

BY-LAWS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

ARTICLE I: Mission

The George Mason University Department of Social Work offers an undergraduate program and graduate program, both of which are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The degrees conferred are Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW).

Our mission is to advance holistic human health and well-being through our work with diverse populations across systems and throughout the life course. Our mission is rooted in principles of equity, inclusion, antiracism, anti-oppression, and trauma-informed practice. Using a critical lens of evidence-based practices, we emphasize social and environmental justice, as well as human and global rights. To do this, we:

- **Prepare** social work practitioners, scholars, and leaders to serve individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities that come from diverse intersecting identities. We deliver an academically rigorous education that develops social workers who engage in critical thinking, challenge injustice, and implement interventions grounded in theory and science.
- **Engage** in public service that cultivates community partnerships, enhances capacity and resources, and provides technical and subject matter expertise to human service organizations serving diverse local, national, and global communities.
- **Solve** social problems and enhance human health and well-being by employing multi-systemic evidence-based interventions and social science research to address the systemic inequities that lead to disparate biopsychosocial outcomes.

We build upon a foundation of social work values, ethics, knowledge, and skills that emphasizes agency, inclusion, antiracism, and system transformation. By embodying these principles, we strive to create a more just and equitable world for all.

ARTICLE II: Faculty Membership & Voting

1. The Social Work faculty is composed of the Department Chair and all faculty who have full-time instructional, research, or clinical appointments with a primary affiliation in the Department of Social Work.
2. All members of the department as defined above are eligible to vote on departmental matters, except as noted in the section on committees below.
3. Voting membership during the summer shall be limited to persons holding voting membership in the prior spring semester who will return as voting members in the following fall semester. Eligibility to vote during summer does not require the faculty member to be engaged in summer session teaching, research, or administrative duties.

ARTICLE III: Responsibilities of the Faculty

1. The faculty shall be responsible for the educational policies, programs, and initiatives, and for degrees, certificates, and endorsements in Social Work, including instruction, curriculum, research, and outreach. Faculty responsibilities include, but are not limited to, decisions regarding admission to the undergraduate and graduate social work programs; policies regarding student retention, change of status, and expectations for conduct in the classroom and in practicum education; and recommendations for faculty reappointment, renewal, promotion, and tenure.
2. The faculty, acting as a body of the whole, is responsible for recommending to the university conferral of the bachelor's degree in social work, the master's degree in social work, minors, certificates, and endorsements upon students who have been certified by the registrar or faculty, as appropriate, to have fulfilled the requirements set for them.
3. The faculty, acting as a body of the whole, have responsibility for:
 - a. the development and oversight of the social work curriculum;
 - b. the mission, goals, and objectives of the Department of Social Work;
 - c. conducting program assessment;
 - d. approving departmental guidelines for reappointment, renewal, promotion, and tenure;
 - e. serving on departmental, college, and university committees; and
 - f. evaluating its own responsibilities and procedures.
4. Faculty members shall share responsibility for advising both undergraduate and graduate Social Work students, from initial admission to graduation.

ARTICLE IV: Meetings of the Department

1. Meetings of the Department shall be held monthly during the academic year. The presiding officer shall be the Department Chair; in the event of the Department Chair's absence, a member of the Social Work Administrative Team shall preside. The undergraduate and graduate programs may hold additional meetings, as needed.
2. Decisions are made by agreement of the majority of the department. The right to vote is held by all faculty members, as defined above. The Department Chair shall not vote with the faculty in instances where the Department Chair is responsible for making a separate recommendation. Faculty who are eligible to vote but are on leave may vote in person or by proxy on any matters pending. A quorum of 2/3 of the faculty must be present for voting.
3. Non-voting persons may attend faculty meetings to observe and participate in discussion. These include, but are not limited to Social Work staff, part-time and adjunct faculty, and undergraduate and graduate student representatives. Other persons may be invited to meet with the faculty for specific purposes. Non-voting members will be excused from discussions related to personnel, individual student issues, and other confidential matters.
4. Special meetings may be convened for ad hoc business.
5. Department meeting minutes will be posted in a shared folder and hard copies will be provided as needed.

ARTICLE V: Committees

1. Unless on leave, it is the expectation that all faculty members serve on departmental committees.
2. Department committees are:
 - a. Social Work Administrative Team
 - b. Reappointment, Renewal, Promotion and Tenure (RRPT)
 - c. BSW Program Committee
 - d. MSW Program Committee
 - e. Diversity and Social Justice
 - f. Awards and Recognition
 - g. Search Committees (as needed)
 - h. Ad Hoc Committees may be formed at the recommendation of the Department Chair or faculty, as needed.
3. With the exception of the Social Work Administrative Team and the RRPT Committee, which have specific membership requirements, faculty members are expected to serve two-year terms on a committee.
4. The members of these committees shall be selected at the end of the academic year. Changes to this can be made at the discretion of the Department Chair.
5. Each standing committee shall elect a chair or co-chairs from its membership.
6. Committee reports are to be provided at monthly department meetings. All committees will provide an annual report at the end of the academic year.
7. Committee membership and responsibilities are as follows:
 - a. **Social Work Administrative Team**
 - i. Membership of this committee will consist of the Department Chair, BSW Program Director, MSW On-Campus Program Director, MSW Online Program Director, and the Practicum Education Director.
 - ii. Assessment
 1. Develop and implement mechanisms for tracking student competencies and program outcomes.
 2. Process, analyze, and maintain assessment data.
 3. Provide evaluation information to the faculty and as requested, to college and university administration.
 - b. **Reappointment, Renewal, Promotion and Tenure (RRPT) Committee (Personnel)**
 - i. Membership and Voting
 1. This committee is comprised of all tenured full-time faculty members with the exception of the Department Chair.
 2. Selection for the RRPT committee shall conform to guidelines in the Faculty Handbook.
 3. All tenured faculty members are expected to vote on all RRPT decisions. A quorum of 4/5 is required for votes.
 4. Committee members may participate in evaluation committee meetings electronically, provided the technology used allows all members to hear each other simultaneously. For all voting that pertains to changes in appointment

status, provision must be made for anonymous submission by a written or secure electronic ballot.

ii. Responsibilities

1. Developing RRPT departmental guidelines within the framework of college and university policies.
2. Conducting a timely review of faculty candidates for reappointment, renewal, promotion, and tenure and making a written recommendation to the Department Chair.

iii. Ad Hoc Term Faculty Promotion Committee

1. Members of the committee are those faculty who are eligible to vote on promotion of term faculty, normally tenured and term faculty above the rank of assistant professor. Term faculty from other substantively related areas may also serve on the evaluation committee if there is an insufficient number of eligible or qualified term faculty in the department.
2. A quorum of 4/5 is required for votes.
3. Committee members may participate in evaluation committee meetings electronically, provided the technology used allows all members to hear each other simultaneously. For all voting that pertains to changes in appointment status, provision must be made for anonymous submission by a written or secure electronic ballot.

c. **BSW Program Committee**

- i. Membership of this committee will consist of the BSW Program Director, Director of Practicum Education (or proxy), and designated BSW faculty members.

ii. Responsibilities

1. Provide oversight and recommendations for improvement of the BSW curriculum.
2. Review and approve proposals for revisions of undergraduate social work courses.
3. Review and approve proposals for new BSW courses.
4. Review and approve proposals for undergraduate social work minors, certificates, and cross-listed undergraduate courses.
5. Review and approve proposals for BSW practicum education.
6. Develop and evaluate program and graduation policies and procedures.
7. Present BSW curriculum revisions and proposals to the faculty for approval.
8. Submit approved course changes and additions to appropriate university and college committees
9. A BSW student representative will be invited to participate as appropriate.

iii. Admissions

1. Make recommendations to the faculty on BSW program admission criteria and application procedures.
2. Review and revise BSW application materials.
3. Conduct a timely review of BSW applications.
4. Recommend a pool of applicants to receive letters of admission to the BSW program.

d. **MSW Program Committee**

- i. Membership of this committee will consist of the MSW On-Campus Program Director, MSW Online Program Director, Director of Practicum Education (or proxy), and all designated MSW faculty members.

ii. Responsibilities

1. Provide oversight and recommendations for improvement of the MSW curriculum.
2. Review and approve proposals for revisions of MSW social work courses.
3. Review proposals for new MSW courses.
4. Review and approve proposals for graduate certificates.
5. Review and approve proposals for MSW practicum education.
6. Develop and evaluate program and graduation policies and procedures.
7. Present MSW curriculum revisions and proposals to the faculty for approval.
8. Submit approved course changes and additions to appropriate university and college committees.

iii. Admissions

1. Make recommendations to the faculty on MSW program admission criteria and application procedures.
2. Review and revise MSW application materials.
3. Conduct a timely review of MSW applications.
4. Recommend a pool of applicants to receive letters of admission to the MSW program.

e. **Diversity and Social Justice**

- i. Membership of this committee will include at least three faculty members, staff, and student representatives from both the BSW and MSW programs. Members of the Program Advisory Committee, community members, alumni, and other constituent groups may also serve on this committee.
- ii. Responsibilities
 1. Promote diversity and social justice in the Social Work curriculum.
 2. Recommend policies to the faculty to promote a departmental climate that assumes, accepts, and engages diversity and social justice in the pursuit of the department's mission.
 3. Develop special activities and programs to promote diversity and social justice.

f. **Awards and Recognition**

- i. Membership of this committee will consist of at least three faculty members. Social work alumni and members of the Program Advisory Committee may also serve on this committee.
- ii. Responsibilities
 1. Promote scholarship opportunities.
 2. Develop and implement opportunities for student recognition.
 3. Facilitate recommendations for BSW and MSW student awards.
 4. Work with Phi Alpha advisors to identify Phi Alpha candidates and coordinate the induction ceremony.
 5. Facilitate recommendations for faculty and staff awards.

g. **Search Committees** (as needed)

- i. Faculty search committees will be established to advise and assist the Department Chair in carrying out a search.
- ii. Responsibilities
 1. After receiving appropriate training from the Office of Diversity, Ethics, and Inclusion, this committee reviews applicant credentials and makes recommendations regarding potential finalists for the position.

2. All eligible faculty of the department will be provided with an opportunity to review the candidates' application materials, to meet with the candidates, and to attend job seminars or formal presentations by the candidates.
3. The search committee then formulates a recommendation that includes the opinions of the eligible faculty.
4. The Department Chair transmits the faculty recommendation, together with their own, to the Dean. The faculty shall be apprised in writing of the Department Chair's recommendation at the time of its transmittal.

h. **Ad Hoc Committees**

- i. Ad Hoc committees may be established as needed
- ii. Ad Hoc committees are established to accomplish an identified task and expire when that task is complete.

ARTICLE VI: Annual Review of Faculty

The Department Chair is responsible for conducting an annual faculty performance review that is consistent with the Mason Faculty Handbook and expectations of the University's Chief Academic Officer. The policies and procedures informing the annual faculty performance evaluation are described in the Mason Faculty Handbook sections 2.4.1-2.4.3. Social Work faculty on Instructional and Tenure-Track/Tenured appointments are evaluated on their work and contributions in teaching, service, and (if relevant) research and scholarship, and administrative assignments.

As part of the annual performance review (APR), faculty shall be assigned an overall rating based on criteria/area of faculty responsibility identified in the Mason Faculty Handbook (section 2.4) and considering the type of faculty appointment (Table 1).

Table 1: Faculty Performance Criteria/Areas of Responsibility

Instructional/Term Faculty Criteria/Areas of Faculty Responsibility	Tenure-Track/Tenured Faculty Criteria/Areas of Faculty Responsibility	Research Faculty Criteria/Areas of Faculty Responsibility
Teaching	Teaching	Research Duties
Service	Service	
Administrative Duties (as assigned)	Research	
	Administrative Duties (as assigned)	

All faculty in the Department of Social Work (Department) shall be evaluated annually and receive an overall performance rating. The APR is based on faculty performance and contributions in the preceding year, to include summer, if applicable.

Specific procedures and criteria are provided in the Department of Social Work Annual Faculty Performance Review Guidelines.

ARTICLE VII: Policies on Change in Faculty Status

Faculty are evaluated when they are candidates for a change in faculty status: reappointment, renewal, promotion, or conferral of tenure. Candidates will be evaluated in light of the missions of the University which are teaching; research and scholarship, both theoretical and applied; and service. Reappointment,

renewal, promotion, and tenure recommendations are based upon an evaluation of performance over the faculty member's total period of service at George Mason University. Scholarly achievements prior to joining the George Mason University faculty weigh less heavily in these evaluations but are also considered. These evaluations differ from the annual review in their emphasis on lasting contributions, consistency of performance, and flexibility.

A. Procedures for Renewal, Promotion, and Tenure

In all cases of promotion and/or tenure, there are two levels of faculty review. At both levels, evaluations are carried out only by tenured faculty. In addition to considering the candidate's dossier, faculty committees on promotion and tenure examine and include in the dossier, all relevant written evidence and testimony offered to them by members of the academic community and others with direct knowledge of the candidate's professional qualifications and achievements. The purpose of the first-level review is for the candidate to be evaluated by colleagues who are in the best position to have observed the candidate's performance in teaching and service and who are best able to professionally evaluate the candidate's research/scholarship and publication record. The processes and procedures by which faculty are evaluated for renewal, promotion, and tenure are outlined in the Department of Social Work Guidelines for Renewal, Promotion, and Tenure.

B. Procedures for Reappointment

Full-time faculty on fixed-term, non-tenure-track appointments are known as Instructional, Clinical, or Research Term faculty, depending on the focus of their primary assignments. Term faculty appointment contracts are issued for a single year or for multiple years, up to a maximum of five years. Term faculty on single-year contracts will be evaluated annually and term faculty on multi-year contracts will be evaluated in the final year of their contract appointment. Instructors or assistant professors may receive a one, two, or three-year reappointment. Senior and master instructors, or associate and full professors may be reappointed to contracts of up to five years.

For reappointment, candidates should provide documentation on the portfolio of responsibilities, primarily teaching, research, or clinical. As applicable, evidence for administrative responsibilities and service should be provided. Documentation may include:

- Current Curriculum Vitae
- Employment chronology
- Evidence of achievement in primary focus area: teaching; research; and/or clinical work
- Other supportive evaluative materials (e.g., accomplishments outside the primary area of focus)
- Evidence of administrative, service, and leadership accomplishments

Evaluation of *High Competence in Teaching* involves an assessment of:

- Pedagogical strategies that equitably support and engage students in learning, typically demonstrated by student evaluations of teaching and peer review
- Successful student learning, typically demonstrated by course design, teaching materials, and/or broad evidence of student achievement
- Faculty growth and continuous course improvement, typically evidenced by course materials, faculty member's self-assessment, attainment of course learning outcomes, and/or involvement in professional development to strengthen teaching and mentoring

C. Guidelines for Term Faculty Promotion

A term faculty member may be considered for promotion, normally after five years of service in the current rank. Term faculty who meet the department's criteria for promotion may be considered early; however, typical candidates for promotion have a minimum of three years teaching, research, or clinical work at George Mason University. Promotion may occur within the period of a multi-year contract. Upon promotion, a new contract will be issued (Section 2.7.1. of the University Faculty Handbook).

In a parallel process to the standards expected of tenure-line faculty, candidates are required to create a comprehensive casebook containing the following items for the Social Work Ad Hoc Term Faculty Promotion Committee, which will be given to the Department Chair. Candidates seeking promotion to associate professor must submit evidence of genuine excellence in either teaching, administration, clinical work, or research. Candidates seeking promotion for full professor must submit materials showing evidence of an emerging national reputation in one of the four criteria. Please see the Department of Social Work Guidelines for Term Faculty Promotion.

ARTICLE VIII: Faculty Representation in the College of Public Health

Representatives to College Committees (e.g., Curriculum Committee, Faculty Council, Student Affairs, Faculty Development, etc.) are elected by members of the faculty as a whole in accordance with college by-laws and the Faculty Handbook.

ARTICLE VIII: Adoption and Amendments of By-Laws

Motions to amend these by-laws shall be considered by the Social Work Department at a regularly scheduled meeting and will be adopted by approval of the majority of faculty and staff through a formal vote.