



# Department of Social Work

APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

BEAVER COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

## MSW

# Student Handbook

### Department of Social Work

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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 and Program of Study 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 on July 12, 2021.**

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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 (ASU). We are delighted that you have selected social work for your graduate degree and are looking forward to having you with us.

We hope that you will find the graduate social work degree both intellectually and personally rewarding. The faculty is always available to assist you in many different ways to support your growth as a masters-educated social work professional. We will enjoy the opportunity to get to know you inside and outside of the classroom. Please do not hesitate to contact us as needed as you progress through the curriculum.

Again, welcome!

### **The Faculty and Staff of the Department of Social Work:**

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Part-time adjunct instructors are also considered Department of Social Work faculty.

#### Acknowledgements:

MSW Program policies and standards adopted in this handbook are based on the program policies developed and presented by Patty Gibbs-Wahlberg, East Tennessee State University, at the 2009 Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education.

Field education policy adopted in this handbook is based on policies developed by the Louisiana State University's field program.

## **General Information**

Appalachian State University's (ASU) Department of Social Work has two degree programs, the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program and the Master of Social Work (MSW) program. Both are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). This is an indication that our programs have been carefully evaluated and meet all of the standards required for full approval. Periodic reviews of our programs occur in order to ensure the quality of our curriculum, resources, and outcomes. The MSW Program's first cohort began in 2006, and the program was officially accredited by the CSWE in October 2009. Thus, the first cohort graduated from our newly accredited program. The MSW Program has consistently been reaffirmed since then and was reaffirmed again in June 2020 through June 2028. As a graduate of our MSW program, your degree will be recognized locally, nationally, and globally by all health and human service organizations.

### **Social Work as a Profession**

As a student in the Department of Social Work at ASU, you will learn about the distinguished history of the social work profession. ASU's program is designed to help you develop your own professional self as you learn in the classroom and in the field.

According to the [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\)](#):

- Social workers are highly trained and experienced professionals. Only those who have earned social work degrees at the bachelor's, master's or doctoral levels—and completed a minimum number of hours in supervised fieldwork—are professional social workers.
- Social workers help individuals, families, and groups restore or enhance their capacity for social functioning, and work to create societal conditions that support communities in need.
- The practice of social work requires knowledge of human development and behavior, of social, economic and cultural institutions, and of the interaction of all these factors.
- Social workers help people overcome some of life's most difficult challenges: poverty, discrimination, abuse, addiction, physical illness, divorce, loss, unemployment, educational problems, disability, and mental illness. They help prevent crises and counsel individuals, families, and communities to cope more effectively with the stresses of everyday life.
- Professional social workers are found in every facet of community life—in schools, hospitals, mental health clinics, senior centers, elected office, private practices, prisons, military, corporations, and in numerous public and private agencies that serve individuals and families in need. Many also serve as social and community service directors.

### **NASW Code of Ethics**

A defining characteristic of the social work profession is its identification with an explicit mission statement, a clearly articulated ethical foundation, and an associated value system. MSW students are expected to adhere to the [NASW Code of Ethics](#). According to NASW,

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual wellbeing in a social context and the wellbeing of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

From this mission, NASW presents six core values and associated ethical principles. These core values and ethical principles are:

*Value: Service*

*Ethical Principle: Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.*

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

*Value: Social Justice*

*Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.*

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

*Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person*

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

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

*Value: Importance of Human Relationships*

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

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

*Value: Integrity*

*Ethical Principle: Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.*

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

*Value: Competence*

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

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

Appalachian's MSW Program identifies with these core values, endeavors to uphold these ethical principles, and works to assist you as you incorporate these values into your professional practice. Please see the [NASW website](#) for full text of the *NASW Code of Ethics*.

## **Council on Social Work Education**

The MSW Program at ASU has been designed in accordance with the standards set by the accrediting body for social work programs within the United States, CSWE. CSWE has carefully and thoughtfully developed *Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards* (EPAS) which are designed to guide MSW programs in ensuring that their graduates have internalized the core values and become competent professional social workers. These educational standards can be found in their entirety on the [CSWE website](#) with additional information found in the [Competencies section](#) below.

## **Beaver College of Health Sciences**

The MSW Program at ASU is part of the [Beaver College of Health Sciences](#). Formed in 2010, the mission of the College is to elevate health and quality of life in our region and beyond by preparing future leaders through transformative education, collaborative research and community engagement.

Departments in the College include Communication Sciences and Disorders, Health and Exercise Sciences, Nutrition and Health Care Management, Nursing, Recreation Management and Physical Education, and Social Work.

## **The Department of Social Work**

Housed within the Beaver College of Health Sciences, the [Department of Social Work](#) at Appalachian State University is guided by an overarching framework of social and economic justice. The mission of the Department of Social Work is to educate professional social workers who actively work towards a sustainable and just society, focusing on the well-being and empowerment of the vulnerable and oppressed. We partner with Appalachian and global communities to advance social, economic, and environmental justice for all people. The undergraduate (BSW) and graduate (MSW) programs are designed to assist students to develop competencies for ethical and culturally-competent generalist social work practice within the distinct Appalachian culture of the region and across national and international contexts.



## **Distance Education/App State Online Programs**

In addition to programs on the main campus of Boone, the Department offers [undergraduate distance education/App State Online programs](#) at the ASU Centers in Hickory and Morganton. The MSW Program offers a two-year Advanced Standing [Hybrid MSW Program](#) option at the ASU Center in Hickory. The MSW Program's admissions requirements, mission, goals, competencies, and curriculum align with the campus program so that distance education/App State Online students receive the same thorough social work education.

## **MSW Program Mission, Goals, and Competencies**

The MSW Program at ASU is placed within the larger context of the Department of Social Work, the Beaver College of Health Sciences, Appalachian State University, and the unique geographical, cultural, and political region of North Carolina's High Country. Within this context, the MSW Program has developed its mission, goals, and competencies.

The MSW Program's mission, goals, and competencies are based on CSWE's EPAS and are designed to assist students in becoming competent generalist practitioners with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities through completion of the foundation curriculum. In addition, MSW students develop advanced knowledge and skills through completion of the concentration curriculum by selecting either the Individuals and Families Concentration or the Community and Organizational Practice Concentration. MSW students also develop a requisite underpinning in the non-selected concentration through a unique feature of ASU's MSW Program known as the "crossover design."

### **Mission**

The MSW Program's mission is to prepare advanced professional social workers who possess a strong generalist foundation. Our students benefit from our unique crossover design that enables them to select one concentration area, Individuals and Families (I&F) or Community and Organizational (C&O) Practice, while integrating courses from the complementary practice area. Our students partner with Appalachian and global communities and engage in interprofessional collaboration to advance the health and well-being of individuals, families, groups, and communities. Our graduates are leaders in addressing the complexities of social problems, challenging systems of oppression and advancing social, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Goals**

Based on the mission, the MSW Program has the following seven goals:

1. Provide graduate students with social work education that is grounded in the profession's history, purposes, and philosophy, and based on a body of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes;
2. Provide graduate students with an integrated professional social work foundation curriculum that is based in the liberal arts, and an advanced curriculum that is built from the professional foundation;
3. Prepare graduates who can function with a high degree of autonomy and effectiveness within diverse social work settings;
4. Prepare graduates who contribute to the quality of services in their organizations and communities with an emphasis on the service region;

5. Prepare graduates to fill leadership roles in the agencies and communities they serve with emphasis on the service region;
6. Prepare graduates with the knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and methods of innovative advanced social work practice with individuals and families with an emphasis on the service region;
7. Prepare graduates with the knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and methods of innovative advanced social work practice with communities and organizations, with an emphasis on the service region.

## **Inclusive Excellence**

The Department of Social Work is committed to promoting a more inclusive and equitable society, beginning with respectfully engaging diversity and difference within our learning environments. Our goal is to prepare social workers who are intentional and reflective in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in their work.

This effort is grounded in our Department's mission to educate professional social workers who will promote the well-being of the vulnerable and oppressed, and will advance social, economic, and environmental justice for all people. Social workers aim to reduce marginalization based on, but not limited to, age, (dis)ability, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, nationality, and religion. Our Department's efforts are also grounded in the National Association of Social Workers' values of social justice and dignity and worth of the person, and its cultural awareness and social diversity standard. Finally, we see our work in this area as an embodiment of ASU's Inclusive Excellence Initiative, and the Beaver College of Health Sciences' core values of diversity, equity, and community.

Our work is ongoing and we are all learners. We encourage an ongoing dialogue among students, faculty, and staff about this commitment. Your participation and feedback in the process is valued.

## **Competencies**

The ASU MSW Program utilizes CSWE's competencies. The competencies are listed below and with the behaviors for foundation and concentration curriculums in [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#).

Graduates will:

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
5. Engage in policy practice.
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

## MSW Curriculum

The MSW curriculum is designed as a progressive model. In order to prepare students for generalist practice, ASU's social work program has developed a curriculum design which builds on the liberal arts education of the undergraduate degree. The MSW curriculum itself can be thought of as having four levels, each 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 at ASU 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.

For a list of all required courses for MSW degree, see the [programs of study 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 [ASU Registrar's website](#). Finally, full-time and part-time course schedules are located on the [MSW website](#).

### **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 social work practice. This foundation curriculum also includes an extensive 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 [MSW 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**

Upon successful completion of the foundation curriculum, including the field education requirements, students begin the concentration coursework. ASU offers two concentrations, one

in *Individuals and Families* 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. The full-time and part-time course schedules are located on the [MSW website](#) and courses are detailed in the following sections based on the specific concentration.

## Selecting a Concentration

Advanced Standing students select a concentration at the point of admission and make final decisions regarding their concentration in consultation with the MSW Director and Field Director in March prior to beginning courses. Foundation students select a concentration 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). The MSW Program provides information about each of the concentrations, and students are encouraged to consult with the MSW Program Director with any questions. Note that the concentration field placement is aligned with the selected concentration and related competencies.

## Individuals and Families Concentration

The *Individuals and Families 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 practice with diverse children, adolescents, adults, and families. 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 and intervention. Students take the following courses in the Individuals and Families 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*
- Two crossover courses
- Two graduate electives

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

Advanced field education for the *Individuals and Families 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, and social policies based within the social work value system while providing leadership within communities and organizations. Coursework in this concentration focuses on community organizing and development, social planning, political and social action, government and nonprofit agency administration, and resource development. Students take the following 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*
- Two crossover courses
- Two graduate electives

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

Advanced field education for *Community and Organizational Practice* takes places 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

Students in both concentrations also take courses from the complementary, non-selected concentration, termed “crossover” courses. The departmental philosophy holds that understanding of both micro and macro level practice, beyond the foundation level, is necessary for effective advanced practice in either area.

## Graduate Electives

The MSW Program of Study includes completion of two graduate electives that can be selected from any department or program at ASU. Courses numbered below 5000 may not count toward the minimum hours required for a graduate degree or certificate program of study. Most MSW

students complete these graduate electives while completing courses in their designated concentration and their designated “cross-over” courses from the opposite concentration.

For these graduate electives, there are several options:

1. Some MSW students may decide to complete all four courses from the complementary concentration. If they elect this option, two of those courses will “count” as their “crossover” courses and two will “count” as their graduate electives;
2. Some MSW students may decide to complete two graduate social work elective courses. Social Work electives include the following:
  - SW 5270: *School Social Work*
  - SW 5245: *Social Work Practice in Health Care*
  - SW 5546: *Social Work Practice and Substance Abuse*
  - SW 5545: *Death, Dying, and Living*
  - Study abroad courses in social work, and SW 5530-5549
  - Special Topics courses in social work, also
3. Some MSW students decide to complete two graduate electives from other ASU departments or programs that will complement their MSW coursework. A list of frequently selected graduate electives from outside departments is provided on the [MSW website](#).

## 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 that 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 COVID-19 or other 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 MSW Field Manual, available on the MSW [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 annually, prior to



each field placement. Students are responsible for paying the minimal fee (usually \$10-20). BCHS typically uses Certiphi as a CBC provider. Our departmental Program Specialist will submit your name to BCHS and send an email to you to let you know that Certiphi will be contacting you. **Students entering the field will receive an email from Certiphi at *studentedition@certiphi.com* and will be required to follow the instructions listed in the email to complete their Criminal Background Check prior to starting field placement.** If you have not received an email from Certiphi within two weeks of the email notification from the departmental Program Specialist, please check your spam first, then notify the Field Director. If you have received the email from Certiphi, complete your CBC within two weeks of receiving the email. If you are unable to do so, please let the Field Director know. Based on the CBC results, students may be required to meet with the Field Director and/or the BSW Program Director in order to be permitted to move forward in the placement process. Some agencies also require CBCs, and they may or may not agree to accept the CBC that was required by BCHS. Most agencies that require these tests also absorb the cost of the tests. However, some agencies will conduct the tests but require you to cover the cost. It is the student's responsibility to follow up and pay for the required CBCs. **Registration for the field placement will not occur until the CBC is completed and concerns are addressed or resolved.** Please see the BSW Student Handbook for additional information.

Depending on the nature of the CBC findings, possible courses of action include, but are not limited to:

- a) Gather more information, which may include contact with the student, faculty members, agency, or others;
- b) Conduct a meeting to resolve issues;
- c) Develop a written performance contract;
- d) Postpone or deny the student's entry into service learning or field placement;
- e) Conduct an Academic Performance Review (APR) (See Appendix C);
- f) Suspend or dismiss the student without an APR.

## **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.

## **MSW Program Policies**

### **Admission**

Because the MSW Program is considered to be a professional degree program, explicit requirements have been set for admission.

### **Admission into the ASU School of Graduate Studies**

ASU's [Cratis D. Williams School of Graduate Studies](#) requires applicants to have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university. Additionally, applicants must have achieved a 3.0 overall grade point average in their last earned degree and be able to present official scores from the appropriate admission test (the GRE for the MSW Program) OR achieved a 2.5 overall grade point average in the last earned degree and official scores at the 25th percentile level from the appropriate admission test (GRE). In addition, applicants must complete the graduate application and pay the fee required by the Graduate School.

### **Admission to the MSW Program**

In addition to the criteria above established by the Graduate School and the Beaver College of Health Sciences (CHS), the MSW Program has developed specific criteria for admission that are consistent with the program's mission and goals of producing social workers who can contribute to the well-being of others and the growth and success of the profession through skills in advanced direct practice, leadership and supervisory skills, community development and advocacy, and innovative program planning and administration. In addition to the ASU Graduate School's application form and fee, the required application materials are listed below and detailed on the [MSW Program's admissions website](#). Minimum admissions requirements include:

- A baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university
- A minimum 3.0 overall GPA in the last earned degree OR a 2.5 overall GPA in the last earned degree and official GRE scores at or above the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile level (i.e., scores between 25% and 100% in both the verbal and quantitative sections). Note: This is a minimum requirement for initial application review and does not guarantee acceptance. The MSW Program requires official GRE scores unless the applicant qualifies for and is granted an entrance exam waiver (see GRE waiver criteria in the following section labeled Application Package).
- A complete Application Package (see all components listed in the following section)
- An undergraduate liberal arts background

### **Admission to the Advanced Standing Program**

Advanced Standing is awarded only to graduates holding degrees from baccalaureate social work programs accredited by CSWE, recognized through its International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Services\*, or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors.

\* This and all future references to degrees from social work programs accredited by CSWE,



include degrees from CSWE-accredited programs or recognized through CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service, or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors.

In addition to the requirements for Admission to the MSW Program, applicants interested in the Advanced Standing MSW Program must have a BSW degree from a CSWE-accredited program that has been completed within seven years prior to the first day of classes in the year of entry, and must have a grade point average of 3.2 or greater in their undergraduate social work courses. In addition, these students must successfully complete the advanced standing transitional seminar (SW 5001) prior to entering ASU's MSW concentration curriculum.

Successful completion of the SW 5001 Advanced Standing Transitional Seminar includes earning a grade of B or better. Students who successfully complete SW 5001 immediately begin their concentration curriculum coursework based on their selection of a concentration at admission. Students may be required to complete up to six hours of additional coursework if deemed necessary by the social work faculty at the completion of SW 5001.

## Application Package

Program admission is competitive, and applications are evaluated based on the entire application package. A strong applicant is one who has at least a 3.2 overall GPA, GRE scores in the top 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, evidence of a commitment to social work values, evidence of readiness to complete a professional graduate program, and a background of paid and volunteer work in human service agencies. Applicants apply through the [Cratis D. Williams School of Graduate Studies](#). All application components must be received by the deadline in order for applications to be reviewed, and these components are:

- 1. Official Transcripts.** Applicants must submit official transcripts from all universities or colleges attended (other than ASU) directly to the Graduate School.
- 2. Application Form and Fee.** Applicants must fully complete the Cratis D. Williams Graduate School's Application Form and pay the required fee.
- 3. Official GRE scores and GRE waiver criteria.** Applicants must submit official [GRE scores](#) from within the last 5 years to the Graduate School unless they qualify for and are granted an entrance exam waiver. The GRE waiver criteria are listed below:
  - Regular MSW Program: A cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.2 or higher in the last earned degree or a completed graduate degree in another discipline
  - Advanced Standing MSW Program: A GPA of 3.2 or higher in social work major courses

While the MSW Program may discuss qualifications and offer a preliminary assessment of eligibility for a waiver, the Graduate School performs the formal evaluation and final approval. The Graduate School review will not take place until the applicant has submitted an application, paid the fee, and all required materials for the application except the test scores. Please plan to take the exam at least 4-6 weeks prior to the application deadline to allow time for scoring and mailing of official scores.

- 4. Letters of Reference.** Applicants must submit three professional letters of reference, preferably with at least one academic and one human service experience (paid or volunteer). Those who write letters of reference must know the applicant as a current or former

student, or have supervised the applicant in either a paid or volunteer job. According to the [Graduate School's Frequently Asked Questions](#), family members may not be recommenders, and character references or references from well-known people are not desirable if they do not know you as an employee or student.

**5. Personal Statement.** The Personal Statement is reviewed to evaluate suitability for the MSW Program and the social work profession, writing skills, and English proficiency. The required format is 12-point font, double-spaced, one-inch margins, and 3-4 pages maximum. Applicants are asked to discuss the development of their interest in and commitment to a career in social work, including the particular aspects of social work that most interest them. They also describe the personal and professional experiences they have had that influenced their choice to pursue the profession of social work. Then, they discuss their commitment to social justice and diversity, both personally and professionally, and how they see these issues relating to their future practice in social work. Finally, they explain what makes Appalachian State University MSW Program stand apart from other programs, and how it will help them to achieve their personal and professional goals.

Applicants interested in the Advanced Standing Program should indicate this by including a statement of readiness for entry into the Advanced Standing Program within their personal statement. The statement of readiness should include information about how their BSW studies and field experience prepared them for the Advanced Standing Program.

**6. Resume.** The resume is reviewed, in part, to determine the extent of the applicant's human service experience. In the absence of human service experience, it is reviewed for other indicators of effective interpersonal communication. Applicants should note reasons for any gaps in the resume.

**7. Program Selection Form.** In this required form, applicants select either the Advanced Standing Program or the Regular Program for their application. Advanced Standing applicants will also provide information about their undergraduate social work courses.

## Orientation

All incoming MSW Students are required to attend the MSW Program 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 via a Welcome Letter at the point of enrollment.

## 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 ASU, the Graduate School, and the Department of Social Work.

MSW students are expected to abide by ASU'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 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 or if they earn an Unsatisfactory in a field course (SW 5040, SW 5240, SW 5720, SW 5750, SW 5830, and SW 5860).

### **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.” Violations of the performance standards set forth by the university, including violations of the *Academic Integrity Code*, will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Please note that alleged threat or harassment complaints must be handled according to university procedures. 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: Academic Requirements and Regulations. Additional review may also be undertaken by the Department of Social Work, following the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.

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 social work department will honor the request.

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 Concerns 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.

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 Concerns 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, or others;
  - b. Conduct a meeting to resolve issues;
  - c. Develop a written performance contract;
  - d. Remove the student from the service learning/Field agency;
  - e. Conduct an Academic Performance Review (APR) (see [Appendix C](#));
  - f. Suspend/dismiss the student without an APR.

NOTE: Any active criminal charge or criminal conviction or active 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 ASU**

ASU's Graduate School has established a policy 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 program director, request approval from the Graduate School to transfer graduate course work to Appalachian from an accredited graduate school. 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.

Permission to use transfer hours on a program of study must be granted by both the student's program and the Graduate School. 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.

Graduate work included in an earned degree from another institution cannot be included on a program of study. Transfer credits may be accepted based on a 7-year time limit from the date the degree was conferred. The maximum number of hours of transfer allowed is 9 hours. The grades earned must be at least "B" (3.0/4.0). A "B-" is not acceptable. Courses with grades of "P" meaning "Passing" or "Pass/Fail" option and grades of "S" meaning "Satisfactory" are not acceptable for transfer.

## **Duplicate Courses or Content**

ASU's MSW Program will assist students in examining the curriculum content completed during their undergraduate careers in order to avoid repeating content. The MSW Program's Advanced Standing full-time and part-time MSW programs are available to students who have a BSW from a CSWE-accredited program within the past 7 years. Advanced standing MSW students are admitted directly into the second year or concentration curriculum after successful completion of the transitional seminar.

In addition, newly-admitted full-time and part-time MSW students may petition to have the MSW Program Director substitute coursework for the SW 5005 course at admission. The MSW Program Director typically will allow this substitution if students have taken courses equivalent to both SW 2010 and SW 2615 (two of ASU's BSW foundation social work courses) during their undergraduate careers. If the MSW Program Director allows this substitution, the students still must take 3 graduate credits in place of SW 5005. However, this allows students to seek an additional elective and avoid repeating some content.

## **Life Experience**

Curriculum credit cannot be given for life experience or work experience. 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 *MSW 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 Title IX Compliance](#) or the [University Ombudsperson](#) and will be assisted by these offices as appropriate.

**Grievance of Course Grades.** Please note that there are specific criteria taken into consideration when appealing a final grade. The following summary of information on grade appeals is taken from the [Faculty Handbook](#) (Section 6.12.3):

Any student considering a grade appeal should understand that each faculty member has the right and responsibility to determine grades according to any method chosen by the faculty member that is professionally acceptable, communicated to everyone in the class, and applied to all students equally. Prejudiced, arbitrary, or capricious academic evaluation by a faculty member, however, is a violation of the student's rights and is a valid ground for a final grade appeal.

*Steps to take in final grade appeal*

--Any student who contests a course final grade shall first attempt to resolve the matter with the instructor. The student must explain her or his position to the instructor and attempt to understand the instructor's reasons for assigning the grade. The purpose of the meeting is to reach a mutual understanding of the student's situation and the instructor's actions and to resolve differences in an informal and cooperative manner. If the student fails to reach a satisfactory solution in consultation with the instructor, the student must present the appeal in writing, using the [Final Grade Appeal Procedure](#), to the chair of the department in which the contested grade was awarded.

--The student must file the written appeal with the department chair within 14 calendar days after consulting with the instructor. The statement must be specific and concise and limit itself to citations of evidence pertaining to valid grounds for the appeal. Through conferring with the student and the instructor, the chair will seek resolution by agreement. The student must provide the chair with a course syllabus and all available tangible materials related to the grade (e.g., exam and term papers) as well a list of any items used in the evaluation for which the student cannot provide documentation (e.g., unreturned exams, grades on class participation, attendance records).

--If there is failure to reach an agreement through consultation with the chair, the student may file the written appeal with the Grade Appeals Committee through the Office of the Dean of the college or school in which the grade was awarded. The student must file this written appeal within 30 calendar days after the beginning of classes in the next semester after the contested grade was awarded. When possible, the form must be signed and dated by both the instructor and the department chair as well as the student. In accordance with the instructions on the form, the student must present with it the documentary evidence furnished to the department chair and any other evidence relevant to the case.

--The dean or her or his 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 her or his case. The convener will also invite the instructor to appear and present any evidence in support of her or his 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 faculty member 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.

### **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. 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. The MSW Program will also 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 Council's Appeals Committee for review. The Appeals Committee is an ad hoc subcommittee of the Graduate Council consisting of graduate faculty from three departments other than the student's home department; the Committee meets only on demand and does not usually meet with the student or the program. The Committee's decision is binding.

**Grievance Procedures for 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. Students who are dissatisfied with the Dean's decision have the right to appeal the decision to the [Provost](#) or Provost's designee in writing by email within 10 business days of receipt of that decision. The Provost's decision is final.

## Interpersonal Student Concerns

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 standard 2. Professional Identity and Self-Awareness, standard 3. Ethical Behavior Standards, and 4. Interpersonal Relationship Standards. (please see these standards above)
2. The [NASW Code of Ethics](#), especially 2. Social Worker's Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues, and under this, 2.01 Respect, and 2.09 Incompetence of Colleagues, and 2.10 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues. (please these standards below)

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

1. First, students should try to resolve concerns between or amongst themselves as soon as possible, if appropriate. If there are safety concerns, then students can go directly to Step 4. below.
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 MSW Field Manual found here: <https://socialwork.appstate.edu/graduate-msw/field-education>
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 Title IX Office and/or file a report at this link: <https://titleix.appstate.edu/>
  - c. Contact the ASU Police Department at this link: <https://police.appstate.edu/>
  - d. Discuss the concerns with the Dean of Students' Office at this link: <https://deanofstudents.appstate.edu/>
  - e. Discuss the concerns with the University Ombudsman's Office at this link: <https://ombuds.appstate.edu/>
  - f. 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. 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. Please note, however, if any student's safety is at risk, then we cannot guarantee anonymity.

## **NASW Code of Ethics**

### **2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues**

#### **2.01 Respect**

- (a) Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.
- (b) Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in verbal, written, and electronic communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.
- (c) Social workers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the well-being of clients.

#### **2.09 Incompetence of Colleagues**

- (a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's incompetence should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.
- (b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague is incompetent and has not taken adequate steps to address the incompetence should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

#### **2.10 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues**

- (a) Social workers should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues, including unethical conduct using technology.

- (b) Social workers should be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about colleagues' unethical behavior. Social workers should be familiar with national, state, and local procedures for handling ethics complaints. These include policies and procedures created by NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, employers, agencies, and other professional organizations.
- (c) Social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should seek resolution by discussing their concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive.
- (d) When necessary, social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should take action through appropriate formal channels (such as contacting a state licensing board or regulatory body, the NASW National Ethics Committee, or other professional ethics committees).
- (e) Social workers should defend and assist colleagues who are unjustly charged with unethical conduct.

## 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 typically the academic advisor for all MSW students. The MSW curriculum is fairly prescribed and the required courses are listed on the Social Work MSW Program website (see Program Schedules). There is also Information about Graduate Electives on the program website. MSW Program Director sends out emails to alert students to new course opportunities as well as other related items. The Program Director does group advising at scheduled times in the Fall and Spring semesters. The Program Director is also available for one-on-one consultations through email, phone or in-person visits. The Program Director also has face-to-face meetings with students whose plans deviate from the norm, such as students who are pursuing their degrees on a part-time basis.

**Professional Advising.** Advising and consultation are integral to the professional development of MSW students. The Program Director is also available through in-person visits, phone calls, and emails for professional advising. Professional advising is also 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. All students meet with the Field Director before going into field; these meetings include professional and career advising.

For Foundation students, the first discussion of professionalism occurs the week before the program begins, during the Orientation. Advanced Standing students must enroll in the Advanced Standing Transitional Seminar during the last week of summer session prior to entry

into the fall semester courses. The orientation and transitional seminar include content on dimensions of professional development, including effective written, verbal, and non-verbal communication; critical thinking; ethics and ethical decision-making; and interprofessional collaboration. Field courses typically include a guest presentation by a professional Career Coach from the University's Career Development Center, who has expertise in working with social work students. Content typically includes resume development and interviewing skills. Each spring, we invite 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.

**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 each 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. 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 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 (including age, color, disability, genetic information, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, 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 the Dean of Students](#) (Phone: 828-262-8284). 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 Title IX Compliance](#).

**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 ASU, 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.

*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” or “ghost writers” or “bot-writing” online sources) 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.

**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.

**University Policy on Course Withdrawals.** The Appalachian State University [Medical Withdrawal](#) policy establishes guidelines for students requesting a course withdrawal during an academic semester in the event of serious short-term or long-term illness or health difficulties. Additional policy relates to circumstances under which a student can request a [Psychological Withdrawal](#) during an academic semester. Some students may be eligible to be granted a retroactive withdrawal if requested before the end of the subsequent semester. 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 Social Work Academic Advisor about their circumstances.

## **Student Input to the MSW Program**

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

One BSW or MSW student will be selected to serve on any faculty search committees. This student will review applications, participate in interviews, and provide input regarding the interview itinerary and the candidates' fit with the program needs. Ideally, there will be a rotation of a BSW and an MSW student with each search. All students will have the opportunity to provide feedback to the search committee about finalists. Voting rights will be determined by University policy.

One MSW student will be selected each semester to attend faculty meetings. Although this student will not have voting rights, they will be invited to participate in discussions and to provide input regarding the program.

One MSW student will also be selected each year to serve on the MSW curriculum committee. This representative will have voting rights. This student is 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 ASU MSW program, this student will be responsible for communicating information about NASW-NC to MSW students. At the end of their terms, the BSW and MSW NASW-NC student representatives will make a recommendation to the Program Director regarding who their replacement might be.

All students are requested to provide feedback on the MSW program when they complete the foundation curriculum and when they exit the program. Anonymous surveys request detailed information regarding the curriculum, their assessment of their competence as generalist and advanced social workers, and the overall program. These surveys are in addition to the feedback requested at the end of every semester in course evaluations and to separate, anonymous surveys of their Field placements and of the Field program. Finally, after students have graduated from the program, an alumni survey may be distributed to solicit additional feedback.

## **Additional MSW Program Information**

### **Social Work Student Groups**

#### **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. In addition to these main functions, the GSSWA assists in planning the MSW hooding ceremony. 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 Department of Social Work typically has at least one GSAS representative.

## **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**

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.

## **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 ASU 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. Alumni also provide feedback to the Program as it strives to remain professionally current and alert to policy and practice issues which must inevitably impact on the educational process.

## Financial Support Through Assistantships and Scholarships

### Graduate Research Assistantships

Full-time MSW students on the Boone campus whose most recent overall grade point average is at least 3.0 may apply for a [graduate assistantship](#) in the Department of Social Work. Selected students must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average. Because full-time MSW students take an overload of 15 hours per semester, assistantships must be part-time. These part-time research assistantships are for up to 10 hours per week under the direction of a faculty member at a rate of \$15.00 per hour (approximately \$2250 per semester). Students may indicate their interest in an assistantship when they apply to the MSW Program. Assistantships are for one cycle of fall/spring and/or for one summer session. Continuing students may reapply by expressing their interest to the MSW Program Director.

### North Carolina Tuition Scholarships

Full-time MSW students from out-of-state who hold Graduate Research Assistantships may apply for a NC Tuition Scholarship. This award covers the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition and is highly competitive. Students must have a most recent grade point average of 3.4 and must maintain at least a 3.4 grade point average. Students may indicate their interest in this and other scholarships when they apply to the MSW Program.

### Departmental and College Scholarships

Several scholarships are available to MSW students through the ASU 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 website](#) and/or as part of their application to the MSW Program.

### 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. Additional information can be found at <https://internships.appstate.edu/insurance>.

You can find additional information about tuition and fees on the Student Accounts website: <https://studentaccounts.appstate.edu/tuition-fees>.

## **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, Nursing, Athletic Training, and Public Health Departments in the Beaver College of Health Sciences also participate, affording the student the opportunity to be involved in interprofessional learning. Each student will receive substance use disorder content in the social work curriculum, which will include the first module of the three-module SBIRT program. 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 a day long training, although this may be modified as needed, including the use of online delivery. Module three consists of practicing SBIRT at the field placement site, our interprofessional clinic or other approved site, receiving feedback from the supervisor or other SBIRT-trained employee and completing assignments on AsULearn.

### **North Carolina Child Welfare Education Collaborative**

Emphasizing public child welfare practice, the [NC 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, the Collaborative aims to ensure safe, permanent and nurturing families for North Carolina's most vulnerable citizens.

The NC Child Welfare Education Collaborative 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 (DSSs).

Students who wish to be placed in child welfare units must complete SW 5535 Competencies for Child Welfare prior to placement. This course may count for one of the student's graduate electives. (For MSW students, the course will be offered every summer off campus at rotating sites and/or online. On-campus students will need to complete the Distance Education/App State Online [form](#) to gain permission to register for the off-campus course.)

In addition, students must take SW 5730 Advanced Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents prior to or concurrent with field placement during their concentration curriculum.

In addition to taking the required courses (SW 5535: Competencies for Child Welfare and SW 5370: Advanced Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents) interested students will complete an application for the Collaborative when directed by the Field Director, usually 1-2 semesters before entering the field placement. Students typically are notified of upcoming Collaborative and Field application periods through announcements in class and via student email lists. The windows for the Collaborative applications are typically open once in the spring and once in the fall, for approximately 1-2 months.

Following submission of the field application for a DSS placement, students will be asked to meet with a member of the Field Faculty to review the application, discuss short and long-term interests and specifics for the placement. If approved to proceed in the Collaborative, the Field Faculty member will assist in locating the placement site. Students will need to complete all components of the Collaborative, including meeting all ASU requirements and Faculty approval to receive Pre-Certification.

All students completing the Collaborative program will be pre-certified to work in DSS, increasing their marketability and improving services to families and children. Students are not required to work in a state DSS following graduation.

## **School Social Work Licensure**

The MSW student who desires to receive North Carolina school social work licensure 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 at a school field placement site. In addition, a graduate education course (SPE 5595 Individual Difference or SPE 5045 Advanced Topics in Diversity) will be required for completion and can be counted as an elective towards the required credit hours for graduation.

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 Field Director asking for verification and that a recommendation be sent to the College of Education (COE) for school social work licensure. The Department of Social Work along with the COE has been approved by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) to be a recommending body for social work school licensure. COE will contact NC DPI to recommend the eligible graduate for licensure. From that point, 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 Specialist at [warrenka@appstate.edu](mailto:warrenka@appstate.edu), office 828-262-8210; or Heather Thorp, Field Director at [thorpha@appstate.edu](mailto:thorpha@appstate.edu), office 828-262-6389 or cell, 828-406-9686.

## 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.

## 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 on the website for [ASU's Campus Life](#), 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 ASU 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, ASU 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.

## **Intercultural Student Affairs**

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

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 [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.

## Early Intervention Team

The Early Intervention Team (EIT) is a multidisciplinary initiative that can respond to concerns (academic, safety, physical or mental health, and well-being) about students made by faculty members, instructors, or other students. According to the EIT its main function is to meet with students who are showing signs of difficulty with university life and who have been referred by faculty or staff. Students may make referrals through a faculty member. The meetings with referred students are non-disciplinary and are intended to offer support and connect students with resources that can assist them to become healthier and more productive members of the community.

Additional information, including guidelines for referring students, is available on the [EIT website](#).

EIT is not an appropriate referral for situations where there is concern that a student is at risk for immediate harmful behavior towards self or others. As EIT notes, “For emergency situations, please contact either the Counseling Center or the University Police. If you, or other community members, feel threatened, please contact the University Police immediately.”

## The Office of Title IX Compliance

The [Office of Title IX Compliance](#), 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**

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
  - a. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
  - b. Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
  - c. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
  - d. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
  - e. Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
  - a. Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
  - b. Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
  - c. Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
  - a. Apply understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and systems levels; and
  - b. Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
  - a. Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
  - b. Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
  - c. Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.
5. Engage in policy practice.
  - a. Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
  - b. Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services; and
  - c. Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
  - a. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
  - b. Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
  - a. Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;



- b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary 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 within 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 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 multidisciplinary theoretical 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; and
  - 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 methods for evaluation of outcomes;
  - b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
  - c. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
  - d. Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

## **Appendix B: MSW Concentration Competencies and Behaviors**

### **Individuals and Families Concentration Competencies and Behaviors**

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
  - a. Identify ethical issues. Determine and implement the most appropriate response(s).
  - b. Conduct oneself professionally in accordance with relevant codes of ethics, laws, policies, and professional standards.
  - c. Establish and maintain clear professional boundaries.
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
  - a. Employ key theoretical frameworks to explore diverse perspectives and life experiences.
  - b. Demonstrate reverence for cultural differences and humility in learning about identities different from one's own.



- c. Engage in continual self-reflection to recognize and challenge implicit and explicit biases, and vocally advocate for others to do the same.
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
  - a. Actively seek information on issues of social, economic, and environmental justice to inform advanced practice.
  - b. Engage in advocacy practices to advance social, economic, and environmental justice at the individual and systems levels.
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
  - a. Use practice experience to inform research, resource development, or intervention.
  - 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.
5. Engage in policy practice.
  - a. Demonstrate understanding of how policy manifests itself in the lives of clients.
  - b. Integrate existing and emerging knowledge of relevant local, state, and federal policies in working with individuals, families, and groups.
  - c. Advocate for community, policy, and social change with and in support of individuals, families, and groups.
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
  - a. Engage with diverse clients and others in a professional, respectful, and empathic manner, taking into account their level of development in cultural context.
  - b. Use effective interpersonal, communication, and interviewing skills to develop collaborative working relationships with individuals, families, and groups.
  - c. Demonstrate the ability 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 and comprehensive assessment using appropriate assessment methods and assessment tools as a basis for effective intervention.
  - b. Understand diagnoses in the context of comprehensive bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment and examine implications for clients.
8. Intervention with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
  - a. Utilize comprehensive ongoing assessment as the basis for determining effective interventions.
  - b. Collaborate with the client to develop clear and reasonable goals.
  - c. Select, apply, and facilitate appropriate interventions across levels (individual, family, group, organizations, and communities) as needed, in a strategic and collaborative manner.
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
  - a. Evaluate practice and modify interventions to maximize the well-being of individuals, families, and groups.
  - b. Use results from practice evaluation to inform program 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 cultural humility framework.
  - b. Conduct oneself professionally in accordance with relevant codes of ethics, laws, policies, and professional standards.
  - c. Provide leadership in making ethical decisions with diverse stakeholders in policy, community, and organizational practice arenas.
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
  - a. Employ key theoretical frameworks to integrate diverse perspectives and intersectionality within policies, organizations, and communities.
  - b. Take steps to assure culturally inclusive policies, organizations, and communities.
3. Advance human rights and social, 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.
  - b. Engage in advocacy practice to advance social, economic, and environmental justice.
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
  - a. Use practice experience 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 social, economic, and environmental justice.
  - b. Analyze and advocate to create or improve 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 interprofessional 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.
  - b. Work collaboratively with communities and organizations to identify, collect, and analyze various sources of information for comprehensive assessment.
8. Intervention with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

- a. Identify culturally appropriate, evidence-informed and evidence-based interventions with communities and organizations.
  - b. Work with communities and organizations to implement interventions to achieve goals.
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
  - a. Identify and use knowledge of policy, evaluation methods, and practice experiences to work with stakeholders to evaluate interventions in communities and organizations.
  - b. Use evaluation findings to inform program and policy change.

## **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. Students who are dissatisfied with the Dean's decision have the right to appeal the decision to the [Provost](#) or Provost's designee in writing by email within 10 business days of receipt of that decision. The Provost's decision is final.



## Appendix D: MSW Academic Standards Concerns Form

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student name:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Faculty member or agency representative:**

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 ASU and the Department of Social Work.

MSW students are expected to abide by ASU's *Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Code*, the National Association of Social Workers' *Code of Ethics*, 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.

**An *Academic Standards Concerns Form* is completed by a faculty member or agency representative when there are concerns about a student's performance. They will discuss the concerns and review the form with the student, except under unusual circumstances. A copy of the *Academic Standards Concerns Form* will be kept in the Department of Social Work.**

**Signify areas of concern and provide a short narrative that further elaborates concerns. Include the class or context in which the behaviors occur.**

Areas of Concern	Level of Concern (1=mild, 2= moderate, 3= serious)	Is it resolved?
<b>1. Scholastic Performance Standards</b>		
Exhibits difficulty in demonstrating scholastic performance standards as developmentally appropriate (e.g., GPA, grades, repeats)	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Other. Please Describe:	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. Professional Identity and Self-Awareness Standards</b>		
Is frequently absent, tardy, or leaves early	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Turns in incomplete or late assignments; is frequently unprepared for class, service learning, or field; does not meet deadlines	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Sleeps through class, service learning, or field	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates disruptive behaviors in class, community, Department- or University-related trips, or service learning/field agency	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Makes inappropriate comments, including inappropriate personal	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

sharing		
Is unable or unwilling to behave according to professional values; imposes personal values on others	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates an inability or unwillingness to work in groups	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Ignores feedback, becomes defensive, or responds inappropriately when feedback is given	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibits evidence of substance abuse	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibits evidence of volatility; demonstrates a lack of self-control	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates personal problems and issues that interfere with learning and performance	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates inappropriate use of technology or social media	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does not follow established policies and processes; does not provided documentation or applications as requested	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does not demonstrate progressive identification with the profession through behavior, communication (verbal, nonverbal, and written), personal reflection, and self-correction	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Other. Please Describe:	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3. Ethical Behavior Standards</b>		
Plagiarizes an assignment, exam, or other activity	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Cheats on an assignment, exam, or other activity	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates dishonesty	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does not demonstrate accountability	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Other. Please Describe:	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4. Interpersonal Relationships Standards</b>		
Demonstrates disrespect, disruptive behavior, or lack of cooperation in interactions with instructor, students, or others in the classroom, Department of Social Work, or other settings	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates acts of bullying and/or cyber bullying	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does not demonstrate skills that facilitate effective helping relationships	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Other. Please Describe:	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5. Commitment to Diversity, Social Justice, and Human Rights Standards</b>		
Is disrespectful in discussing sensitive issues, such as diversity; is insensitive to the feelings or needs of others	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does not support or encourage open dialogue and increased understanding in the classroom, agency, or other contexts	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Other. Please describe:	1 2 3	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Competencies</b> Exhibits difficulty in demonstrating competency(ies) as	<b>Concern</b>	<b>Comments/Notes</b>

developmentally appropriate:		
1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior	1 2 3	
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice	1 2 3	
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice	1 2 3	
4. Engage in practice-informed research-informed practice	1 2 3	
5. Engage in policy practice	1 2 3	
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities	1 2 3	
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities	1 2 3	
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities	1 2 3	
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities	1 2 3	

**Comments** - signify areas of concern and provide a short a narrative that further elaborates concerns. Include the class or context in which the behaviors occur:

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**Student Comments** (if desired):

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Has student received a copy of this form?

Yes    No

If no, reasons not provided to date:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Faculty Member                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Field Director                      Date  
(as applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of MSW Director                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Department Chair                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Student                      Date

\*Student's signature signifies receipt of this form, but not necessarily agreement with it.

## **Appendix E: Spring 2020 Pass-No Credit Grading Policies**

In response to COVID-19 in Spring 2020, the university adopted special grading policies to accommodate the sudden change to online learning towards the end of the semester, and the faculty in the Department of Social Work voted to enact additional guidelines. *The policies adopted apply only to grades earned in Spring 2020* but may have ramifications later for students who earned grades in Social Work courses, including electives.

All MSW students were provided with a document created by the Department explaining the special grading policy and Social Work-related provisions on April 17, 2020, so that students could make informed choices about their grades and potential impacts for Spring 2020 and beyond.

***Students were encouraged to consult with their instructor or Academic Advisor before making a decision regarding the grading option they elected into for each of their courses for Spring 2020 due to the potential ramifications of their choices.***

Students had the opportunity to withdraw from any class through May 12 at 11:59 p.m. May 11th was the date when grades had to be submitted by faculty, so students had the opportunity to see their final grades before making a decision to withdraw from a class.

Students had the opportunity of opting into the alternative pass-no credit option anytime between April 20th and May 17th at 11:59 pm.

Students were asked to consider the following items as they contemplated choosing a withdrawal or opting into the alternative pass-no credit option:

1. Students were able to apply the withdrawal policy and the alternate Pass-No Credit option to individual classes.
2. Students could not apply the withdrawal policy or opt into the alternate Pass-No Credit to classes that were graded S/U.
3. Withdrawal from a class meant that students would have to take the class again to get credit for it.
4. If students chose to opt into the alternate pass-no credit option, they either received a 'P' or 'NC' on their transcripts, but it did not affect their GPA.
5. If students received an 'NC' they had to repeat the class.

6. Students who were considering pursuing a Ph.D. and/or who wanted to raise their GPA for other reasons, were told to carefully decide about whether or not to opt into the alternate pass-no credit option because, as described above, that option would not affect their GPA.

7. For Spring of 2020, students who selected the Pass option were allowed to earn a C minus and received credit for the class.

8. The MSW program has a policy allowing no more than two grades of 'C'. Please note that for Spring 2020, any Cs or C minuses earned did not count toward this policy if the student selected the Pass option for those courses.

9. Students were told that the Department cannot predict the potential future implications of the students' decisions regarding the P/NC options, especially in systems beyond the department and university. For example, the decisions may impact future eligibility for licensure in various states or admission to graduate or doctoral degree programs.