

BSW Student Handbook 2025-2026

Contents

Introduction	3
School of Social Work Administrative and Clerical Staff	3
School of Social Work Faculty	4
UTRGV School of Social Work BSW Program.....	4
School of Social Work BSW Mission Statement	4
Program History	5
Program Goals and Objectives	5
Communication	6
Eligibility for Admission.....	6
Process for Admission and Notification	6
Overview of BSW Curriculum	7
Required General Education Courses	7
General Elective Courses.....	8
Required Social Work Core Courses	8
Courses that Support Social Work Curriculum	9
Other Required Courses	9
Course Prerequisites and Corequisites	10
Field Placement Transfers and In-Progress Grades	11
Academic Advising.....	11
Advanced Hours	12
Transfer Credit	12
Course Substitutions to the Degree Plan	12
Credit for Life Experience.....	13
Program and University Policies Procedures.....	14
Academic Standing and GPA Requirements	14
Student Concerns and Complaints	14
Student Responsibilities	14
Academic Responsibilities.....	14
Grading policy	15
Incomplete Policy	15
Class Attendance.....	16
Class Participation:	16

Technology:	17
Americans With Disability Act and other Accommodation Requests	17
Student Conduct, Professional Expectations, and Program Policies	18
Student Impairment and Behavioral Expectations	18
School of Social Work Statement on Background Checks and Screenings:	19
Steps for Addressing Unprofessional Behavior.....	20
Termination from BSW Program	21
Students' Rights on Confidentiality.....	21
Student Complaints and Appeals	22
ACADEMIC APPEALS	22
Whistleblower policy:	23
Student Involvement.....	23
Social Work Student Association	23
Phi Alpha Mu Social Work Honor Society.....	24
Student Participation in Department Committees	24
Appendices	25
Appendix A: Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) 2022	26
Appendix B: BSW Degree Plan	30
Appendix C: BSW Program Application	33
Appendix D: Notification Letter to Students.....	35
Appendix E: NASW Code of Ethics	37
Appendix F: Academic Dismissal and Academic Probation and Suspension	39
Appendix G: UTRGV Undergraduate Transfer Credit Policy	42
Appendix H: Instructions for Submitting Request for Course Substitution and Waivers Online	48
Appendix I: Instructions for Submitting Petition for Degree Requirements.....	49
Appendix J: Student Conduct and Discipline	50
Appendix K: Student Complaint Procedures.....	51

Introduction

The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Student Handbook is designed as a reference tool for student and faculty use in understanding the standards, roles and relationships that govern the student's undergraduate experience in The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley School of Social Work. Student questions or concerns that are not covered in this manual should be addressed to the BSW Program Director. The School of Social Work reserves the right to update or modify any policy or procedure contained in this manual to protect student rights or to comply with University policy. Any change in policies or other manual content will be communicated to students through email to all students enrolled in the program. Student representatives to the BSW Program Committee are responsible for communicating with fellow students and bringing comments or concerns to the BSW Program Committee meetings for discussion and decision-making.

School of Social Work Administrative and Clerical Staff

Luis Torres-Hostos, PhD	Founding Dean of the School of Social Work	Luis.TorresHostos@utrgv.edu
Leticia Villarreal Sosa, PhD, LCSW, PEL, SSW	Associate Dean of Research and Faculty Development	leticia.villarrealsoa@utrgv.edu
Denise Longoria, PhD, LCSW-S	Associate Dean for Academic Affairs/ MSW Program Director	denise.longoria@utrgv.edu
Heather Vitek, LMSW	BSW Program Director	heather.vitek@utrgv.edu
Veronica Cano, LCSW-S	BSW Practicum Director	veronica.cano@utrgv.edu
Charleen Martinez Rodriguez, Ed.D, MSW	MSW Practicum Director	charleen.martinezrodriguez@utrgv.edu
Griselda Vasquez, LMSW	Title IV-E Coordinator	griselda.vasquez01@utrgv.edu
Susy Villegas, PhD	Director International Social Work	susy.villegas@utrgv.edu
Lauren Serafy, LMSW	Co-Director, Human Mobility Institute (HMI)	lauren.serafy@utrgv.edu
Sarah Villarreal	Administrative Associate to Dean Dr. Luis Torres-Hostos	sarah.villarreal@utrgv.edu
Cynthia Cisneros	Practicum Program Coordinator	cynthia.cisneros@utrgv.edu
Dalia Danielle Reyna	Administrative Assistant II	dalia.reyna01@utrgv.edu
Martha Herrera Gallardo	Administrative Assistant I	martha.herreragallardo@utrgv.edu
Maria Valdez, LBSW	Regional Outreach Representative (Laredo)	maria.valdez2@utrgv.edu
Claudia Dole, MBA, MACT	College Administrator	claudia.dole@utrgv.edu
Sebastian Sanchez	Accountant I	sebastian.sanchez03@utrgv.edu
Erica De Leon, MSHS, RCHADM-CRT	Sr. Research Services Coordinator	erica.deleon02@utrgv.edu

School of Social Work Faculty

Noelia Alonzo, LCSW	Clinical Assistant Professor	noelia.alonzo@utrgv.edu
Veronica Cano, LCSW-S	Clinical Assistant Professor	veronica.cano@utrgv.edu
Rebecca Cole, PhD, LCSW-S	Postdoctoral Research Fellow	rebecca.cole@utrgv.edu
Enedina “Nina” Enriquez, DSW LCSW-S	Clinical Associate Professor	enedina.enriquez@utrgv.edu
Leyla Feize, PhD, LCSW-S	Associate Professor	leyla.feize@utrgv.edu
John Gonzalez, PhD, LMSW	Professor	john.gonzalez@utrgv.edu
Pedro Hernandez, PhD, LCSW	Clinical Assistant Professor	pedro.hernandez03@utrgv.edu
Alexis Herrera, LMSW	Clinical Assistant Professor	alexis.herrera04@utrgv.edu
Nazanin Heydarian, PhD	Assistant Professor	nazanin.heydarian@utrgv.edu
Christine Highfill, PhD	Assistant Professor	Christine.chacehighfill@utrgv.edu
Vanessa Ibarra, LCSW-S	Clinical Assistant Professor	vanessa.ibarra02@utrgv.edu
Lin “Helen” Jiang, PhD	Associate Professor	lin.jiang@utrgv.edu
Denise Lamore, LMSW	Clinical Assistant Professor	denise.lamore01@utrgv.edu
Denise Longoria, PhD, LCSW-S	Associate Professor	denise.longoria@utrgv.edu
Robert Louis, MSW, PhD	Clinical Assistant Professor	robert.louis@utrgv.edu
Charleen Martinz Rodriguez, Ed.D, MSW	Clinical Assistant Professor	charleen.martinezrodriguez@utrgv.edu
Sudershan Pasupuleti, PhD	Professor	sudershan.pasupuleti@utrgv.edu
Jo Redcliffe, PhD	Associate Professor	jo.redcliffe@utrgv.edu
Nelda Rodriguez, LMSW	Clinical Professor	nelda.rodriguez@utrgv.edu
Lauren Serafy, LMSW	Clinical Assistant Professor	lauren.serafy@utrgv.edu
Susheelabai Srinivasa, PhD	Associate Professor	susheelabai.srinivasa@utrgv.edu
Melissa Torres, PhD	Assistant Professor	melissa.torres1@utrgv.edu
Luis Torres-Hostos, PhD	Professor	luis.torreshostos@utrgv.edu
Kriti Vashisht, PhD, NCC	Assistant Professor	kriti.vashisht@utrgv.edu
Griselda Vasquez, LMSW	Clinical Assistant Professor	griselda.vasquez01@utrgv.edu
Leticia Villarreal Sosa, PhD, LCSW	Professor	leticia.villarrealsoa@utrgv.edu
Susy Villegas, PhD	Associate Professor	susy.villegas@utrgv.edu
Heather Vitek, LMSW	Clinical Associate Professor	heather.vitek@utrgv.edu
Minzhi Ye, PhD	Assistant Professor	minzhi.ye@utrgv.edu

UTRGV School of Social Work BSW Program

School of Social Work BSW Mission Statement

The mission of the BSW program is to prepare graduates to provide effective evidence-based generalist social work practice that understands and addresses the unique needs of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities that reside in the region along the US-Mexico border and beyond. The program strives to foster a commitment to social justice, advocacy, and community engagement, while

preparing graduates to respect all people, to strive for fairness and equity, and to make meaningful contributions for the well-being of clients and constituents. While grounded in the unique sociocultural context of the U.S.-Mexico border region, the program equips students with the knowledge and skills applicable to a wide range of settings and populations, both locally and nationally.

Program History

Baccalaureate social work education has been offered at this institution since January 1970. The program was originally conceptualized as being a liberal art based; broad-field major designed to prepare students to enter the social work profession. The Manpower Development Project of the Texas Department of Welfare provided initial funding to the University for the Program's creation. This action was in response to specific, urgent socioeconomic problems and the social service personnel needs of the South Texas region. Initially, it was known as the Bachelor of Arts in Community Services to create a term that was understood and accepted by the public.

The Community Services program was administered in the School of Humanities and Social Studies and housed in the departments of History and Political Science. In 1973, under a university wide divisional restructuring, the degree program came under Behavioral Sciences and the Department of Sociology. On April 22, 1977, the Coordinating Board of the Texas College and University System authorized a degree name change from a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Community Services to the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Degree. The name change was officially retroactive to the fall of 1976. The Social Work program achieved initial accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education in 1976 and departmental status in the early 1990s. The program's accredited status was reaffirmed in 1985, 1992, 2001, 2008, 2015, and 2022. In 2018, the Department of Social Work became the School of Social Work.

The School of Social Work is administratively under the Division of Academic Affairs, and most faculty are housed in the Innovation Building on the Edinburg campus; phone number 956-665-3575.

Program Goals and Objectives

- Provide students with an educational curriculum that builds upon a liberal arts foundation and person-in-environmental framework that prepares them to become competent generalist practitioners.
- Prepare students to assess, intervene, and evaluate diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities guided by research-informed and best practices that promote the well-being of client systems.
- Prepare students to be culturally competent social work practitioners who can deliver social work services to diverse communities.
- Prepare students to engage in advocacy for policies that support the advancement of human rights and the promotion of social, economic and environmental justice.
- Prepare generalist practitioners who can think critically and are guided by values and ethics of the profession

- Encourage students to be leaders and collaborators with stakeholders within the community to address the unmet and legitimate needs and rights.

Communication

The School of Social Work supports the bilingualism, biculturalism, and biliteracy of our students. We acknowledge that students and staff may speak English as well as a second language, such as Spanish. As part of culturally sustaining pedagogies, we support translanguaging, or allowing students to use their full linguistic repertoire, including Spanish or other languages, to express themselves or engage with content. This could involve using bilingual dictionaries, allowing code-switching, and encouraging students to share vocabulary and concepts in their home language. Assignments and other class activities should continue to be submitted in English unless otherwise specified by the instructor.

Eligibility for Admission

Pre-social work majors may request admission into the BSW Program after:

- 1) Successfully completing the University College Requirement, i.e., completing a minimum of 30 hours, including six hours (6) of freshman English (ENG 1301 & ENG 1302), and the mathematics requirement (college algebra or higher math) with a “C” grade or better.
- 2) Passing SOCW 2361 Introduction to the Social Work Profession with a “C” grade or better.
- 3) Achieving sophomore, junior, or senior standing.
- 4) Possessing a 2.7 cumulative grade point average (GPA) at time of application
- 5) Writing a 300–500-word essay on your interest in Social Work as a career choice
- 6) Submitting a completed application for admission into BSW Degree Program
- 7) Demonstrating no incomplete grades
- 8) Submitting an unofficial transcript

The BSW Program application is available on the UTRGV School of Social Work website. Students submit their completed application and supporting documents through the School of Social Work website.

See Appendix C: BSW Program Application

Process for Admission and Notification

The eligibility of applicants for admission into the BSW Program is reviewed and verified by the BSW Program Director and/or members of the BSW Committee. If concerns arise regarding the content of a student's personal statement, the Program Director may request additional information from the applicant. In such cases, the Program Director will also consult with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for further guidance.

Upon approval for admission, the BSW Program Director will notify the Registrar's Office via email of the student's acceptance into the program. The student will then receive an official acceptance notification from the Administrative Assistant. Following this, students are expected to schedule an initial advising appointment with the BSW Program Director. During this meeting, a comprehensive academic plan will be developed, outlining coursework through to graduation. Students are required to meet with either the BSW Program Director or a representative from the UTRGV Advising Department each semester for

continued academic advisement. This expectation is clearly communicated during the initial advising session.

Applicants who are not accepted into the BSW Program will receive formal notification via email. This communication will include an invitation to discuss the admission decision with the Program Director, either in person or through a virtual meeting (Zoom or Microsoft Teams). During this meeting, the Program Director will provide feedback and outline recommendations for strengthening a future application to the program. **See Appendix D: Notification Letter to Students**

Overview of BSW Curriculum

Program Objectives and Curriculum Components

The primary objective of the undergraduate Social Work program is to prepare students for competent and ethical professional practice in entry-level positions, under appropriate supervision. The curriculum is designed to provide a comprehensive foundation in liberal arts and social work education. The BSW Program consists of the following core components:

1. **Liberal Arts Requirements** – 42 credit hours
2. **General Electives** – 6 credit hours
3. **Social Work Core Courses** – 48 credit hours
4. **Advanced Support Courses** – 9 credit hours
5. **Spanish Language Requirement** – 6 credit hours
6. **Upper-Level Electives** – 9 credit hours

Required General Education Courses

Effective September 2008, students entering the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley must complete the Core Curriculum consisting of 42 credit hours grouped in eight Foundational Component Areas and one Component Area Option.

Foundational Component Area	Requirement	Examples
010-Communication	2 courses – 6 hours required: minimum grade of C	ENGL 1301, ENGL 1302
020-Mathematics	1 course-3 hours required: minimum grade of C	MATH 1314, MATH 1414
030-Life and Physical Sciences	2 course-6 hours required: lecture only	BIOL, CHEM, ENVR, PHYS
040-Language, Philosophy, and Culture	1 course-3 hours required	
050-Creative Arts	1 course-3 hours required	
060-American History	2 courses-6 hours required	HIST 1301, HIST 1302
070-Government/Political Science	2 course-6 hours required	POLS 2305 & POLS 2306
080-Social and Behavioral Sciences	1 course-3 hours required	SOCI 1301 or PSYC 2301
090-Integrative/Experiential Learning Option	6 hours required	Applied Communication and Literacies, Humanities, Leadership, Science Labs, Interdisciplinary, Language Diversity and Writing

General Elective Courses

Students entering the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley September 2008 and thereafter, who major in social work, must complete 6 hours of general electives. Students may select electives from any courses that are offered at the university. An elective can be any class (course number 1000-4999) for which you can receive College or University credits.

Required Social Work Core Courses

As an accredited program with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the BSW Program at the UTRGV School of Social Work uses a competency-based education framework.

“Competency-based education rests on a shared view of the nature of competence in professional practice. Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes to practice situations in a culturally responsive, purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being. (CSWE, 2022)

The following nine competencies are from the most recent Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (2022):

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

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

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

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

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

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

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

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

Content Area	Course Number & Title
Social Work History	SOCW 2361 Introduction to Social Work (C min.)
Human Behavior and Social Environment Diversity Professional Ethics	SOCW 3321 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I SOCW 3322 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II SOCW 3310 Professional Communication in Social Work SOCW 3317 Social Work in Complex Social Environments
Generalist Social Work Practice* * a “C” is required	SOCW 3323 Practice with Individuals (C min.) SOCW 4301 Social Work with Groups (C min.) SOCW 4302 Social Work with Organizations and Communities (C min.) SOCW 4303 Social Work with Families (C min.)

	SOCW 3363 De-escalation and Crisis Intervention
Research	SOCW 3375 Social Work Statistics SOCW 4311 Social Work Research
Policy	SOCW 2362 Social Welfare Institution SOCW 3314 Connecting Social Work through Policy Change
Field Education	SOCW 4619 Generalist Practicum Block SOCW 4353 Generalist Practicum I SOCW 4355 Generalist Practicum II

Courses that Support Social Work Curriculum

While students are completing the above core social work courses, they will also be completing courses in areas that support the social work curriculum. Students must complete 18 hours of support course work as shown below.

9 hours required from the following

3 hours: (Choose one from the following)

PSYC 4313: Abnormal Psychology or SOCI 4313: Sociology of Deviance

3 hours: (Choose one from the following)

SOCI 4313: Race/ Ethnic Relations or SOCI 4323: The Mexican American Experience

3 hours: (Required)

SOCI 4352: Social Stratification

9 hours of Upper Division Restrictive Electives:

Upper division courses are numbered 3000 – 4999 in the following disciplines:

Criminal Justice, Rehabilitation, Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology.

Other Required Courses

Students are also required to complete 6 hours of Spanish or take an exam for college credit (College Level Examination Program -CLEP) for Spanish.

Students must also complete SOCI 1301 Introduction to Sociology and PSYC 2301 General Psychology and complete six (6) hours of General Electives.

The University provides all social work students with the Social Work degree plan during orientation. Students are required to be knowledgeable about the degree plan and its requirements.

See Appendix B: Social Work Degree Plan

Course Prerequisites and Corequisites

SOCW 2361 – Introduction to the Social Work Profession

Students must earn a minimum grade of “C” in this course to be eligible for admission into the BSW Program.

SOCW 3323, 4301, 4302, and 4303 – Social Work Practice Courses

These courses include:

- SOCW 3323 – Social Work with Individuals
- SOCW 4301 – Social Work with Groups
- SOCW 4302 – Social Work with Organizations and Communities
- SOCW 4303 – Social Work with Families

Only students officially declared as Social Work majors may enroll in these practice courses. A minimum grade of “C” is required in each course to qualify for the Generalist Practicum.

Note: SOCW 4301, 4302, and 4303 may be taken concurrently after successful completion of SOCW 3323.

SOCW 3375 - Social Work Statistics

This course must not be taken concurrently with SOCW 4311. It must be completed independently.

SOCW 4311 – Social Work Research

Students may enroll in SOCW 4311 only after successfully completing SOCW 3375.

Field Practicum Requirements

SOCW 4354 (Generalist Practicum I) and SOCW 4355 (Generalist Practicum II)

The Field Practicum (SOCW 4354/4355 or SOCW 4619) is a required component of the BSW Program and cannot be waived. To be eligible for enrollment, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be formally admitted to the BSW Program.
- Have a minimum overall GPA of 2.7.
- Successfully complete the following courses: SOCW 2361, 2362, 3375, 3314, 3321, 3322, 3323, and 4311.
- Have any approved course substitutions documented in Degree Works.
- Submit an Application for Field Practicum.
- Apply for graduation through the Office of Admissions and Records.

Field Placement Transfers and In-Progress Grades

Students who are transferred to a different agency during the semester due to placement circumstances and are approved by the Office of Field Education will receive credit for the clock hours completed at the original placement.

A student may receive an “IP” (In Progress) grade for the Field Practicum under the following conditions:

- The student was unable to complete the required clock hours due to agency-related issues beyond their control.
- The student experienced significant personal or health-related challenges.
- The student withdrew unexpectedly from the university.

All “IP” grades must be resolved by the designated faculty liaison. If a final grade is not submitted by the end of the following regular semester, the “IP” will automatically convert to an “F”. All incomplete grades must be resolved before the student can be certified for graduation.

Academic Advising

All BSW majors receive initial academic advising from the BSW Program Director. Thereafter, students are required to participate in semesterly advising sessions through the UTRGV Advising Department or with the BSW Program Director.

Initial Advising Responsibilities of the BSW Program Director

The BSW Program Director provides initial advisement to support students in the following ways:

1. Assisting students in evaluating their aptitude and motivation for a career in social work.
2. Engaging students in early and ongoing evaluation of their academic performance.
3. Supporting students in course selection and long-term academic planning.
4. Referring students with academic or personal concerns to appropriate university or community resources.
5. Collaborating with students to identify field placement settings that align with their educational needs and career goals.

Student Responsibilities in the Advising Process

While academic advising is a critical component of student success, students bear primary responsibility for the satisfactory completion of their degree requirements. Student responsibilities include:

1. Meeting with their academic advisor each semester for course planning and guidance.
2. Following their academic plan to ensure timely progress toward degree completion.
3. Successfully completing all registered courses.
4. Reviewing the Undergraduate Catalog to stay informed about academic policies, procedures, and available student services.
5. Maintaining up-to-date contact information (email, mailing address, and phone number) with both the Office of Admissions and Records and the School of Social Work.
6. Reading and adhering to the policies outlined in the BSW Student Handbook.

Advanced Hours

Effective September 2008, all entering and/or transfer students must complete a designated number of advanced hours per major. Advanced hours are earned in upper division courses, those numbered 3000 and above. This university requirement is satisfied when the student completes the core social work curriculum, the advanced restrictive electives, and the advanced support course work. The social work curriculum contains 48 advanced hours, and students must complete 24 advanced hours in support courses, restrictive electives, and Spanish for a total of 72 hours.

Transfer Credit

The University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley accepts transfer credit from accredited lower division and upper division colleges and universities. UTRGV policies and procedures for transfer of college credit are described in detail in the university catalog. As relates to the transfer of social work courses, the School of Social Work routinely accepts transfer courses from Texas universities and other accredited institutions of higher education for the 1st two courses in the curriculum. As part of an articulation agreement that was drawn up by the Texas Coordinating Board of State Colleges and Universities, the school accepts the transfer of SOCW 2361 Introduction to Social Work and SOCW 2362 Social Welfare Institutions. The school has had a longstanding relationship with the junior colleges in the region, South Texas College, Texas Southmost College and Laredo College. All institutions offer a limited number of social work courses and human services courses leading to an associate degree.

See Appendix G for UTRGV Undergraduate Transfer Credit Policy

Transfer credit beyond the first two courses is evaluated on an individual basis, but credit is accepted only from BSW programs that are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The BSW Program Director evaluates all requests for transfer credit, with the exceptions noted above. As needed, the director will request that students supply copies of syllabi and or documentation, to determine whether the transfer work meets school and CSWE standards. Since the university requires transfer students to complete a residence requirement, at least 24 of the last 31 semester hours must be in the major. Courses that **may be** accepted for transfer credit include:

- SOCW 2361 Introduction to Social Work
- SOCW 2362 Social Welfare Institutions
- SOCW 3375 Social Work Statistics
- SOCW 3314 Connecting Social Work through Policy Change
- SOCW 3321 Human Behavior/Social Environment I
- SOCW 3322 Human Behavior/Social Environment II
- SOCW 3323 Social Work Practice with Individuals
- SOCW 4301 Social Work with Groups
- SOCW 4302 Social Work with Organizations and Communities
- SOCW 4311 Social Work Research
- SOCW 4303 Social Work with Families

Course Substitutions to the Degree Plan

According to university policy, course substitutions are initiated by the student's academic advisor who will submit the request through the online portal to officially petition for review of degree requirements.

1. The social work major student must discuss possible needs with their advisor.
2. If the advisor supports the student's request, the advisor then completes an online substitution request (<https://www.utrgv.edu/ucentral/registration/course-substitution/index.htm>) with all the necessary information.
3. The online substitution request is forwarded to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for approval or disapproval. Once completed, it is forwarded to the Dean of the School of Social Work and then through the university system
4. An email will be sent to the originator, notifying them of approval or denial. Should the course substitution be approved, it will be documented in Degree Works
5. The advisor is to notify the student of approval or denial. If denied, the student will be expected to meet the course requirements.

See Appendix H: Instructions for Submitting Requests for Course Substitutions & Waivers Online

Course substitutions in the general education curriculum are seldom possible. Students wishing to substitute a general education requirement must adhere to the following processes.

1. The social work major student must seek approval from his/her designated faculty advisor with a letter of appeal and a transcript.
2. If the advisor supports the student's request, the advisor then completes a Petition for Degree Requirements Guidelines & Instructions online.
(https://www.utrgv.edu/dass/_files/documents/petition-for-degree-requirements-guidelines-and-instructions.pdf)
3. It will be reviewed and forwarded to the Associate Provost for Student Success/Dean of University College.

See Appendix I: Petition for Degree Requirements

Credit for Life Experience

Under no circumstances are academic credits awarded in social work courses for life or work experience. The university's policy regarding this is as follows: "Normally, no credit will be awarded for life experience. The exception to this rule may include those cases where the credit has been validated either by another regionally accredited institution of higher education or by a test administered by an academic department and approved by the Office of the Provost." This is found in Undergraduate Admissions - Transfer Credit Policies.

Refer to Appendix G: Transfer of Undergraduate Credits

Program and University Policies Procedures

Academic Standing and GPA Requirements

To remain in good academic standing within the School of Social Work, students must maintain a minimum overall GPA of 2.7. This requirement is emphasized during both program orientation and academic advising.

If a student's GPA falls below 2.7, they will be granted one semester to improve their academic performance and restore their GPA to the required level. At the end of that semester, once final grades are posted, the BSW Program Director will review the student's academic record to determine whether the student may continue in the program or will be suspended until the GPA requirement is met. The student will be notified of this decision via email from the Program Director.

At the conclusion of each semester, the BSW Program Director will review the overall GPA of all students admitted to the BSW Program. This review is based on a report provided by Enrollment Systems and Analysis, which includes GPA data for both social work majors and pre-social work students. Students who do not meet the GPA requirement will be formally removed from the program and notified via email. The Program Director will also offer to meet with the student to discuss the decision and explore the next possible steps.

Information regarding academic performance expectations is available in the course syllabi, this Student Handbook, and on the UTRGV website.

Student Concerns and Complaints

Students who have concerns or complaints that are not resolved to their satisfaction may contact the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. This office provides support and guidance regarding academic performance issues, as well as questions or complaints related to university policies and procedures.

Student Responsibilities

Academic Responsibilities

Students are expected to inform themselves thoroughly concerning the regulations of the university and the course requirements for degrees, and to make inquiries in case of doubt.

Regulations will not be waived, nor exceptions to requirements made, on a plea of ignorance of the regulations and requirements. Students, therefore, should become familiar with all of the information related to the program contained in the [University Catalog](#), on the university website, and in other official publications.

Each student, by registering, enters an academic college of the university and is under its jurisdiction with regard to the student's program of study and degree requirements. For questions regarding waivers to course requirements and

options, deficiencies, degree plan and special regulations, students should work directly with the person in their major who is assigned the responsibility of supervising their programs or seek assistance from the [Academic Advising Center](#)(undergraduate students only). Requests to waive regulations and/or requirements should be directed in writing to the Dean of the college.

Grading policy

UTRGV School of Social Work BSW Program Grading Policy

1. Grading Scale:

- A: 90%-100
- B: 80-89
- C: 70-79
- D: 60-69
- F: Below 60

2. Minimum Grade Requirements:

- Students must achieve a minimum grade of **C** in SOCW 4301, SOCW 4302, and SOCW 4303 to progress to SOCW 4619 (Field Education Block) or SOCW 4354 and SOCW 4355 (Generalist Practicum I and Generalist Practicum II)

3. Grade Point Average (GPA):

- Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of **2.7** throughout their time in the program.

Incomplete Policy

The UTRGV School of Social Work follows university policies regarding incomplete grades as described below.

An incomplete (I) grade is a temporary grade given only after the final official drop date for the term and only if:

1. The student is passing the course to date
2. The student will not have completed the required coursework or exam within the allotted time of a regular semester or summer session; and
3. The instructor determines that the reason for the work being incomplete is valid and that the grade of “I” is justified

Incomplete grades are not to be awarded to students who failed to attend or stopped attending classes.

A written agreement between the student and the instructor specifying the work to be made up and the deadline for its accomplishment should be filed in the office of the Department Chair at the time that the “I” is submitted. The work agreed upon between the instructor and the student must be satisfactorily completed and the “I” changed no later than the end of the next long term (Fall or Spring) from the date the “I” was submitted (unless an extension is requested by the instructor and communicated to the Office of the University Registrar) or the grade will convert to a failing grade unless the faculty member identifies an alternate grade to be assigned at the time of submitting the written agreement between the student and faculty member.

Faculty members wishing to assign an Incomplete grade may do so during the regular grading period via ASSIST, otherwise a grade of NR (Not Reported) will appear as the student's grade. Grades of NR may have a negative impact on students' eligibility for financial aid.

For students in the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program, it is essential to:

- Communicate early with your instructor if you anticipate needing an incomplete grade.
- Ensure that any incomplete grade does not interfere with field practicum requirements.
- Adhere to the written agreement and deadlines as outlined in the general policy

Class Attendance

Absences: Students are allowed two absences per semester without impact to their participation grade. Students must not miss mandatory dates such as exam dates or days with presentations.

Request for excused absences: Any student that requires more than two absences must request an excused absence from their instructor. Frequent absences may impact the student's overall grade. Students with frequent absences may be advised to request an incomplete or withdraw to avoid receiving a failing grade in the course.

Drop policy: [Drop/Withdrawal Policy](#)

Request for religious observances: Students who require an absence due to a religious observance should request an excused absence from their instructor. Please see the Accommodations section of this handbook for more information on religious accommodations.

Class cancellation policy: Any communication regarding class being cancelled or moved online will be sent by the instructor through the student's UTRGV email. Students are required to check their UTRGV email frequently for communication from instructors.

Additional university absence policy: [UTRGV Absence Policy](#)

Tardies: Students are allowed up to 2 unexcused tardies per semester. Students who arrive to class 15 minutes after the start time are considered tardy.

Step away/class disruption: Students who have frequent disruptions in their class participation (as defined as more than 2 disruptions for longer than 5 minutes) per class may be subject to a reduction of participation or attendance points. This includes answering phone calls, text messages, tending to caregiving, etc.

Class Participation:

Participation: Students are expected to participate fully in class. Participation includes attending class on time, having camera on and microphone on (for online, synchronous classes), responding to peers and

the instruction in class discussion, not engaging with another activity including work, other classes, trainings, caregiving, driving, etc.

Students taking classes online are expected to have a working camera, working microphone, and working chat feature. Students are expected to turn their camera on at the start of class, when responding to classmates or to the instructor, and at the end of class. Students will be monitored for online engagement using analytics available in the online classroom technology. Students found to be not attentive for more than 20% of the class may be subject to a reduction in participation points. Students are also expected to participate in all polls, quizzes, and other online engagement activities throughout the class.

Technology:

Recording class and requesting transcripts: Students are not allowed to record class in any way, either online or in person, without prior consent from the instructor. Students may not post any content from classes online or in other communication venues. Students who would like to record class or need to record class related to their established accommodation should discuss this with their instructor no later than 3 days before class. Students may request the transcript from online classes prior to their class. Students should feel free to turn on any accessibility feature they require in Zoom or request the instructor to do so.

Artificial Intelligence (AI), Chatbots, and other learning software: Students are responsible for their use of AI and other tech platforms for any use in any course related activities or assignments. Students that elect to utilize any AI or other related software are responsible for fact checking their content against established and reliable sources. Students who do not fact check their assignments may be subject to a reduction of points in the assignment. Misinformation, disinformation, or incorrect facts given to the student using AI or other technology will not be an allowable excuse for restoration of points. Students may not use AI as the primary source or writer of any assignment.

Use of headphones, e readers, or other assistive devices- Students that use any assistive device, through an ADA accommodation or not, are expected to notify their course instructor 3 days prior to the class. Headphones should only be utilized with prior consent from the instructor unless being utilized in online courses.

Email/Cell phone/texting and general internet: All social work students are required to check their university email daily. Failure to check university email will not constitute an excuse for missed information or assignments. Students are required to keep their cell phone, computer, or other smart devices silent during class.

Americans With Disability Act and other Accommodation Requests

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accommodations: Students with a diagnosed disability are encouraged to reach out to the University ADA office to obtain needed accommodations under the ADA section 504. [UTRGV ADA Office](#)

Breastfeeding accommodations: Students who require accommodation for breastfeeding or to express breastmilk should inform their instructor per university policy. [UTRGV Breastfeeding Policy](#)

Prayer or other religious observances: Students who would like to request an accommodation for prayer or for class absences for religious observances that are not covered by the University holiday schedule should first discuss their request with their course instructor. Students may also elect to complete this form if needed: [UTRGV Accommodation Form for Religious Observances](#) .

Other types of accommodation: If a student would like to request an accommodation for a condition or life event that is not covered by the policies above, they should reach out to their course instructor to discuss their request. If they require additional assistance with requesting their accommodation they should contact the director of their program.

Student Conduct, Professional Expectations, and Program Policies

The UTRGV School of Social Work is committed to preparing students for ethical, competent, and professional practice. Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Program are expected to uphold the values outlined in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, including service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence.

Academic success alone is not sufficient for continuation in the program. Students must also demonstrate professional behavior, emotional maturity, and ethical conduct in both classroom and field settings. The following policies outline expectations and procedures related to student conduct, impairment, and other behavioral concerns.

Student Impairment and Behavioral Expectations

Student impairment: Students may not attend class, or their practicum while impaired. If a student comes to class or practicum with signs of impairment, emergency services may be called for the student to receive an evaluation. Follow up with the student will occur after the incident.

Symptoms of acute impairment can be (but are not limited to):

- Facial drooping or noticeable acute physical changes
- Slurring Speech
- Nodding off or falling asleep
- Other signs of physical distress
- Exhibiting signs of psychosis that cannot be managed by the student
- Frequent interpersonal conflicts with classmates, instructors or practicum staff
- Threats of violence towards self or others
- Frequent refusal to complete tasks required to pass the course

Egregious or dangerous behavior: Any student that is exhibiting dangerous or egregious behavior, including yelling, screaming, demeaning, threatening, or exhibiting other types of violence will be immediately dismissed from the class and suspended by the program. Investigation will occur pursuant to university policies. Safety planning and other types of mandatory interventions may be required of the student to return.

Possession of a Firearm: The School of Social Work strongly discourages any possession of a firearm in classes or any on campus activities. In addition, the SSW strongly discourages any images of firearms (either manufactured or actual) in online courses. This is the UTRGV Firearm Policy: [UTRGV Campus Carry Policy](#)

Children in class: All parents and guardians are encouraged to fill out this parenting resource form [Parenting and Guardian Support](#) If students need to have their children present in class, either online or in person, the student should reach out to the instructor prior to class for guidance.

Statement on sharing information from professional, personal or internship experience: Students and faculty may utilize their own life experiences as examples in class. Information shared in class, particularly information not specific to the students' own lived experience, should be shared with caution. De-identification of clients must be always adhered to. There is no expectation of confidentiality within the classroom although students are encouraged to not share information outside of the classroom unless required.

School of Social Work Statement on Background Checks and Screenings:

Substance Use Screenings and other health screenings: The School of Social Work does not require substance use or other background screenings for entrance into the academic program. Prior to the start of the field placement phase of a student's program plan, some agencies may require a student to complete a substance use screening or other type of health screening (TB testing, vaccinations, etc.) before beginning their internship. The University will not facilitate these screenings, nor will they release this information on behalf of the student.

Students that test positive for substance use, legal or illegal, or other screenings may be precluded from completing their internship at their chosen site. Students that have concerns regarding these types of screenings are encouraged to discuss this with the Field Office staff prior to applying to the internship location.

Criminal Background Checks (CBC): The School of Social Work does not conduct criminal background checks prior to entry into the program. However, students may encounter a request or requirement for CBC for some field placements. The Office of Field Education makes every possible effort to secure a field placement site for students. Students enrolling in the field practicum course are required to comply with individual field agency requirements regarding criminal background checks (CBC) prior to the beginning of the field placement and are responsible for any associated costs in completing the requirements if not covered by the field agency or the UTRGV School of Social Work Office of Field Education.

If the CBC reveals a felony conviction or serious misdemeanor an agency may be unwilling to extend a field practicum offer to the student and can negatively impact on the student's ability to continue in the field placement process or completion of their social work degree.

Students with circumstances in their backgrounds that may emerge during the criminal background check will need to discuss the potential implications of these circumstances with the Office of Field Education during their individual interview for a placement opportunity.

Students need to be aware that the circumstances revealed in their CBC may preclude them from the field practicum in the following ways:

- The ability to secure and complete the required Field Placement Experience, as most field placement agencies request criminal background investigations, fingerprint checks, child and/or adult protective services check and/or random drug screens.
- The ability to be considered eligible for licensure as a social worker by the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners which requires that licensure applicants must provide a sworn statement regarding the existence of criminal history which states that certain misdemeanor or felony convictions could preclude the possibility of acquiring one's license to practice social work.
- The ability to secure employment within the social work practice field, as most employers within the social work field require that applicants either possess or be eligible for, a social work license, as well as require criminal background investigations, fingerprint checks, child and/or adult protective services check and/or random drug screens, as a condition for employment.

Steps for Addressing Unprofessional Behavior

Step 1: Informal Faculty Intervention

- Observation: A faculty member or field instructor identifies concerning behavior related to professionalism, ethics, or academic performance.
- Initial Discussion: The faculty member meets with the student to discuss the concern directly.
- Resolution Plan: Together, they develop a plan to address and resolve the issue.
- Documentation: The faculty member keeps personal notes of the conversation and resolution plan.
- Outcome: If the concern is resolved, no formal record is placed in the student's file.

Step 2: Formal Review Initiation

- Escalation: If the concern is not resolved informally, or if the student or faculty member requests further action, a formal review is initiated.
- Referral: The faculty member refers the matter to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities and submits a report via Vaquero Report It.

Step 3: Administrative Review

- Review Process: The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities evaluates the concern using evidence and testimony.
- Meeting: The BSW Program Director (or designee) meets with the student to review the issue.

Step 4: Determination and Outcomes

Based on the review, one or more of the following actions may be taken:

- A. Continuation Without Conditions
 - The concern is resolved and no further action is required.

B. Continuation With Informal Conditions

- Oral or written warning or reprimand.
- Misconduct noted in administrative records.
- Sanctions applied per university policy and/ or School of Social Work recommendations (e.g., behavioral agreement).

C. Continuation With Formal Conditions

- a. Collaboration with the BSW Program Director and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to set specific conditions.
- b. Possible actions include:
 - Development of a performance improvement plan.
 - Probation with monitoring.
 - Referral to counseling or academic support services.
 - Reduced course load or delayed field placement.
 - Temporary withdrawal with the option to reapply.
 - Suspension from the program (e.g., one-year suspension).

Note: Failure to meet formal conditions may result in dismissal from the BSW Program.

D. Dismissal From the Program

- a. The BSW Program Director notifies the appropriate university office.
- b. Dismissal is processed according to university policies and procedures.

Termination from BSW Program

A student can be terminated from the program for not maintaining the required GPA after being given a semester to raise their overall GPA to a minimum of 2.7. BSW students may also be terminated from the program due to confirmed criminal activity, verified dishonesty in their work, assignments, field practicum, grades and/or unprofessional behavior.

Students' Rights on Confidentiality

All procedures relating to the performance review shall be carried out in a manner that will protect the student's right to privacy consistent with federal and state privacy laws. Members of the committee and all other persons who appear at the review meeting are expected to observe the confidential nature of the information made available to them, as well as any discussion held during the meeting. Actions and recommendations of the committee are to be confidential and shared only with those persons involved with the student in educational capacity or University personnel on a need-to-know basis.

The School of Social Work faculty, staff, and field instructors have a right and an obligation to exchange information about students. Such an exchange is necessary because student performance may impact

the operation of any part of the program, integrity of the program in meeting its goals and objectives, student's potential for success, and the safety and well-being of UTRGV Faculty and field agency personnel, other students, and agency clients. The School of Social Work also abides by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which protects the student's educational records and grants specific rights to parents and eligible students.

Student Complaints and Appeals

ACADEMIC APPEALS

Students wishing to appeal final course grades or decisions regarding academic standards should first discuss the matter with the instructor of the class. If no resolution occurs, and the student wishes to pursue the matter further, the student may appeal in writing to the appropriate department chair/director within one long semester, or Summer III long semester, after the disputed grade or decision is issued. The department chair/director will respond in writing to the student within 14 calendar days (excluding holidays) of the receipt of the student's written appeal.

Pursuant appeals will be written and directed within 14 calendar days (excluding holidays) of the date of the department chair/director's decision to the school, college, or division. Upon receipt of the written appeal of the department chair/director's decision, the Dean will appoint a College Academic Appeals Committee. The committee will consist of a panel of three faculty members, two of whom may not be from the department in which the appeal originated. The Dean will notify the student in writing of the date, time and location of the hearing and the names of the members of the panel to take place no less than 14 calendar days of the receipt of the student's appeal. The student and the faculty member involved may appear in person before the panel and present evidence. The hearing will be closed to the public, and no person other than the student, the faculty member involved, and panel members may be present. No person may represent the student or the faculty member except in the event that the instructor is unavailable for an extended period of time (such as due to death, serious illness, or termination of employment with UTRGV). In those cases, the faculty member may be represented by the appropriate department chair.

After the College Academic Appeals Committee has heard the appeal, it will deliberate and come to a decision. The committee's decision will be written, mailed, emailed, or delivered in person, to the student and faculty member within three business days of the close of the hearing. The student may appeal in writing within 14 calendar days to the Dean/director (excluding holidays). The Dean's/director's decision will be final, and it must be mailed, emailed, or delivered in person to the student within 14 calendar days (excluding holidays) of the receipt of the student's written appeal.

Students who may wish to complain or grieve a class that is in progress should utilize the complaint and grievance process outlined in [STU 02-200](#).

Note that a transcript notation that the student dropped or withdrew from a course is not subject to academic appeal through this process. That notation is an indication of enrollment status, not academic performance. Students believing that such a notation is incorrect who wish to appeal can do so through the [UTRGV Strategic Enrollment and Student Affairs appeals portal](#).

Please see Appendix K: UTRGV Student Complaint Procedures for additional information.

Whistleblower policy:

Whistle Blower: The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Social Work is dedicated to supporting students and other stakeholders in transparency and full reporting of possible violations of local, state, and federal law. Furthermore, the program is committed to the NASW Code of Ethics and requires all students, faculty, staff, and program stakeholders to act in accordance with the profession's ethical standards.

If a student believes, in good faith, that the school, program, or their internship agency is acting in a way that violates the professions ethical standards, or violates any laws, they are encouraged to report that to the Director of the Field Office or Dean of the School of Social Work.

If a report is made, the school commits to the following procedures:

1. All reports will be investigated. In conducting its investigations, the UTRGV School of Social Work will strive to keep the identity of the complaining individual as confidential as possible, while conducting an adequate review and investigation.
2. The student will be free from retaliation or other consequences from making a Whistle Blower Report
3. The student will be fully notified of the outcome of the investigation possible within university policy
4. If a complaint is made against the student's field placement, the student may request to be removed from the placement and secure a new placement, per the policies listed in this handbook.

Student Involvement

Social Work Student Association

Both pre-social work students and social work majors are encouraged to join the Social Work Student Association (SWSA). The guiding principle of the SWSA is "Making a Difference in People's Lives". Its purpose is to promote awareness about the profession of social work in the community, as well as on campus, and to foster unity among social work students through mutual support and advocacy. The organization offers students opportunities to enhance personal growth through sharing and working together, and to learn about organizational dynamics and leadership.

The student organization operates through a committee structure which offers social work students many opportunities to participate in community service activities, fundraising, student support, student recruitment, and community and university events. (See SWSA By-laws, Appendix 43). Its Executive Committee includes the Officers of the organization, as well as the Chairperson of its six standing

committees, ensuring broad-based decision-making and information sharing. Elections are held each semester.

Students may join the organization at any time during the year by contacting SWSA's Recruitment Committee Chair or Treasurer or via VLink. A small membership fee is required. The combination of membership dues and special fundraising projects helps finance lunch meetings, as well as student trips to NASW conferences or Social Work Legislative Day activities in Austin and/or other functions.

Phi Alpha Mu Social Work Honor Society

Undergraduate and graduate students have an opportunity to apply for induction to the Phi Alpha Mu Social Work Honor Society. To qualify for membership the student must meet the following eligibility requirements:

Undergraduate level:

1. Acceptance in the BSW Program and completion of nine semester hours of required social work courses and at least 37.5% of the total hours/ credits required for the degree
2. Ranked in the top 35% of their class.

Graduate Level:

1. Enrolled in a graduate program in social work and completed 9 semester hours of required social work graduate courses and at least 37.5% of the total hours/ credits required for the graduate degree whichever is later achieved.
2. Ranked in the top 35% of their class.

Collegiate Members are admitted upon meeting criteria and by invitation only from the local collegiate chapter at the college or university where the Collegiate Member attends school at time of membership.

Student Participation in Department Committees

BSW students may select representatives to serve on Social Work Department Committees that review department policies, course offerings and course schedules, BSW degree plan requirements, student handbook, program materials, and participate in searches for new social work faculty. Students may serve alongside faculty on the BSW Program Committee, department committees engaged in curriculum review and planning for the various social work core classes and in Faculty Searches.

Student representatives are recruited from the membership of the Social Work Student Association and nonmembers, through volunteering, and faculty recruitment. Besides providing practical input, representatives may poll and inform students regarding important programmatic decisions. The social work faculty regard student input as essential to informed decision making in the department.

Appendices

Appendix A: 2022 CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

Appendix B: BSW Degree Plan

Appendix C: BSW Program Application

Appendix D: Notification Letter to Students

Appendix E: NASW Code of Ethics

Appendix F: Academic Dismissal and Academic Probation and Suspension

Appendix G: UTRGV Undergraduate Transfer Credit Policy

Appendix H: Instructions for Submitting Request for Course Substitution and Waivers Online

Appendix I: Instructions for Submitting Petition for Degree Requirements

Appendix J: Student Conduct and Discipline

Appendix K: Student Complaint Procedure

Appendix A: Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) 2022

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social workers:

- a. make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;
- b. demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- c. use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- d. use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social workers:

- a. advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and

- b. engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

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

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

Social workers:

- a. demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
- b. demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.

Social workers:

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

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects wellbeing, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings.

Social workers:

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

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

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Social workers:

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

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

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional

collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making.

Social workers:

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

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

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

Social workers:

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

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

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social workers:

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

Appendix B: BSW Degree Plan

Social Work, Bachelor of Social Work

Program Overview

This program leads to a profession which requires an occupational license as defined under Texas Occupations Code 58.001. This requires that all applicants seeking to become licensed must undergo a criminal background check prior to licensure.

The School of Social Work at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley offers a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree program which is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The BSW is a professional degree built on a liberal arts foundation with social and behavioral sciences coursework. Graduates of our program will qualify to take the Texas licensing examination to become a Licensed Baccalaureate Social Work (LBSW).

Admission requirements for this program beyond university admission requirements.

- 2.7 cumulative GPA
- At least 30 hours of University General Education Core Curriculum requirements, with a 2.0 GPA
- SOCW 2361 Introduction to Social Work, with a grade of 'C' or higher,
- 6 hours of freshmen Rhetoric and Composition, with a grade of 'C' or higher (ENGL 1301 and ENGL 1302)
- 3 hours of college algebra or higher-level mathematics, with a grade of 'C' or better.

Progression requirements for this program.

- A minimum grade of 'C' is required for SOCW 3323 (Practice I) as a prerequisite for enrollment in SOCW 4301 (Social Work with Groups), SOCW 4302 (Social Work with Organizations and Communities) and SOCW 4303 (Social Work with Families).
- A minimum grade 'C' is required in SOCW 4301, SOCW 4302, and SOCW 4303 in order to progress to SOCW 4619 (Generalist Practicum Block) or SOCW 4354 (Generalist Practicum I) and SOCW 4355 (Generalist Practicum II)

Core Curriculum - 48hours

The Core Curriculum serves as a broad foundation for the undergraduate degree. All candidates for a bachelor's degree must achieve core student learning outcomes, including communication, critical thinking, empirical and quantitative skills, teamwork, personal responsibility and social responsibility, by completing courses within each category or component area of the Core Curriculum as outlined below.

The University has approved specific courses that satisfy Core Curriculum Requirements. Approved courses can be found on the Core Curriculum Page. Students seeking the most efficient way to complete the core curriculum and major or minor requirements are advised to take approved courses that can fulfill both requirements. Although core curriculum courses can also be used to fulfill major or minor requirements, earned credits hours are only applied once.

The courses listed below fulfill core curriculum and major requirements. Students who have completed a core curriculum category with courses other than those listed below will still be required to take the listed course(s) to meet major requirements.

020 Mathematics - 3 hours

Choose one:

MATH 1314	College Algebra	3
	Or	
MATH 1414	College Algebra	4
MATH 1342	Elementary Statistical Methods	3
MATH 1324	Mathematics for Business and Social Sciences	3
MATH 1343	Introduction to Biostatistics	3
MATH 2412	Precalculus	4
MATH 2413	Calculus I	4

080 Social and Behavioral Sciences - 3 hours

Choose one:

SOCI 1301	Introduction to Sociology	3
PSYC 2301	General Psychology	3

Major Requirements - 72 hours

Core Curriculum – 48 credits	
SOCW 2361 – Introduction to Social Work	3
SOCW 2362 – Social Welfare Institutions	3
SOCW 3375 – Social Work Statistics	3
SOCW 3310 – Professional Communication in Social Work	3
SOCW 4311 – Social Work Research	3
SOCW 3321 – Human Behavior and the Social Environment I	3
SOCW 3323 – Practice with Individuals	3
SOCW 4303 – Social Work with Families	3
SOCW 3322 – Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	3
SOCW 3317 – Diversity in Social Work	3
SOCW 3314 – Connecting Social Work through Policy Change	3
SOCW 4301 – Social Work with Groups	3
SOCW 3363 – De-escalation and Crisis Intervention	3
SOCW 4302 – Social Work with Organizations and Communities	3
SOCW 4354 – Generalist Practicum I and	3
SOCW 4355 – Generalist Practicum II	3
<i>or</i>	
SOCW 4619-Generalist Practicum Block	6
	48
Spanish Requirement – 6 credits	
Choose any two Spanish language electives	6
	6
Advanced Support Courses – 9 credits	
SOCI 4352 – Social Stratification	3
PSYC 4313 – Abnormal Psychology	3
SOCI 4313 – Race/Ethnic Relations <i>or</i> SOCI 4323 – Mexican American Experience	3
	9

Upper-Level Electives – 9 credits	
Choose 3 classes from any advanced (3000-4999) course in CRIJ, REHS, SOCW, PSYC, SOCI, POLS, or ANTH	9
	9

Appendix C: BSW Program Application



School of Social Work
APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION INTO BSW DEGREE PROGRAM
Submit Application to the Social Work Department Office

Print Name: _____ UTRGV SID#: _____

DOB: _____ Gender: _____ Ethnicity: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Cellular Phone #: _____ Alternate Phone #: _____

UTRGV Email address: _____ UTRGV Campus: _____

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION INTO BSW MAJOR

- _____ 1. University College requirement of 30 hours, including.
 - _____ Six hours (6) of freshman English 1301& 1302 (English 1305 is not accepted) with a “C” or better.
 - _____ Math 1314 or higher-level math, with a “C” or better.
- _____ 2. SOCW 2361, Introduction to Social Work with a “C” or better.
- _____ 3. Sophomore, Junior, or Senior standing.
- _____ 4. 2.7 cumulative (overall) grade point average (GPA) / or better at time of application.
- _____ 5. Copy of unofficial transcript attached to this application.
- _____ 6. No incomplete grades on transcript.
- _____ 7. Personal Statement (Please use template in BSW tab)
- _____ 8. 1 Letter of Recommendation (Please use template in BSW tab)
- _____ 9.

Must Complete this section:

Have you ever been convicted of a Misdemeanor or Felony (Underline) If so, when did it occur?

a. Nature of misdemeanor/felony:

b. Were you convicted or placed on probation?

All applicants must understand that they will have to take and pass the Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker examination as well as passing an online Jurisprudence Exam and a criminal background check. Should you have answered yes to committing a misdemeanor or felony it may affect your ability to be licensed in the State of Texas.

In compliance with the Social Work admissions requirements, I hereby submit this application for admission into the Baccalaureate Social Work Degree Program.

Student's Signature

Date

Decision:

Admission into BSW Program:

Date: _____

BSW Program Director Signature: _____

Denial:

Reason: _____

Date: _____

BSW Program Director Signature: _____

Appendix D: Notification Letter to Students

Acceptance Letter:

Congratulations!

You have been accepted into the BSW Program: (Please read thoroughly)

The department will forward the Change of Major to the University Registrar's office to change your status from **pre-social work to social work major**. The department will also issue an official degree plan, which will be kept in your file. For those of you who have declared a major other than social work, please contact U-Central to do a change of major.

Please make plans to attend a **Mandatory** meeting of new BSW majors on. **This meeting is Currently To be Determined we will let you know the Date / Time once Decided. There will be no make-up sessions regarding this meeting.** This notice of meeting will give you ample time to make necessary arrangements so that you can come to the meeting. Upon receipt of this notification, begin working on your plans to come to this meeting and how you will handle your work schedule.

Initial advising will be with Ms. Heather Vitek – BSW Program Director. To schedule an appointment with Ms. Vitek please click link below:

<https://calendly.com/heather-vitek/advising>

You must receive advisement before you can register if not done so. Schedule early to avoid not being able to register.

Every attempt will be made to use technology to communicate with BSW Program students for exchange of information on an as-needed basis. **In all BSW correspondence, always include your student ID#, to better assist you. Please keep your personal information updated on our on-line program services (ASSIST) and check your e-mail on a regular basis. It would be very helpful if you would notify Dalia Danielle Reyna at 956-665-2981 of your new address and phone number.**

To remain in the program, you must maintain 2.7 cumulative GPA (overall) or above for continuous enrollment in the BSW program. If during your course of study in social work, we ask that you let us know so that we can inform you of your status in the BSW program.

We hope that as a social work student, you will consider joining one or more professional social work organizations, such as the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). You may also want to join the UTRGV Social Work Student Association (SWSA) or Phi Alpha Mu Honor Society. Membership in these

organizations allows you to: 1) participate in professional activities; and 2) contribute to the community and the experience in self-government.

On behalf of the Founding Dean - Dr. Luis Torres-Hostos, Acting Associate Dean of Academic Affairs - Dr. Leticia Villarreal Sosa, Faculty, staff, and myself, we welcome you to the BSW program. If you have any questions, please call us at (956) 665-3575.

Sincerely,

Heather Vitek, LMSW

BSW Program Director
School of Social Work

Denial Letter:

Hello _____,

We regret to inform you that after reviewing your application, you have been denied admission into the BSW Program at this time. The review determined that you have not met the following requirements:

☐ ☐ 2.7 cumulative GPA for 2021-2022 Catalog Year or 3.0 cumulative for 2022-2023 Catalog Year

☐ ☐ At least 30 hours of University Core Curriculum requirements, with a 2.0 GPA

☐ ☐ SOCW 2361 Introduction to the Social Work Profession, with a grade of “C” or higher

☐ ☐ 6 hours of freshman English (ENG 1301 & 1302), with a grade of “C” or higher

☐ ☐ 3 hours of college algebra or higher-level mathematics, with a grade of “C” or higher

We thank you for your interest in our BSW program and encourage you to reapply after you satisfy the admission requirements indicated with a checkmark. Therefore, we are referring you back to the Academic Advisement Center for academic enhancement and advisement. Should you wish to speak to the BSW Program Director to discuss what steps you should take to meet the requirements of the program, please contact Ms. Dalia Danielle Reyna at 956-665-3575 to schedule an appointment.

I look forward to meeting you and discussing your application with you and what you need to do to be accepted into the BSW program. Please do not hesitate to call us to schedule an appointment.

Sincerely,

Heather Vitek, LMSW

BSW Program Director
School of Social Work

Appendix E: NASW Code of Ethics

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

Value: Service

Ethical Principle: Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

Value: Social Justice

Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person

Ethical Principle: Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

Value: Importance of Human Relationships

Ethical Principle: Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Value: Integrity

Ethical Principle: Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers should take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Value: Competence

Ethical Principle: Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

Taken from <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

Appendix F: Academic Dismissal and Academic Probation and Suspension

Academic Dismissal:

Students are required to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.00 or above to remain in good standing (1.70 in case of freshman and 1.80 in case of Sophomore) for the university. Persistent substandard academic performance may result in probation, followed by academic suspension. An academic suspension may be appealed if the student feels that the circumstances warrant review or special consideration. The policy for determining scholastic probation or suspension is found in the Undergraduate Catalog under Continuous Enrollment Policies. Students can choose to do a written appeal or an online appeal.

The BSW Program Director or Administrative Assistant upon receipt of the GPA report on all School of Social Work students (PreSocial Work students and Admitted BSW students) will review the report to determine if there are students whose GPA do not meet the enrollment requirement. Those students who do not meet the required GPA will be sent an email to inform them of this information. They are asked to request an appointment with the BSW Program Director in person, via Zoom or by phone. Should the Program Director not hear from the student, an email will be sent alerting them of their GPA and that they have the current semester to bring their GPA to the required amount. If the student does not bring their GPA to the required amount, they will be removed from the program. They may reapply when they meet the GPA requirement.

Should a student commit a felony/criminal act or a verified act of dishonesty, they will be removed/terminated from the program. The student will be asked to meet with the BSW Program Director and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to discuss this matter. The meeting will be documented in an email to the student. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the BSW Program Director will meet to discuss the meeting with the student and to decide whether the student should be terminated from the program or remain in the program. Consultation will be made with Student Rights and Responsibilities and any appropriate department within the University. Should the decision be made to terminate the student from the program, an in-person meeting will be requested via email with the student to discuss the decision. If a response is not received, an email will be sent to the student regarding the decision. The student will be notified of their right to seek assistance from Student Rights and Responsibilities.

BSW students have access to the BSW Student Handbook and therefore are expected to understand the policies and procedures. Those students who are involved in a situation that could lead to termination from the program will be encouraged to review the policies and procedures in the Handbook. They will also be referred to the UTRGV Student Policies Publication, Student Rights and Responsibilities, and the UTRGV Undergraduate Catalog.

Undergraduate Student Standing and Probation

ACADEMIC STANDING

Undergraduate students are expected to meet certain minimal academic standards throughout their postsecondary education. Students who fail to maintain these minimum standards will be placed on academic probation or academic suspension, as appropriate. In determining whether a student will be

placed on academic probation or suspension, all grades earned by the student will be included in GPA calculations. If a student has attempted a course more than once, only the last grade is calculated into the GPA, regardless of whether the most recent grade is higher or lower than previously earned grade(s).

ACADEMIC PROBATION AND SUSPENSION POLICY

The Academic Probation and Suspension Policy for undergraduate students at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley is as follows:

1. Academic probation or suspension will be determined each regular (fall or spring) semester based on the student's current term and total institutional Grade Point Average (GPA).
2. An undergraduate student will be placed on academic probation when the student's institutional GPA falls below 2.0.
3. An undergraduate student will be placed on academic suspension for one regular semester whenever the student enters a semester on academic probation and does not remove him/herself from academic probation by achieving an institutional GPA of 2.0 or greater. The student will continue on probation if the student's current term GPA is 2.0 or above for a fall or spring semester.

Academic Status and GPA Criteria

Good Standing - Institutional GPA is 2.0 or above

Placed on Academic Probation - Institutional GPA has dropped below 2.0.

Continued Academic Probation - Previously on Academic Probation, institutional GPA is below 2.0, and current term GPA is 2.0 or above.

Academic Suspension - Previously on Academic Probation, institutional GPA is below 2.0, and current term GPA is below 2.0.

4. A student on academic suspension may enroll for summer sessions for the purpose of raising the institutional GPA to the level required for good standing for the student's classification (Once placed on suspension for a semester, the suspension cannot be removed or changed to probation on the basis that the current term GPA is a 2.0 or higher.) Removal from suspension can be most efficiently accomplished by enrolling only for courses in which the student has previously earned a low or failing grade.
5. A student on academic suspension who raises the institutional GPA to the level required for good standing will be reinstated as a student in good standing.
6. If a student who has been suspended for failure to meet academic probation requirements feels that unusual circumstances warrant a review, the student may submit an academic suspension appeal online by the deadline stated in the notification email to affected students from the Office of the University Registrar. The appeal is submitted through the Enrollment Services Online Appeal Portal according to instructions in the email notice. The appeal must detail the reasons for alleging that circumstances warrant special consideration and should articulate the student's plan for achieving academic success. The committee may reinstate a student who has not served the period of academic suspension when convinced the best interests of both the university and the student will be served by such action. Final decisions will be made by the committee and communicated to students by email within thirty days of submission of the appeal, or before the first day of classes in the next regular semester (fall or spring), whichever comes first. Submission

of an appeal for Academic Suspension does not also serve as an appeal for meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress with the Office of Financial Aid.

All students are responsible for knowing whether they are eligible to continue enrollment at the university. An ineligible student who nevertheless registers or has registered prior to completion of the semester for which academic standing is determined will be dropped from classes and may not attend those or other classes. Students will not receive special consideration for lack of knowledge of academic standing including failure to check campus email, regardless of whether the student registered and paid tuition and/or fees. Similarly, credit will not be awarded for any classes the student was ineligible to take as a result of his or her academic standing.

STUDENT-ATHLETE ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

To be in compliance with NCAA Division I academic eligibility requirements for athletic participation and/or athletically-related financial aid, a student-athlete must meet institutional, conference, and NCAA D1 initial and "progress toward degree" requirements including institutional grade point requirements as stated on the [Academic Suspension and Probation website](#).

Appendix G: UTRGV Undergraduate Transfer Credit Policy

Applicants who last attended a college or university other than The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley after high school completion may seek admission as a transfer student. Applicants must be in good standing or have a status that allows them to return to the transferring institution.

APPLICATION DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

1. **Transfer Application.** The application is available at <https://applytexas.org>.
2. **Official College Transcripts from All Colleges and Universities Attended.** Transcripts must not be older than 6 months. Students who are currently enrolled at another institution should request a transcript to be sent with the coursework completed to date, followed by a final official transcript to be sent upon completion of the current semester. If a domestic applicant attended a foreign college or university, a foreign credential evaluation will be required. See Evaluation of Foreign Credentials section under [International Undergraduate Student Admission](#) for more details.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED AFTER ADMISSION

1. **Texas Success Initiative (TSI).** TSI approved test scores or proof of exemption for students who plan to enroll in college-level coursework. Test scores from approved TSI exams or TSI exemption will not be used as a basis for admission but will be used to determine placement.
2. **Meningitis Vaccination.** Medical record documenting Meningitis Vaccination administered within 5 years prior to the start of the application term or exemption will not be used for admission purposes but is a requirement for enrollment for students under 22 years of age. Please check with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions for full details.

Transfer students who have fewer than 24 earned college-level hours must also submit:

1. **ACT or SAT Scores.** For the current application cycle, UTRGV remains test optional. Methods in which UTRGV will accept test scores: (a) sent directly from the testing agency or (b) on official high school transcript. The UTRGV school code is ACT 6991 and SAT 6568.
2. **Final High School Transcript or High School Equivalency.** Final high school transcript indicating graduation date, class rank and size (if applicable), GPA, and high school graduation plan (if applicable). The transcript must be received directly from the school or may be delivered by the student in a sealed envelope from the institution. For high school equivalency, a copy of the certificate and the high school transcript with any coursework completed before earning the equivalency certificate are needed.

All documents submitted become property of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Documents submitted will not be returned to the student.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Assured admission is in place for transfer applicants who have earned an associate's degree from an accredited college. For applicants with 24 earned college-level hours or more, a cumulative GPA of 2.0 (on a 4.0 scale) is required on all transfer coursework attempted. For applicants with less than 24 earned college-level hours, the freshman admission requirements must be followed in addition to a minimum cumulative college GPA of 2.0 (essays not required). Applicants must be in good standing at their previous institution(s) to be considered for admission at UTRGV.

OUTREACH TO PROSPECTIVE TRANSFER STUDENTS

In an effort to help facilitate the transfer process from two-year and four-year institutions to UTRGV, several programs and resources have been established to assist transfer students.

UTRGV provides a host of transfer resources such as the Transfer Equivalency Guide found under the “Resources” tab at my.utrgv.edu to assist transfer students in evaluating how their existing course credits might transfer to UTRGV. Additional information on transfer coursework can be found at www.tccns.org.

For more information on transferring to UTRGV, please visit the Office of Undergraduate Admissions website at www.utrgv.edu/admissions or call 1-888-882-4026.

TRANSFER OF UNDERGRADUATE CREDITS

It is the student's responsibility to submit official transcripts from all the post-secondary institutions attended before they enroll at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). Official college transcripts are also required for coursework taken while in high school or while attending UTRGV concurrently with another post-secondary institution. Transcripts must be sent to UTRGV directly from the transfer institution or hand-delivered by the student in a school-issued sealed envelope to be considered official.

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions, in consultation with academic departments, is responsible for awarding transfer credit. An evaluation of transfer credit is completed for undergraduate degree-seeking applicants at the time of admission. Students are responsible for reviewing their transfer credit evaluations by accessing their Advising Course History and their DegreeWorks on ASSIST. Students should consult with their Academic Advisor regarding concerns about how transfer credit applies to their degree within their first year of enrollment at UTRGV to ensure accuracy in degree progression.

UTRGV will review transfer credit for all college-level academic coursework, regardless of grade or total number of credits being transferred. The grading policies of UTRGV will be applied to all coursework transferring from other institutions. The applicability of transfer coursework to a student's degree plan will depend on degree requirements. Most academic transfer courses with passing grades are applicable towards the student's degree at UTRGV. One exception to this rule is when degree requirements require a higher grade, which would apply equally whether the course was completed at UTRGV or a transferring institution. Transfer courses are not individually listed on official transcripts issued by UTRGV.

Transfer of college-level academic coursework or recognition of degrees from another institution by UTRGV involves at least three considerations in addition to the guidelines and practices recommended by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO):

1. The educational quality of the institution from which the student transfers.
2. The comparability of the nature, content and level of credit earned to that offered by UTRGV.
3. The appropriateness and applicability of credit earned to the programs offered by UTRGV.

UTRGV accepts transfer credit from institutions of higher education with an institutional accreditation according to the U.S. Department of Education. In some circumstances, course credit earned at institutions undergoing accreditation or from foreign institutions may be accepted.

Some special circumstances regarding the transfer or non-transfer of credit to UTRGV are listed as follows:

1. **Second Undergraduate Degrees:** Refer to the Multiple Degrees section of the Undergraduate Catalog for more information.
2. **Quarter-based institutions:** UTRGV operates on a semester-hour system, therefore, quarter hours will be converted to semester credit hours.
3. **Lecture and lab course combinations:** Transfer courses for which the lecture and lab are offered separate at the transfer institution, but UTRGV only offers a combined course will be given elective credit and a course substitution may be required. (i.e., BIOL 1306/1106 vs BIOL 1406)
4. **Incomplete Grades:** Incomplete grades are kept as incomplete until a letter grade has been posted by the transferring institution.
5. **Life Experience:** No credit will be awarded for life experience.
6. **Remedial Courses:** Courses such as remedial or developmental reading and math, speed reading, remedial science and orientation are not transferable.
7. **Terminal Courses:** Terminal courses offered at many two-year institutions are not offered for the purpose of transfer to four-year institutions and usually are clearly labeled in the college catalog as being non-transferable. Examples of terminal courses are auto mechanics, machine shop, electricity, data processing and welding.
8. **Vocational/Technical Courses:** Coursework typically described as vocational or technical are not designed for transfer into university curricula even when courses have been taken at a two-year institution as part of a certificate program or an Associate of Applied Science degree. In Texas, such courses are organized in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM). UTRGV generally does not accept WECM or similar courses for transfer. Exceptions are only considered when content is substantially like subjects/courses offered at UTRGV as demonstrated by a review of the course description and learning outcomes. Exceptions are approved as part of standard curriculum approval processes at UTRGV.
9. **Faith-Related Coursework:** Religious courses of a doctrinal or denominational character (sacraments, Christian approaches to missions, etc.) are nontransferable.

TEXAS COMMON COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM (TCCNS)

UTRGV participates in the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS) which aids students in the transfer of general academic courses between colleges and universities throughout Texas. Common courses are freshman and sophomore academic credit courses identified as common by TCCNS member institutions. The TCCNS system ensures that if the student takes courses designated as common, they are accepted as transfer with credit. A list of courses UTRGV has identified as common and their TCCNS equivalents are listed in the undergraduate catalog.

Non-TCCNS Courses

Transfer coursework not part of the TCCNS inventory is evaluated on a course-by-course basis by an admissions staff member to determine if there is an equivalent course at UTRGV. Admissions staff analyzes course descriptions, content, quality, and comparability to UTRGV courses. If a course is found to be equivalent to a UTRGV course and it does not exist in the system as an equivalent, it will be created. The course must be of the same level and number of credits. A lower-level course at the transfer institution cannot be given an upper-level UTRGV equivalent, and an upper-level transfer course cannot be given a lower-level UTRGV equivalent. If the equivalent of a required upper-division UTRGV course is completed at an accredited institution as a lower-division course, the course need not be repeated, but another upper-division course, approved by the student's advisor, must be completed at UTRGV in substitution. If the admissions staff member cannot determine if the course is equivalent to a UTRGV

course, they may consult with the appropriate department official. An electronic request is sent to the department for review. The department will review and respond with a decision. If the course is not equivalent to a UTRGV course but the discipline and level is offered at UTRGV, it may transfer as a general credit under such discipline (i.e. HIST 1000, BIOL 3000, etc.), otherwise, the course may be transferred as general elective credit according to the level of the course (i.e. ELAC 1000, ELAC 2000, etc). A general credit may in some situations be used to meet a degree requirement. Credit is not given for duplicated courses, except in specific circumstances such as but not limited to Special topics and Music courses.

CREDIT FOR MILITARY EXPERIENCE

In accordance with Texas Education Code, Section 51.3042, eligible former armed forces members admitted as undergraduates or readmitted as undergraduates (after having withdrawn to perform military service) are given course credit for all required physical education courses and for additional semester credit hours, not to exceed 12, satisfying any elective course requirements for courses outside the student's degree program. Credits will be reflected as transfer credit on the student's academic record.

Eligible veterans must graduate from an accredited public or private high school, or a U.S. Department of Defense operated high school, and be honorably discharged from the U.S. armed forces after completion of at least two years of service or discharged because of disability.

To award the credit, students must complete a Military Service Credit Request form and must provide proof of eligibility (i.e., DD214 or disability discharge documentation).

CREDIT FROM FOREIGN INSTITUTIONS

Students that attended institutions outside the U.S. are required to have their credits evaluated at the student's expense through one of the following agencies: **The Evaluation Company (previously SPANTRAN)**, **Foreign Credentials Service of America (FCSA)**, **World Education Services (WES)**, or **International Education Evaluation (IEE)**.

Evaluations must be received directly from the agency and include a list of the courses and grades, in addition to the grade point average and degrees earned. Elective credit is generally granted for foreign courses. Students can request a credit review for possible equivalency to a UTRGV course by providing the Office of Undergraduate Admissions with a copy of the original foreign transcript, certified English translation for the course description, and course syllabus if these documents are not included in their foreign credential evaluation file sent to UTRGV by the agencies.

An evaluation may be waived on a case-by-case basis if the foreign institution is accredited by an organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the official foreign transcript is issued in English by the foreign institution. Waiver is not applicable to students with a foreign degree.

Courses taken at language training centers or language institutes are not transferable.

CREDIT BY EXAM

UTRGV offers college credit by examination to qualified students through **approved examinations**. Students may apply to their degree plan up to 30 hours of undergraduate credit by examination through the following programs:

- Advanced Placement (AP) Tests
- International Baccalaureate (IB) exams

- College Level Examination Program (CLEP)

A list of available credits and the process to petition the credits may be found in the UTRGV Undergraduate Admissions website. Students must request official scores to be sent directly to UTRGV by the Testing agency. Credit posts to the student's permanent record after census day of the student's first term of enrollment. Credit by exam is accepted as credit only (CR) and does not affect the student's cumulative grade point average.

Non-traditional Credit Providers

UTRGV does not accept credit from companies/organizations that offer or sell courses for college credit even when those courses have been evaluated and endorsed by the American Council on Education (ACE). ACE is a third-party credit evaluator for learning that occurs outside of an institution of higher education. UTRGV does not participate in a partnership, nor does it have an agreement to accept credit from any non-traditional credit provider. If a transfer student has course credit from a non-traditional credit provider on the transfer transcript, UTRGV will not accept the credit. UTRGV will only accept credit earned through **institutionally approved AP, IB, or CLEP documented on the transfer transcript.**

TRANSFERABILITY OF EXCHANGE OR STUDY ABROAD COURSES

It is highly recommended that UTRGV students planning on participating in Exchange or Study Abroad programs email the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at admissions@utrgv.edu to address the transferability of the courses prior to finalizing their program participation. For applicability of credit to their degree plan, students must consult with the respective Academic department overseeing their major.

TRANSFER EQUIVALENCY RECONSIDERATION

Students may request reconsideration of transfer credit equivalencies within their first year of enrollment at UTRGV when coursework is evaluated as elective credit. Requests for reconsideration can be emailed to admissions@utrgv.edu through the student's UTRGV email address and must include the course being requested for reevaluation, course description, and syllabus. Appealing a transfer equivalency decision does not guarantee a different outcome. Degree applicability concerns must be addressed to the student's Academic Advisor or Academic department overseeing the major.

DISPUTES FOR LOWER DIVISION COURSES

UTRGV follows the process established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) regarding transfer disputes for lower-division courses from Texas institutions of higher education (see definition of institutions in the Texas Education Code, §61.003).

If UTRGV does not accept academic lower-division course credit earned by a student at another institution of higher education, UTRGV shall give written notice to the student and to the sending institution that it intends to deny the transfer of the course credit and shall include in that notice the reasons for the denial. The student may dispute the denial of credit by contacting the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at UTRGV. The two institutions and the student shall attempt to resolve the transfer of the course credit in accordance with the rules and guidelines of THECB. If the student or the sending institution is not satisfied with the resolution of the credit transfer dispute, the student or the sending institution may notify the Commissioner in writing of the request for transfer dispute resolution.

UTRGV shall notify the Commissioner in writing of its denial and the reasons for the denial not later than the 45th day after the date UTRGV provided the required notice of the transfer credit denial to the student. The Commissioner or the Commissioner's designee shall make the final determination about a credit transfer dispute and give written notice of the determination to the student and institutions.

Appendix H: Instructions for Submitting Request for Course Substitution and Waivers Online

Instructions for Submitting Requests for Course Substitutions & Waivers Online

[Course Substitution and Waivers Portal](#)

If you need to initiate a course substitution or waiver, please [contact your Academic Advisor](#). All requests will need to be submitted by your academic advisor through the online portal to officially petition for review of your degree requirements.

Your Academic Advisor will follow these 4 easy steps (taking course substitution for example) to initiate the process:

- **Step 1:** Fill in the basic information
- **Step 2:** Enter course substitution
- **Step 3:** Upload documents (Optional)
- **Step 4:** Verify department chair or designee and submit

After the request is submitted, students will be able to see the request by logging into the [Course Substitution and Waivers Portal](#). The request will be displayed under “My Requests” Tab with all the detailed information, including the full workflow path. The current pending approver can be viewed from the View Detail page.

Waiver requests are similar to that of course substitutions with a little variation but can easily be completed following the same steps.

Appendix I: Instructions for Submitting Petition for Degree Requirements

Petition for Degree Requirements Online Portal

If you need to initiate a course substitution or waiver, please [contact your Academic Advisor](#). All requests will need to be submitted by your academic advisor through the online portal to officially petition for review of your degree requirements.

Your Academic Advisor will follow these 4 easy steps (taking course substitution for example) to initiate the process:

- **Step 1:** Fill the basic information
- **Step 2:** Enter course substitution
- **Step 3:** Upload supporting documentation
- **Step 4:** Verify department chair or designee and submit

After the request is submitted, students will be able to see the request by logging into the [Petition for Degree Requirements Portal](#). The request will be displayed under “My Requests” Tab with all the detailed information, including the full workflow path. Current pending approver can be viewed from the View Detail page.

Waiver requests are similar to that of course substitutions with a little variation, but can easily be completed following the same steps.

Appendix J: Student Conduct and Discipline

The purpose of this policy is to provide students fair notice of standards of conduct considered unacceptable at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) and which may be the basis for disciplinary action, and to provide procedures to be followed in deciding student disciplinary cases (including the appeals process). The conduct described in this policy is not intended to be a complete list of conduct punishable by disciplinary action.

For details regarding specific policies and standards of conduct, please visit <https://www.utrgv.edu/hop/policies/stu-02-100.pdf>

Appendix K: Student Complaint Procedures

STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Purpose

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley endeavors to provide fair and objective procedures for hearing student complaints. Students are protected from coercion, intimidation, interference, harassment, retaliation, or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation.

Student Advisement for Concerns/Complaints

University policies and procedures direct students about how to file a complaint. The applicable policy will depend on the nature of the complaint. If a student has questions about the applicable policy, the Office for Student Rights and Responsibilities, located in the University Center, Rm. 315, on the Edinburg Campus and in Cavalry, Rm. 205 on the Brownsville Campus, can assist a student who has questions regarding existing policies and procedures. Methods to file complaints are outlined more fully in the Handbook of Operating Procedures.

UTRGV Complaint Process

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Texas Administrative Code ([19 TAC § 1.110-1.120](#)) require The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley to provide a student complaint procedure that complies with the U.S. Department of Education’s “Program Integrity” regulations as part of UTRGV’s eligibility for Title IV federal funds. The THECB complaint process may be found [here](#).

Students wishing to file a formal complaint under the THECB process must ensure they have first brought their complaint to UTRGV’s attention through UTRGV’s complaint processes. Students may submit complaints through [Vaqueros Report It](#). If the matter is unresolved after exhausting UTRGV’s complaint processes, the student may then file a formal complaint with THECB.

Students making a complaint to the THECB may submit required forms and supporting documentation in PDF format by email to studentcomplaints@theeb.state.tx.us, or by regular mail to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Office of General Counsel, P.O. Box 12788, Austin, TX 78711-2788. Original documents should not be submitted, as the THECB cannot return documents received.

Accreditation-related complaints regarding UTRGV’s accreditation may be made to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) under its complaint procedures. A complainant should complete SACSCOC’s Complaint Form and send two signed copies to the President, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097. The details of the SACSCOC complaint process explain that it is intended to address significant, documented, alleged non-compliance with SACSCOC accreditation standards, policies, or procedures. Complainants are expected to have attempted to resolve the issue through UTRGV’s complaint processes before filing a complaint with SACSCOC.