

APPSTATE

BEAVER COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Social Work

MSW

Student Handbook

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The Appalachian State University *MSW Student Handbook* is intended for information purposes only and does not constitute a contract between the University and the student. While this handbook presents policies and programs as accurately as possible at the time of publication, the department reserves the right to revise any section or part without notice or obligation. Changes in degree requirements do not affect students already enrolled in a degree program, although adaptations may be needed. Degree requirements can be found in the *Graduate Bulletin* for the student's year of admission to the University. Changes in departmental and academic policies become effective for all students on the date approved for implementation; therefore, all Social Work students are subject to those policies as posted herein. **Last revised August 2025.**

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Welcome!

Welcome to the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program from the faculty and staff of the Department of Social Work at Appalachian State University (AppState). We are delighted that you have selected social work for your graduate degree.

Please refer to the [Department of Social Work's website](https://socialwork.appstate.edu/) (https://socialwork.appstate.edu/) for information regarding the Department's mission and vision, faculty, departmental policies that apply to all students, information related to the profession, and resources for students.

MSW Curriculum

The AppState MSW Program curriculum is competency based and accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). [CSWE's 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards](https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/policies-process/2022epas/) (EPAS; https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/policies-process/2022epas/) prepare students to demonstrate mastery of skills for preparation for professional social work. These educational standards can be found in their entirety on the CSWE website. The competencies for foundation and concentration curriculums are found in [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#).

To prepare students for professional social work practice, AppState's MSW program is a progressive curriculum design built on the liberal arts education of the undergraduate degree. The MSW curriculum has four levels, each progressively building on earlier levels and reinforcing, integrating, and enhancing knowledge, values and skills across levels. These levels include a) Foundation Coursework for Generalist Practice; b) Advanced Concentration Coursework; c) Crossover and Elective Coursework; and d) Field Education undergirding the previous three levels.

The MSW degree consists of 60 credit hours. Students admitted to the Advanced Standing Program complete 33 credit hours and up to 6 additional hours if deemed necessary by the Social Work faculty after review of each student's readiness through the transitional seminar course. The Advanced Standing Program is offered in two program delivery format options, including online and face to face.

For a list of all required courses for the MSW degree and the full-time and part-time program schedules, see the [program schedules website](#). Students can find short bulletin descriptions for MSW courses listed in the Department of Social Work section of the *Graduate Bulletin* located on the Graduate School's [Graduate Bulletin website](#).

Although Advanced Standing Full-Time students can complete the curriculum in one academic year and one summer term, the MSW Program is not an "Accelerated Masters Degree." Accelerated Masters Degrees at AppState allow students to begin as undergraduates and transfer graduate credit in to apply to their degree requirements. The MSW Program does not participate in the Accelerated Masters Degree program.

The MSW Program does not participate in AppState's Dual Graduate Degree program. Due to accreditation standards, field education requirements, structured course sequencing, and the academic rigor of the MSW curriculum, students may not pursue a second graduate degree concurrently with the MSW. Requests to enroll in a Dual Degree program will not be approved.

The MSW Program cannot accept graduate credits from a different graduate degree as substitutes for MSW degree requirements or "share" credits, which is what dual graduate degrees require.

Foundation Curriculum for Generalist Practice

Students who enter the regular full-time or part-time program will complete courses that focus on social welfare, human behavior, research, policy, and micro, mezzo, and macro social work practice. This Foundation curriculum also includes a required field education component. Through both the Foundation level courses and the concurrent field placement, students are able to experience and master a set of competencies for generalist practice (see [Appendix A](#)) established by CSWE and reinforced through the foundation curriculum. The full-time and part-time course schedules are located on the [program schedules website](#) and students take the following courses in the foundation curriculum:

- SW 5005: *Foundations of Social Work Practice*
- SW 5010: *Human Behavior and the Social Environment I*
- SW 5020: *Practice with Individuals and Families*
- SW 5030: *Foundations of Social Work Research*
- SW 5040: *Social Work Field Practicum and Seminar I*
- SW 5200: *Social Welfare Policy Analysis and Practice*
- SW 5210: *Human Behavior and the Social Environment II*
- SW 5220: *Practice with Groups and Communities*
- SW 5230: *Evaluation of Professional Social Work Practice*
- SW 5240: *Social Work Field Practicum and Seminar II*

Course descriptions for all of the foundation courses can be found in the [Graduate Bulletin](#).

Concentration Curriculum for Specialized Practice

The MSW program offers two concentrations, one in *Individuals and Families Practice* and one in *Community and Organizational Practice*. Through the concentration level courses, crossover courses, graduate electives, and concurrent concentration field placement, students are able to experience and master a set of advanced competencies and behaviors for specialized practice (see [Appendix B](#)) specified by CSWE and articulated through the overall design of the curriculum and the concentration curriculum. Note that the concentration field placement is aligned with the selected concentration and related competencies. Courses are detailed in the following sections based on the specific concentration.

Foundation students make an "intended" concentration decision at the point of admission and make final decisions regarding their concentration in consultation with the MSW Director and Field Director in December of their first year in the program (full-time) or in January of their second year in the program (part-time). Concentration year field placement arrangements are made during the Spring semester of the Foundation year because concentration year field

placements begin in the Fall. Upon successful completion of the Foundation curriculum, including the field education requirements, students in the regular full-time or part-time program begin their advanced coursework in the Concentration year.

Advanced Standing students select a concentration at the point of admission and make final decisions regarding their concentration in consultation with the MSW Director. Field placement arrangements are made between admission to the program and the beginning of the Fall semester. Students will consult with the Field Director prior to beginning courses since the chosen concentration impacts the identified field placement. Students are encouraged to consult with the MSW Program Director with any questions.

Each student's chosen concentration is reflected in [DegreeWorks](#). The concentration dictates which courses are presented in the student's course completion requirements.

Individuals and Families Practice Concentration

The *Individuals and Families Practice Concentration* is designed for those students who intend to go into advanced direct and clinical practice upon graduation. This concentration prepares students for agency-based direct practice with diverse children, adolescents, adults, families, and small groups. Coursework in this concentration integrates social work values and ethics, and focuses on the development of the professional relationship, theoretical perspectives, advanced clinical assessment, evidence-based practice, intervention, and developing and demonstrating skills for social justice-centered, anti-oppressive, anti-racist social work practice through direct practice. Students take the following required courses in the *Individuals and Families Practice Concentration*:

- SW 5700: *Advanced Social Work Assessment*
- SW 5710: *Advanced Social Work Practice with Families*
- SW 5720: *Individuals and Families Field Practicum and Seminar I*
- SW 5730: *Advanced Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents*
- SW 5740: *Advanced Social Work Practice with Adults*
- SW 5750: *Individuals and Families Field Practicum and Seminar II*

Students are also required to take:

- Two Crossover courses (see "Crossover Courses")
- Two graduate electives (see "Graduate Electives")

Course descriptions for all of the foundation courses can be found in the [Graduate Bulletin](#). The full-time and part-time course schedules for this concentration are located on the [program schedules website](#)

Advanced field education for the *Individuals and Families Practice Concentration* is offered in a wide range of settings, such as child and family agencies, schools, hospitals, employee assistance programs, veterans settings, mental health and substance abuse clinics, correctional facilities, older adult and child welfare settings, homeless shelters and multi-service community centers. These settings provide opportunities for in-depth learning about diverse populations in an urban or rural setting, further development of clinical assessment skills within the agency

context, and practicing specific intervention models such as crisis intervention and various brief and long-term treatment modalities.

Community and Organizational Practice Concentration

The *Community and Organizational Practice Concentration* prepares students for advanced direct practice in the range of settings that focus on social problems and social change at the community, organizational, and societal levels. The emphasis is on developing and implementing services, social programs, agency administration, program planning and implementation, and social policies while providing leadership within communities and organizations, working within the Social Work value system, and developing and demonstrating skills for social justice-centered, anti-oppressive, anti-racist social work practice through direct and indirect practice. Coursework in this concentration focuses on community organizing and development, social planning, political and social action, government and nonprofit agency administration, resource development, and program planning, intervention, and evaluation. Students take the following required courses in the *Community and Organizational Practice Concentration*:

- SW 5810: *Advanced Community Social Work Practice*
- SW 5825: *Leadership in Health and Human Service Organizations*
- SW 5830: *Community and Organizational Practice Field Practicum and Seminar I*
- SW 5845: *Advanced Advocacy Practice*
- SW 5855: *Program Development and Evaluation for Health and Human Services*
- SW 5860: *Community and Organizational Practice Field Practicum and Seminar II*

Students are also required to take:

- Two Crossover courses (see “Crossover Courses”)
- Two graduate electives (see “Graduate Electives”)

Course descriptions for all of the foundation courses can be found in the [Graduate Bulletin](#). The full-time and part-time course schedules for this concentration are located on the [program schedules website](#)

Advanced field education for *Community and Organizational Practice* takes place in settings such as non-profit and grassroots organizations, non-governmental and community-based organizations, community planning and development organizations, legislative offices, advocacy agencies, and other public and private human service agencies. These settings provide opportunities for students to develop skills related to program development and administration, community assessment, development and organizing, legislative advocacy, employee assistance, and grassroots leadership development.

Crossover Curriculum

Because professional social workers engage in different kinds of social work practice across their careers, they need to be prepared to “crossover” from micro and mezzo direct practice to macro direct and indirect practice, and vice-versa, as their interests and opportunities change. Students in both concentrations also take courses from the complementary, non-selected concentration, termed “Crossover” courses. Each Concentration student and Advanced Standing

student will take at least two Crossover courses, with the option to take up to four Crossover courses. Unless all required graduate electives have already been completed, any Crossover courses beyond the required two will be recognized in [DegreeWorks](#) as meeting a requirement for a graduate elective. Crossover courses are only scheduled in the Fall and Spring semesters. Students are encouraged to review the descriptions in the [Graduate Bulletin](#) for the Crossover courses that apply for their chosen concentration, identify the Crossover courses that appeal to them most, and then build their Fall and Spring schedules accordingly. There are no substitutions for the “Crossover” courses. They can only be met by the “Required” courses from the complementary concentration.

“Crossover” courses that can be taken by *Individuals and Families Practice* concentration students are: SW 5810, SW 5825, SW 5845, and SW 5855.

“Crossover” courses that can be taken by *Community and Organizational Practice* concentration students are: SW 5700, SW 5710, SW 5730, and SW 5740.

Graduate Electives

The MSW requires completion of two graduate electives. Courses numbered below 5000 will not count toward the minimum hours required for a graduate degree or certificate program of study and will not be accepted for graduate electives. Graduate electives may be taken in the Fall or Spring or in either or both summer sessions. Typically, the MSW program offers at least one course that counts as a required elective in each summer session. Students in the regular program may take graduate electives in the summer prior to the start of their Fall courses, during the Fall and Spring semesters, during the summer between the Foundation and Concentration years, or during the Concentration year. Advanced Standing students may take graduate electives in the summer prior to the start of their Fall courses or during the Fall and Spring semesters. Note that students cannot register for courses in the summer before beginning their Fall semester Foundation or Advanced Standing courses until their “Admit Term” status is changed by the Graduate School to the summer session when the student wants to take one or more courses. New Foundation and Advanced Standing students who want to take summer courses (Summer I and/or Summer II for Foundation students, Summer I for Advanced Standing students) should make a request for an “Admit Term” change through the MSW Program Director. The Graduate School will notify the student when the “Admit Term” has been changed and the student is able to register.

For required graduate electives, there are several options:

1. MSW students may decide to complete all four courses from the complementary concentration. If they elect this option, two of those courses will be applied as their “Crossover” courses and two will be applied as their graduate electives.
2. MSW students may decide to complete two graduate Social Work elective courses. Social Work electives include the following and any others that are offered while the student is completing their degree requirements:
 - SW 5270: *School Social Work*

- SW 5245: *Social Work Practice in Health Care*
 - SW 5546: *Social Work Practice and Substance Abuse*
 - SW 5541: *The Working Poor in the United States: Problems and Solutions*
 - SW 5545: *Death, Dying, and Living*
 - Independent Study (See “Independent Study”)
 - Study abroad courses in Social Work (when the Department is offering study abroad)
 - SW 5530-5549 Special Topics courses in Social Work
3. MSW students may decide to complete two graduate electives that can be selected from any department or program at AppState that will complement their MSW coursework. Outside electives must be 5000-level, 3 credit-hour courses. The MSW Program Director cannot give permission to enroll in any other program’s courses or register a student into any other program’s courses. Many graduate programs restrict their courses to their own students. However, some programs will allow MSW students to take their courses after receiving a request from a student for permission to enroll. Students should contact the Program Director overseeing graduate courses in other programs to request permission to enroll in a course if there is a course restriction applied in the registration system.

Field Education

In addition to the classroom work, students have the opportunity to put knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and theories into practice as part of their concurrent field education. Field education in the MSW Program includes both a field seminar course (asynchronous for online students and for main campus students the seminar meets twice per month) and the field placement. Students complete field education as part of their foundation and concentration curricula. For the foundation field placement, students complete at least 480 hours of supervised generalist practice in a field agency. For the concentration placement, they also complete at least 480 hours of supervised advanced practice in a different field agency. This results in a total of at least 960 hours in field over the course of the MSW program. The Department may make a temporary reduction in hours for any given semester based on changes in policy and/or the academic calendar due to unforeseen circumstances. For successful completion of the degree, students must show mastery of the competencies of the foundation curriculum and of their selected concentration. For more detailed information, see the [Field Manual](#), available on the [Field Education website](#).

Required Criminal Background Checks

Criminal background checks (CBCs) are required by the Beaver College of Health Sciences (BCHS). The BCHS policy can be found [here](#). Students must complete a CBC prior to their field placement and will be provided instruction on how and when to do so by the Field Faculty. The CBC fee of \$18.90 will need to be paid by the student. BCHS typically uses Certiphi as a CBC provider. Our departmental Program Coordinator will contact you via email with instructions to submit your CBC.Coordinator.

Note: Department of Social Work policy requires that any applicant (or student at any point after being admitted) report any pending criminal charge or criminal conviction to the MSW Program

Director or the Department Chair to determine what impact, if any, the charge or conviction may have on their participation in the program.

Department of Social Work Policies

The Department has developed [departmental policies](#) regarding safety, confidentiality, professional development, technology, social media, snow/inclement weather, and mandatory reporting obligations. Additional policies are added as needed.

MSW Program Policies

Orientation

All incoming MSW students are required to attend the MSW Program Orientation. Each cohort will participate in a scheduled orientation. The orientation will provide information related to Appalachian State University, the MSW Program, curriculum and requirements, policies and procedures, and the profession of social work.

Orientation for Advanced Standing MSW students is typically held on the first day of the *Advanced Standing Transitional Seminar*. Orientation for students in the Regular Program is typically held during the week before classes start. Incoming students are informed of the MSW Program Orientation as well as other requirements from the MSW Program Director and the Graduate School at the point of enrollment and in subsequent communications.

Because students in the regular program participate in orientation at the beginning of their Foundation year, they do not participate in an orientation for their Concentration year.

Academic Policies

Academic Standards for Retention in the MSW Program

In order to meet our responsibilities to provide quality professional education and to ensure that our MSW graduates are able to function in a broad variety of professional situations, the Department of Social Work has set forth standards for students in the MSW Program. Social Work students must maintain the academic standards for retention set forth by AppState, the Graduate School, and the Department of Social Work.

MSW students are expected to abide by AppState's [Code of Student Conduct](#) and [Academic Integrity Code](#), the National Association of Social Workers' [Code of Ethics](#), and demonstrate increasing competence in the MSW Program's Competencies, and the following standards: 1) Scholastic Performance; 2) Professional Identity and Self Awareness; 3) Ethical Behavior; 4) Interpersonal Relationships; and 5) Commitment to Diversity, Social Justice, and Human Rights. Failure to meet the standards may result in dismissal from the program. The standards are delineated below. The bulleted expectations provided under each standard are illustrative not exhaustive.

1. Scholastic Performance Standards.

- Maintain a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 or higher;
- Earn no more than two final grades of “C” in the program of study (Note that this expectation is more rigorous than the Graduate School’s standards, which state that no student may include more than 3 C-level grades in a program of study);
- According to the Graduate School’s standards, students may repeat only one course in which the final grade is below a “C” (“C-” or “F”). Students may repeat a particular course only one time.
- Earn a “Satisfactory” grade in all Foundation and applicable Concentration field courses (SW 5040, SW 5240, SW 5720, SW 5750, SW 5830, and SW 5860); and
- Complete all course prerequisites outlined in the appropriate courses of study. Students may not enroll in social work courses while they have [Incompletes](#) in any prerequisites.
- NOTE: Students are dismissed from the MSW Program if they earn more than two final grades of a “C” or below. If students earn an “Unsatisfactory” in a Field course (SW 5040, SW 5240, SW 5720, SW 5750, SW 5830, and SW 5860) they may be dismissed from the MSW program (please see the [Field Manual](#) policy, ‘Resolving Field Education Concerns’ for further information).

2. Professional Identity and Self-Awareness Standards.

- Function within the structure of the University and Department including following established policies and processes; meeting deadlines; providing documentation and applications as requested; completing required in-class and out-of-class assignments; being prepared for class/Field; attending class/Field; arriving to class/Field on time and remaining in class/Field; and communicating respectfully and appropriately with faculty, staff, supervisors, field instruction personnel, fellow students and others; and
- Demonstrate progressive identification with the profession through behavior, communication (verbal, nonverbal, and written), personal reflection, and self-correction.

3. Ethical Behavior Standards.

- Demonstrate honesty and accountability and communicate directly within the University, Department, community, and field placement.

4. Interpersonal Relationships Standards.

- Interact with others, including peers, faculty, administrators, clients, agency personnel, and community members with integrity, cooperation, and respect, and in a non-disruptive manner; and
- Demonstrate interpersonal skills that facilitate forming and sustaining effective helping relationships.

5. Commitment to Diversity, Social Justice, and Human Rights Standards.

- Contribute to a community culture within the Department and the Field placement, which supports and encourages open dialogue, increases understanding and awareness, and inspires action;
- Demonstrate respect for all people; and
- Promote social justice and human rights in language and behavior in consideration of individual, family, organization, and/or community context.

Academic Performance Concerns

Students in the MSW program are first and foremost Appalachian State University students. Therefore, they must adhere to the academic standards and performance standards set forth by the University for all students. According to the Appalachian State University [Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Code](#), “When students enter the University, they assume obligations of performance and behavior relevant to the University’s mission, processes, and functions. These expectations of students in an academic community are higher than those expected of other citizens.” Alleged violations of the performance standards set forth by the University, including violations of the *Academic Integrity Code* or the *Student Code of Conduct*, will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Please note that alleged threat or harassment complaints must be handled according to University procedures, involving the appropriate University staff and processes. Further, students who fail to maintain the University’s scholastic requirements are subject to academic probation or dismissal as indicated in the Appalachian State University [Graduate Bulletin](#). Additional review may also be undertaken by the Department of Social Work, following the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook. Students are entitled to due process as set out by the University. Course instructors and administrators must follow the established procedures for reporting and addressing alleged violations or concerns in order to ensure due process.

Because the MSW program is a professional program, MSW students must also adhere to the specific *Academic Performance Standards* set forth by the Department of Social Work. The MSW Program’s *Academic Performance Standards* and expectations of essential behaviors for each standard were developed to ensure clarity of expectations for behavior and achievement and to ensure that students from our program are well-suited for the professional demands, roles, and responsibilities of professional social workers, acknowledging that the development of competency in every area is progressive, beginning with a basic level of commitment, knowledge, understanding and skill and moving towards an appropriate degree of professional competency in all areas by graduation. Therefore, academic performance expectations will follow this developmental sequence, with increasing competency expected over time.

Student academic performance is monitored throughout the MSW Program. When concerns are noted in any of the areas outlined in the *Academic Performance Standards for Retention*, the Department will utilize the policies and procedures outlined in the following paragraphs. The severity of the concern will influence the level of intervention and steps followed. It is important to note that if a Field placement or service learning agency requests a student be removed, the Department of Social Work will honor the request. Please see the [Field Manual](#) for more information.

When an academic, behavioral, or professional concern is identified the following steps are strongly recommended.

1. The faculty member and student should attempt to resolve concerns as soon as possible through open discussion of the issues. Possible solutions will be identified, implemented, and documented. Documentation may include e-mail summaries of meetings and/or the *Academic Standards Feedback* form (see [Appendix D](#)). The MSW Program Director and/or Department Chair may serve as resources to assist the student and the faculty member in resolving concerns. Note: If the concern involves a possible violation of the *Academic Integrity Code* or the *Student Conduct Code*, the instructor will have to follow established procedures in addressing the concern, including officially reporting the concern. The degree to which the instructor can address these concerns varies depending on the instructions the instructor receives from the Office of Student Conduct and its established procedures.
2. If a satisfactory solution is not reached and/or if another issue arises following the meeting with the faculty member and student, the MSW Program Director should be contacted. The MSW Program Director may consult with the Department Chair. The faculty member and MSW Program Director may use a variety of documented methods including joint and individual meetings to assist in resolving the problems; efforts to resolve the problems will be documented. Documentation may include e-mail summaries of meetings and/or the *Academic Standards Feedback* form (see [Appendix D](#)).
3. If agreeable solutions are not found, the problem is not remedied, or a new problem occurs following consultation with the MSW Program Director, the MSW Program Director will notify the Department Chair. Possible actions may include but are not limited to the following items. The Department Chair will determine a course of action and may consult with appropriate University and Department personnel.
 - a. Gather more information which may include contact with the student, faculty members, agency, College or University administrators, or others;
 - b. Conduct a meeting to resolve issues;
 - c. Develop a written performance contract;
 - d. Remove the student from the Field agency;
 - e. Conduct an Academic Performance Review (APR) (see [Appendix C](#));
 - f. Suspend/dismiss the student without an APR.
 - g. Follow a course of action approved by the University's General Counsel.

NOTE: Any active criminal charge or criminal conviction or active or alleged or substantiated violation of the *Student Code of Conduct* and *Academic Integrity Code* must be reported to the MSW Program Director or Department Chair. If students have previously earned professional licenses or certifications, they must also notify the MSW Program Director or Department Chair of any current or past complaints, disciplinary actions, sanctions, and/or suspensions related to those credentials. Failure to meet these reporting requirements may result in an Academic Performance Review and/or dismissal from the MSW Program.

Violence or threat of harm to any human being, cheating, or two documented instances of plagiarism may result in immediate dismissal from the MSW Program. Engaging in conduct that results in dismissal from the Field may also result in immediate dismissal from the MSW

program or an APR. Any other actions required by law and/or University policy will also be taken.

Although every effort is made to identify and positively address student concerns as early as possible, the Department may conduct an APR, or take other appropriate action, at any time to address concerns, even if the relevant issues arise late in the student's final semester. Concerns related to student academic performance, behavior, or professionalism can delay awarding the MSW degree or lead to dismissal from the program.

Transferring Credits to AppState

AppState's Graduate School has established a policies for transferring graduate credits from other institutions. The MSW Program abides by the policy that follows and which is listed in the [Graduate Bulletin](#).

A candidate may, with permission of the MSW Program Director, request approval from the Graduate School to transfer graduate course work to Appalachian from an accredited MSW program (for SW course credits) or an accredited graduate school (for non-SW course credits). The grade earned must be a "B" or higher grade, on a letter grade scale, for consideration. The coursework cannot be coursework from a completed degree. This coursework must be at the same or higher level than the student's program at Appalachian; must be acceptable in a graduate degree program at the credit-granting institution; and must meet other requirements specified by the Graduate School. See the sections below related to course credit transfers. The MSW Program only approves credit transfer for elective courses in the MSW degree requirements. It does not allow transfer credits to apply to Foundation or Concentration course requirements (such as required Foundation courses, required Concentration courses, and "Crossover" courses).

Permission to use transfer hours on a program of study must be granted by both the MSW Program Director and the Graduate School. Approved transfer credit should be reported to the Graduate School as soon as possible but will not be posted to the student's official Appalachian transcript until official transcripts are received.

Students should arrange for official transcripts to be sent directly to the graduate records staff in the Graduate School as soon as grades are posted.

Transfer credits may be accepted based only for credits no older than five years prior to admission in the MSW program. The maximum number of hours of transfer allowed by the Graduate School is 9 hours, but the MSW Program may only approve fewer credits for transfer. The grades earned must be at least "B" (3.0/4.0). A "B-" is not acceptable. Courses with grades of "P" meaning "Passing" under "Pass/Fail" grading and grades of "S" meaning "Satisfactory" under "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory" grading are not acceptable for transfer.

Duplicate Courses or Content

AppState's MSW Program will assist students in examining the curriculum content completed during their undergraduate careers in order to avoid repeating content.

Newly-admitted full-time and part-time MSW students in the 2-year program may request an approval from the MSW Program Director to substitute coursework for the SW 5005 course at admission. The Graduate School and MSW Program Director typically will allow this substitution if students have taken undergraduate courses equivalent to **both** SW 2010 and SW 2615 (two of AppState's BSW foundation Social Work courses) during their undergraduate careers. If the Graduate School and MSW Program Director allow this substitution, the students still must take 3 graduate credits *in place of* SW 5005. However, this allows students to take an additional elective and avoid repeating some content.

Experience Credit

Although the Graduate School allows credit for life or professional experience and some graduate programs at AppState allow this credit, in the MSW program curriculum credit cannot be given for life experience or work experience because of Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation rules. CSWE currently does not allow military experience to count for curriculum credit. Neither courses nor credit hours can be waived.

Grievance Procedures

Students who are dissatisfied with decisions regarding course concerns, final course grades, termination from graduate assistantships or from the MSW Program, and Academic Performance Reviews are expected to follow University-wide and Departmental grievance procedures as outlined below. Students must follow the procedure specific to their grievance. Please also consult the [Field Manual](#) for grievance procedures related to Field decisions.

Procedures for Course Concerns. Students may have concerns in a course that are not related to a final grade but may be related to grades on assignments in a course or other aspects of the course. When these concerns arise, students are encouraged to first address their concerns with the faculty member, in accordance with both University procedures and the MSW Program's [Academic Standards for Retention](#). If the concerns are not addressed by the faculty member to the student's satisfaction, then the student may address these concerns with the Department Chair.

On rare occasions, students may have significant concerns with addressing their faculty member directly. On these rare occasions, the students may take their concerns directly to the Department Chair. They should not only outline their concerns with the course, but also their reasons for not approaching their faculty member as a first course of action. The Department Chair will determine whether to refer students back to the faculty member or to move forward in addressing their concerns at that point as appropriate in the Chair's judgment. When a concern involves the Department Chair, students should first try to address the concern with the Department Chair in a similar manner. If the concern is not resolved successfully, then the student should contact the [Dean's Office](#) for assistance. Students may also contact the [Office of Access and Equity: Equal Opportunity](#) or the [University Ombudsperson](#) and will be assisted by these offices as appropriate.

Grievance of Course Grades. Dissatisfaction with a grade is not the basis for a grade appeal. Students may only appeal the grade for the course, not for any particular assignment in a course. Specific criteria are taken into consideration when appealing a final grade. According to the

Graduate School's *Grade Appeal Policy*, students must follow the grade appeal policy in effect in the Office of Academic Affairs which requires the student to arrange a discussion with the course instructor to discuss the grade assigned for the course. Following that discussion, the student has 14 calendar days from the date of the meeting with the instructor to file an appeal with the Department Chair using the official [appeal form](#). Following the meeting with the Chair, the student may opt to file an appeal with the University's Grade Appeals Committee. The appeal must be filed within 30 calendar days of the start of the next academic term after the contested grade was awarded. The appeal is filed with the Dean's office. For Social Work courses, the appeal is filed with the Associate Dean for Graduate Education in the Beaver College of Health Sciences.

The Dean or their designee serves as convener of the [Grade Appeals Committee](#) of the college or school. Each full committee consists of the convener (who presides over hearings), the Chair of the department in which the contested grade was assigned, three faculty, one undergraduate student, and one graduate student, all from the college or school which the committee serves. The Department Chair sits in a non-voting capacity, and the convener votes only in the case of a tie. The three faculty members, one alternate faculty member, and two students are appointed by the Dean from among volunteers for the assignment. A quorum for each committee shall consist of no fewer than one student and two faculty members, along with the convener.

The Grade Appeals Committee has authority to screen out frivolous or unsubstantiated appeals. The convener will explain any such finding in writing to the student, the faculty member, and the Department Chair. If the committee grants a full hearing, the student will appear before it to present all evidence relevant to their case. The convener will also invite the instructor to appear and present any evidence in support of their grade decision. The committee may ask questions of either or both and will hold its deliberations in executive session after hearing the case. The Dean, the Department Chair, the instructor, and the student will receive prompt written notification of the committee's findings. The committee's decision is binding. If the committee supports the student's appeal, the instructor will be required to re-evaluate the student according to a specific method. The method of reevaluation will depend on the circumstances of the appeal. Re-evaluation will not be used in a punitive manner toward the student. The student has 14 calendar days to inform the instructor, Department Chair, and convener in writing whether she or he consents to the proposed method of re-evaluation (which must be completed within the semester of the finding). Should the student not consent to the proposed method of re-evaluation, the instructor, Chair, and committee will mutually agree on a method of recalculating the appealed grade. In either case, the resulting grade is final and may not be appealed.

An appealed grade stands unless it is overturned.

Grievance Procedures Related to Termination of a Graduate Assistantship or Termination from the MSW Program. The following summary of information on appeals involving

termination from a graduate assistantship or graduate program is taken from the [Graduate Bulletin](#), Appeals Processes. Appeals involving termination from a graduate assistantship or termination from the MSW Program begin with the MSW Program Director and/or Department Chair, per departmental policy, by submitting a written request for an appeal to the decision to the MSW Program Director. The written appeal request must be submitted within 15 calendar days of the date of notification of the decision in question. The written appeal request may take the form of an email or letter describing the basis for the request for the appeal. If a letter, it must be submitted to the MSW Program Director via email. The email also should include any documentation that the student believes supports the appeal request. The appeal request will prompt the MSW Program Director (or Chair, depending on the appeal) arranging a meeting to discuss the decision and the appeal request. The Department reserves the right to include relevant parties in the meeting and will notify the student of any parties invited to participate and will explain their relevance. The student may invite relevant parties to participate in the meeting and will notify the MSW Program Director of any parties invited to participate and will explain their relevance. Examples of relevant parties would be a course instructor, some other party involved in the decision, or a party who can provide information relevant to an appeal decision. The Department will notify the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the Beaver College of Health Sciences of the appeal request and the decision following the meeting. If the situation cannot be resolved at the program level, students may appeal to the Graduate School by submitting documentation in writing to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the Graduate School. The MSW Program will be given an opportunity to provide written documentation about the situation. Finally, appeals denied by the Graduate School will automatically be sent to the Graduate AP & P's (Academic Policies & Procedures) Appeals Committee for review. The Committee's decision is binding.

Grievance Procedures for Academic Performance Review Decisions. Following the outcome of an academic performance review (APR), students may respond regarding the process of the APR and/or appeal the decision. The student may provide a written response regarding the review process and/or the Department Chair's decision within 10 business days of the date of the email communicating the decision; **this written response is NOT an appeal**. This written response should be sent to the Department Chair who will keep a copy in the Department of Social Work. Students who are dissatisfied with an APR decision have the right to appeal the Department Chair's decision to the [Dean](#) (or Dean's designee) in writing by email within 10 business days of receipt of that decision. The Dean's decision is final.

Interpersonal Student Concerns

Any concern of imminent or immediate threat, violence, or harm to you or other students should be reported to Campus Police (828-262-8000). If you have been assaulted or harmed by another student, you should report the incident to Campus Police.

When there are concerns between or among students that are professional or behavioral in nature, and which might affect the safety, health and well-being of students as well as affecting the learning environment and/or learning experience, then students should be aware of the following relevant policies:

1. The Department of Social Work's *Academic Standards for Retention*, especially *Standards 2. Professional Identity and Self-Awareness*, *3. Ethical Behavior Standards*, and *4. Interpersonal Relationship Standards*. (Please see these standards above.)
2. The [*NASW Code of Ethics*](#), especially *2.0 Social Worker's Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues*, and under this, *2.01 Respect*, *2.04 Disputes Involving Colleagues*, *2.08 Impairment of Colleagues*, *2.09 Incompetence of Colleagues*, and *2.10 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues*.

With these policies in mind, the following steps are strongly recommended:

1. First, students should try to resolve concerns between or among themselves as soon as possible, if appropriate. If there is an immediate threat of harm, students should contact Campus Police in person, by phone, or using this link: <https://police.appstate.edu/>.
2. If this issue is occurring in a course, please follow the *Procedures for Course Concerns*, under the *Grievance Procedures* section above.
3. If the issue is occurring in the Field seminar or Field placement then please go to the link for *Resolving Field Education Concerns* in the [Field Manual](#).
4. If a satisfactory solution is not reached, or if Steps 1 to 3 were bypassed, then the student(s) should determine which of the following routes to take:
 - a. Discuss the concerns with the MSW Program Director and/or the Department Chair.
 - b. Consult with the the Office of Access and Equity and/or file a report at this link: <https://titleix.appstate.edu/>
 - c. Discuss the concerns with the Dean of Students' Office at this link: <https://deanofstudents.appstate.edu/>
 - d. Discuss the concerns with the University Ombudsman's Office at this link: <https://ombuds.appstate.edu/>
 - e. Initiate an Academic Performance Review. See instructions and more information in [Appendix C](#), below.
5. If the concerns are brought to the MSW Program Director and/or the Chair of the department, all relevant known resources will be offered to the student(s). The Program Director and/or the Chair will work with the students to attempt to resolve the issue. If it is necessary for the Program Director or Chair to approach the student(s) who are the subject of the report, then the reporter(s) should be aware that their concern might not be anonymous or confidential. Depending on the nature of the concerns, if the student(s) want to retain their anonymity, then the Program Director and/or Chair may be unable to address this situation. Even if students request anonymity or confidentiality, circumstances may lead the reporting student to be identified or assumed to be the reporter by the student in question. Please note, however, if any student's safety is at risk, then we cannot guarantee anonymity or confidentiality.

Rights and Responsibilities

Program Responsibilities

Course Syllabus. Every course offered by the Department of Social Work is described in the faculty member's syllabus. In addition to listing related University and departmental policies, the

course syllabus will state the course description and objectives, course text and required materials, content to be covered during the semester, assignments and evaluation methods, course policies, and specific course requirements.

Academic Advising. The MSW Program Director is the academic advisor for all MSW students. The Office of Advising in BCHS only offers undergraduate advising. The MSW curriculum is fairly prescribed and the required courses are listed on the Social Work MSW Program website (see *Program Schedules*), as well as information pertaining to electives and “Crossover” courses. Before requesting advising, students should consult the program schedule for their program option. Virtual “drop-in” or group advising may be offered ahead of registration each semester. Students whose progression is disrupted for some reason and whose progression through the curriculum may deviate from the norm will meet with the Program Director.

Students are able to track the progress of meeting degree requirements through [DegreeWorks](#).

Professional Mentoring. Professional mentoring is provided by Social Work program faculty through informal mentoring relationships and in classes. Faculty engage in individual meetings with students to address concerns related to professional development as needed.

Faculty Contact Hours. Per University policy, each faculty member must maintain contact hours to consult with students. A schedule of the hours and preferred contact methods will be provided in each course syllabus. If faculty contact hours conflict with students’ classes, students may request a mutually convenient appointment time.

Posting of Grades. As soon as grades are determined at the end of each semester or summer term, grades are posted electronically by the Registrar’s Office and are available to students shortly after posting.

Privacy of Student Educational Records. Each student has a right to see his or her educational file, interpreted as whatever records may exist regarding the student that are created by and managed by the MSW Program, the Field Program, and/or the Department of Social Work. Personally-identifiable information contained in student education records will not be disclosed by the Department of Social Work without prior written consent of the student. However, Appalachian State University’s [policy](#), developed in accordance with the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974*, provides limited information to the general public, including parents; this information includes the student’s name, local phone number, University post office box number, email address, academic classification, enrollment status, field of study, and certain other categories of information. If a student wishes that all such information remains confidential, they must contact the Registrar’s office to make that request. Information beyond that specified above will not be released to parents unless students provide written permission or if the parent can present evidence that the student is dependent on the parent for support.

Student Rights and Responsibilities in Addition to the MSW Program’s Academic Standards for Retention

Code of Ethics and Confidentiality. MSW students are expected to adhere to the NASW *Code of Ethics* as well as the following confidentiality statement:

A salient issue for social work students is respecting the confidentiality of clients, client records, and activities that occur in the field and in the classroom. These can include interactions with agency staff, other students, professors, and the student's Field instructor. It is expected that students adhere to the [Code of Ethics](#) regarding professional and ethical conduct. Students are to respect client and agency confidentiality in their course assignments by refraining from the use of client names or identifying information. While maintaining confidentiality is important, it is expected that students will be able to discuss issues and activities of concern regarding field and should seek the guidance of their seminar instructor and other professors in doing so appropriately.

University Information on Student Responsibilities. Additional, University-wide student responsibilities are outlined below. Pursuant to these policies, the Department of Social Work has determined that any student whose conduct is unsatisfactory as defined in the *Student Code of Conduct* will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. In the absence of exceptional circumstances, a student found guilty and who has exhausted all appeals may be dismissed from the program.

Student responsibilities at Appalachian State University are delineated in the [Appalachian State University Policy Manual](#). These include policies related to academics, safety, harassment and discrimination, drugs and alcohol, weapons, health, and many other areas. Please see the policy manual for a complete listing of policies related to students.

Non-Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation. Students have the right to an educational experience free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. According to the [discrimination, harassment, and retaliation policy](#), Appalachian State University “prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment based on protected class status as well as all forms of retaliation against any individual because of their participation in the reporting, investigation, or adjudication of alleged violations of this policy.”

Reports and concerns regarding protected categories (age, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), sexual orientation, or veteran status) and other forms of harassment (such as bullying or intimidation), discrimination, workplace violence, or retaliation should be directed to the [Office of Access and Equity: Equal Opportunity](#). Staff in this office will redirect your concern if it is not the appropriate office to address it.

For concerns regarding all forms of discrimination and harassment based on sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, and sexual orientation, including instances involving sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, or stalking, refer to the [handbook section regarding the Office of Access and Equity: Equal Opportunity](#).

Equal Opportunity. According to the [Equal Employment Opportunity policy](#),

Appalachian State University is committed to providing equal opportunity in education and employment to all applicants, students, and employees. The University does not discriminate in access to its educational programs and activities, or with respect to hiring or the terms and conditions of employment, on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity and expression, political affiliation, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information or sexual orientation. The University actively promotes diversity among students and employees.

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct. The following information relates to academic integrity and student conduct.

Academic Integrity: Appalachian State University has developed an [Academic Integrity Code](#) to promote “an atmosphere of trust, respect, fairness, honesty, and responsibility.” During admission, Social Work students, as well as all other students at AppState, agree to abide by the code: “Students will not lie, cheat, or steal to gain academic advantage. Students will oppose every instance of academic dishonesty.” Violations of the *Code* will be taken seriously. Policies and procedures, as outlined in the *Academic Integrity Code*, will be followed by the Department of Social Work, including the specification that alleged violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct in order to protect students’ right to due process.

Student Conduct: The purpose of the [Student Conduct Code](#) for Appalachian State University is provided below:

As an academic community, the University has an interest in the safety, welfare, and education of the members of this community and in fostering an environment consistent with the educational mission, purpose, and processes of the University. When students voluntarily enter the University, they assume obligations of performance and behavior relevant to the University’s mission, processes, and functions. These expectations of students in an academic community are higher than those expected of other citizens.

Sharing Assignment and/or Exam Information or Instructors’ Materials: While it is acceptable to share study notes with other students, it is not acceptable to share exam questions, assignment answers, or materials provided by instructors, unless instructors grant permission for these materials to be shared with other students or to other sources (for example, posting materials on study sites like Quizlet.).

Use of Web-Based (or other) Sources that Facilitate Academic Dishonesty: While it is acceptable to consult resources for support (for example, Write Social Work or the University Writing Center or University tutoring services), the use of any resources (such as “essay mills,” “ghost writers,” “bot-writing” online sources, or AI generators) that produce material which the student presents as his or her own work would be considered cheating.

When in doubt about whether it is appropriate to share materials or whether a potential form of assistance is acceptable, students should consult with their instructors before using the assistance or submitting work that has been developed using the assistance.

University Policy on Alcohol and Drugs. Appalachian State University's [policy on alcohol and drugs](#) views the illegal or abusive use of alcohol and/or drugs as contrary to the high standards of professional and personal conduct and incompatible with personal health and the pursuit of academic excellence. Illegal or abusive use of alcohol and drugs can adversely affect the academic community and educational environment. Therefore, the *Student Code of Conduct* contains specific policies and regulations regarding the use of alcohol and drugs. See also the *NASW Code of Ethics, Ethical Standard 4: Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities as Professionals, 4.05 Impairment* which addresses substance use.

University Policy on Course Withdrawals. Appalachian State University establishes [guidelines](#) for students requesting a withdrawal during an academic semester after the published add/drop date. If approved, both regular and retroactive withdrawals convert grades from the assigned grade to a "W" for withdrawal. Courses with a "W" do not penalize students in regard to MSW program policies. Procedures for applying for withdrawals are outlined in the policies. Students who are experiencing serious health and/or mental health concerns are encouraged to talk with their course instructors and the MSW Program Director about their circumstances. Students intending to withdraw, or who have submitted a withdrawal request, should notify the MSW Program Director.

Student Input to the MSW Program

Students have several mechanisms for providing input to the MSW Program and the Department of Social Work.

Student input is highly valued in the hiring process in the Department of Social Work.. Whenever possible, students will have the opportunity to provide feedback to the search committee about finalists.

One or more MSW students will be selected each semester to attend faculty meetings. Although this student(s) do not have voting rights, they will be invited to participate in discussions and to provide input regarding the program and departmental activities.

One more more MSW students will also be selected each year to serve on the MSW Committee. Representatives will have voting rights in matters where students are eligible to vote. Representatives are expected to provide information to the entire MSW student body and to solicit feedback regarding the program.

One student will be selected to serve as the [NASW-NC](#) representative. In addition to representing the AppState MSW program, this student will be responsible for communicating information about NASW-NC to MSW students.

Non-Degree Seeking Students

The MSW Program Director may approve requests from the Graduate School to allow non-degree seeking (NDS) students to enroll in *SW 5005: Foundations of Social Work Practice*, depending on course enrollment and other factors. The Graduate School must also approve NDS requests. Requests are not guaranteed to be approved. NDS students who are considering

applying to the two-year MSW program may be approved to enroll in SW 5005 to self-assess their readiness for graduate education and their commitment to earning their Social Work graduate degree. Participating in the course also gives students who have been out of school for a long period a chance to build a relationship with a graduate-level instructor who might provide a recommendation for their application to graduate school at AppState or at other universities. It also establishes a recent GPA which can benefit an applicant, especially those whose GPA was at or below the minimum required for graduate studies at AppState. NDS students who complete SW 5005 with a “C” or higher grade will be allowed to count the course as “completed” in their Foundation degree requirements should they be accepted into the MSW program within five years. NDS students who opt to enroll in SW 5005 with approval from the MSW Program Director would apply to the two-year MSW program. This option would not be available to NDS students who hold a BSW degree (unless it is older than seven years) since they apply for Advanced Standing given the credit would not count toward their degree requirements. Credit for a similar course completed by an NDS student at a different institution will not be accepted for transfer as equivalent to SW 5005. SW 5005 is only offered in the Fall semester. Typically, it is taught as an in-person course. NDS students would have to be able to participate in the modality in which the course is being offered.

Elective Credit and Non-Degree Seeking Students

Non-degree seeking (NDS) students who complete a graduate-level course (5000-level, 3-credit hours) at AppState in any department (other than Social Work) may request approval to transfer in up to 6-credit hours towards the elective requirement for their graduate degree (in the two-year MSW program or the Advanced Standing program) if they are accepted into the MSW program. A graduate course *completed at AppState* can be applied with a grade of “C” or higher.

DegreeWorks

Progression through the MSW degree is recorded in [DegreeWorks](#), the university’s degree audit tool. DegreeWorks applies credits earned to degree requirements as courses are completed each semester. DegreeWorks applies credits to required Foundation and Concentration courses for students in the two-year program and to Concentration courses in the Advanced Standing program. DegreeWorks also identifies degree requirement shortages, which helps students identify courses they need to complete while working towards their degree. Application of credit is based on the intended Concentration (Foundation students) and the declared Concentration (for second-year students and Advanced Standing students), so students should confirm that DegreeWorks is recognizing their correct Concentration (Individuals and Families Practice or Community and Organizational Practice). If students discover their Concentration is mis-identified, they should request a correction through the MSW Program Director.

Deferrals

Before their courses begin, applicants who are accepted into the MSW program may request a one-time, one-year deferral to begin their MSW coursework. Applicants who are accepted into the Regular program would request deferring their start in Foundation year courses until Fall of the next year. Applicants accepted into the Advanced Standing program would request deferring their start to Summer II of the next year. The MSW Program Director requests the Graduate

School change the applicant's "Admit Term" to the deferred term. Deferring students are expected to contact the MSW Program Director early in the Spring semester prior to their deferred start to confirm their intention to begin their deferred coursework or to notify the MSW Program that they will not be enrolling. Preferably they will contact the MSW Program Director in February or March. Deferred students who will be beginning their coursework will also consult with the Field Director to begin the Field placement process in that Spring semester. Deferred applicants who do not contact the MSW Program Director, or respond promptly to communications from the MSW Program Director, are subject to having their admission denied. Any deferred applicant who does not begin their courses in the term they deferred to must reapply to the MSW program.

MSW Student Course Overloads

In the MSW Program, students do not make their own overload requests to the Graduate School. Each semester, the MSW Program Director requests permission for overloads for all Full-Time MSW students because the standard 15-hour MSW course load exceeds the 9-hour standard course load for graduate studies. Also, the MSW Program is required to identify students who are hired as graduate assistants as part of making overload requests. Students who take electives in the summer or who have had transfer credit accepted may have a course load that is lower than the standard 15 hours. Requests to *exceed* the 15 hour overload will not be approved. The Graduate School reserves the right to deny overload requests.

Graduate Certificates

Various departments at the University offer [graduate certificates](#). Students interested in earning a graduate certificate must apply to the graduate certificate program and be accepted. Students should be aware that participating in a graduate certificate likely will delay their graduation as the Graduate School mandates that all requirements for a graduate certificate must be completed before a graduate degree can be awarded. MSW students who participate in graduate certificates generally officially graduate in August or December. As long as they meet the other requirements for graduation, students may participate in the May Hooding ceremony.

Graduation

When MSW students will have completed their degree requirements, they must officially apply to graduate from AppState. The application form is accessed through the Appalnet account. The application triggers an audit of the applicant's coursework and initiates an order for a diploma. The application deadline for May graduation is the last working day in February. For students completing graduate certificates whose graduation will be delayed, the deadline for August graduation is the last working day in June, and the deadline for December graduation is the last working day in September.

Graduating MSW students are encouraged to participate in the MSW Program's Hooding Ceremony and the University Commencement ceremony.

Independent Studies

The Graduate School allows 6-credit hours of independent study to count to graduate degree requirements. In the MSW Program, students may meet their *elective credit requirements* by

completing one or more independent studies. Students wishing to develop an independent study proposal should begin the independent study proposal process several months ahead of the term in which they wish to complete the independent study.

To propose an independent study for elective course credit, the student must identify a Social Work faculty member who will agree to supervise the independent study. The instructor cannot supervise more than two independent studies in a given term per College policy. The supervisor's Graduate Faculty Membership must be up to date and remain in effect through the semester of the independent study. The supervising faculty member will contact the MSW Program Director and confirm that they will supervise the student's independent study and that they hold Graduate Faculty status. The faculty member will also request a syllabus template for the upcoming academic term. The student then develops a draft syllabus using the template provided by the MSW Program Director. The syllabus must be complete. The syllabus must identify the learning objectives for the independent study, identify the relevant CSWE competencies that will be met in the independent study, identify a set of assessments (assignments) that will assess the learning objectives, provide a schedule for the weeks in the course, and must indicate the **weekly** supervision conferences the student will have with the supervising instructor (Weekly contact is required by the Graduate School for all independent studies). After the syllabus draft is created and approved by the supervising instructor, the student (or instructor) will provide it to the MSW Program Director for review and feedback. The MSW Program Director will provide feedback and identify any necessary changes. After the syllabus is revised to address the Program Director's review, the student (or instructor) will provide it to the MSW Program Director who will forward it and a recommendation to approve the independent study request to the Department Chair. The Department Chair will review the syllabus, provide feedback, and identify any necessary changes. If changes are requested, the student (or instructor) will provide a final revised copy to the Department Chair and MSW Program Director. When the Department Chair accepts the revised, final syllabus, the student will complete and submit both the [Independent Study Form](#) and the [Special Course Approval Form for Graduate Courses](#). Both must be approved by the Department Chair, the College, and the Graduate School. The Dean's Designee should be identified as Jessica Guggenheimer in the BCHS Office of Academic Advising. After the approvals are received, the student will be able to enroll in an independent study course (with an assigned Social Work course number and section number) created for them by the Department Chair. The forms should be submitted for approval at least **two weeks** ahead of the start of the academic term identified for the independent study. Independent study proposals will not be accepted for consideration after the end of the drop-add period. The Graduate School reserves final approval of independent study proposals and may request or require changes to the approved proposal after they review it.

Timeline for Independent Study Proposals:

Advanced Standing Students: Advanced Standing students may submit a proposal in the **Fall** semester for an Independent Study in the **Spring** semester. The **final** syllabus draft, the *Independent Study Form*, and the *Special Course Form* must be submitted by the end of Reading Day for consideration.

Foundation Students: Students in the Foundation program may submit a proposal in the **Spring** semester for an Independent Study in the **Fall** semester of their Concentration year. The **final** syllabus draft, the *Independent Study Form*, and the *Special Course Form* must be submitted by the end of Reading Day for consideration.

Concentration Students: In their Concentration year, students may submit a proposal in the **Fall** semester for an Independent Study in the **Spring** semester. The **final** syllabus draft, the *Independent Study Form*, and the *Special Course Form* must be submitted by the end of Reading Day for consideration.

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistants hired through the Department of Social Work assist faculty by completing work that supports faculty's workloads related to teaching, research, and service. The MSW Program Director matches graduate assistants with faculty based on departmental needs, faculty needs, and the skillsets and experience that students report when they apply for an assistantship. Students do not select their graduate assistantship supervisor. Graduate assistants are expected to work consistently across their contract period, completed tasks assigned to them, and to work with a high level of independent self-direction. Students may be hired as Graduate Research Assistants or Graduate Teaching Assistants depending on the preference of the faculty member who will be the students' supervisors.

Tasks assigned to graduate assistants vary depending on their supervisors' needs. Some examples of common research activities include searching for and summarizing literature, locating measures and creating materials, collecting data, and assisting with data analysis and reporting. Some examples of activities that support teaching include searching for and creating materials, creating learning activities, making copies, making or contributing to presentations, updating materials on AsULearn sites, entering grades and attendance into AsULearn, assisting with accessibility of materials, and other tasks that help instructors with their teaching. Students do not become teachers in courses. Service-related activities include making posters or brochures, attending meetings of community groups and organizations, assisting with projects, and other tasks that support faculty in their service work. Graduate assistants assigned to the Chair, Program Directors, or Field staff will have tasks specific to supporting the administration of the program, such as coordinating listening sessions, assisting with departmental events, reviewing information about other programs to inform departmental decision-making, developing communications, assisting with internship placement coordination, and other tasks that support the supervisor's workload.

Typically the Department of Social Work is allotted a budget for hiring Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). The budget determines the number of assistantship hires that can be made. Incoming full-time MSW students in the Foundation and Advanced Standing cohorts may apply for a [graduate assistantship](#) in the Department of Social Work. Students indicate their interest in an assistantship when they apply to the MSW Program. To be considered for a graduate assistantship, the Graduate School requires that the most recent overall grade point average be at least **3.0** at the time of admission

to the MSW Program (or when later applying for a graduate assistantship). Selected students must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average while serving in assistantships. If the GPA of a GRA or GTA falls below 3.0, their assistantship will be terminated by the MSW Program Director. GRAs and GTAs are paid through a stipend of roughly equal amounts disbursed throughout the allotted pay periods for the academic terms they are employed (Fall/Spring, Summer I, Summer II).

Because full-time MSW students take an overload equaling at least 15 hours per semester, assistantships must be part-time. These part-time assistantships generally are for 10 hours per week under the direction of a faculty member. The pay rate depends on the budget, but the current rate is approximately \$17.50 per hour (approximately \$2625 per semester). Depending on departmental needs, some assistantships may be offered for a different number of hours or at a different pay rate. GRAs and GTAs contracted through the Department of Social Work may be assigned to faculty from other departments in the Beaver College of Health Sciences or in other Colleges at AppState. Students may opt not to accept a contract offered to them for a graduate assistantship.

Foundation students hired as graduate assistants may be offered the opportunity to continue their assistantship in their Concentration year, usually with the same faculty supervisor as long as that is acceptable to the supervisor and the student and the student's work and work habits have been satisfactory. Concentration students who were not hired as graduate assistants in their Foundation year generally will not have the opportunity to have graduate assistantships unless a vacant assistantship is advertised to MSW students or is posted on the Graduate School's list of open Graduate Assistantships across the University that all graduate students can apply for.

Students whose work is not satisfactory, work-related behavior is not satisfactory, or who do not meet the required weekly hours for the assistantship are subject to being terminated. Graduate assistants may terminate their assistantship anytime by contacting the MSW Program Director to request a contract termination. Students who accept their assistantship accept the type of assistantship offered and the variety of tasks their particular supervisor may assign.

Students may be hired into a graduate assistantship position in the Department of Social Work and also be hired for an assistantship in another University program or unit. However, no graduate assistant can hold the equivalent of a full-time workload. The Graduate School will intervene when a graduate assistant is earning too many hours in one or more assistantships.

Program Option Changes

The program is subject to the University's and College's "minimum class enrollment requirements" and uses each admission cycle's enrollment data to project and schedule future classes in each program option so planning anticipates students continuing in their program option. When applying for admission, applicants identify the MSW Program Option (or "cohort") that they want to participate in (for example the campus-based Regular Program for applicants without a BSW or the online or campus-based Advanced Standing Program for BSW graduates). When accepted, students are accepted into the program option they applied to.

Students will remain in the program option they were accepted into throughout their entire degree completion (whether full-time or part-time) except under conditions required under *Title IX* (i.e., pregnancy and postnatal needs), to meet approved ODR accommodations, or to accommodate short-term unpredicted challenges or crises which otherwise would make it unlikely or certain that the student would not be able to continue progressing through their degree. Any student approved to temporarily participate in a different program option will return to the original program option at the end of the applicable term(s). ODR/Office of Access and Equity typically initiate temporary change requests for students whose need for a change is related to issues managed by their offices. Requests made by students for a temporary program option change will be made in writing, by email, to the MSW Program Director. The request should explain clearly the challenge or crisis the student is facing and why it would likely or definitely prevent the student from progressing further without a program option change. If the student's issue requires consultation that has not occurred with an office like ODR, the student will be referred and no decision will be made until input is provided from the appropriate office. The MSW Program Director will consult with two members of the MSW Program Committee before making a decision. The MSW Program Director will provide the decision by email. Generally, approved changes begin in the next academic term.

Additional MSW Program Information

The Graduate Student Social Work Association

The Graduate Student Social Work Association (GSSWA) offers MSW students opportunities for community building through social events and volunteer opportunities. The club also provides opportunities for professional development by hosting special interest speakers and events within the department. All MSW students within the Social Work department are welcome to join the club if they would like to take part in planning events, and all MSW students are encouraged to participate in the activities hosted by the GSSWA.

The Graduate Student Association Senate of Appalachian State University

The [Graduate Student Government Association](#) (GSGA) of Appalachian State University is an elected body through which graduate students express their concern for the welfare of the graduate students at the University, develop and disseminate ideas for the improvement of graduate education, and contribute to the formation of relevant University policy. GSAS is the representative, deliberative, and administrative organization of the graduate student body of Appalachian State University and is a duly constituted collegiate organization within the Graduate School. The MSW Program is represented by a recruited Senator and Alternate who participate in monthly meetings.

North Carolina School Social Workers Association

The role of a School Social Worker is to provide services to students, families, faculties, and communities to allow students to attain maximum benefits from their school experiences. As the

population in the state grows, the need for student support services increases. The North Carolina School Social Workers Association ([NCSSWA](#)) was created in 1972 in order to promote the professional development of school social workers, to increase networking among school social workers, and to advocate for legislation and policies to enhance the welfare of children. NCSSWA is accessible through Facebook.

National Association of Social Workers (National and NC)

As graduate students in an accredited Social Work program, students are eligible to become members of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and thereby student members of the [North Carolina Chapter of NASW](#). When students join NASW, they will begin receiving the journal, *Social Work*, and may enjoy other membership benefits and responsibilities. Student members pay a reduced membership fee.

Additional Professional Associations of Social Workers

While the National Association of Social Workers is the profession's national organization, there are additional professional associations that meet the needs of and represent underrepresented populations in the profession. These include the [National Association of Black Social Workers](#), the [National Association of Puerto Rican and Hispanic Social Workers](#), the [Latino Social Workers Association](#), and the [American Asian Social Work & Counseling Association](#).

Phi Alpha – National Social Work Honor Society

The Department of Social Work has established a [Chapter of Phi Alpha](#), the National Social Work honor society. The purpose of the society is to provide a closer bond among students of Social Work and promote humanitarian goals and ideas. MSW students are eligible for membership when they have been admitted as graduate Social Work students, completed at least 9 hours of required Social Work courses or at least 37.5% of the total hours/credits required for the graduate degree, whichever is achieved later, and have a GPA that is within the top 35% of their class. The national organization has policies that apply to membership in *Phi Alpha* when an inducted member has founded allegations of academic dishonesty or personal misconduct. The AppState chapter will report founded allegations to the national organization.

Opportunities for Alumni

As the Department of Social Work continues to develop and expand, a cadre of former students is now employed as Social Work professionals in North Carolina and throughout the country. As alumni, there are opportunities to contribute to and support the Social Work Program through recruitment of potential students, service as Field supervisors, employment as part-time and adjunct faculty members, and involvement in special professional activities. AppState MSW graduates are also full-time Social Work faculty. Alumni also provide feedback to the Program as it strives to remain professionally current and alert to policy and practice issues, which inevitably impact on the educational process.

Financial Support Through Scholarships

Students receiving financial aid are reminded that graduate assistantships and scholarships do impact financial aid awards. Students should consult with the [Office of Student Financial Aid](#) to determine how their financial aid may be impacted.

North Carolina Tuition Scholarships

The Department of Social Work may be asked to recommend a recipient for a North Carolina Tuition Scholarship. Typically only one is available for students from the MSW program. Full-time MSW students who are charged out-of-state tuition and are hired as a graduate assistant are eligible for consideration. This award partly covers the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition. Students who receive this scholarship must maintain at least a **3.4** grade point average and remain employed as a graduate assistant in the Department of Social Work.

Departmental and College Scholarships

Students may indicate their interest in scholarships when they apply to the MSW Program. The Graduate School reviews all applications for eligibility for scholarships and encourages students to apply for scholarships they are determined to be eligible for.

Several scholarships are available to MSW students through the AppState Department of Social Work and the Beaver College of Health Sciences. Availability is based on funding, and students may apply through the [Beaver College of Health Sciences scholarship portal](#). MSW students are strongly encouraged to apply for scholarships available to them.

Additional Scholarships and Financial Support

Additional scholarships and financial support, including the Provost's Fellowship, are available through the [School of Graduate Studies](#). Students may indicate their interest in these when they apply to the MSW Program.

Insurance Coverage Required for Internships, Practicums, Field Experiences, and Some Service Learning Courses

Appalachian State University requires professional and [general liability coverage](#) for all students enrolled in an internship, field experience, practicum, clinical, and student teaching. Therefore, the University has assisted by locating a policy that can be purchased by University students for this purpose. The premium for this coverage is charged to each student's account upon enrollment.

You can find additional information about tuition and fees on the [Student Accounts](#).

Specialized Programs and Field Opportunities

Screening, Brief Treatment, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)

The Department of Social Work provides training to students, field instructors and community members in the universal screening tool, SBIRT. In addition, the Nursing and Public Health Departments in the Beaver College of Health Sciences and the Psychology Department in the College of Arts and Sciences also participate, affording students the opportunity to be involved in interprofessional learning. Each student will receive substance use disorder content appropriate to their cohort: SW 5020 for first-year MSW Foundation students which will include the first module of the three-module SBIRT program. Advanced Standing MSW students who did not complete their BSW at AppState that are interested in participating in SBIRT will need to contact the Program Coordinator, Kayla Warren, warrenka@appstate.edu, for access to Module One material.

Students may then choose to complete Modules Two and Three and receive a certificate of completion from the Beaver College of Health Sciences. Module Two consists of asynchronous online work and a two hour synchronous role play workshop which occurs in August and January. Module Three consists of practicing SBIRT at your field placement site, our interprofessional clinic or other approved site, receiving feedback from your supervisor or other SBIRT-trained employee and completing assignments on AsULearn. Upon successful completion of all three modules, students will receive an electronic copy of their certificate of completion.

North Carolina Child Welfare Education Collaborative

Emphasizing public child welfare practice, the [North Carolina Child Welfare Education Collaborative](#) provides educational opportunities to BSW and MSW students who are interested in careers in child welfare. As North Carolina grows in both population and diversity, the changing social landscape highlights an increasing need for professionally-trained child welfare workers to help our children. Recruiting students who are new to child welfare, as well as seasoned professionals who want to move forward in their careers, CWEC aims to ensure safe, permanent and nurturing families for North Carolina's most vulnerable citizens.

CWEC is the overall initiative working to strengthen public child welfare services by increasing the number and diversity of well trained and highly committed BSWs and MSWs in local Departments of Social Services (DSS). CWEC provides educational opportunities to students who are interested in careers in child welfare.

MSW students who wish to complete a field placement in a County Department of Social Services Child Welfare unit **must** complete two courses:

- *SW 5002: Competencies for Child Welfare*, offered in the summer. This course may count for one of the student's graduate electives.
- *SW 5730: Advanced Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents*, prior to or concurrent with field placement during their concentration curriculum.

Students typically are notified about the Collaborative through announcements in class and via student email lists from the Program Specialist. Applications to the Collaborative for MSW fall placements are **due by the second Friday in March**.

Applicants will receive confirmation via email once their application is successfully submitted. The CWEC/NCDSS will review and approve applications and then notify universities of their decision within two weeks of the application deadline. Universities will notify applicants via email of the outcome and approved applicants will receive guidance on next steps towards the interview process. Students who move forward to interviews will participate in a panel interview including a CWEC/NCDSS Representative, a local county DSS leader, and a University Representative. Once students have been approved after interviews, they can move forward with finalizing their placement with a DSS agency.

All students completing the Collaborative program will be pre-certified to work in DSS, increasing their marketability and improving services to families and children.

School Social Work Licensure

The MSW student who desires to receive North Carolina School Social Work licensure to work as a school social worker should complete the school social work elective (*SW 5270*) and complete a field placement in a public school system. Students who have taken *SW 5270* while earning their undergraduate degree do not need to repeat the course. Students are highly encouraged to take the school social work course before or concurrent with entering their field placements. **In addition**, a graduate level Special Education course (*SPE 5595: Individual Difference* or *SPE 5045: Advanced Topics in Diversity*) will be required for licensure completion and can be counted as an elective towards the required credit hours for graduation. Students will need to contact Program Coordinator, Kayla Warren, to set course permits for either *SPE 5595* or *SPE 5045*.

Following completion of these requirements and subsequent awarding of the MSW, graduates who wish to be licensed as a school social worker must send an email request to the Program Coordinator asking for licensure application information. The Department of Social Work, along with the Reich College of Education, has been approved by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) to be a recommending body for social work school licensure. Once an application has been submitted to NC DPI, they will contact the Reich College of Education

to recommend the eligible graduate for licensure. After the application has been submitted, the process is managed by NC DPI.

In some cases, individuals who may or may not have completed all the requirements may wish to seek school social work licensure at some point in their future. For additional and current information related to school social work licensure, please contact Kayla Warren, Program Coordinator, at warrenka@appstate.edu or office phone (828) 262-8210.

North Carolina Social Work Licensure

Clinical Social Work Licensure

MSW graduates are eligible to apply immediately for licensure as a Licensed Clinical Social Work Associate (LCSWA). After passing the Association of Social Work Boards' (ASWB) clinical examination and obtaining two years of supervised clinical experience, graduates may apply for their full licensure as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in North Carolina through the [North Carolina Social Work Certification and Licensure Board](#). Some states have reciprocity with North Carolina, and some states may have different requirements regarding years of experience. Graduates should apply in the state where they wish to practice. The MSW curriculum prepares graduates for licensure in NC. It cannot guarantee graduates will meet the requirements in other states. Each spring, the Program or the Graduate Social Work Student Association invites a representative from the [North Carolina Social Work Certification and Licensure Board](#) to visit campus to provide a presentation regarding licensure. This is open to all students. Requirements for licensure outside of North Carolina may differ from this state's. Students are encouraged to be familiar with the licensure requirements in the state in which they wish to practice after graduation to ensure they will be able to meet the requirements.

Student Services

Appalachian State University has a strong commitment to providing services for students enrolled in the University. An overview of student services and resources can be accessed in the [Graduate Bulletin](#), including a range of Wellness, Health, and Safety resources.

Health Services

Medical services are provided to qualified students by the [Mary S. Shook Student Health Services](#) at its location on the second floor of the Miles Annas Student Support Services Building on Howard Street. These include an outpatient clinic, an after-hours clinic, and a pharmacy.

Contacts with the Health Service are confidential. Records are maintained separately from the University records for the use of Health Service personnel and may be released only with written permission by the student.

The Health Service does not issue medical excuses for class absences due to illness or injury. Students who withdraw from the University for health reasons should do this through the Health Service and must receive a medical clearance before being re-admitted. This clearance must present evidence that the condition, which necessitated withdrawal, has improved and that there is reasonable expectation of the student's ability to participate in University life.

Immunization: North Carolina law requires anyone entering college to present a complete immunization record to show their compliance with all required immunizations.

Proof of Medical Insurance: [University of North Carolina System policy](#) requires that all degree-seeking, on-campus graduate students who are enrolled in 9 or more hours and are eligible to pay the AppState Student Health Fee must provide proof of medical insurance.

Disability Services

The [Office of Disability Resources](#) (ODR), located in Suite 112 Anne Belk Hall, assists eligible students and employees who have documented disabilities by determining and coordinating reasonable academic and/or workplace accommodations. Appalachian State University is committed to providing equal opportunity and participation for otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA), Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act* (Section 504) and state law. In adherence to the ADA and Section 504, AppState will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities and will provide reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have equal opportunity to participate and enjoy its services, programs or activities.

Individuals seeking accommodations are responsible for providing ODR with current, comprehensive documentation to support the request for reasonable accommodations. ODR is responsible for determining eligibility based on current in-depth documentation, meeting with the individual, and creating an individual Accommodation Plan which reflects reasonable accommodations. The University is responsible for providing the reasonable accommodations stated on the Accommodation Plan. Reasonable accommodations may include (not all inclusive): alternate formats, testing accommodations, assistive technology, and program accessibility.

Due to the confidential nature of such documentation, individuals are responsible for authorizing disclosure of their complete or partial Accommodation Plan to their instructors or supervisors and explaining the impact of the requested accommodation(s) within the University classroom, program, place of employment, or campus-wide activities. Students should understand that instructors will only honor accommodations when the official ODR process has been followed, ODR has granted accommodations, and instructors have received the proper official notification of relevant accommodations through the automated notification system. ODR recommends that

students make their instructors aware of their accommodations, using the official procedure, as early as possible, but by the end of the Drop/Add period.

Accommodations must be authorized by ODR. Instructors receive notice when students in their courses have been approved for specific accommodations. Instructors follow the accommodation requirements that are shared with them officially through ODR. Instructors can only follow official, authorized accommodations. They cannot make adjustments based on students telling them what they need, what accommodations they have been approved for, or what accommodations they have had in the past.

Intercultural Student Affairs

[Intercultural Student Affairs](#) is located in the Plemmons Student Union. It contributes to AppState

by providing marginalized and underrepresented students with mentoring, advocacy, community and identity affirmation; as well as by offering multiple and varied learning opportunities for all Appalachian students to develop an appreciation for diversity and different perspectives, enhance self-awareness, increase multicultural knowledge and strengthen intercultural competency. Intercultural Student Affairs operates three student-led outreach centers: the Henderson Springs [LGBT Center](#), [Multicultural Center](#), and [Women's Center](#).

Counseling and Psychological Services Center

The [Counseling and Psychological Services Center](#), located in the Miles Annas Student Services Building, provides an array of services for students who are currently enrolled in classes including emergency services; walk-in services; assessments; individual, group, and family counseling; programs for those with eating concerns; prevention and outreach programs; assistance with psychological withdrawals; self-help programs; and referrals to campus and community programs.

The Office of Access and Equity: Equal Opportunity

The [Office of Access and Equity: Equal Opportunity](#), located in 123 I.G. Greer Hall, supports the University's mission of scholarship through the promotion of equity, access, and civil rights throughout the campus community, fostering an environment free of discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, including sex-based misconduct and relationship violence.

Students may report instances of discrimination and harassment to this office.

Additional Student Services

Additional services are available the [Belk Library](#), the [Career Development Center](#), the [Student Learning Center](#), and the [Student Legal Clinic](#).

Appendix A: MSW Foundation Competencies and Behaviors

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

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; The Nine Social Work Competencies 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards
- 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:

- 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:

- 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:

- 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:

- 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:

- 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:

- 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:

- 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:

- 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: MSW Concentration Competencies and Behaviors

Individuals and Families Concentration Competencies and Behaviors

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
 - a. Understand ethical standards through a rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lens. Seek supervision and consultation to guide ethical decision-making.
 - b. Develop and incorporate wellness and self-care measures to ensure their own competent and ethical practice. Advocate for support of systemic wellness practices and support in their agency and the profession.
 - c. Fully engage in and reflect on interprofessional practice opportunities as a tool for incorporating diverse perspectives into their practice.
 - d. Utilize strategies to recognize how their own worldview, experiences, and affective responses influence practice.
2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
 - a. Actively seek information on current and historical issues of social, racial, economic, and environmental injustice to inform advanced practice.
 - b. Actively engage in advocacy practices in your agency and in the larger community to advance social, racial, economic, and environmental justice at individual and systems levels
 - c. Engage in continual self-reflection to recognize and challenge implicit and explicit biases, and vocally advocate for others to do the same.
3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
 - a. Employ key theoretical frameworks which explore diverse perspectives and life experiences.
 - b. Demonstrate reverence for cultural differences and humility in learning about identities different from their own. Incorporate knowledge about the impact of identity and intersectionality on equity and inclusion in society.
 - c. Engage in continual self-reflection to recognize and challenge implicit and explicit biases, and vocally advocate for anti-racist practices.
 - d. Explore and acknowledge the impact that White supremacy and privilege have had on client experiences. These impacts may include poverty, oppression, marginalization, and alienation.
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
 - a. Use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches to inform research and build knowledge. Demonstrate the ability to articulate and share findings with a wide variety of constituencies including clients, other professionals, and community stakeholders.
 - b. Utilize multiple sources of knowledge, e.g. empirical/research evidence, practice wisdom, client input, and/or contextual factors, when making practice decisions with individuals, families, and groups. Demonstrate an understanding of the inherent bias in research and identify methods to mitigate this bias when interpreting research.

5. Engage in policy practice.
 - a. Analyze how historical, social, racial, cultural, economical, organizational, environmental and global influences impact current social policies. Identify the impact on clients, constituents, and communities served by your agency.
 - b. Integrate existing and emerging knowledge of relevant local, state, and federal policies in working with individuals, families, and groups.
 - c. Engage in anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to affect change at all levels of practice.
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
 - a. Engage with diverse clients and others using an anti-racist inclusive lens taking into account their level of development and cultural contexts as well as the impact of power and privilege
 - b. Use culturally responsive interpersonal, communication, and interviewing skills to develop collaborative working relationships with individuals, families, and groups.
 - c. Demonstrate strategies to reflect on one's role in facilitating or inhibiting engagement and to implement a plan to improve these skills.
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
 - a. Conduct ongoing, comprehensive, and culturally responsive assessments using appropriately developed assessment methods and assessment tools.
 - b. Integrate knowledge from multiple sources including theoretical frameworks to understand clients, systems, and challenges in context.
 - c. Develop strategies to identify and mitigate negative influences related to bias, experiences, and affective reactions in the assessment process.
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
 - a. Utilize comprehensive, ongoing, and culturally sensitive assessment as the basis for determining appropriate interventions and collaboratively developed goals.
 - b. Identify and mitigate the effect of interventions that are based in white supremacy, heteronormism, sexism, racism, and other forms of oppression
 - c. Select, apply, and facilitate appropriate interventions (across all practice levels as appropriate) strategically and collaboratively.
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
 - a. Critically evaluate professional practice through diverse methods and modify interventions to maximize the well-being of individuals, families, and groups. Utilize evaluation data to inform practitioner knowledge and skill development.
 - b. Use results from program evaluation to inform program development and policy recommendations.

Community and Organizational Practice Concentration Competencies and Behaviors

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
 - a. Identify ethical issues. Determine and implement the most appropriate response(s) within a *rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive* framework.

- b. Conduct themselves professionally in accordance with relevant codes of ethics, laws, policies, and professional standards.
 - c. Provide leadership from a social work perspective in making ethical decisions with diverse stakeholders in policy, community, and organizational practice arenas.
2. Advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.
 - a. Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights in policy, community, and organizational practice arenas.
 - b. Engage in advocacy practices to advance social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.
3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
 - a. Employ key theoretical frameworks to explore diverse perspectives and intersectionality within policies, organizations, and communities.
 - b. Apply their understanding of social, racial, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for ADEI in policy, community, and organizational practice arenas.
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
 - a. Use practice experience and an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective to inform research, resource development, or intervention.
 - b. Utilize the best available evidence when making policy, community, and organizational practice decisions.
5. Engage in policy practice.
 - a. Engage and encourage stakeholders within communities and organizations to be active advocates for racial, social, economic, and environmental justice.
 - b. Analyze and advocate to create or improve anti-racist and anti-oppressive policies at the organizational, local, state, national, or global levels that further social, economic, and environmental justice.
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
 - a. Apply knowledge of policy, community, and organizational theories and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with diverse communities and organizations.
 - b. Use empathy, self-reflection, interpersonal skills and inter-professional collaboration with people from diverse economic, political, social, and cultural backgrounds to facilitate social, economic, and environmental justice and/or sustainable change.
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, and organizations, and communities.
 - a. Apply knowledge of community and organizational theories, multidisciplinary frameworks and policy to assess diverse communities and organizations in a culturally responsive manner.
 - b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multi-disciplinary theoretical frameworks in the

- analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies.
 - c. Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges with clients and constituencies.
 - d. Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- a. Critically choose and implement culturally responsive interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies.
 - b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multi-disciplinary frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies.
 - c. Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes.
 - d. Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies.
 - e. Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- a. Select and use appropriate anti-racist and anti-oppressive methods of evaluation of outcomes.
 - b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multi-disciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes.
 - c. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes.
 - d. Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Appendix C: Academic Performance Review Procedures

Initiating an Academic Performance Review

Any faculty member who has a specific and significant concern or pattern of concerns about an aspect of a student's performance may request to bring the concern before the Academic Performance Review (APR) Committee. A student who has a concern about another student may bring that concern to the MSW Program Director or Department Chair. Concerns must be presented in writing to the attention of the MSW Program Director or the Department Chair. If the MSW Program Director initiates an APR based on a concern with a student or there is another conflict of interest, another faculty member will be designated as chair of the APR committee by the Department Chair.

Composition of the Academic Performance Review Committee

The APR Committee will consist of a minimum of three faculty members, typically the APR Chair, the faculty member bringing forward the concerns, and at least one additional faculty member appointed by the APR Chair. The MSW Program Director will serve as the chair of the APR Committee unless another chair is needed as outlined in the previous section. In this case, the Department Chair will select an alternate chair of the APR.

Responsibilities and Roles

The ***student*** will be informed of the concerns and of the APR. He or she has the right to participate in the APR and speak on his or her own behalf. The student may invite witness(es) and/or an observer to the APR as outlined below. The student also has the right to respond to the process and/or outcome of the APR as detailed in the grievance procedures.

The ***APR Chair*** shall see that all necessary information is compiled and available for the APR committee's use in deliberations. The APR chair is also responsible for appointing any additional APR committee members, convening the committee, informing the student in writing that an APR has been initiated and the brief reasons for the review, recording and taking notes in the APR meeting, communicating information to the student before and during the APR, ensuring that the meeting is focused on the identified concern(s) and academic performance of the student, and providing a written recommendation of the APR committee to the Department Chair.

The ***faculty member bringing forward the concerns*** is viewed as the person most knowledgeable about the situation under review and is therefore responsible for presenting pertinent information on the nature of and facts about the problem under review.

The ***APR Committee Members*** will review all information, listen and ask questions during the proceedings, and engage in deliberations to determine the recommendation(s) that will be made to the Department Chair.

The ***Department Chair*** will be present during the fact-finding component of the APR and for the APR committee's deliberations to observe and to hear first-hand the presentations and discussions. The Department Chair may also ask questions and participate in discussions. The Department Chair shall not be present when the APR committee prepares its recommendation(s). After receiving the written recommendation(s) from the APR Chair, the Department Chair is responsible for making a final decision. The Department Chair will then notify the student and

APR Committee in writing of the outcome of the APR. In the event that the Department Chair cannot serve in an APR, an alternate will be selected.

Witness(es) may be invited by the student or the APR Chair. They must have significant knowledge of the problem or of the student's academic performance. They are not present in the APR except when called. Witnesses may be questioned by the student and the APR Committee, but witnesses do not typically ask questions of the APR Committee or of the student. An attorney cannot serve as a witness. An individual cannot serve as both a witness and an observer.

One ***Observer*** may be invited by the student and he or she is present to observe only. An observer does not provide evidence and does not ask or answer questions. An attorney cannot be an observer. An individual cannot serve as both an observer and a witness.

Student Privacy and Confidentiality

Consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, documentation of information disclosed during student meetings with faculty, program directors, or school administrators will be kept confidential. Faculty, program directors and/or service learning/field placement supervisors may share pertinent information, consistent with FERPA, for the professional purpose of identifying student issues and enhancing problem solving about the concerns as they relate to expected Academic Performance Standards. Should the student invite an observer or witness, the student will be deemed to have provided permission for that individual to be privy to the information discussed in the APR. The APR documentation will be kept in the Department of Social Work.

Procedures and Process

The ***first step*** in the process is for the APR Chair to schedule the APR. An APR meeting should be scheduled as soon as possible following the emergence of a concern or complaint, and the APR Chair shall notify the student, the faculty member bringing forward the concerns, any other APR committee members, and the Department Chair of the meeting time and place, those who will attend, as well as the nature of the concern(s) to be considered. The APR Chair will attempt to accommodate attendees' schedules.

Attendance at the APR meeting will be governed as follows:

1. The student whose performance will be reviewed is invited to participate in the APR meeting. However, if the student has been contacted but refuses to or does not attend, the APR will be conducted in his or her absence. Prior to the meeting date, the student is responsible for contacting the APR Chair in writing within two business days of the notice to confirm his or her intent to attend the meeting. The student participates in the meeting until the point at which the committee begins its deliberations.
2. The student may invite any person other than an attorney to attend the APR meeting as an observer or witness. It is the student's responsibility to notify the APR Chair in writing that an observer or witness will attend at least two business days prior to the scheduled meeting. The names and relationships of the observers and witnesses will be provided by the student to the APR Chair.
3. The APR Chair may invite additional administrative personnel from within the institution, as appropriate.
4. If the size of the group becomes unwieldy or the APR must occur within an immediate time frame, the APR chair has the authority to limit the number of people who will attend the APR meeting.

In all cases, the following procedures for the APR will be adhered to:

1. The student shall be advised of the time and place of the review and who will attend.
2. The student shall be advised of the nature of the academic performance concern(s).
3. The student shall be advised of the following rights:
 - a. The right to present his or her case.
 - b. The right to be accompanied by an observer, but not an attorney.
 - c. The right to call witnesses in his or her behalf, but not an attorney.
 - d. The right to question other witnesses.
 - e. The student shall be advised of the APR process and the method of response and appeal.

Any requests from the student for modifications or revisions to the Procedures and Process as outlined must be made in writing at least 3 business days prior to the APR. These must be considered and decided during the *first step*. The APR Chair and Department Chair must agree on decisions regarding procedural changes. Decisions will be conveyed to the student in writing at least 24 hours prior to the APR being convened.

Once an APR is convened, the *second step* is to conduct the review. The agenda for the APR meeting will include the following:

1. Fact finding component. All APR committee members, the student, and the Department Chair shall participate in this component.
 - a. The APR meeting will be convened by the APR Chair.
 - b. The faculty member bringing forward the concerns will present the facts leading to the APR.
 - c. The student or others may present additional facts or clarify facts related to the review.
 - d. Witnesses, if any, will be questioned.
 - e. The APR Chair will summarize the discussion.
 - f. The student or others may offer corrections or additions to the summary.
2. Deliberation. After the student and any witnesses and/or observers are dismissed, the APR members, including the APR Chair, the faculty member bringing forward the concerns, the faculty member(s) appointed by the APR Chair, and the Department Chair shall participate in this portion of the meeting. The APR members may utilize materials produced for the APR, contents of the APR meeting, and any other relevant information in their review and discussion.
3. Preparation of Recommendations. The APR committee members jointly develop their recommendation(s). The Department Chair shall not be present when the recommendations are developed.

The *third step* is for the APR Chair to write and submit the recommendation of the APR Committee to the Department Chair as soon as possible following the APR and deliberations. When committee recommendations are not unanimous, dissenting opinions will be included in the recommendations submitted to the Department Chair.

The *fourth step* is for the Department Chair to review the recommendations and to consult with other administrators, University officials, or APR Committee members as needed. The Department Chair will make the final decision and the student and APR Committee will be notified in writing of this decision within 15 business days of the APR. This period may be

extended in extenuating circumstances. A copy of the e-mail/letter outlining the Department Chair's decision will be kept in the Department of Social Work.

The student may respond to the process of the APR and/or appeal the decision. The student may provide a written response to the review process and/or the Department Chair's decision within 10 business days of receipt of the decision. This written response should be sent to the Department Chair who will keep a copy in the Department of Social Work. If the student chooses to initiate a formal appeal of the APR decision, he or she will follow the process outlined under the grievance procedures that follow.

Possible Outcomes of a Performance Review

The following are some possible outcomes of an APR, applied as appropriate to the severity of the issue. This list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

- A written performance plan may be established. In such a case, the plan may require the following:
 - Additional coursework,
 - Completion of training relevant to the issue,
 - Mutually agreed upon counseling, or
 - Other activities as warranted.
- A departmental probationary period during which specified criteria must be met.
- Delayed entry into the field practicum based on specified criteria being met.
- Suspension from the MSW program. If the decision is to suspend the student, specific reasons for the suspension should be identified and specific criteria for reinstatement must be met.
- Termination from the MSW program.

Grievance Procedures of Academic Performance Review Decisions

Students may respond regarding the process of the APR and/or appeal the decision. The student may provide a written response regarding the review process and/or the Department Chair's decision within 10 business days of receipt of the decision; **this written response is NOT an appeal**. This written response should be sent to the Department Chair who will keep a copy in the Department of Social Work. Students who are dissatisfied with an APR decision have the right to appeal the Department Chair's decision to the [Dean](#) (or Dean's designee) in writing by email within 10 business days of receipt of that decision. The Dean's decision is final.

Appendix D: MSW Academic Standards Feedback Form

[The form is linked here.](#)