medicaid expansion, end-of-life rights, health equity) and write a policy brief outlining the issue, implications for vulnerable populations, and evidence-based solutions. A one-page advocacy memo to a policymaker will also be included.

Purpose:

Strengthens skills in policy analysis and social justice advocacy.

CSWE Competencies: C3, C5

Interdisciplinary Team Role Play Reflection (10%)

Format: Written reflection (2–3 pages)

Description:

After participating in or observing a simulated interdisciplinary care team meeting, students will reflect on team roles, communication dynamics, power imbalances, and the social worker's unique contributions.

Purpose:

Enhances understanding of team-based healthcare delivery and ethical practice.

CSWE Competencies: C1, C6, C8

Quizzes (2 total) (10%)

Format: Multiple-choice and short-answer

- **Quiz 1:** Topics include social work roles, ethics, assessment, and interdisciplinary teams (Week 4)
- **Quiz 2:** Topics include trauma-informed care, health disparities, healthcare policy, and insurance systems (Week 12)

Purpose:

Assesses students' grasp of foundational knowledge necessary for clinical and policy practice in healthcare.

CSWE Competencies: C1, C4, C5, C7

Final Project: Patient-Centered Portfolio (20%)

Format: Multi-part digital submission

Description:

Students will compile a portfolio demonstrating key learning and practice readiness in medical social work. Components include:

- Revised biopsychosocial-spiritual assessment and care plan
- Summary of a policy issue and advocacy plan
- Self-reflection on growth in cultural competence and trauma-informed care
- A professional development plan identifying future learning goals

Purpose:

Demonstrates integration of knowledge, applied skills, and professional identity in the field of medical social work.

CSWE Competencies: All (C1–C9)

Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
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Course Policies

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Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 5020: Forensic Social Work (3 Credit Hours, Online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Admitted into MSW Program

Texts and Resources

Dolan, M., & Scott, D. (2017). *Forensic Social Work: Psychological and Legal Issues*.
Routledge.

Course Welcome and Description

This course explores the intersection of social work and the legal system, preparing students for practice in forensic settings. Students will examine the roles of social workers in criminal justice, child welfare, mental health courts, corrections, and related environments where legal and clinical issues converge. Emphasis is placed on assessment, intervention, case management, and expert testimony in cases involving abuse, neglect, trauma, substance use, and violence. Students will also study relevant laws, ethical dilemmas, and the impact of systemic inequality, racism, and oppression within legal systems. The course highlights evidence-based and trauma-informed practices that promote rehabilitation, human rights, and restorative justice. Through case studies, applied exercises, and critical analysis, students will develop competencies in working with justice-involved individuals, families, and communities, while advocating for equitable and humane policies.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to analyze the roles and responsibilities of social workers within various forensic settings, including criminal justice, child welfare, mental health courts, and correctional systems. They will apply assessment and intervention techniques tailored to the unique needs of forensic populations, with a focus on evidence-based and trauma-informed approaches. Students will learn to navigate complex ethical dilemmas and adhere to legal requirements inherent in forensic social work practice. They will critically evaluate the impact of systemic inequalities, racism, and oppression within legal contexts, and develop strategies to address these injustices through culturally competent and client-centered practice. Additionally, students will be equipped to advocate effectively for individuals and communities involved in the legal system, promoting policies that support justice, human rights, and social change. They will also gain practical skills in preparing and delivering expert testimony, ensuring their professional contributions are both informed and impactful. Through this course, students will

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

strengthen their capacity to serve diverse, justice-involved clients with integrity, competence, and a commitment to equity.

Outcome CSWE Competency Alignment Students Will Be Able To...

| | | |
|-------|--|--|
| SLO 1 | Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior | Navigate ethical dilemmas and apply social work ethical principles in forensic settings, including confidentiality, dual relationships, and professional boundaries. |
| SLO 2 | Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice | Demonstrate cultural humility and competence in working with justice-involved individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those impacted by systemic racism, poverty, and marginalization. |
| SLO 3 | Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice | Analyze how legal systems perpetuate inequality and advocate for equitable, trauma-informed, and human rights-based practices in forensic settings. |
| SLO 4 | Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice | Apply current research to inform forensic social work assessment and interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of those practices. |
| SLO 5 | Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice | Examine and influence laws and policies that affect justice-involved individuals, advocating for reforms that advance social justice and reduce disparities. |
| SLO 6 | Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Build collaborative, respectful, and empowering relationships with justice-involved clients and stakeholders in legal and correctional systems. |
| SLO 7 | Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Conduct comprehensive assessments using appropriate tools and frameworks to understand the biopsychosocial needs of forensic clients. |
| SLO 8 | Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | Implement trauma-informed, evidence-based interventions and case management strategies that promote rehabilitation, recovery, and reintegration. |
| SLO 9 | Competency 1, 3, 6, 8 | Prepare and deliver expert testimony and legal documentation that uphold ethical standards and support client advocacy in judicial processes. |

Major Teaching Methods

Major teaching methods for this course include asynchronous online lectures, interactive discussion forums, and applied learning through case studies and multimedia content. Students will engage in collaborative assignments, reflective writing, and structured peer feedback to deepen their understanding of course material. Emphasis is placed on experiential learning, including the analysis of real-world scenarios and policy applications relevant to forensic social work practice in legal, criminal justice, and correctional settings.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials

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Topics to be Covered

Introduction to Forensic Social Work

History, definitions, and scope of practice
Roles and settings (e.g., courts, corrections, child welfare, mental health)

The U.S. Legal System and Social Work Interface

Civil vs. criminal law
Key legal concepts and terminology relevant to social work practice

Ethical and Legal Considerations in Forensic Social Work

Confidentiality, informed consent, and mandated reporting
Navigating dual roles and professional boundaries

Forensic Assessment and Evaluation

Biopsychosocial and risk assessments in legal contexts
Competency, risk of harm, and criminal responsibility evaluations

Trauma-Informed Practice in Forensic Settings

Understanding complex trauma and its legal implications
Vicarious trauma and practitioner self-care

Substance Use Disorders and Co-occurring Diagnoses

Assessment and intervention within justice systems
Drug courts and diversion programs

Mental Health Courts and Alternative Sentencing

Therapeutic jurisprudence
Treatment vs. incarceration models

Child Welfare and Family Court Involvement

Child abuse, neglect, custody, and reunification
Forensic interviewing and child advocacy

Working in Correctional and Reentry Settings

Roles of social workers in jails, prisons, and probation/parole
Reentry planning, housing, employment, and stigma

Expert Testimony and Courtroom Skills

Preparing reports and affidavits
Providing expert witness testimony

Systemic Inequality and Structural Racism in Legal Systems

Racial disparities in policing, sentencing, and incarceration
Disproportionate impacts on marginalized communities

Restorative Justice and Rehabilitation Models

Victim-offender mediation
Community-based alternatives to incarceration

Policy Practice in Forensic Social Work

Analyzing laws, policies, and reform movements
Advocacy strategies and coalition building

Cultural Competence and Diversity in Forensic Settings

Working with justice-involved populations across cultures
Addressing biases and promoting equity

Ethical Use of Technology and Digital Records in Legal Practice

Digital confidentiality and case documentation
Telehealth in correctional and court settings

Course Schedule

Week Topics

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Introduction to Forensic Social Work: History, Roles, and Settings |
| 2 | Legal Systems, Laws, and Social Work Practice |
| 3 | Ethical Issues and Professional Boundaries in Forensic Practice |
| 4 | Assessment in Forensic Settings: Tools and Techniques |
| 5 | Trauma-Informed Care and Substance Use in Justice-Involved Populations |
| 6 | Working with Child Welfare and Family Court Systems |
| 7 | Mental Health Courts and Diversion Programs |
| 8 | Corrections and Reentry: Challenges and Supports |
| 9 | Expert Testimony and Documentation |
| 10 | Systemic Inequality, Racism, and Oppression in the Legal System |
| 11 | Restorative Justice and Rehabilitation Models |

Assignments

- | |
|--|
| Intro Discussion Board Post |
| Quiz: Legal Frameworks |
| Case Study Analysis |
| Clinical Assessment Exercise |
| Reflective Journal Entry |
| Applied Intervention Assignment |
| Group Discussion and Case Presentation |
| Reentry Policy Analysis Paper |
| Mock Testimony Video Submission |
| Critical Analysis Paper |
| Restorative Justice Role Play |

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| | | |
|----|--|---------------------------------|
| 12 | Advocacy and Policy Practice in Forensic Social Work | Legislative Advocacy Simulation |
| 13 | Emerging Issues: Technology, Privacy, and Digital Ethics | Final Project Proposal |
| 14 | Student Presentations and Course Review | Final Project Presentation |
| 15 | Course Wrap-up and Evaluation | Course Evaluation |

Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignment/Assessment | Weight |
|--|--------|
| 1. Weekly Discussion Posts & Peer Responses | 15% |
| 2. Case Study Analysis Paper | 15% |
| 3. Policy Brief and Advocacy Memo | 15% |
| 4. Forensic Assessment & Treatment Plan | 15% |
| 5. Expert Witness Testimony Video | 10% |
| 6. Quizzes (2 total) | 10% |
| 7. Final Project: Applied Forensic Social Work Portfolio | 20% |

Weekly Discussion Posts & Peer Responses (15%)

Description:

Students will participate in weekly asynchronous discussions based on readings, lectures, and current issues in forensic social work. Each week, students will post an original response (400–500 words) to a prompt and provide substantive replies to at least two peers. Topics include ethical dilemmas, systemic injustice, courtroom dynamics, and restorative justice.

Purpose:

Promotes engagement, critical reflection, and application of course concepts in peer dialogue.

Case Study Analysis Paper (15%)

Length: 5–7 pages

Description:

Students will select or be assigned a complex forensic case (e.g., involving child abuse, mental illness, or criminal charges) and analyze it from a social work perspective. The paper should include a biopsychosocial assessment, ethical and legal considerations, risk analysis, and an intervention recommendation grounded in trauma-informed and evidence-based practice.

Purpose:

Assesses ability to synthesize theory, ethics, and practice skills in forensic contexts.

Policy Brief and Advocacy Memo (15%)

Length: 3–5 pages + 1-page memo

Description:

Students will identify a current policy (e.g., related to sentencing reform, juvenile justice, or prison conditions), analyze its impact on justice-involved individuals, and write a policy brief summarizing the issue, its implications, and proposed reforms. They will also prepare a short advocacy memo to a legislator or public official.

Purpose:

Develops policy analysis and advocacy skills essential for forensic social workers.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Forensic Assessment & Treatment Plan (15%)

Description:

Using a provided vignette, students will conduct a forensic assessment and develop a treatment or service plan appropriate for the setting (e.g., correctional facility, drug court, or child welfare case). They will identify risk factors, service needs, and proposed goals using evidence-based and culturally responsive strategies.

Purpose:

Assesses practical skills in assessment, treatment planning, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Expert Witness Testimony Video (10%)

Length: 5–7 minutes

Description:

Students will record a simulated expert witness testimony presentation based on a mock case. They will practice articulating professional opinions, responding to cross-examination, and demonstrating clear, ethical communication to a legal audience.

Purpose:

Builds courtroom competency, communication skills, and understanding of legal protocols.

Quizzes (2 Total) (10%)

Format: Multiple-choice and short answer

Topics Covered:

- Quiz 1: Legal systems, ethics, forensic roles
- Quiz 2: Assessment tools, trauma-informed care, policies

Purpose:

Tests foundational knowledge of laws, procedures, ethical standards, and practice models in forensic social work.

Final Project: Applied Forensic Social Work Portfolio (20%)

Format: Multi-part digital portfolio

Description:

Students will compile and submit a comprehensive portfolio demonstrating core competencies in forensic social work. Components may include a revised case study, advocacy strategy, sample court report, self-reflection on cultural competence, and action plan for future professional development.

Purpose:

Demonstrates integration of course learning, critical reflection, and readiness for advanced practice in forensic settings.

Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
| B | 79.5-89.4 |
| C | 69.5-79.4 |
| D | 59.5-69.4 |
| F | 59.4 & below |

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

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All assignments must be submitted through the course's online learning management system by the specified deadlines. Late submissions will incur a grade penalty of 10% per day unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor due to extenuating circumstances. Assignments are designed to reinforce key course concepts and contribute to 55% of the final grade, with clear guidelines and grading rubrics provided for each. Timed quizzes and the final comprehensive exam must be completed within the designated time frames and are weighted accordingly. Students are responsible for ensuring their submissions are complete and properly uploaded; technical issues should be reported promptly to avoid penalties.

AI policy statement: Not Permitted in this Course

In this course, Generative AI resources are not permitted. Students are expected to do all coursework themselves, as an individual or collectively, as designated by the instructor per assignment. The use of a Generative AI Tool to complete coursework constitutes academic misconduct for this course.

Disability Accommodation

Students with a disability requiring accommodations should contact the accessible education center (AEC). An accommodation request (AR) should be completed as soon as possible, preferably by the end of the first week of the course. The AEC is located in the Roaden University Center, room 112; phone 931-372-6119. For details, view Tennessee Tech's policy 340 – [services for students with disabilities at policy central](#).

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Additional Resources

Technical Help

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Tutoring

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Counseling and Health Services

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Emergency Preparedness Protocols

Each student must take personal responsibility for following any University protocol related to pandemics, natural disasters, and other public health and safety events. Students are expected to follow all directives published by Tennessee Tech on its [Environmental Health & Safety webpage](#).

Tennessee Tech University
Department of Sociology & Political Science
Master of Social Work Program
SW 5025: Social Work with Children & Youth (3 Credit Hours, Online)
Semester, Year

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name

Office

Telephone Number

Campus Email

Course Information

Prerequisites

Admitted into MSW Program

Texts and Resources

Title: *Social Work Practice with Children, Fourth Edition*

Author: Nancy Boyd Webb

Publisher: The Guilford Press

ISBN-13: 978-146253

Course Welcome and Description

This course examines theories, practices, and policies relevant to social work with children and adolescents in diverse settings. Using developmental, ecological, and trauma-informed frameworks, students explore the unique needs and strengths of young people. The course emphasizes assessment, engagement, and intervention strategies promoting safety, resilience, and well-being across child welfare, schools, juvenile justice, and community-based contexts. Students will learn to apply evidence-based models, address challenges related to poverty, abuse, neglect, and systemic inequities, and collaborate with families, caregivers, and interdisciplinary teams. Advocacy and policy practice for improving outcomes are integral. Through case studies, applied projects, and reflective exercises, students will develop competencies in direct practice and systems-level intervention with young populations.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to prepare MSW students to competently engage in ethical, evidence-informed, and culturally responsive social work practice with children and adolescents in a variety of settings. By the end of the course, students will be able to assess and intervene using developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, and ecological approaches; apply research-based strategies to address challenges such as abuse, neglect, poverty, and mental health; critically analyze and advocate for policies impacting children and families; and collaborate effectively with caregivers, interdisciplinary teams, and community systems. Students will also demonstrate professional judgment and adherence to social work values in navigating complex ethical dilemmas, with a particular focus on the needs of children and youth in rural and underserved communities such as the Upper Cumberland region.

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| Outcome CSWE Competency Alignment | | Students Will Be Able To... |
|--|--|---|
| SLO 1 | Competency 1: Ethical & Professional Behavior | Exhibit ethical professionalism in all course activities. |
| SLO 2 | Competency 2: Diversity & Difference | Apply culturally responsive, inclusive practices with children and youth. |
| SLO 3 | Competency 4: Practice-Informed Research | Integrate research into designing evidence-based interventions. |
| SLO 4 | Competencies 6–8: Engage, Assess, Intervene & Evaluate | Engage with and assess children and systems; plan and evaluate interventions. |
| SLO 5 | Competencies 3 & 5: Justice & Policy Practice | Analyze systemic oppression and advocate for supportive policy solutions. |

Major Teaching Methods

Major teaching methods for this course include asynchronous online lectures, interactive discussion forums, and applied learning through case studies and multimedia content. Students will engage in collaborative assignments, reflective writing, and structured peer feedback to deepen their understanding of course material. Emphasis is placed on experiential learning, including the analysis of real-world scenarios and policy applications relevant to social work with children and youth.

Special Instructional Platform/Materials [e.g. laptop, etc.]

This course will be delivered fully online using iLearn. Students are expected to log in regularly to access weekly modules, participate in discussions, complete assignments, and review course announcements. All instructional materials—including readings, recorded lectures, case studies, and assessments—will be organized within the iLearn platform. Students must have access to a reliable internet connection and a compatible device to engage fully with course content. Technical support for iLearn is available through the university's Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL).

Topics to be Covered

Introduction to Social Work with Children and Youth
 Developmental and Ecological Frameworks
 Trauma-Informed Practice with Children and Adolescents
 Cultural Humility and Intersectionality in Youth Practice
 Child Welfare Systems and Family Engagement
 Assessment and Intervention with Abused and Neglected Children
 School Social Work and Educational Settings
 Mental Health and Behavioral Challenges in Children and Youth
 Substance Use and Risk Behaviors among Adolescents
 Juvenile Justice and Youth Involved in Legal Systems

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Working with LGBTQ+ and Gender Diverse Youth
 Community-Based and Preventative Programs for Youth
 Policy and Advocacy for Child and Youth Well-being
 Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Team-Based Practice
 Ethical Considerations and Professional Boundaries in Youth Work
 Final Reflections and Applications to Rural and Underserved Settings

Course Schedule

| Week | Topic | Key Focus Areas |
|------|---|--|
| 1 | Introduction to Social Work with Children and Youth | Overview of course expectations; the role of social work in child and youth settings; introduction to relevant CSWE competencies |
| 2 | Developmental and Ecological Frameworks | Child and adolescent development; ecological systems theory; risk and protective factors |
| 3 | Trauma-Informed Practice | Impact of trauma on youth; trauma-responsive engagement; ACEs and resilience |
| 4 | Cultural Humility and Intersectionality | Diversity, equity, and inclusion; working with youth from marginalized backgrounds |
| 5 | Child Welfare Systems | History and structure of child welfare; family preservation vs. removal; permanency planning |
| 6 | Assessment and Intervention in Child Welfare | Safety planning; mandated reporting; strengths-based assessments |
| 7 | Social Work in Schools | Educational equity; addressing barriers to academic success; school-based interventions |
| 8 | Mental Health in Children and Youth | Common diagnoses; behavioral health assessment; coordinated care planning |
| 9 | Youth Substance Use and Risk Behaviors | Prevention and intervention models; adolescent brain development and decision-making |
| 10 | Juvenile Justice Systems | Youth justice policy; diversion and rehabilitation; school-to-prison pipeline |
| 11 | Working with LGBTQ+ and Gender Diverse Youth | Affirming practice; understanding identity development; advocacy and support services |
| 12 | Community-Based Practice with Youth | Youth programs and prevention; out-of-school supports; rural service models |
| 13 | Policy and Advocacy for Youth and Families | Child-focused policies; macro practice in advocacy and reform; local and federal programs |
| 14 | Interdisciplinary Practice and Collaboration | Working with families, schools, courts, and healthcare systems; effective communication across systems |
| 15 | Ethics, Boundaries, and Rural Practice | Ethical dilemmas; boundary-setting; applying course content to underserved areas like the Upper Cumberland |

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Grading and Evaluation Procedures

| Assignments | Weight |
|--|---------------|
| Weekly Reading Quizzes (Weeks 2–13) | 15% |
| Weekly Discussion Board Participation | 15% |
| Case Study Analysis – Trauma-Informed Practice | 15% |
| Cultural Humility Reflection Paper | 10% |
| Field Interview and System Mapping Project | 15% |
| Youth Advocacy Policy Brief | 15% |
| Comprehensive Final Exam (Week 15) | 15% |
| Total | 100% |

Weekly Reading Quizzes (Weeks 2–13)

Description: Short quizzes (5–10 questions) based on weekly readings and multimedia content.

Purpose: Assess foundational knowledge, ensure engagement with materials, and reinforce key concepts.

Format: Multiple-choice and short answer; administered in iLearn.

Weight: 15% of final grade

Discussion Board Participation (Weekly)

Description: Students will respond to a weekly prompt and reply to at least two peers. Topics relate to that week’s theme and encourage critical thinking, peer engagement, and application of concepts.

Purpose: Promote reflection, professional discourse, and integration of theory and practice.

Weight: 15% of final grade

Case Study Analysis – Trauma-Informed Practice (Due Week 4)

Description: Students will complete a written analysis of a case involving a child or youth affected by trauma. Must include assessment, trauma-informed engagement strategies, and relevant evidence-based interventions.

Purpose: Demonstrate application of trauma theory and practice (CSWE Competency 7).

Length: 5–6 pages

Weight: 15% of final grade

Cultural Humility Reflection Paper (Due Week 5)

Description: A personal reflection exploring students’ own cultural identities, biases, and professional responsibilities when working with diverse children and youth.

Purpose: Assess growth in self-awareness and culturally responsive practice (CSWE Competency 2).

Length: 3–4 pages

Weight: 10% of final grade

Field Interview and System Mapping Project (Due Week 8)

Description: Students will conduct an interview with a social worker or professional working with children/youth, and create a visual “system map” showing services, barriers, and

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opportunities in the local/regional context (especially in rural/Upper Cumberland areas).

Purpose: Encourage systems thinking, exposure to local practice settings, and integration of mezzo/macro perspectives (CSWE Competencies 1, 5, 6).

Format: Written summary (3–4 pages) and system map (graphic or chart)

Weight: 15% of final grade

Youth Advocacy Policy Brief (Due Week 13)

Description: Students will choose a current policy issue affecting children/youth and write a professional policy brief advocating for specific changes.

Purpose: Develop skills in policy analysis, advocacy, and macro-level intervention (CSWE Competency 5).

Length: 3–4 pages

Weight: 15% of final grade

Comprehensive Final Exam (Week 15)

Description: A proctored cumulative exam assessing mastery of course content, case application, CSWE competencies, and ethical decision-making. No AI tools may be used.

Format: Combination of multiple choice, case vignettes, and short essays

Weight: 15% of final grade

Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|--------------|--------------|
| A | 89.5-100 |
| B | 79.5-89.4 |
| C | 69.5-79.4 |
| D | 59.5-69.4 |
| F | 59.4 & below |

Course Policies

Student Academic Integrity Policy

Maintaining high standards of academic integrity in every class is critical to the reputation of Tennessee Tech, its students, faculty, alumni, and the employers of Tennessee Tech graduates. Academic integrity is at the foundation of the educational process and the key to student success. Students with academic integrity are committed to honesty, ethical behavior, and avoiding violations of academic integrity. All students are required to read and understand Policy 216: Student Academic Integrity. Please see the Academic Integrity website (<https://www.tntech.edu/provost/academicintegrity/>) for more information.

Attendance Policy

Students who are unable to attend class for an extended period due to an emergency/extenuating circumstance (i.e., medical illness, hospitalization, death in the family/bereavement, military or legal obligation), may contact the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at studentaffairs@tntech.edu to request an absence notification.

Reviewed and Revised July 21, 2025

Class Participation

Active participation is essential in this graduate-level online course and is a critical component of your professional development as a social worker. Students are expected to engage meaningfully in weekly discussion boards, respond to peers, and contribute thoughtful, evidence-based reflections that connect course content to real-world practice. Consistent participation demonstrates your commitment to collaborative learning, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue—core values of ethical social work practice. Failure to regularly participate may significantly impact your final grade and your ability to meet CSWE competencies.

Assignments and Related Policy

All assignments must be submitted through the course's online learning management system by the specified deadlines. Late submissions will incur a grade penalty of 10% per day unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor due to extenuating circumstances. Assignments are designed to reinforce key course concepts and contribute to 55% of the final grade, with clear guidelines and grading rubrics provided for each. Timed quizzes and the final comprehensive exam must be completed within the designated time frames and are weighted accordingly. Students are responsible for ensuring their submissions are complete and properly uploaded; technical issues should be reported promptly to avoid penalties.

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Agenda Item Summary

Date: December 4, 2025

Agenda Item: TTU Policy 207 (Tenured Faculty)

☐

Review



Action



No action required

PRESENTER(S): Interim Provost John Liu

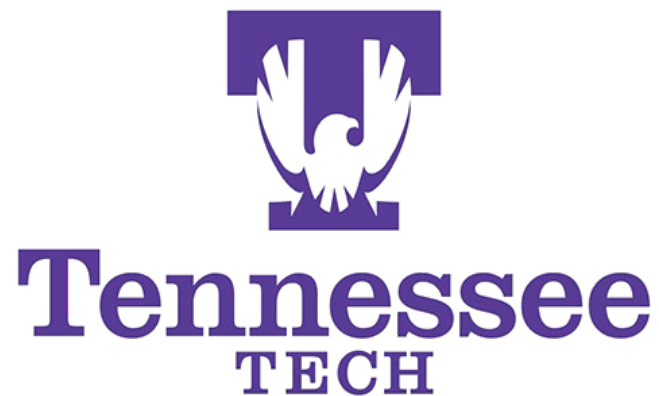
PURPOSE & KEY POINTS:

Policy 207 (Tenured Faculty) was scheduled for review. A committee representing each academic college (Faculty, Department Chairs, Dean) and the Provost's Office (Associate Provost) completed the yearlong policy review. Policy 207 revisions require Board approval.

Highlight of Revisions:

- Clarification that tenured faculty are evaluated annually and subject to University employee-related policies
- Remediation processes occur and made more explicit in the policy
- Alignment of policy language with current annual evaluation review processes and recent revisions to Policy 205 (Faculty Tenure)
- Clarification of scope, sequence, and documentation for Peer Review Committee
- Expanded definitions and added headings to assist with clarity of narrative sections
- Removed dates and replaced with timeframes alongside grammatical/format changes

The proposed revisions have received all necessary university approvals, including Academic Council, Administrative Council, and University Assembly.

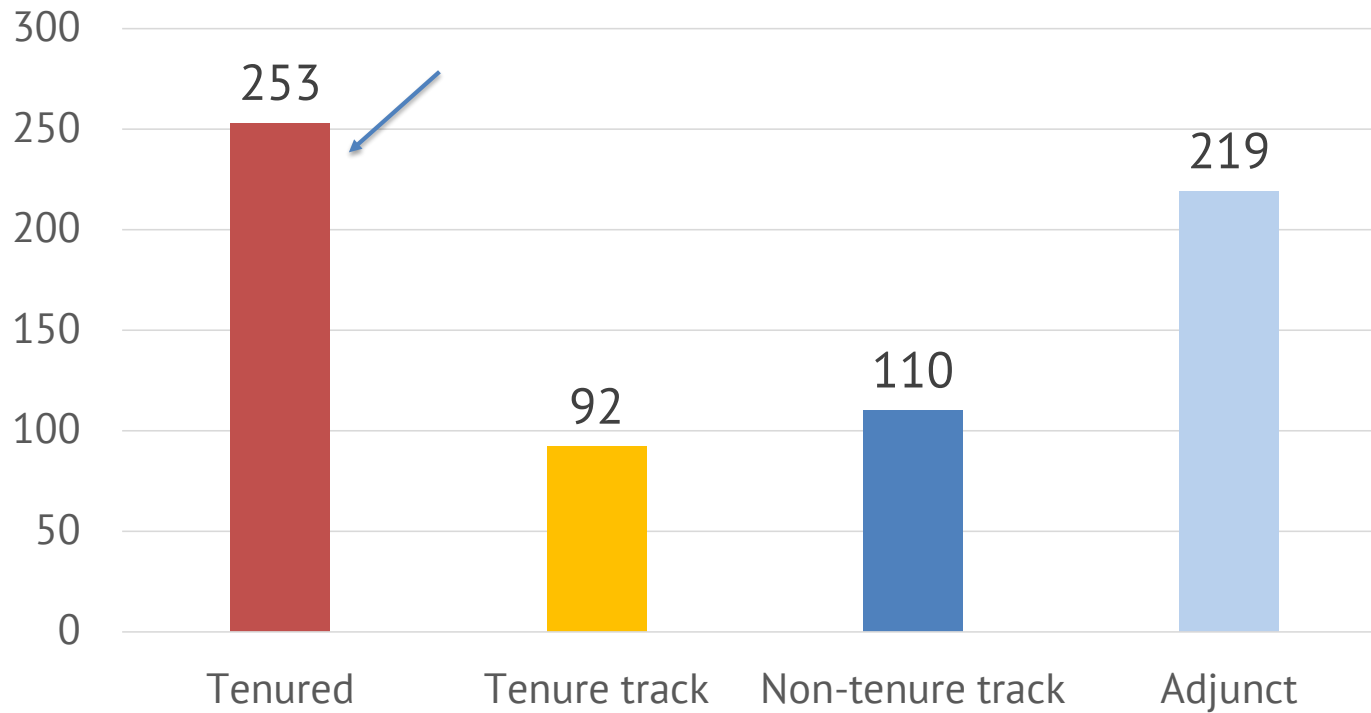


TTU Policy 207 (Tenured Faculty)

Presentation to Academic & Student Affairs Committee
Board of Trustees
December 4, 2025



Faculty Profiles



Policy 207 and highlights of revisions are included in the Board Book.



Policy 207 Changes

- Clarification that tenured faculty are evaluated annually and subject to University employee-related policies
- Remediation processes made more explicit in the policy
- Alignment of policy language with current annual evaluation review processes and recent revisions to Policy 205 (Faculty Tenure)
- Clarification of scope, sequence, and documentation for Peer Review Committee
- Expanded definitions and added headings to assist with clarity of narrative sections





Tennessee Technological University
Policy No. 207

Tenured
Faculty

Effective Date: July 1, 2019

Policy No.: 207

Policy Name: Tenured Faculty

I. Purpose

This policy addresses ongoing performance evaluation and remediation of tenured faculty, retention and transfer of tenure, tenure expiration and relinquishment, and termination of tenured faculty. The significance of tenure, and the peer and administrative expectations for the award of it, are outlined extensively in Policy 205.

II. Review

This policy will be reviewed every four years or whenever circumstances require review, whichever is earlier, by the Provost, with recommendations for revision reviewed by the Faculty Senate and approved by the Academic Council, Administrative Council, University Assembly, and the Board of Trustees.

III. Scope

This policy applies to Faculty Members who hold Tenure.

IV. Definitions

A. Tenure: a personnel status in a Unit defined by TTU Policy 205 (Faculty Tenure).

B. Board: the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees.

C. Faculty Member: for the purposes of this policy, an employee who holds academic rank and Tenure.

D. Peers: regular, full-time tenured members of the same Unit or College as the Faculty Member for the purpose of establishing the Peer Review Committee. Peer excludes those whose primary responsibilities are administrative, including, but not limited to, Departmental Chairs or School Directors, Center Directors, Deans, Assistant and Associate Deans, President, Vice-Presidents, Assistant and Associate Vice-Presidents, Provost, Assistant and Associate Provosts, and Immediate Family.

E. Immediate Family: spouse, domestic partner, cohabitant, child, stepchild, grandchild, parent, stepparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, great-grandparent, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, stepsibling, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or first cousin (that is, a child of an aunt or uncle) of a Faculty Member.

F. Unit: a Tennessee Tech academic department, school, or the Volpe Library.
Professional Development Plan (PDP): faculty remediation plan as part of the annual evaluation of the Faculty Member's job performance in one or more areas determined to need improvement or be unacceptable.

G. Focused Faculty Remediation (FFR): faculty remediation to address performance issues of the Faculty Member that arise outside the spring annual evaluation period completed by supervisors.

- H.** Conflict of Interest: a situation in which objectivity could be impaired by virtue of a relationship with the Faculty Member or the process.
- I.** Adequate Cause Review: investigations which occur in situations that suggest the need for Faculty Member termination due to adequate cause (see Section VIII B).
- J.** Overall Evaluation: the overall rating assigned to the Faculty Member by the Chair/Director or Dean based on the assigned responsibilities and/or workplace professional standards.
- K.** Annual Goals Planning (AGP): the documentation submitted annually by the Faculty Member to the Chair/Director that outlines goals, objectives, and allocation of time planned for the calendar year, respective of faculty rank, type of appointment, and assigned responsibilities.
- L.** Peer Review Committee (PRC): peer committee established to review faculty improvement efforts following remediation of the Faculty Member and to provide recommendations to the Chair/Director or Dean for continuing evaluation.

V. Transfer and Retention of Tenure

- A.** In the event the changing organizational needs of Tennessee Tech require transfer of a tenured faculty member to another academic unit, the tenure status and faculty rank, at the time of transfer, is retained by the faculty member.
- B.** Tenured faculty members appointed to an administrative position at the University retain tenure and faculty rank attained.

VI. Tenure Expiration and Relinquishment

- A.** Tenure shall expire upon the resignation or retirement of the Faculty Member. Emeriti faculty retain certain rights and privileges as described in TTU Policy 219 (Emeriti Faculty).
- B.** Consistent with federal and state law, tenure shall expire should a permanent physical or mental condition render a Faculty Member unable to continue to perform his/her essential duties, with or without an accommodation, as certified by appropriate medical authorities.
- C.** A Faculty Member relinquishes his/her tenure during a period of an unapproved leave of absence, which includes, but is not limited to, a failure to report for service at the designated date of the beginning of any academic term. This failure to report or absence shall be deemed to be a resignation unless, in the opinion of the President, the Faculty Member has shown due cause for his/her failure to report.

VII. Tenured Faculty Evaluation and Remediation

A. Faculty Evaluation

The professional performance of all faculty members is evaluated annually by the Chair/Director and Dean, consistent with procedures for faculty annual activity reporting relative to rank, type of appointment, and assigned responsibilities. All tenured faculty members participate in the annual evaluation review process. For situational performance issues that arise outside the annual evaluation period, a focused review may be necessary for the sake of the Students, Unit, and the University. All faculty members are subject to all university policies that govern their employment.

B. Faculty Remediation

The purpose of faculty remediation is to support and enhance the continued professional growth of the Faculty Member, across any area identified for improvement. Prompt attention and follow-up is given toward remediation support for the sake of the Students, Faculty Member, Unit, and University.

1. At the time of spring annual evaluation, a faculty member who receives a Needs Improvement or Unacceptable rating in one or more areas of assigned responsibility and/or workplace professional standards will mutually establish, with the Chair/Director, a PDP.
2. An FFR may be established by the Chair/Director or Dean outside the spring annual evaluation as part of an interim performance issue/situation.
3. PDP and FFR efforts to improve performance should outline specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic goals along with benchmarks/criteria for acceptable performance improvement. A timeline for expected performance improvements shall be included as part of the remediation efforts.
4. Development of either a PDP or FFR shall be coordinated, where appropriate, with the Department, College, Academic Affairs, and when necessary, the Office of Human Resources and other available resources.
5. The Chair/Director or Dean will evaluate distribution of assigned responsibilities relative to job performance and determine if additional requests, i.e., funding for travel support, extra or overload pay, summer appointments, and internal grant/award application support can serve to enhance or inhibit faculty remediation efforts to improvement performance.
6. The Chair/Director or Dean will evaluate the Faculty Member's remediation efforts in accordance with the timeline established by the PDP/FFR. When evaluating remediation efforts, the Chair/Director or Dean determines:
 - a. Faculty member Meets Expectations – no further action is needed.
 - b. Faculty member remains as Needs Improvement or Unacceptable in one or more sub-categories of evaluation – Chair/Director shall continue PDP/FFR and/or revise where appropriate. A new timeline for follow-up evaluation of remediation efforts is re-established.
 - c. Faculty member rated as Unacceptable in the Overall Evaluation (by Chair/Director or Dean) – Chair/Director or Dean *may* establish a Peer

Review Committee and consider an Adequate Cause Review (see section VIII).

- d. Faculty member rated as Unacceptable in the Overall Evaluation (by Chair/Director *and* Dean) – Chair/Director or Dean *shall* establish a Peer Review Committee, absent due cause, and consider an Adequate Cause Review (see section VIII).
7. An Unacceptable in the Overall Evaluation requires immediate attention for the sake of the Students, Faculty Member, the Unit, and the University. Along with actions listed above, the Faculty Member assigned an Overall Evaluation rating of Unacceptable, by the Dean, is ineligible for non-cost-of-living raises (in the years available). Faculty members under a PDP/FFR and/or any other employee performance improvement plan involving Human Resources are also ineligible for non-cost-of-living raises.
8. In some instances, a Faculty Member's performance will be so egregiously deficient that no remedial effort would bring about meaningful improvement. In those rare instances, an immediate Adequate Cause Review (see section VIII.C.) may be warranted.

C. Peer Review Committee (PRC) Procedures:

To review an Overall Evaluation rating of Unacceptable (unrelated to HR policy-related situations or performance improvement plans), the Dean shall first notify the Office of the Provost. The Office of the Provost will provide a designee to facilitate committee formation and documentation review. The committee will be comprised of at least three tenured Peers, of equal or higher rank, from the Faculty Member's Unit (or when necessary, the Faculty Member's College or related Units across the University). The Office of the Provost's designee will work with the Faculty Member, Chair/Director, and Dean to compile documentation that reflects faculty performance and remediation efforts. Documentation should be related to the period of evaluation and remediation and may include, but is not limited to:

- Performance evaluations, including supervisor and faculty member feedback
- Teaching evaluations (IDEA, peer, others)
- AGP, workload distributions, and annual reports
- Departmental or college level comparative data
- Other relevant documentation

VIII. Termination of Tenured Faculty

A tenured Faculty Member may be terminated due to curricular changes, financial exigency, or adequate cause.

- A. **Curricular Changes/Financial Exigency:** A tenured Faculty Member may be terminated due to curricular changes such as the deletion of an academic program or a substantial and continued reduction of student enrollment in a particular field. Similarly, a tenured Faculty Member may be terminated as a result of financial

exigency. All personnel decisions that result from a declaration of financial exigency will comply with TTU Policy 648 (Financial Exigency) and Policy 649 (Reduction in Force, Reorganization, and Elimination of Occupational Classifications).

1. The Provost will make every reasonable effort to relocate the tenured Faculty Member in another vacant position for which he/she is qualified, prior to termination.
2. The Faculty Senate shall have the opportunity to respond in writing to the Provost on a proposed termination of a tenured Faculty Member due to financial exigency or enrollment/curricular changes.
3. If tenured Faculty Members must be terminated due to financial exigency or curricular changes, reductions shall take place within any Unit, in the following order, unless the President determines that an exception should be made based on annual performance evaluations to reduce qualitative compromises:
 - a. Before a tenured Faculty Member is terminated, part-time faculty should not be renewed, followed by temporary faculty, non-tenured Instructors, Lecturers, then tenure-track faculty in the probationary period.
 - b. Tenured Faculty Members with lower rank should be terminated before those with higher rank.
 - c. Among tenured Faculty Members with comparable rank, those with non-terminal degrees should be terminated before those with terminal degrees.
 - d. Among tenured Faculty Members with comparable rank and comparable degrees, those with less seniority in rank should be terminated before those with greater seniority.
4. The Provost's written notification to the Faculty Member of termination due to financial exigency or curricular changes shall explain the reasons and indicate that the Faculty Member has the opportunity to appeal the decision in writing within ten (10) working days of receiving the notice, absent due cause.
 - a. If the Faculty Member appeals, the Faculty Affairs Committee shall conduct a review and a hearing within ten (10) working days of receiving the request, absent due cause.
 - b. The committee shall consider evidence including, but not limited to, the following: the Unit in which the reductions are required, the order of reductions within the Unit, exceptions to the normal order of reductions, and the possibility of departmental transfer within Tennessee Tech.
 - c. The committee shall report its findings and recommendation to the President within ten (10) working days of receiving the Faculty Member's appeal request. In ten (10) working days, absent due cause, the President shall inform

the Faculty Member in writing that the decision for termination stands or that it has been altered.

5. When a tenured Faculty Member is terminated due to financial exigency or curricular changes, the position will not be filled in the same areas of specialization for at least three years unless the terminated Faculty Member has been offered reappointment to the position with tenure and at his/her previous rank and salary plus raises that would have been awarded during the termination period.

B. Adequate Cause: A tenured Faculty Member may be terminated for adequate cause. Reasons for adequate cause include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Conviction of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude;
- Improper use of narcotics or intoxicants, which substantially impairs fulfillment of duties and responsibilities;
- Falsification of information on an employment application or otherwise providing false information concerning qualifications for a position;
- Unacceptable completion of a PDP/FFR;
- Refusal or continued failure to comply with the policies of the Board, Tennessee Tech, or his/her Unit;
- Willful failure to perform assigned duties and responsibilities when such assignments are reasonable and non-discriminatory including, but not limited to, failure to participate in a required PDP/FFR;
- Egregious incompetence or dishonesty in teaching, or research misconduct; and
- Capricious disregard of accepted standards of professional conduct.

1. Adequate Cause Review:

The Office of Human Resources shall handle Adequate Cause situations related to policies that impact all university employees. The Office of Human Resources will seek expert advice independently from concerned parties as appropriate, including but not limited to: The Faculty Member, law enforcement, the Office of Research, Deans, Chairs/Directors, other Faculty, Students, and University Counsel, before reporting its findings and conclusions to the Provost.

For other Adequate Cause situations related to policies specific only to the faculty role, the Office of the Provost may additionally seek expert advice independently from concerned parties as appropriate, including but not limited to: the Faculty Member, Chair/Director, Dean, Peer Review Committee, Faculty Senate President, Faculty Board representative, Office of Research, and Human

Resources. The Provost makes the decision whether the evidence supports the conclusion of a violation of policy/policies or otherwise is sufficient to convene a hearing committee to consider termination for adequate cause. The Provost shares the recommendation with the President.

Prior to convening an Adequate Cause Hearing, the Faculty Member, the Office of the Provost, and Office of Human Resources shall meet to discuss the recommendation and whether a resolution can be reached without an Adequate Cause Hearing. A Faculty Member may waive the right to an Adequate Cause Hearing at this stage of review.

2. Adequate Cause Hearing Committee Procedures: The following procedures apply to hearings convened to decide whether adequate cause, as described earlier (or any other reason not listed) exists and to related matters:

a. The Faculty Member shall be provided with a written statement of the specific charges alleged by Tennessee Tech that constitute grounds for termination and a notice of hearing specifying the time, date, and place. The statement and notice must be provided at least thirty (30) days before the hearing. The Faculty Member shall respond to the charges in writing at least ten (10) days before the hearing.

b. A Faculty Member may be suspended (with pay) pending completion of the process.

c. The Provost and Faculty Senate President shall jointly appoint a hearing committee consisting of six tenured Peers of equal or higher rank. If the Provost and Faculty Senate President are unable to agree as to the committee members, then each shall choose three Peers. Members of a related Peer Review Committee (PRC) may serve, but the majority of the committee shall be non-PRC members.

d. The Faculty Senate President (or designee) will serve as chairperson and the committee's seventh member. She/he shall direct the proceedings and rule on procedural matters.

e. The main purpose of the hearing is to determine whether termination of the Faculty Member is appropriate. Specific conduct of the hearing is the prerogative of the committee chair.

aa. The burden of proof rests with Tennessee Tech and shall be satisfied only by clear and convincing evidence in the record considered as a whole, and shall be based solely on the hearing record.

bb. During the hearing, the Faculty Member will be permitted to have an advisor present and may be represented by legal counsel of his/her choice.

cc. The Faculty Member shall have the right to confront and cross-examine all witnesses.

- dd. A verbatim record of the hearing shall be made, and a copy made available to the Faculty Member for a reasonable fee upon his/her request.
- ee. Following the hearing, the committee shall prepare a report (within five days of receiving all evidence, absent due cause) specifying whether the committee has determined that termination is appropriate, and, if so, the specific reasons for termination. The committee chair will provide the President and the Faculty Member with a copy of the report.
- ff. The committee may at its discretion recommend or suggest actions other than termination.
- f. After consideration of the committee's report and the record, the President may at his/her discretion consult with the Faculty Member, the hearing committee, or others as necessary before reaching a final decision regarding termination. Following his/her review, the President shall notify the Faculty Member of his/her decision within a reasonable time, which, if contrary to the committee's recommendation, shall be accompanied by a statement of the reasons.
- g. A Faculty Member who has been awarded tenure and who has been dismissed or suspended for cause may obtain de novo judicial review of the final decision by filing a petition in Chancery Court having jurisdiction within thirty (30) days of the final decision and copies of the petition shall be served upon the Board and all parties of record.
- e. Within forty-five (45) days after service of the petition, or within such further time allowed by the court, the Board or its designee shall transmit to the court the original or a certified copy of the entire record of the proceeding.

IX. Conflicts of Interest

- A. In cases where a party to any of the procedures outlined above believes that a committee member or a recommender has a conflict of interest, that party must send a written request to the Provost, or if the alleged conflict of interest involves the Provost or if the Provost is raising the alleged conflict of interest, to the President, for reconsideration of the member or recommender's role. The President will advise the party in writing of the decision related to the request.
- B. If a committee member or recommender is removed for a conflict of interest, the President or his/her designee will appoint a replacement to the role.

X. Interpretation

The Provost or his/her designee has the final authority to interpret the terms of this policy.

XI. Citation of Authority for Policy

T.C.A. § 49-8-301 et seq.

XII. Approved by:

Academic Council: April 10, 2019; September 3, 2025

Administrative Council: April 3, 2019; August 27, 2025

University Assembly: April 17, 2019; November 19, 2025

Board of Trustees: June 20, 2019

Tennessee Technological University
Policy No. 207

**Tenured
Faculty**

Effective Date: July 1, 2019

Policy No.: 207

Policy Name: Tenured Faculty

I. Purpose

This policy addresses ongoing performance evaluation and remediation of tenured faculty, retention and transfer of tenure, tenure expiration and relinquishment, and termination of tenured faculty. The significance of tenure, and the peer and administrative expectations for the award of it, ~~are~~ outlined extensively in Policy 205.

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processes related to faculty tenure after tenure has been granted. The process of obtaining tenure is detailed in TTU Policy 205 (Faculty Tenure).

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C. Tenure for faculty at a university is not a "job for life." It is a guarantee of academic freedom and due process built on a rigorous credentialing process and peer review. Tenure is only granted when earned, and only revoked in accordance with this policy.

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D. Tenure protects the reputation of the university and the pursuit of knowledge and truth. University faculty must be allowed to pursue knowledge and truth as a public good, without fear of reprisal, coercion, or undue outside influence.

E. Faculties are built by attracting, hiring, and retaining highly qualified professors in their fields. Tenure enables the university to attract and keep expertise and research dollars on campus.

F. While tenure protects faculty from arbitrary dismissal, this policy provides an appropriate means to address the occasional problem of tenured faculty who appear to be failing to contribute to the university in a meaningful fashion.

III. Review

This policy will be reviewed every four years or whenever circumstances require review, whichever is earlier, by the Provost, with recommendations for revision reviewed by the Faculty Senate and approved by the Academic Council, Administrative Council, University Assembly, and the Board of Trustees.

III. Scope

This policy ~~is only~~ applies ~~to~~ Faculty Members who hold Tenure.

IV. Definitions

A. Tenure: a personnel status in a Unit defined by TTU Policy 205 (Faculty Tenure).

B. Board: the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees.

C. Faculty Member: for the purposes of this policy, an employee who holds ~~ing~~ academic rank and Tenure, ~~as instructor, senior instructor, master instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor.~~

D. Peers: regular, full-time tenured members of the same Unit or College as the Faculty Member ~~for the purpose of establishment of~~ establishing the Peer Review Committee.

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Peer exclusion those whose primary responsibilities are administrative, including, but not limited to, Departmental Chairs or School Directors, Center Directors, Deans, Assistant and Associate Deans, President, Vice-Presidents, Assistant and Associate Vice-Presidents, Provost, Assistant and Associate Provosts, and Immediate Family, academic Unit chairpersons, center directors, deans, assistant and

D. associate deans, President, vice presidents, assistant and associate vice presidents, Provost, assistant and associate provosts, and Immediate Family.

E. Immediate Family: spouse, domestic partner, cohabitant, child, stepchild, grandchild, parent, stepparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, great-grandparent, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, stepsibling, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or first cousin (that is, a child of an aunt or uncle) of a Faculty Member.

F. Unit: a Tennessee Tech academic department, school, or the Volpe Library. Professional Development Plan (PDP): faculty remediation plan as part of the annual evaluation of the Faculty Member's job performance in one or more areas determined to need improvement or be unacceptable.

G. Focused Faculty Remediation (FFR): faculty remediation to address performance issues of the Faculty Member that arise outside the spring annual evaluation period completed by supervisors.

H. -Conflict of Interest: a situation in which objectivity could be impaired by virtue of a relationship with the Faculty Member or the process.

I. Adequate Cause Review: investigations which occur in situations that suggest the need for Faculty Member termination due to adequate cause (see Section VIII B).

J. Overall Evaluation: the overall rating assigned to the Faculty Member by the Chair/Director or Dean based on the assigned responsibilities and/or workplace professional standards.

K. Annual Goals Planning (AGP): the documentation submitted annually by the Faculty Member to the Chair/Director that outlines goals, objectives, and allocation of time planned for the calendar year, respective of faculty rank, type of appointment, and assigned responsibilities.

L. Peer Review Committee (PRC): peer committee established to review faculty improvement efforts following remediation of the Faculty Member and to provide recommendations to the Chair/Director or Dean for continuing evaluation.

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XLV. Transfer and Retention of Tenure

A. In the event the changing organizational needs of Tennessee Tech require transfer of a

tenured faculty member to another academic unit, the tenure status and faculty rank, at the time of transfer, is retained by the faculty member.

B. Tenured faculty members appointed to an administrative position at the University retain tenure and faculty rank attained.

L. Tenured Faculty Members may have their positions transferred within Tennessee Tech to accommodate changing needs. When a Faculty Member is transferred to another Unit, the transfer is made with tenure. In no instance may the Faculty Member be compelled to relinquish tenure as a condition of the transfer.

M. Before a transfer, the Provost shall consult the tenured Faculty Member and the Peers in the receiving Unit. Approval of a majority of the Peers and the Faculty Member is required to complete the transfer.

N. When a tenured Faculty Member is appointed to an administrative position, he/she retains tenure and rank in his/her former faculty position.

XXV.VI. Tenure Expiration and Relinquishment

- A. Tenure shall expire upon the resignation or retirement of the Faculty Member. Emeriti faculty retain certain rights and privileges as described in TTU Policy 219 (Emeriti Faculty).
- B. Consistent with federal and state law, tenure shall expire should a permanent physical or mental condition render a Faculty Member unable to continue to perform his/her essential duties, with or without an accommodation, as certified by appropriate medical authorities.
- C. A Faculty Member relinquishes his/her tenure during a period of an unapproved leave of absence, which includes, but is not limited to, a failure to report for service at the designated date of the beginning of any academic term. This failure to report or absence shall be deemed to be a resignation unless, in the opinion of the President, the Faculty Member has shown due good cause for his/her failure to report.

XXV.VII. Tenured Faculty Evaluation and Remediation

A. Faculty Evaluation

A. The professional performance of all faculty members is evaluated annually by the Chair/Director and Dean, consistent with procedures for faculty annual activity reporting relative to rank, type of appointment, and assigned responsibilities. All tenured faculty members participate in the annual evaluation review process. For situational performance issues that arise outside the annual evaluation period, a focused review may be necessary for the sake of the Students, Unit, and the University. All faculty members are subject to all university policies that govern their employment. The professional performance of each Faculty Member is evaluated annually.

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~~2. Faculty workloads vary in their percentage of effort for research, teaching, and service and may at times include additional responsibilities such as advisement, administration, or special assignments. Workloads can change over time. This necessitates annual "Agreements on Responsibilities" (AORs), which establish parameters to measure faculty performance.~~

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~~1. Department chairs will review faculty effort reports and rate each faculty member annually, taking into account these AORs.~~

~~2. Deans will review all materials and rate each faculty member as well. They may or may not concur with the chair's ratings.~~

B. Faculty Remediation

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The purpose of faculty remediation is to support and enhance the continued professional growth of the Faculty Member, across any area identified for improvement. Prompt attention and follow-up is given towards remediation support for the sake of the Students, Faculty Member, Unit, and University.

1. At the time of spring annual evaluation, a faculty member who receives a Needs Improvement or Unacceptable rating in one or more areas of assigned responsibility and/or workplace professional standards will mutually establish, with the Chair/Director, a PDP.

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2. An FFR may be established by the Chair/Director or Dean outside the spring annual evaluation as part of an interim performance issue/situation.

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3. PDP and FFR efforts to improve performance should outline specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic goals along with benchmarks/criteria for acceptable performance improvement. A timeline for expected performance improvements shall be included as part of the remediation efforts.

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4. Development of either a PDP or FFR shall be coordinated, where appropriate, with the Department, College, Academic Affairs, and when necessary, the Office of Human Resources and other available resources.

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5. The Chair/Director or Dean will evaluate distribution of assigned responsibilities relative to job performance and determine if additional requests, i.e., funding for travel support, extra or overload pay, summer appointments, and internal grant/award application support can serve to enhance or inhibit faculty remediation efforts to improve performance.

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6. The Chair/Director or Dean will evaluate the Faculty Member's remediation efforts in accordance with the timeline established by the PDP/FFR. When evaluating remediation efforts, the Chair/Director or Dean determines:

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a. Faculty member Meets Expectations – no further action is needed.

b. Faculty member remains as Needs Improvement or Unacceptable in one or more sub-categories of evaluation – Chair/Director shall continue PDP/FFR

- and/or revise where appropriate. A new timeline for follow-up evaluation of remediation efforts is re-established.
- c. Faculty member rated as Unacceptable in the Overall Evaluation (by Chair/Director *or* Dean) – Chair/Director or Dean *may* establish a Peer Review Committee and consider an Adequate Cause Review (see section VIII).
 - d. Faculty member rated as Unacceptable in the Overall Evaluation (by Chair/Director *and* Dean) – Chair/Director or Dean *shall* establish a Peer Review Committee, absent due cause, and consider an Adequate Cause Review (see section VIII).
7. An Unacceptable in the Overall Evaluation requires immediate attention for the sake of the Students, Faculty Member, the Unit, and the University. Along with actions listed above, the Faculty Member assigned an Overall Evaluation rating of Unacceptable, by the Dean, is ineligible for non-cost-of-living raises (in the years available). Faculty members under a PDP/FFR and/or any other employee performance improvement plan involving Human Resources are also ineligible for non-cost-of-living raises.
8. In some instances, a Faculty Member’s performance will be so egregiously deficient that no remedial effort would bring about meaningful improvement. In those rare instances, an immediate Adequate Cause Review (see section VIII.C.) may be warranted.
- ~~C. Limited faculty remediation will be handled within individual departments. Should a chair deem a Faculty Member’s performance in a particular area below standard, developmental activities (including, but not limited to, mentoring and training) are encouraged and should be coordinated within the department and the Office for Human Resources as appropriate. Long-term unacceptable performance in one particular area (including, but not limited to, research), if accompanied by strong performance in other area(s) (including, but not limited to, teaching and service), may be best addressed via reassignment of duties and adjustment of the AORs (including, but not limited to, differential teaching loads).~~
- ~~E. An overall unsatisfactory performance requires immediate attention for the sake of the students, the Unit, and the university.~~
- 6. If a tenured Faculty Member receives an overall rating of “Unacceptable” from both his/her chair and dean, indicative of systemically poor performance across the majority of her/his duties as per the AOR, the Provost must initiate a Faculty Improvement Assessment (FIA).
 - 7. In addition to the procedures outlined below, an overall rating of “Unacceptable” carries with it sanctions that can include, but are not limited to, withholding all merit-based salary increases, and loss of eligibility for travel funds, summer appointments, overload pay, and internal grants.
- C. Peer Review Committee (PRC) Procedures: Faculty Improvement Assessment (FIA)**

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To review an Overall Evaluation rating of Unacceptable (unrelated to HR policy-related situations or performance improvement plans), the Dean shall first notify the Office of the Provost. The Office of the Provost will provide a designee to facilitate committee formation and documentation review. The committee will be comprised of at least three tenured Peers, of equal or higher rank, from the Faculty Member's Unit (or when necessary, the Faculty Member's College or related Units across the University). The Office of the Provost's designee will work with the Faculty Member, Chair/Director, and Dean to compile documentation that reflects faculty performance and remediation efforts. Documentation should be related to the period of evaluation and remediation and may include, but is not limited to:

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- Performance evaluations, including supervisor and faculty member feedback
- Teaching evaluations (IDEA, peer, others)
- AGP, workload distributions, and annual reports
- Departmental or college level comparative data
- Other relevant documentation

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17. To review an overall rating of "Unacceptable" the Provost (or her/his designee) will chair an FIA committee and select at least four tenured Peers, of equal or higher rank, from the Unit (if available) and relevant departments (if needed) to serve on the committee.

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18. The committee chair will gather the following documentation:

s. Dossier from the Faculty Member of work over the preceding five years related to teaching, research, service, and other responsibilities;

t. Teaching evaluations from the previous five years, and other teaching related documents (including, but not limited to, grade distributions, enrollment data, observations) as appropriate;

u. Current curriculum vita from the Faculty Member; and

v. Feedback from Peers, direct supervisor, and dean, including performance evaluations from the previous five years.

23. The FIA committee will review the documentation, and the committee chair will provide the Faculty Member with a written summary of the assessment and the conclusion as to whether the Faculty Member's performance is unacceptable or not. The chair will also provide copies of this summary to the direct supervisor and dean as applicable.

x. If the majority of the FIA committee determines the Faculty Member's performance is satisfactory, the Faculty Member's chair and dean will revise the annual performance evaluation.

y. If the faculty of the FIA committee are evenly divided, or if a majority of the faculty determines the Faculty Member's performance is unsatisfactory, the final decision passes to the Provost alone. If he/she determines the Faculty Member's

performance is unsatisfactory, then a Faculty Development Plan (FDP) shall be created.

Z. Faculty Development Plans

27. The FDP will be created jointly by the Faculty Member and direct supervisor, subject to approval by the dean and Provost, by May 15, absent good cause.

28. The FDP is an attempt to elevate the Faculty Member to a higher level of performance. It must include specific, measurable goals, which can be reasonably attained by July 15 of the year following its creation, absent good cause.

29. Unless the FDP states otherwise, the Faculty Member will submit his/her regular annual evaluation materials as usual, including progress on the FDP as requested.

30. The Faculty Member will submit a report summarizing his/her progress on achieving the goals specified in the FDP not later than July 15 of the year following the creation of the FDP, absent good cause.

ee. The dean, direct supervisor, and the FIA committee (minus the Provost or designee) will jointly review the report to determine (not later than August 15, absent good cause) whether the Faculty Member successfully achieved the goals of the FDP. The dean will chair the meeting of this FDP evaluation group.

ff. A two thirds majority positive vote of the FDP evaluation group confirms satisfactory performance. The FDP is completed.

gg. Less than a two thirds vote initiates an automatic appeal to the Provost. The Provost will render a decision within 10 working days, absent good cause, and his/her decision shall be final. Upon the Provost's finding of unsatisfactory performance, the Faculty Member is subject to VIII B 4 below.

VIII. Termination of Tenured Faculty

XXXIV. A tenured Faculty Member may be terminated due to curricular changes, financial exigency, or adequate cause.

A. Curricular Changes/Financial Exigency: A tenured Faculty Member may be terminated due to curricular changes such as the deletion of an academic program or a substantial and continued reduction of student enrollment in a particular field. Similarly, a tenured Faculty Member may be terminated as a result of financial exigency. All personnel decisions that result from a declaration of financial exigency will comply with TTU Policy 648 (Financial Exigency) and Policy 649 (Reduction in Force, Reorganization, and Elimination of Occupational Classifications).

1. The Provost will make every ~~reasonable~~possible effort to relocate the tenured Faculty Member in another vacant position for which he/she is qualified, prior to termination.

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2. The Faculty Senate shall have the opportunity to respond in writing to the Provost on a proposed termination of a tenured Faculty Member due to financial exigency or enrollment/curricular changes.
3. If tenured Faculty Members must be terminated due to financial exigency or curricular changes, reductions shall take place within any ~~Unit, department~~ in the following order, unless the President determines that an exception should be made based on annual performance evaluations to reduce qualitative compromises:
 - a. Before a tenured Faculty Member is terminated, part-time faculty should not be renewed, followed by temporary faculty, non-tenured Instructors, Lecturers, then tenure-track faculty in the probationary period.
 - ~~b. Before a tenured Faculty Member is terminated, temporary faculty, Lecturers, and tenure-track faculty in the probationary period should not be renewed.~~
 - ~~e.b.~~ Tenured Faculty Members with lower rank should be terminated before those with higher rank.
 - ~~d.c.~~ Among tenured Faculty Members with comparable rank, those with non-terminal degrees should be terminated before those with appropriate terminal higher academic degrees.
 - ~~e.d.~~ Among tenured Faculty Members with comparable rank and comparable degrees, those with less seniority in rank should be terminated before those with greater seniority.
4. The Provost's written notification to the Faculty Member of termination due to financial exigency or curricular changes shall explain the reasons and indicate that the Faculty Member has the opportunity to appeal the decision in writing within ten (10) working days of receiving the notice, absent ~~due~~good cause.
 - a. If the Faculty Member appeals, the Faculty Affairs Committee shall conduct a review and a hearing within ten (10) working days of receiving the request, absent ~~good~~due cause.
 - b. The committee shall consider evidence including, but not limited to, the following: the Unit in which the reductions are required, the order of reductions within the Unit, exceptions to the normal order of reductions, and the possibility of departmental transfer within Tennessee Tech.
 - c. The committee shall report its findings and recommendation to the President within ten (10) working days of receiving the Faculty Member's appeal request. In ~~ten (10) working days a reasonable amount of time~~, absent due cause, the President shall inform the Faculty Member in writing that the decision for termination stands or that it has been altered.
5. When a tenured Faculty Member is terminated due to financial exigency or

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curricular changes, the position will not be filled in the same areas of specialization for at least three years unless the terminated Faculty Member has been offered reappointment to the position with tenure and at his/her previous rank and salary plus raises that would have been awarded during the termination period.

B. Adequate Cause: A tenured Faculty Member may be terminated for adequate cause. Reasons for adequate cause include, but are not limited to, the following:

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- Conviction of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude;
- Improper use of narcotics or intoxicants, which substantially impairs fulfillment of duties and responsibilities;
- Falsification of information on an employment application or otherwise providing false information concerning qualifications for a position;
- Unacceptable/satisfactory completion of an FDP/FFR;
- Refusal or continued failure to comply with the policies of the Board, Tennessee Tech, or his/her Unit;
- Willful failure to perform assigned duties and responsibilities when such assignments are reasonable and non-discriminatory including, but not limited to, failure to participate in a required FDP/FFR;
- Egregious incompetence or dishonesty in teaching, or research misconduct; and
- Capricious disregard of accepted standards of professional conduct.

1. Adequate Cause Review:

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The Office of Human Resources shall handle Adequate Cause situations related to policies that impact all university employees. The Office of Human Resources will seek expert advice independently from concerned parties as appropriate, including but not limited to: The Faculty Member, law enforcement, the Office of Research, Deans, Chairs/Directors, other Faculty, Students, and University Counsel, before reporting its findings and conclusions to the Provost.

For other Adequate Cause situations related to policies specific only to the faculty role, the Office of the Provost may additionally seek expert advice independently from concerned parties as appropriate, including but not limited to: the Faculty Member, Chair/Director, Dean, Peer Review Committee, Faculty Senate President, Faculty Board representative, Office of Research, and Human Resources. The Provost makes the decision whether the evidence supports the conclusion of a violation of policy/policies or otherwise is sufficient to convene a hearing committee to consider termination for adequate cause. The Provost shares the recommendation with the President.

Prior to convening an Adequate Cause Hearing, the Faculty Member, the Office of the Provost, and Office of Human Resources shall meet to discuss the recommendation and whether a resolution can be reached without an Adequate Cause Hearing. A Faculty Member may waive the right to an Adequate Cause Hearing at this stage of review.

- ~~C. Investigation as to the validity of accusations 1-3 and 5-8 (including, but not limited to, multiple accusations) falls under the purview of the Office for Human Resources and shall be handled according to related policies impacting all university employees. The Office for Human Resources will seek expert advice from concerned parties as appropriate, including but not limited to, law enforcement, the Office of Research, deans, chairs/directors, faculty, and university counsel, before reporting its findings to the Provost.~~
- ~~5. In cases related to "adequate cause" as defined in Section VIII.B.1-B.4, the Provost alone makes the final determination whether the evidence supports a conclusion of a violation of policy/policies or otherwise is sufficient to convene a hearing committee to consider whether adequate cause under Sections VIII.B.1-B.4 exists.~~
- ~~6. In cases related to "adequate cause" as defined in Section VIII.B.5-B.8 (or any other reason not listed), the Provost shall, after conferring with the faculty senate president and the faculty trustee, share the recommendations with the President as to whether the evidence supports a conclusion of a violation of policy/policies or otherwise is adequate cause for termination. The President shall decide whether the evidence is sufficient to convene a hearing committee to consider whether adequate cause under Sections VIII.B.5-B.8 (or any other reason not listed) exists.~~
- ~~G. Any proposed termination for adequate cause shall be preceded by discussion between the Faculty Member and appropriate administrative officers seeking a mutual resolution. Faculty Members who do not attend such a discussion forfeit the opportunity for a hearing.~~

H.2. Adequate Cause Hearing Committee Procedures: The following procedures apply to hearings convened to decide whether adequate cause, as described earlier under Sections VIII.B.1-8 (or any other reason not listed) exists and to related matters:

- a. The Faculty Member shall be provided with a written statement of the specific charges alleged by Tennessee Tech that constitute grounds for termination and a notice of hearing specifying the time, date, and place. The statement and notice must be provided at least thirty (30) days before the hearing. The Faculty Member shall respond to the charges in writing at least ten (10) days before the hearing.
- b. A Faculty Member may be suspended (with pay) pending completion of the process.

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c. The Provost and ~~f~~Faculty ~~s~~Senate ~~p~~President shall jointly appoint a hearing committee consisting of six tenured Peers of equal or higher rank. If the Provost and ~~f~~Faculty ~~s~~Senate ~~p~~President are unable to agree as to the committee members, then each shall choose three Peers. Members of a related ~~F~~A Peer Review ~~e~~Committee (PRC) may serve, but the majority of the committee shall be non-~~PRC~~~~F~~A members.

d. The Faculty Senate President (or designee) will serve as chairperson and the committee's seventh member. She/he shall direct the proceedings and rule on procedural matters.

e. The main purpose of the hearing is to determine whether termination of the Faculty Member is appropriate. Specific conduct of the hearing is the prerogative of the committee chair.

~~a~~aa. The burden of proof rests with Tennessee Tech and shall be satisfied only by clear and convincing evidence in the record considered as a whole, and shall be based solely on the hearing record.

~~b~~bb. During the hearing, the Faculty Member will be permitted to have an advisor present and may be represented by legal counsel of his/her choice.

~~e~~cc. The Faculty Member shall have the right to confront and cross-examine all witnesses.

~~d~~dd. A verbatim record of the hearing shall be made, and a copy made available to the Faculty Member for a reasonable fee upon his/her request.

~~e~~ee. Following the hearing, the committee shall prepare a report (within five days of receiving all evidence, absent ~~due~~ good-cause) specifying whether the committee has determined that termination is appropriate, and, if so, the specific reasons for termination. The committee chair will provide the President and the Faculty Member with a copy of the report.

~~f~~ff. The committee may at its discretion recommend or suggest actions other than termination.

f. After consideration of the committee's report and the record, the President may at his/her discretion consult with the Faculty Member, the hearing committee, or others as necessary before reaching a final decision regarding termination. Following his/her review, the President shall notify the Faculty Member of his/her decision within a reasonable time, which, if contrary to the committee's recommendation, shall be accompanied by a statement of the reasons.

g. A Faculty Member who has been awarded tenure and who has been dismissed or suspended for cause may obtain de novo judicial review of the final decision by filing a petition in ~~C~~ehancery ~~C~~eourt having jurisdiction within thirty

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(30) days of the final decision and copies of the petition shall be served upon the Board and all parties of record.

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~~a-c.~~ Within forty-five (45) days after service of the petition, or within such further time allowed by the court, the Board or its designee shall transmit to the court the original or a certified copy of the entire record of the proceeding.

~~b. The Chancellor may award back pay in the event a determination is made that dismissal was not appropriate.~~

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XXXXV.IX. Conflicts of Interest

- A. In cases where a party to any of the procedures outlined above believes that a committee member or a recommender has a conflict of interest, that party must send a written request to the Provost, or if the alleged conflict of interest involves the Provost or if the Provost is raising the alleged conflict of interest, to the President, for reconsideration of the member or recommender’s role. The President will advise the party in writing of the decision related to the request.
- B. If a committee member or recommender is removed for a conflict of interest, the President or his/her designee will appoint a replacement to the role.

XXXXVI.X. Interpretation

The Provost or his/her designee has the final authority to interpret the terms of this policy.

XXXXVII.XI. Citation of Authority for Policy

T.C.A. § 49-8-301 et seq.

XXXXVIII.XII. Approved by:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Academic Council: | April 10, 2019; April 10, 2019 September 3, 2025 |
| Administrative Council: | April 3, 2019; April 3, 2019 August 27, 2025 |
| University Assembly: | April 17, 2019; November 19, 2025 April 17, 2019 |
| Board of Trustees: | June 20, 2019 |

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Agenda Item Summary

Date: December 4, 2025

Agenda Item: Student Affairs Update-Mental Health Services

☐

Review

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Action

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No action required

PRESENTER(S): Dr. Christina Mick

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS:

Dr. Christina Mick, Director, Center for Counseling and Mental Health Wellness, will provide an update on mental health services and the Center for Counseling and Mental Health Wellness.