

THE UNIVERSITY OF
MEMPHIS®

School of Social Work

Doctor of Social Work

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

School of Social Work

Doctor of Social Work (DSW)

Student Handbook

2026-2027

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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

DSW Student Handbook

From the School of Social Work

Dear Incoming DSW Students,

On behalf of the faculty and staff in the School of Social Work at the University of Memphis, I would like to extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to you as you embark on this exciting and transformative journey toward your doctoral degree. We are thrilled that you have chosen to join our program, and we are eager to support you every step of the way as you develop the knowledge, skills, and leadership abilities that will shape the future of social work practice, research, and policy.

As a doctoral student, you will be part of a vibrant and supportive academic community. Our program is designed to challenge and inspire you, while also providing the resources and mentorship necessary for success. Throughout your studies, you will have opportunities to engage in rigorous research, work alongside distinguished faculty, and collaborate with fellow students who share your commitment to social justice and improving the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

In our program, we place a strong emphasis on fostering critical thinking, ethical practice, and a deep understanding of the complexities of social issues. Whether your focus is in direct practice, policy advocacy, or research, our curriculum will help you develop the tools to make meaningful and lasting contributions to the social work profession and beyond. Our goal is to prepare practitioner-scholars who can generate new social work knowledge and respond to increasingly complex practice environments. The DSW program learning

outcomes are to develop leaders in social work education by: preparing students with cutting-edge social work skills necessary to practice in complex settings; creating knowledge through research and engaged scholarship; reducing poverty, inequality, and social and economic injustice through evidence-based practices; and addressing the needs of the Mid-South within a global perspective. We are excited to have you in our program to help us make this mission a reality!

We understand that pursuing a doctoral degree can be both exciting and challenging, and we are confident that with your dedication, passion, and perseverance, you will achieve great things. We are excited to see the unique perspectives, research ideas, and experiences you will bring to our program, and we look forward to working with you over the course of your studies.

Once again, welcome to the University of Memphis Social Work Doctoral Program. We are excited about the journey ahead and are confident that your time here will be both enriching and impactful. If you have any questions or need assistance before the start of the semester, please do not hesitate to contact our office.
We wish you all the best as you prepare to begin this next chapter of your academic and professional life.

Warm regards,
Susan Elswick EdD LCSW LSSW RPT-S IMH-E



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THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS MISSION

The University of Memphis is a learner-centered metropolitan research university providing high quality educational experiences while pursuing new knowledge through research, artistic expression, and interdisciplinary and engaged scholarship. A doctoral degree-granting urban research university, The University of Memphis is committed to excellence in undergraduate, graduate, and professional education; in the discovery and dissemination of knowledge; in service to the metropolitan community, the state, and the nation; and in preparation of a diverse student population for successful careers and meaningful participation in a global society. The University of Memphis remains committed to the education of a non-racially identifiable student body and promotes diversity and access without regard to race, gender, religion, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES MISSION

The School of Social Work at the University of Memphis is part of the College of Arts and Sciences. The College of Arts and Sciences is the largest college in the University of Memphis, comprising 24 academic units, the ROTC, and multiple research centers, including two Centers of Excellence. Providing over quarter-million credit hours of instruction annually, the College of Arts and Sciences offers a comprehensive liberal arts curriculum to equip its students in pursuing rich personal and professional lives. It is dedicated to providing educational opportunities that broaden student knowledge within the major areas of human study, in-depth understanding of at least one area of inquiry, and the skills and abilities necessary for a lifetime of learning, career success, and participatory citizenship. The College provides quality undergraduate and graduate education by training students to think critically about their course of study, themselves, and the world around them. Through programs of basic and applied research, the College's faculty and students increase knowledge and address the complex issues, local and global, facing all citizens.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK MISSION

The School of Social Work seeks to be a leader in social work education by: preparing students with cutting-edge social work skills necessary to practice in complex settings; creating knowledge through research and engaged scholarship; reducing poverty, inequality, and social and economic injustice through evidence based practices; and addressing the needs of the Mid-South within a global perspective.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

A primary focus of the Doctor of Social Work program is to enhance human wellbeing and help to meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. This mission is consistent with the values of the social work profession in that all aspects of the program are committed to enhancing service to vulnerable populations while promoting social justice with

focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The program is committed to developing student knowledge, values, and skills essential to competent social work practice, the importance of human relationships, the dignity and worth of all persons and integrity throughout all aspects of professional practice.

DOCTOR OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM MISSION

The mission of the Doctor of Social Work (DSW) program is to cultivate visionary practitioner scholars who are leaders in social work dedicated to fostering transformative change and empowering communities through innovative, inclusive, and ethical practices.

CSWE STATEMENT ON DSW ACCREDITATION

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is pleased to announce the approval and release of the 2025 Accreditation Standards for Practice Doctorate Social Work Programs. The accreditation standards were developed and approved by the Board of Accreditation (BOA) on February 6, 2025. The standards may be reviewed here. The CSWE BOA will begin accepting applications for accreditation on August 1, 2025.

As of the publication of this student handbook, the University of Memphis DSW program has paid the Candidacy Eligibility Fee to initiate the accreditation process and applied for the Temporary Alternative Pathway for expedited accreditation later in 2026.

DOCTOR OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM COMPETENCIES

Doctors of Social Work (DSW) are practitioner-scholars who can generate new social work knowledge and respond to increasingly complex practice. DSWs are leaders and decision-makers who utilize complex data and research, supervision, teaching, and management skills to engage in high-level social work practice and direction. A Doctor of Social Work prepared practitioner:

1. (a) Evaluate social work services and practice environments using twenty-first century skills in data-driven analysis and informatics; and (b) contribute to social work knowledge through research and practice.
2. Demonstrate social work leadership and management skills to respond to complex practice environments locally, nationally, and globally.
3. Educate the next generation of social workers to be leaders in a changing practice environment through supervision and training.
4. Demonstrate leadership skills in interdisciplinary environments in collaboration with diverse clients and communities.

ADMISSIONS

Admissions Requirements

Admission to the DSW program requires:

1. A Master of Social Work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.
2. Two years of full-time post-MSW practice experience (or equivalent part-time experience).
3. Submission of transcripts from undergraduate program and MSW program.
4. Submission writing sample
5. International applicants should submit Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores or another acceptable score by the University of Memphis Graduate School (https://www.memphis.edu/graduateadmissions/future/admission-requirements.php).
6. A Professional Goal Statement (see the online application for specific requirements).
7. A Professional Resume/CV.
8. Three letters of reference.

The DSW Program Committee reviews all submitted materials. Admissions decisions are made on the applicant's meeting admissions requirements and the overall quality of professional background in social work, scholarship, academic ability, research capacity, and the fitness for the program.

Readmissions Requirements

Once accepted into the DSW program, students are expected to enroll every semester thereafter and make satisfactory progress toward the degree. Students who do not enroll for one semester must apply for readmission compliant with the Graduate Admissions guidelines. Submission of an application for readmission does not ensure acceptance. An application for readmission may be rejected or additional requirements may be imposed on the student.

CURRICULUM

The DSW program requires the completion of a minimum of forty-eight (48) credit hours.

1. Students are required to complete thirty (30) credit hours of required coursework. The required courses are as follows:
    2. SWRK 8020 Quantitative SW Research (3)
    - SWRK 8030 Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research (3)
    - SWRK 8040 Advanced SW Theory (3)
    - SWRK 8050 Writing for Publication (3)
    - SWRK 8065 Pedagogy in SW (3)
    - SWRK 8080 Managing SW Practice (3)
    - SWRK 8100 Developing Fundable Proposals (3)
    - SWRK 8102 Social Work Statistics (3)
    - SWRK 8155 Informatics & Data-Driven Decision Making in Social Work (3)
    - SWRK 8175 Reflective Supervision (3)

- PADM 8600 Admin Theory & Ethics (3)

2. Students are also required to complete a minimum of nine (9) credit hours of electives. Electives must be levels 7000 or 8000, but 6000 levels are acceptable at the discretion of the student's advisor (the student's DSW committee chair).

3. Students are required to complete a minimum of six (6) credit hours of Capstone (SWRK 9001).

Sample Study Plan

The DSW program is designed for students to complete their degree in three years. A sample of a three-year study plan is included below (please note that the School of Social Work reserves the right to make changes):

	Even-Year Cohort	Odd-Year Cohort	
Year 1			
Fall	PADM 8600/7600 Admin Theory & Ethics	SWRK 8102 Social Work Statistics	3
	SWRK 8040 Advanced SW Theory	PADM 8600/7600 Admin Theory & Ethics	3
Spring	SWRK 8020 Quantitative SW Research	SWRK 8030 Qualitative SW Research	3
	SWRK 8065 Pedagogy in SW	SWRK 8075 Reflective Supervision	3
Summer	SWRK 8100 Developing Fundable Proposals	SWRK 8080 Managing SW Practice	3
	Elective	Elective	3
	Total		**18**
Year 2			
Fall	SWRK 8102 Social Work Statistics	SWRK 8155 Informatics & Data-Driven	3
	SWRK 8050 Writing for Publication	SWRK 8040 Advanced SW Theory	3
Spring	SWRK 8030 Qualitative SW Research	SWRK 8020 Quantitative SW Research	3
	SWRK 8075 Reflective Supervision	SWRK 8065 Pedagogy in SW	3
Summer	SWRK 8080 Managing SW Practice	SWRK 8100 Develop. Fund. Proposals	3
	Elective	Elective	3
	Total		**18**

Year 3

Fall	SWRK 8155 Informatics & Data-Driven	SWRK 8050 Writing for Publication	3
	Elective	Elective	3
Spring	SWRK 9001 Capstone	SWRK 9001 Capstone	3
	SWRK 9001 Capstone	SWRK 9001 Capstone	3
		Total	**12**

Courses

SWRK 8020 Quantitative SW Research (3)
Course covers fundamental strategies for developing a quantitative research study.

SWRK 8030 Qualitative Methods for SW (3)
The purpose of this advanced course is to further prepare doctoral students to organize and conduct qualitative research. Students will learn the history of qualitative methods and the theoretical underpinnings to qualitative data collection and analysis.

SWRK 8040 Advanced SW Theory (3)
Course covers major theories that have influenced social work research, social work practice, and social welfare policy. The interdisciplinary nature of social work theory and history of social work will be covered. Students will learn methods of theory building and theoretical modeling.

SWRK 8050 Writing for Publication (3)
Course introduces students to the process of writing for publication. Course will be a project-focused seminar in which students will formulate a concept for a scholarly paper, draft the paper, and rewrite the paper based on a review from peers. Course will also cover the process of writing an abstract for a scholarly presentation.

SWRK 8065 Pedagogy in Social Work (3)
Course focuses on aspects of pedagogy that are unique to social work education. Course will cover paradigms for teaching and learning, meeting accreditation standards, evaluating for accreditation, and the unique issues of running field placement.

SWRK 8080 Managing a SW Practice (3)
This course, required in the DSW, is designed to provide social work professionals and clinical practitioners the skills and knowledge to establish, direct, and administer social work and behavioral health practices. The course covers legal, logistic, and financial issues in developing a private practice.

SWRK 8100 Developing Fundable Proposals (3)
Course is designed to prepare students to apply knowledge of evidence-based interventions and knowledge of policy related to social work practice to the development of a proposal for funding. Foundation knowledge and skills in grant writing will be explored. There will also be emphasis on working effectively with others to operationalize ideas to create a program or a plan in response to a request for proposals/applications. Students will learn to organize a proposal and respond to reviewers. Particular emphasis is placed on proposals for social work practice with culturally diverse, vulnerable and high-risk populations.

SWRK 8102 Social Work Statistics (3)
This course is an applied course intended to introduce students to the statistical tools used for empirical analysis and decision-making in the social work context. This course is designed to provide an introduction to the process of conducting statistical analyses of data relevant to public issues, problems, and policies in the area of social work. Both conceptual understanding and the development of practical applied skills are emphasized throughout the course.

SWRK 8155 Informatics & Data-Driven Decision Making (3)
This course emphasizes the use of information technology in social work practice (1) to improve overall quality of services provided by clinicians as well as (2) to leverage the implicit knowledge of workers so that agencies foster ongoing innovations in service provision.

SWRK 8175 Reflective Supervision (3)
Reflective supervision is a regular collaborative reflection experience between a service provider and supervisor that builds on the supervisee's use of his/her thoughts, feelings, and values within a service encounter. In this course, the student will learn about the origins and history of different models of supervision. Through discussion and practice, the student will learn how supervision can provide a rich opportunity for service providers to further their self-awareness and skills.

PADM 8600 Admin Theory & Ethics (3)
Significance of public administration in American government; includes an introduction to formal organization theory and bureaucracy, decision-making theory, leadership and motivational theory, and current trends and problems in the study of public administration. Prerequisite(s): SPAN 7102 or equivalent.

SWRK 9001 Capstone Project (1-6)
Candidates for graduation will be required to complete a capstone project. Grade of S/U, or IP will be given. Grades for SWRK 9001 will be assigned based on student's progress. "Satisfactory" will be assigned when student's capstone is complete (final semester). IP will be assigned if student is making satisfactory progress based on where the chair and committee believe that student should be. U will be assigned if the student is not making satisfactory progress towards their capstone project. More information on the capstone project is described below in the "Capstone Project" section of this handbook.

Electives

The DSW program requires the completion of a minimum of nine (9) credit hours (3 courses) of electives. The electives allow students to tailor their program of study to their interests. Students who are interested in higher education teaching can use the electives to complete a certificate in higher education teaching offered through the Department of Leadership in the College of Education. Students who are interested in advanced training in research methods or statistics can use the hours to pursue either a Qualitative Methods or Quantitative Methods Graduate Certificate in the College of Education or a Graduate Certificate in Health Analytics through the School of Public Health. Students who are interested in advanced clinical methods can use their electives to take clinical courses through social work, counseling, or psychology. Students can also use electives to take coursework in a population specialty (e.g., health care, gerontology). The student should take initiative to find electives that will add depth and breadth to their education. It is the student's responsibility to work with their advisor (DSW committee chair) to identify electives that will strengthen the education and skills in their doctoral education. Electives must be levels 7000 or 8000, but 6000 levels are acceptable at the discretion of the student's advisor.

Transfer Credit

Up to fifteen (15) hours of transfer credit may be accepted from another institution provided that: 1) It was earned after the student's Master of Social Work degree, 2) It falls within the University's ten-year time to degree limit; and 3) It is deemed relevant to the student's program of study by the advisor and DSW program director. Transfer credit that is substituted for required DSW courses must be deemed to meet all of the learning objectives in the equivalent DSW course.

Shared Credit

Credit may not be shared between the Master of Social Work program and the Doctor of Social Work program. If the student previously took a DSW course as an MSW elective, they may substitute those credit hours for additional elective hours. Courses taken during the MSW program should not be repeated in the DSW program. Up to fifteen (15) hours may be shared between the DSW program and a graduate certificate, a second master's degree, or a second doctoral degree.

Credit for Work or Life Experience

In compliance with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Accreditation Standards for Practice Doctorate Social Work Programs, the University of Memphis DSW program does not grant credit for life experience or prior work experience.

Distance Learning & Residency

The DSW program is offered via distance learning. All courses are available online. The University of Memphis has resources for online teaching through the UM Global. The UM Global provides review of courses, workshops on online teaching, online tutoring, online writing support, and other online support for students. Furthermore, students are asked to come to

campus approximately one week per year to complete in-person residencies. The in-person residencies provide the opportunity to become oriented to the program, meet fellow students, meet the faculty, and form DSW committees. Students are also required to have synchronous meetings. The plan for the in-person residencies are as follows:

Year 1 Residency: A New Doctoral Student
Year 1 residency is designed to provide an overview of the DSW program and provide skills that are not taught elsewhere. The goal of Year 1 Residency is to prepare the student to embark on the DSW program and to create a cohort.

Year 2 Residency: Focusing on Your Research
Year two residency is designed to bring DSW students together and to prepare second-year students for the comprehensive exam and their proposal for their capstone project. Specific skills are highlighted.

Year 3 Residency: Capstone and Graduation
Year 3 residency focuses on the Completion of the capstone project and graduation. Third-year students are also involved in sharing their experiences with first- and second-year students.

RETENTION, GRADING, AND GRADUATION

Retention Requirements

Retention requirements for the DSW program include:

1. Students must comply with all retention standards of the Graduate School at the University of Memphis.
2. Students are required to maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00. Should the student's cumulative GPA fall below that mark, a period of one semester will be allowed to correct the deficiency. Students failing to improve their GPA to an acceptable level in that time will be dismissed from the program.
3. No more than 6 hours of "C-," "C" or "C+" will be applied toward meeting degree requirements. No grade of a D+ or lower will count toward the degree.
4. Students must pass a comprehensive examination.
5. Students must engage in ethical conduct and follow the University of Memphis Code of Student Conduct and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. Students in the DSW program are expected to demonstrate exemplary leadership in following all ethical standards.

Ethical Conduct

Students in the DSW Program are expected to abide by the University of Memphis Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities and the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. DSW students are expected to demonstrate exemplary leadership in following all ethical standards in all spaces including the classroom, the community, student organizations, and extra-curricular activities. Students who are found to be out of compliance with one of these two codes will be referred to retention review.

Retention Review

Students who fail to meet one of the five criteria under the retention policy will be reviewed for retention. A retention committee will be formed consisting of the student's committee and may include the DSW director if needed. If the student has not yet formed a committee, the DSW director will establish a committee for the purpose of a retention review. The committee will meet with the student and hear the student's concerns. If the committee determines that termination is not warranted, the committee will make specific recommendations to support the student in improving their academic or professional performance. If the committee determines that termination is warranted, the committee members will complete the appropriate Graduate School form.

The termination procedures and the termination appeals process will follow the process outlined in the University of Memphis Graduate Catalog. Under this process, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the College of Arts & Sciences will review the recommendation for termination. If the Associate Dean agrees, they will write a letter and forward their decision to the Dean of the Graduate School for a final decision.

Students have a right to appeal a termination decision to the Graduate Appeals Committee for Grade and Academic Performance Retention Appeals. Students should follow all procedures outline in the University of Memphis Graduate Catalog.

Grading

All courses in the DSW program are graded A-F with the exception of SWRK 9001: Capstone. SWRK 9001 will be graded as "S," "U," or "IP." A grade of "IP" will be assigned if a capstone is not completed in the semester enrolled. When the student completes the capstone, the "IP" grade will be replaced with "S."

Grade Appeals

Grade appeals will follow the procedures outlined in the University of Memphis Graduate Catalog. All students should refer to the Graduate Catalog for specific instructions, appeals forms, and deadlines for each stage of the process.

- The first step in the process is for the student to appeal to the instructor and try to resolve the matter with the instructor.
- If the matter is not resolved with the instructor, the student may next appeal to the School chair.
- If the matter is not resolved after the appeal to the School chair, the appeal will proceed to the College of Arts & Sciences Dean.
- If the matter is not resolved after the appeal to the College Dean, the final level of appeal is the Graduate Appeals Committee.

Graduation Requirements

Graduation requirements for the DSW program include:

1. Completion of all required coursework with no more than 6 hours of C (i.e., "C-," "C" or

"C+") grades.
2. No more than two courses may be repeated.
3. Completion of the comprehensive exam
4. Completion of a capstone project.

Timeline to Graduation

The primary procedures and timeline of the DSW program are as below:

- By the end of the first semester of doctoral studies (fall of the first year), a faculty advisor, called a DSW Committee Chair, is assigned to each student in consultations with the DSW program director.
- During the second semester (spring of the first year) The student then works with his/her DSW committee chair to select at least two more committee members among the faculty who hold full Graduate Status in the School of Social Work at the University of Memphis.
- By the end of the second year of doctoral studies, the student takes the comprehensive exam and submits a written proposal to his/her DSW committee.
- Once the written proposal is approved by the student's DSW committee, the student may begin work on the capstone project.
- At the end of the spring semester of the third year, the student submits the completed capstone project and conducts a public presentation of the capstone project at the School of Social Work.

MENTORSHIP

Mentorship is a central part of the doctoral student experience and is critical to doctoral student learning. All students will receive mentorship throughout the program. In the first semester of the program, students will be mentored by the DSW director. It is the student's responsibility to obtain a DSW committee chair by the end of the first semester. Beginning in the second semester, the student's mentoring relationship will shift to the student's DSW committee chair. The committee chair will continue to mentor and support the student throughout the process. It is both the student's and the faculty member's responsibility to ensure that they are holding regular meetings to support and guide the student's progress through the program. During the student's first year, the meetings may occur as infrequently as once per semester. During the second and third years, the meetings should occur at least monthly during semesters that the student is enrolled. Students are strongly encouraged to give feedback to their mentors about their preference for frequency of meetings. Since the DSW is an online program, meetings will typically occur over Teams at a time that is convenient for both the student and the faculty member. If the student prefers to meet face-to-face, they may schedule in person meetings with their DSW committee chair.

ADVISING

Advising in the DSW program has the following purposes: Supporting students through completing the required portion of the curriculum and helping students identify electives and a capstone that meets their interests and is tailored to their career goals. When the student starts the program, the DSW program director is the student's advisor. Typically, by the end of the first semester, but no later than by

the end of the first year, the student selects a chair of their committee. From that point until graduation, the chair will be the student's academic advisor.

FORMING A DSW COMMITTEE

In order to promote successful and timely completion of the DSW program, students must form a DSW Committee. The DSW committee will oversee the comprehensive exam, will approve the proposal, and will oversee the successful completion of the capstone project. Upon admission to the DSW program, each student will work with the director of the DSW program for academic advising until they have selected a DSW Chair (generally a chair is selected in the fall semester of year 1 and no later than the spring semester of year 1). Once the student has selected a DSW Committee Chair, the DSW committee chair will take over and serve as the academic advisor. The committee chair must be a full member of the University of Memphis Graduate Faculty. The DSW committee chair will meet with the student prior to registration for courses, to ensure the student is on track, discuss questions and/or concerns, and discuss progress in the DSW program. The advisor is responsible for clearing student PIN and entering permits for social work courses to allow students to register. By initiating regular advising meetings, the student needs to seek professional success and enhance academic performance. The student should also make sure to discuss with the advisor the follows:

- Frequency of advising meetings
- A plan and tentative time frame for capstone work.
- Recommendations for members of the DSW committee

The DSW committee chair will provide guidance to the student on the following areas:

- IRB protocol application for the capstone project, if needed.
- Development and implementation of the capstone project.
- Opportunities for internal/external grants to support the capstone project, when available.
- Opportunities for conferences and presentations.
- Opportunities for participating in research projects and publications

By the end of the second semester of doctoral studies, the student should have assembled his or her DSW Committee in consultation with the DSW committee chair, who is the student's major advisor. The DSW committee consists of three faculty members who hold full or associate Graduate Status at the University of Memphis. The chair of the committee must have full graduate faculty status in Social Work. Among the three members in the DSW Committee, two members must be from the School of Social Work, but the other one may be from external discipline or external to the University. External DSW committee members who are not full time with the University of Memphis must hold a doctoral degree and must apply with the University of Memphis Graduate School for External Graduate Faculty Status.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

Successful completion of the comprehensive exam is the official marker of the move from doctoral student to doctoral candidate. Completion of the comprehensive exam is intended to

signify sufficient knowledge, skill, and mastery to enable the student to move to the capstone phase and continue their progress towards successful completion of the capstone. The comprehensive exam and capstone proposal may be pursued concurrently. The comprehensive exam consists of three sections and each section is graded on a rubric (see Appendix G) by the student's DSW Committee. The questions for each of the sections of the comprehensive exam are selected by the student's DSW Committee from a question bank developed by the DSW faculty and available to the student before the exam. The questions are in essay format. The grading rubrics (see Appendix G) for each of the sections of the comprehensive exam are developed by the entire DSW faculty body of the School of Social Work at the University of Memphis and available to the student before the exam.

The DSW committed chair schedules the comprehensive exam after the student has completed SWRK 8020, Quantitative SW Research; SWRK 8030, Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research; SWRK 8040, Advanced SW Theory; SWRK 8050, Writing for Publication; SWRK 8065, Pedagogy in SW; SWRK 8080, Managing SW Practice; SWRK 8100, Developing Fundable Proposals; SWRK 8102, Social Work Statistics; and SWRK 8175, Reflective Supervision. The exam is scheduled at the end of Year 2 after the end of the summer semester in year 2. During the summer semester of Year 2, the student's DSW committee gives access to the student to the question bank and grading rubrics (see Appendix G). Then the DSW committee chair selects one or two questions for each section of the comprehensive exam from the question bank in consultation with the rest of the DSW committee and then provides the questions and specific instructions for the exam to the student. The student is given the exam as a take home exam and provided a specific deadline for submission of at least two weeks but no more than three weeks. The student must submit the exam to the DSW committee chair by 11:59 pm on the deadline date. If the student misses this deadline, the exam will be considered failed and will not be graded unless extenuating and well-documented circumstances exist. If the need for an extension should arise, the student must communicate with the DSW committee chair as soon as the student becomes aware that such circumstances exist.

Once the student has completed the comprehensive exam, each committee member grades each section of the comprehensive exam on a rubric (see Appendix G)available to student before the exam and the results for each section are averaged for the student and reported to the DSW program director on the internal comps reporting form alongside the University of Memphis Comprehensive Exam Form indicating whether the student has passed the comprehensive exam. The student's DSW committee has two weeks to grade the exam and report the grade to the student and to the School of Social Work. A passing grade is 80% or above. If the student does not achieve 80% on any section, the section is not considered "passed". In the case a student does not pass one or more of the sections of the comprehensive exam, student may retake that section(s) one more time. Student does not need to retake sections in which a passing grade has been obtained. Exam retake occurs under the same conditions as the first exam but the student's DSW committee selects new questions for the exam A retake should occur no later than the end of the fall semester of Year 3.

CAPSTONE PROJECT

The capstone project and capstone project presentation are viewed as the culminating experience of the DSW student's academic training, reflecting the student's capability for independent research. The capstone project is graded on a rubric (see Appendix H)

Capstone Proposal

By August of year 2 (at the end of year 2), the doctoral student must submit a proposal for a capstone project to his/her DSW committee. The comprehensive exam and proposal may be pursued concurrently. The proposal must be a written document 5 to 10 pages in length following APA formatting. The capstone proposal must include **specification of the outcome product, the justification for the choice of said outcome product, and a timeline**. The student may choose among options 1, 2, and 3 below in consultation with his/her DSW committee chair:

1. Option 1: Student submits a proposal for a project to be implemented at the agency student works or another partner agency. This project could be assessment of secondary data and report, training, survey, or other small project implementation. Consideration should be given to feasibility within time constraints. Project must be research-based, have a theory base, and identify clear outcomes.

1. Option 2: Student completes a proposal to write and submit two scholarly articles, one conceptual and one research. In the proposal, student clearly articulates the conceptualization of the articles, the rationale, how the two articles are tied together, and how they contribute to the literature. Papers may be co-authored with chair but coauthored articles must follow University of Memphis policy (§5.2): https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/current_students/td-prep.php

2. Option 3: Student completes a proposal for a substantial project not described in options 1 and 2. The substantial project may involve art, the development of a non-profit, a curriculum, a course, or any other project that is consistent with the goals of the DSW and involves scholarly and/or evaluative activity. The project must be developed in consultation with the student's DSW committee chair and approved by the DSW committee chair using the appropriate form.

Once the student has submitted the capstone proposal, the student's DSW committee may ask the student to modify the proposed project or parts thereof, enhance the proposed project, or submit an entirely different proposed project. The student's DSW committee may ask the student to submit several iterations of the capstone proposal before it is approved. The proposal approval form (internal form #3) is not signed until the student's DSW committee has approved the proposal and has allowed student to proceed to capstone project.

Capstone Project

During Year 3 of the DSW, the student will implement the capstone project as per the student's approved proposal.

1. Option 1: A project that is implemented at the agency student works or another partner agency. This project may involve assessment of secondary data and report, training, survey, or other small project implementation. Project must be research-based, have a theory base, and identify clear outcomes.

2. Option 2: Student writes and submits two scholarly articles, one conceptual and one research. The student must also produce a 2-page summary in which the student clearly articulates the conceptualization of the articles, the rationale, how the two articles are tied together, and how they contribute to the literature. Papers may be co-authored with chair but coauthored articles must follow University of Memphis policy (§5.2): https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/current_students/td-prep.php

3. Option 3: Student completes a substantial project not described in options 1 and 2. The substantial project may involve art, the development of a non-profit, a curriculum, a course or any other project that is consistent with the goals of the DSW and involves scholarly and/or evaluative activity. As part of the capstone project the student must also produce a 2-page summary in which the student clearly articulates the conceptualization of the project, the connection to the DSW goals and objectives, the research/assessment/evaluation component, and the relevance and application of the project to the discipline. Note that if a DSW student chooses to develop a course as a capstone project, the course must be developed fully including the CANVAS shell, and the School of Social Work retains the rights to the course, including the right to implement, modify, and teach the course as the School of Social Work deems appropriate.

The doctoral candidate will take at least one semester (but it may be more) to implement and assess project per the proposal and write and submit a full report to chair and the rest of the committee. In case the student has chosen options 2 or 3, a 2-page summary per the description above must be included in the capstone project submission. Once the doctoral candidate has submitted the final capstone project to the student's DSW committee, the DSW committee evaluates the project with rubric in Appendix H, and issues a decision. The decision of the committee must be unanimous and may be one of the following decisions:

- **Pass.** This decision indicates that the committee unanimously agrees that the student has satisfactorily completed the capstone project. If the student's DSW committee recommends minor revisions to the capstone project, the committee should feel free to leave oversight of revisions to the student's DSW committee chair. A final presentation may be scheduled at this time and the student's DSW committee will sign the Final Capstone Project Approval Form (internal form #4) at the time of the presentation.
- **Not Pass.** This decision indicates that the committee is not satisfied with the

capstone project work but anticipates that it could be made satisfactory with significant revisions. Final Capstone Project Approval Form (internal form #4) is not signed and the capstone presentation is not scheduled until the student's DSW committee approves or "passes" the capstone project. The DSW committee must provide the student specific instructions on how to improve capstone project. If one or two members of the DSW committee are not satisfied with the capstone project, then the members of the DSW committee who are not satisfied with the capstone project must work with the student to improve the project. If the student is not able to pass the capstone project within 3 years of the "not pass" decision, the student fails out of the DSW program.

Capstone Project Presentation

Once the student's DSW committee has approved the capstone project and considered it final or final with minor revisions, the DSW committee chair schedules the student's capstone project presentation to the School of Social Work. The capstone presentation is the final activity in the DSW program and once it has been completed the student has fulfilled all requirements and may be called "doctor". Once student has completed his/her capstone project and the student's DSW committee has approved it, the student will conduct a public presentation to the School of Social Work. The presentation may take place in April for a spring-semester graduation, in July for a summer-semester graduation, and in November for a fall-semester graduation. The capstone presentation is public and will be announced to School of Social Work faculty and DSW students by the student's DSW committee chair at least a week before it takes place. The capstone presentation consists of a presentation highlighting the student's capstone project including the relevant literature, the methods used, and the results of the project including the implications for social work and for the community. The capstone project presentation may take 30 to 45 minutes with 15 to 20 minutes for questions from those present. The capstone presentation is a formal event and at the end of the presentation internal form #4 is completed, signed, and submitted to the DSW program director. The student's DSW committee chair will complete all grading to allow student to graduate and participate in commencement. Student's DSW committee chair is tasked with hooding the doctoral candidate at commencement. In the event that the DSW committee chair is unable to participate in the commencement ceremony, the DSW committee chair must designate one of the other DSW committee members as a substitute. It is the responsibility of the student's committee chair to make sure that all grades and documents required by the Graduate School at the University of Memphis are submitted in a timely manner, and that the doctoral candidate is hooded at commencement if candidate chooses to participate.

TUITION AND FEES

Admission to the Doctor of Social Information on current tuition and fees can be obtained from the University of Memphis Bursar's Office website (http://bf.memphis.edu/finance/bursar/). Graduate students may be eligible for a variety of financial aid options. Students should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). For general financial aid information for graduate students, including Assistantships, Fellowships, Work Study Programs,

Awards and Scholarships, students should inquire at the Student Financial Aid office (www.memphis.edu/FinancialAid/). Students are encouraged to investigate opportunities for student aid offered by the University of Memphis, including loans, scholarships and assistantship opportunities.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

DSW students have the right to participate in their education and are strongly encouraged to do so. The following are a list of ways that students can participate in their education. The list is not exhaustive.

- The School of Social Work has two student organizations: The Student Social Work Organization (SSWO) and the Coalition for Black Social Workers (CBSW) and DSW students are strongly encouraged to participate and have been leaders in these organizations in the past.

- The DSW program director holds regular meetings with students. Students are encouraged to join and give feedback.

- Students have the opportunity to give feedback on the curriculum through annual surveys. In addition, the student body is encouraged to elect a student to sit on the DSW program committee. This student can give feedback on curriculum.

- Students also fill out an evaluation on the DSW residency and student feedback is considered when planning residency for the next year.

- DSW students are invited to fill out an annual climate survey. The climate survey allows them to give feedback on the overall climate of the School and the DSW program.

- Students have the opportunity to tailor their program to their specific interests through nine hours of electives and through their selection of a capstone project. Students are expected to actively participate in their education by selecting elective courses, selecting their capstone projects, and by selecting topics for assignments throughout their coursework that align with their interests and career goals.

FINANCIAL AID

Federal Funding

Admission Limited federal assistance, in the form of loans, is available. Contact the Office of Student Aid at (901) 678-2303 for more information. Some students may seek aid through VA benefits or Title IV funds. VA benefits and Title IV funds for enrollment fees are subject to cancellation and immediate repayment if the recipient stops attending, whether or not he/she has withdrawn or dropped a course. The instructor will report the last known date of attendance as the “unofficial withdrawal date.” Students who stopped attending will be

assigned a grade of “F” in courses from which they have not withdrawn according to the policies of the university.

From time to time, the School of Social Work will have Federal traineeships or funded research assistantships available. Faculty make every effort to secure these types of funds for students, but they are not guaranteed. These types of funding opportunities may be tied to the student’s ability to work on campus, the student’s ability to work during the day, or the student’s current work setting.

Graduate Assistantships

The School of Social Work awards a small number of graduate assistantships annually. Serving as a graduate assistant provides a stipend for the academic year plus a partial waiver of tuition and fees. The School has the option of awarding either part-time or full-time graduate assistantships. Part- time assistantships waive some in tuition and fees and provide half of the stipend. Both types of assistantships require the student to be enrolled as a full-time student. Social work graduate assistantships require weekly service to the School of approximately 10-20 hours. This service normally takes the form teaching a class and may also include aiding one or more faculty members with their research or teaching responsibilities. Appointments of graduate assistants are made on an annual basis but may be renewed by the School of Social Work for one additional year, depending on performance. A yearly application is required. A graduate assistant is expected to make satisfactory progress toward the completion of his or her degree. To do this, a graduate assistant must enroll for a minimum of six hours of course work per semester and must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 at all times. Failure to maintain a grade point average of 3.0 disqualifies a student from holding a future graduate assistantship. Once a student has reached doctoral candidate status, the student is considered full time by taking one hour of capstone project credit.

APPENDIX A – TIMELINE

DSW Capstone Project Timeline and Primary Tasks

Program Year (Semester)	Deadline	Task	Document	
1 (Fall)	December	Student finds DSW committee chair and confers with chair to find two other committee members. All three members must hold full graduate-faculty status at the University of Memphis. An additional member can be external. More members can be added but it is not advisable.	Departmental Form #1 Committee Appointment	Student initiates form and obtains signatures in order. Final signed copy is emailed to DSW Director.
1 (Spring or Summer)	May and August	DSW committee chair advises student and works with student toward achieving goals	--	Student and DSW Committee Chair.
2 (Fall)	December	DSW committee chair advises student and works with student toward achieving goals	--	Student and DSW Committee Chair.
2 (After Summer Semester)	August	Student takes comprehensive exam. Exam is graded by student's committee. Result of exam is reported in official UofM form to DSW Director and Graduate School. If student is not able to pass the comprehensive exam, student is not allowed to register in capstone hours. Student may take comprehensive exam twice. Advising by Committee Chair continues.	Departmental Form #2 and UofM Form #1 Comprehensive Exam Results Form	Student initiates form and obtain signatures upon passing the comprehensive exam. Final signed copy is emailed to DSW Director, who will then email it to Graduate School.
2 (Spring or Summer)	August	Student submits written proposal for capstone project (5-10 pages) to committee for approval. Committee may approve with revisions and changes. Advising by Committee Chair continues.	Departmental Form #3 Proposal Approval Form	Student initiates form and obtains signatures in order. Final signed copy is emailed to DSW Director

Program Year (Semester)	Deadline	Task	Document	
3 (Late Fall or Early Spring)	Per Graduate School Guidelines for semester of expected graduation	Student must complete the doctoral candidacy form and submit it to the Graduate School per University of Memphis guidelines. Pay attention to dates. Advising by Committee Chair continues.	UofM Form #2 DSW Candidacy Form	Student initiates form and obtain signatures upon passing the comprehensive exam. Final signed copy is emailed to DSW Director, who will then email it to Graduate School.
3 (Spring)	April	Student completes capstone project per approved proposal. Student presents capstone project to the School of Social Work Community. Form is signed upon successful completion of capstone project AND presentation to the School of Social Work. Advising by Committee Chair continues until graduation.	Departmental Form #4 Capstone Project Approval Form	Committee Chair submits signed form to DSW Director.

Departmental Form#

1. DSW COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT FORM
2. INTERNAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAM FORM
3. CAPSTONE PROPOSAL APPROVAL FORM
4. FINAL CAPSTONE PROJECT APPROVAL FORM

All departmental forms can be found in Appendices B-E.

University of Memphis forms and additional information can be found in Appendix E.

APPENDIX B – INTERNAL FORM #1

Doctor of Social Work (DSW)
Program School of Social Work Internal Form #1
DSW COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT FORM

Date:

Student's Full Name: _____Banner ID: U_____

Current Mailing Address: _____

Street City, State Zip Code: _____

Email Address: _____

FACULTY COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS (Must have Full Graduate Status):

Name (print)	Role (chair, member)	Signature

ADDITIONAL/EXTERNAL MEMBER(S) TO COMMITTEE:

Name (print)	Affiliation	Signature

DSW Committee Chair and Student to retain a signed copy for their records.
Please send a signed copy to DSW Program Director.

APPENDIX C – INTERNAL FORM #2

Doctor of Social Work (DSW)
Program School of Social Work Internal Form #2
INTERNAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAM FORM

Date of Comprehensive Exam: _____

Student's Full Name: _____Banner ID: U_____

Email Address: _____

Comprehensive Exam Results:

Competency	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Average Score	Pass
Quantitative and qualitative research and evaluation					
Social work leadership and management					
Teaching and supervision skills and practice					

RETAKE Comprehensive Exam Results. RETAKE DATE: _____

Competency	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Average Score	Pass
Quantitative and qualitative research and evaluation					
Social work leadership and management					
Teaching and supervision skills and practice					

APPROVAL:

DSW Committee Chair: _____ Date: _____

DSW Committee Chair and Student to retain a signed copy for their records. Please send a signed copy to DSW Program Director.

APPENDIX D - INTERNAL FORM #3

Doctor of Social Work (DSW)
Program School of Social Work Internal Form #3
CAPSTONE PROPOSAL APPROVAL FORM

Date: _____

Student's Full Name: _____Banner ID: U_____

Email Address: _____

Type of Project: _____

Title of Project: _____

Description of Project: _____

_____

_____

Is IRB Approval Needed? _____

DSW COMMITTEE APPROVALS

Role	Name (print)	Signature
Chair		
Member		
Member		
Member		

Note that if a DSW student chooses to develop a course as a capstone project, the course must be developed fully including the CANVAS shell, and the School of Social Work retains the rights to the course, including the right to implement, modify, and teach the course as the School of Social Work deems appropriate.

APPROVAL:

DSW Committee Chair: _____Date: _____

Student is responsible for obtaining all signatures and submitting a signed copy to DSW Program Director. Approved proposal (5-10 pages) must be attached to this form.

APPENDIX E - INTERNAL FORM #4

Doctor of Social Work (DSW)
Program School of Social Work Internal Form #4
FINAL CAPSTONE PROJECT APPROVAL FORM

Date: _____

Student's Full Name: _____Banner ID: U_____

Email Address: _____

Type of Project: _____

Title of Project: _____

Description of Project: _____

_____

_____

DSW COMMITTEE APPROVALS FOR CAPSTONE PROJECT:

Role	Name (print)	Signature
Chair		
Member		
Member		
Member		
Member		

DATE OF CAPSTONE PRESENTATION: _____

DSW Committee Chair: _____Date: _____

DSW Committee Chair and Student to retain a signed copy for their records. Please send a signed copy to DSW Program Director.

APPENDIX F – UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS FORMS

Refer to the websites of the Graduate School and DSW Student Handbook for detailed guidance:

- DSW Student Handbook: https://www.memphis.edu/socialwork/programs/doctoral.php
- The dates for each semester: https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/current_students/graduation.php

UofM Form #:

5. Comprehensive Exam Results Form: https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/pdfs/forms/compexamresults2.pdf
6. Doctoral Candidacy Form: https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/current_students/candidacy-doc-instructions.php

APPENDIX G – COMPREHENSIVE EXAM GRADING RUBRIC

Comprehensive Exam Grading Rubric

Please rate the student's project on the DSW Core Expertise and Skills. Students must average a score of 3 or higher across all three raters to pass their capstone. The benchmark is 90% of students scoring a 3 or higher on each of the six core expertise and skills. Please use the following anchors for the rating scale:

1=Does Not Meet: The response is unclear, lacks structure, or is significantly below or beyond the length requirement.
2=Needs Improvement: The response has some information relevant to the core expertise or skill but is partial or lacks sufficient detail or organization.
3=Meets Expectations: The response is clear and concise. It is sufficiently organized and has all of the required content areas.
4=Exceeds Expectations: The response is well-structured and integrates all required content. The student goes beyond the minimum requested content in the response.
5=Outstanding: The response is exemplary demonstrating outstanding critical thinking, goes far beyond the minimum required, and/or includes new knowledge that moves the field forward.

Competency	**1=Does Not Meet**	**2=Needs Improvement**	**3=Meets Expectations**	**4=Exceeds Expectations**	**5= Outstanding**
Advance practice through innovative approaches. (Average score of a, b, and c items for this competency)					
a. Student fully described the intervention in one page or less.					
b. In two pages, the student summarized some of the literature or theory that supports the use of this approach. If you can, identify why this new or innovative approach is needed.					
c. The student briefly described a plan for monitoring or evaluating the intervention when you pilot it.					

Competency	1=Does Not Meet	2=Needs Improvement	3=Meets Expectations	4=Exceeds Expectations	5= Outstanding
Use and critically evaluate research and knowledge. (Average score of a, b, c, and d items for this competency)					
a. The student cited at least 3 sources and defined and explained theory one.					
b. The student cited at least 3 sources and defined and explained theory two.					
c. The student analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of each theory giving at least two strengths and two weaknesses of each theory.					
d. The student wrote a conclusion statement that indicates which theory they would likely use in a future project.					
Engage in scientific inquiry that reflects doctoral-level scholarship. (Average score of a, b, c, and d items for this competency)					
a. The student clearly explained the chosen methodology.					
b. Research questions (or hypotheses) were clear.					
c. Analysis plan was clear.					
d. All parts of the question are answered.					
Develop and disseminate practice-relevant, research-informed knowledge through a variety of channels, such as teaching, scholarship, professional presentations, mentoring, and administration. (Average score of a and b items for this competency)					
a. Student described a research study and gave a					

Competency	1=Does Not Meet	2=Needs Improvement	3=Meets Expectations	4=Exceeds Expectations	5= Outstanding
rationale for the importance of disseminating the findings.					
b. Student described a dissemination plan for at least two populations.					
Provide leadership in social work practice and/or education. **(Average score of a, b, c, and d items for this competency)**					
a. The student described a leadership setting.					
b. The student clearly identified and described a theory.					
c. The student reflected on how the chosen theory works best for them.					
d. The student identified an evaluation plan for the leadership strategy.					
Develop and maintain substantive expertise in one or more areas of social work practice. **(Average score of a and b items for this competency)**					
a. The student clearly labeled which option they were choosing.					
b. The student gave a complete answer to all parts of the question.					

APPENDIX H – Capstone Evaluation Form

Capstone Evaluation Form
DSW Core Expertise and Skills

Please rate the student's project on the DSW Core Expertise and Skills. Students must average a score of 3 or higher across all three raters to pass their capstone. The benchmark is 90% of students scoring a 3 or higher on each of the six core expertise and skills across two measures.

Competency	1=Does Not Meet	2=Needs Improvement	3=Meets Expectations	4=Exceeds Expectations	5= Outstanding
The project advances social work practice through innovative approaches. (Average score of a and b items for this competency)					
a. The project is innovative in its methods, research question, design, or implementation.					
b. The project advances practice whether that be practice locally or practice on a national/international level.					
The project demonstrates the student's ability to use and critically evaluate research and knowledge. (Average score of a and b items for this competency)					
a. The project demonstrates a critical reflection on the current knowledge or research in the field.					
b. The project uses a critique of knowledge or research to seek to advance the field.					
The project engages in scientific inquiry that reflects doctoral-level scholarship. (Average score of a and b items for this competency)					
a. The project uses a rigorous methodology to engage in doctoral level scholarship.					
b. The project was carried out using an appropriate methodology.					

Competency	1=Does Not Meet	2=Needs Improvement	3=Meets Expectations	4=Exceeds Expectations	5= Outstanding
The project demonstrates the ability to develop and disseminate practice-relevant, research-informed knowledge through a variety of channels, such as teaching, scholarship, professional presentations, mentoring, and administration. (Average score of a and b items for this competency)					
a. The student has a clear plan at the end of the project to disseminate findings to two or more audiences.					
b. The student has disseminated findings to at least one audience.					
The project demonstrates the student's ability for leadership in social work practice and/or education.					
a. The student translated the project into an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in social work practice.					
b. The student translated the project into an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in social work education.					
The project demonstrates the student's ability to develop and maintain substantive expertise in one or more areas of social work practice. (Average score of a, b, and c items for this competency)					
a. The student demonstrates expertise in leading social work practice.					
b. The student demonstrates in depth knowledge in their chosen area of social work practice.					
c. The student has a plan to keep knowledge current beyond graduation and to continually update their knowledge.					