



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 18, 2016.**

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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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General Information

Appalachian State University's (ASU) Department of Social Work has two degree programs: the Bachelor of Social Work Program (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 and reaffirmed in February, 2014 through 2020. 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):¹

- 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.

¹ <http://www.socialworkers.org/pressroom/features/general/profession.asp>

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,²

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 well-being 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, NASW² 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

² <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

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 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 website³ 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 website⁴ 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 Sciences⁵. Formed in 2010, the mission of the College is to provide transformative education, conduct collaborative research that advances knowledge and practice in our disciplines, and engage in community service that enhances health and quality of life in our region. Departments in the College include Communication Sciences and Disorders, Health and Exercise Sciences, Nutrition and

³ <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

⁴ <http://www.cswe.org>

⁵ <http://healthsciences.appstate.edu/>

Health Care Management, Nursing, Recreation Management and Physical Education, and Social Work.

The Department of Social Work

The Department of Social Work⁶ at Appalachian State University is guided by an overarching framework of social and economic justice. Housed within the Beaver College of Health Sciences, the Social Work Department's mission is to promote the well-being of individuals, families, groups and communities and to meet the work force needs for professional social workers, especially at the local and regional level. 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. The graduate program is further charged with providing educational opportunities for students to develop expertise in advanced direct practice with individuals and families, or in leadership roles within community and organizational practice. Through scholarly activities and service, members of the faculty contribute to the knowledge base of the profession, enhance social work practice throughout the region and state, and support the social work profession regionally, nationally and globally.

Distance Education Programs

In addition to programs on the main campus of Boone, the Department offers distance education programs⁷ at throughout the region. The MSW Program offers a part-time program in Hickory, NC at the ASU Center in Hickory. Beginning in 2016, the program will be hybrid. The MSW Program's admissions requirements, mission, goals, competencies, and curriculum align with the campus program so that distance education 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."

⁶ <http://socialwork.appstate.edu/>

⁷ BSW Program (<http://socialwork.appstate.edu/undergraduate/distance-education>) and MSW Program (<http://socialwork.appstate.edu/graduate/distance-education>)

Mission

Guided by an overarching framework of human rights, and grounded in human relationships and scientific inquiry, the mission of the MSW Program at Appalachian State University is to promote the health and well-being of individuals, families, groups and communities; prevent oppression, discrimination, social and economic injustice; and provide assistance to those in need. The MSW Program, informed by and engaged with regional, state, national and global community contexts, aspires to provide exemplary educational opportunities. The foundation curriculum for the Program is designed to prepare students for generalist social work practice within the distinct Appalachian culture of the region, as well as across national and international contexts. Building on the foundation, students select from one of two distinct concentration curricula: the Individuals and Families concentration or the Community and Organizational Practice concentration. The Individuals and Families concentration curriculum provides students with specialized knowledge and skills to effectively practice with adults, children, adolescents, and families in a variety of settings. The Community and Organizational Practice concentration curriculum provides students with specialized knowledge and skills to effectively practice with communities and organizations in different locales. Appalachian's MSW Program also seeks to enhance students' knowledge and skills through a unique crossover design. The crossover design provides students specializing in one concentration vital exposure to content from the other concentration. Graduates of Appalachian's MSW Program demonstrate firm generalist practice knowledge and skills as well as specialized practice knowledge and skills to successfully serve individuals, families, groups, communities or organizations.

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, and skills;
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, skills, and methods of innovative advanced social work practice with individuals and families with emphasis on the service region;
7. Prepare graduates with the knowledge, skills, and methods of innovative advanced practice to work with communities and organizations, with emphasis on the service region; and
8. Respond to the legislative intent and to community leadership in nearby jurisdictions to extend the MSW to students unable to attend ASU.

Competencies

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

Graduates will:

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.
2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
4. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
9. Respond to contexts that shape practice.
10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate 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. MSW students in both the Advanced Standing and regular programs must have a broad liberal arts background including knowledge from a variety of disciplines.

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 website⁸. Students can find short bulletin descriptions for MSW courses listed in the Department of

⁸ <http://socialwork.appstate.edu/graduate/programs-study>

Social Work section of the Graduate Bulletin located on the ASU Registrar's Website⁹. Finally, full-time and part-time course schedules are located on the MSW website¹⁰.

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 website¹¹ and students take the following courses in the foundation curriculum:

- SW 5005: American Social Welfare History and the Social Work Profession
- 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 Bulletin¹².

Concentration Curriculum for Advanced Knowledge and Skills

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 specialized practice behaviors and competencies for advanced 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 website¹³ and courses are detailed in the following sections based on the specific concentration.

⁹ <https://registrar.appstate.edu/resources/course-catalogs>

¹⁰ <http://socialwork.appstate.edu/graduate/program-schedules>

¹¹ <http://socialwork.appstate.edu/graduate/program-schedules>

¹² <https://registrar.appstate.edu/resources/course-catalogs>

¹³ <http://socialwork.appstate.edu/graduate/program-schedules>

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 Bulletin¹⁴.

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 practice in the range of settings that focus on social problems and social change at the

¹⁴ <https://registrar.apstate.edu/resources/course-catalogs>

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 5820: Social Welfare Organizational Management
- SW 5830: Community and Organizational Practice Field Practicum and Seminar I
- SW 5840: Nonprofit and Public Human Services Administration
- SW 5850: Community and Organizational Cultures
- 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 Bulletin¹⁵.

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

Crossover Curriculum

Students in both concentrations also take courses from the other 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. For these graduate electives, there are several options:

1. Some MSW students may decide to complete all four courses from the opposite 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. These are SW 5270: School Social Work, SW 5245: Social Work Practice in

¹⁵ <https://registrar.apstate.edu/resources/course-catalogs>

Health Care, study abroad courses in social work, and SW 5530-5549: Special Topics courses in social work, and;

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 outside departments is provided on the MSW website¹⁶.

Field Education

In addition to the classroom work, students have the opportunity to put knowledge, skills, 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. 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*¹⁷.

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 Graduate School

ASU's Cratis D. Williams Graduate School¹⁸ 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

¹⁶ <http://socialwork.appstate.edu/node/81>

¹⁷ <http://socialwork.appstate.edu/graduate/field-education>

¹⁸ <https://graduate.appstate.edu/2015-16-graduate-bulletin-course-catalog/graduate-admissions>

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 website¹⁹. 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 showing at least the 25th percentile level. (Note: This is a minimum requirement for initial application review and does not guarantee acceptance. Regardless of GPA, all applicants must submit GRE scores and these are considered as part of the application review process).
- A complete Application Package (see all components listed in the following section)
- An undergraduate liberal arts background, including knowledge from a variety of disciplines

Admission to the Advanced Standing Program

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 application to ASU's MSW program, 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 the Transitional Seminar (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 3.25 overall GPA, GRE scores in the top 25th 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 Graduate School's website²⁰. 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.

¹⁹ <http://socialwork.appstate.edu/graduate/admission>

²⁰ <https://www.gradadmissions1.appstate.edu/gradweb/default.asp>

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. Applicants must submit official GRE scores²¹ to the Graduate School. 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). According to the Graduate School's Frequently Asked Questions²², 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 personal traits and characteristics that they perceive as strengths for and/or congruent with the profession of social work as well as the personal traits and characteristics they would like to change and/or improve and why. Finally, they explain how completing a Master's Degree in Social Work will help them achieve their personal and professional goals and the contributions they hope to make on behalf of others.

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 the BSW coursework, field placement, and other experiences have prepared them to begin their selected concentration.

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

²¹ <http://www.ets.org/gre>

²² <https://graduate.appstate.edu/prospective-students/applying/applying-faqs>

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 in March.

Academic Policies

Academic Standards for Retention in the MSW Program²³

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*, 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;
- Must repeat courses in which the final grade is below a C;
- Earn no more than two final grades of C or below in the program of study*;
- 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 lower or if they earn an Unsatisfactory in a field course (SW 5040, SW 5240, SW 5720, SW 5750, SW 5830, and SW 5860).

***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.**

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

²³ These policies and standards 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.

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, 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 Concerns²⁴

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*²⁵, “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.

²⁴ These policies and standards 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.

²⁵ <http://studentconduct.appstate.edu/>

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 followed²⁶. 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 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;

²⁶ This information is based on policies developed by the Louisiana State University's field program.

- 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 criminal conviction or substantiated violation of the *Student Code of Conduct* and *Academic Integrity Code* may result in an APR. Social Work students are required to notify the MSW Program Director or Department Chair of criminal charges, convictions, or substantiated ASU academic or conduct code violations. Failure to do so may result in 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 Bulletin²⁷.

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 are subject to the 7-year time limit requirement at the time of graduation. 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.

²⁷ <https://registrar.appstate.edu/resources/course-catalogs>

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 2020 (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.

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 expected to first address their concerns privately 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 privately. 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. Students may also contact the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Compliance²⁸ or the University Ombudsperson²⁹ and will be assisted by these offices as appropriate. When a concern involves

²⁸ <http://edc.appstate.edu/>

²⁹ <http://ombuds.appstate.edu/>

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 Office³⁰ for assistance.

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 Handbook³¹ (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 grade appeal form³², 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

³⁰ <http://healthsciences.appstate.edu/about-college/office-dean/college-administration-2>

³¹ <http://facultyhandbook.appstate.edu/> This summary is printed here for the convenience of students. In the event of any discrepancy between this summary and the relevant provision(s) of the Faculty Handbook, the Faculty Handbook language shall apply.

³² <https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/resources/final-grade-appeal-procedure>

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 Processes³³. Appeals involving termination from a graduate assistantship or termination from the MSW Program begin with the 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 Academic Policies and Procedures Committee (AP&P) 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.

³³ <https://registrar.appstate.edu/resources/course-catalogs> (The policy is listed under Academic Requirements and Regulations, Appeals Processes). This summary is printed here for the convenience of students. In the event of any discrepancy between this summary and the relevant provision(s) of the Graduate Bulletin the Graduate Bulletin language shall apply.

Grievance Procedures for Academic Performance Review Decisions. Students who are dissatisfied with an APR decision have the right to appeal. If the decision results in termination from the program or from an assistantship, students should follow those [Grievance Procedures](#). Otherwise, students may 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.

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.

Departmental Advising. Advising and consultation are integral to the professional development of MSW students. The MSW Program Director is typically the advisor for all MSW students.

Faculty Office Hours. Per university policy, each faculty member posts office hours on his/her office door, as well as in each syllabus. If faculty office 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,³⁴ 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 remain 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.

³⁴ See the Graduate Bulletin for full information.

Student 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*³⁵. 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 Equal Opportunity. Students have the right to an educational experience free from discrimination. According to the harassment and discrimination policy³⁶, "Appalachian State University is committed to providing an atmosphere in which students are free from all forms of impermissible discrimination." According to the equal opportunity policy³⁷,

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.

³⁵ http://policy.appstate.edu/Policy_Manual

³⁶ http://policy.appstate.edu/Harassment_and_Discrimination

³⁷ http://policy.appstate.edu/Equal_Employment_Opportunity

Academic Integrity: Appalachian State University has developed an *Academic Integrity Code*³⁸ 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 Code of Conduct³⁹ 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.

University Policy on Alcohol and Drugs. Appalachian State University 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 excellence⁴⁰. 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.

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.

Two MSW students will be selected each semester to attend faculty meetings. Although these students 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.

³⁸ <http://studentconduct.appstate.edu/>

³⁹ <http://studentconduct.appstate.edu/>

⁴⁰ http://policy.appstate.edu/Drugs_and_Alcohol

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.

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 is distributed every three years 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 Association Senate⁴¹ (GSAS) 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 NC

⁴¹ <http://gsas.appstate.edu/>

School Social Workers Association⁴² (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 offers a discount for student membership. The NCSSWA encourages school social workers to obtain the NC School Social Work Licensure.

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 NASW⁴³. 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 Alpha⁴⁴, the National Social Work honor society. The purpose of the society is to encourage and recognize superior scholarship in social work education and to enhance excellence in social work practice. MSW students are eligible for membership when they have been admitted as graduate social work students, completed at least 8 hours of required social work courses, achieved an overall grade point average of at least 3.0, and achieved a grade point average of at least 3.25 in required social work courses. In addition to academic excellence, a student must have demonstrated leadership ability, a high standard of personal behavior and a dedication to social work practice. 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 assistantship⁴⁵ in the Department of Social Work.

⁴² <http://www.ncsswa.org/>

⁴³ <http://www.naswnc.org/>

⁴⁴ <http://www.phialpha.org/>

⁴⁵ <https://graduate.appstate.edu/enrolled-students/financial-support/graduate-assistantships>

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 half-time. These half-time research assistantships are for up to 10 hours per week under the direction of a faculty member at a rate of \$13.33 per hour (approximately \$2000 per semester). Students may indicate their interest in an assistantship when they apply to the MSW Program and/or when an email request for interest is sent to the MSW listserv. Assistantships are on a cycle of fall/spring and/or for one-two summer sessions. Continuing students may reapply by expressing their interest to the MSW Program Director when the email request is sent to the MSW listserv.

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 website⁴⁶ 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 Graduate School⁴⁷. Students may indicate their interest in these when they apply to the MSW Program.

Licensure and Certifications

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 Board⁴⁸. 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.

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

⁴⁶ <http://healthsciences.appstate.edu/student-services/scholarships>

⁴⁷ <https://graduate.appstate.edu/enrolled-students/financial-support>

⁴⁸ <http://www.ncswboard.org/>

a field placement in a public school system. In addition, education courses may be recommended for completion and can be counted as your graduate electives in your Program of Study--ASU's College of Education is currently working to identify appropriate courses.

Following completion of these requirements, graduates may pursue licensure through the Regional Alternative Licensing Centers located throughout North Carolina, but they must first be employed with a North Carolina School System as a school social worker. The Department of Social Work is seeking to become a school social work licensing authorizing site along with ASU's College of Education so that students may pursue licensure through the Department in the future. For additional and current information, please contact Dr. Kellie Reed Ashcraft, the Assistant Department Chair, at ashcraftkb@appstate.edu.

Child Welfare Collaborative

Emphasizing public child welfare practice, the NC Child Welfare Collaborative⁴⁹ provides educational opportunities to BSW and MSW students who are interested in careers in child welfare.

Child Welfare Waiver Students. The MSW student who desires to complete a field placement in child welfare in a North Carolina County Department of Social Services (DSS) must submit a field application for a DSS placement and meet with a member of the Field Faculty to discuss short- and long-term interests. **If approved** during or after that meeting, the faculty member will provide a link to the student for the Collaborative application online. The student must complete the required graduate Child Welfare Pre-Service/Competencies course (see course information below) prior to placement unless a student has a current NC Pre-Services Training Certificate. After receiving feedback from departmental faculty and the Field Committee and consulting with the MSW Program Director and/or the Department Chair, the Field Director or Child Welfare Coordinator will make final decisions about approval for placements in child welfare settings. Note that successful completion of the course requirements *does not guarantee approval* for a child welfare placement.

Approved students who complete the course requirement, complete a field placement in a NC DSS and graduate from the MSW Program will meet the State's mandatory pre-service training requirements. This allows them to immediately begin work in a county DSS child welfare position as well as qualify for the Social Work III classification per the State of N.C. Office of State Personnel. Please talk to your academic advisor early in your social work education to plan for this. For additional information, please see the Field Director.

Course Requirements. Note that **prior** to a child welfare field placement in DSS, MSW students must have successfully completed a 5000-level course on Competencies for Child Welfare. This course is offered to MSW students each summer at a rotating distance education location. Students may need to complete a Distance Education form⁵⁰ in order to gain permission to register for the course. In addition, MSW students must take SW 5730: Advanced Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents **prior to or concurrent with**

⁴⁹ <http://ssw.unc.edu/cwec/index.htm>

⁵⁰ <http://extension.appstate.edu/permit.php>

their Child Welfare field placement during their concentration curriculum. Please see the Tips for Specialized Field Placements⁵¹ for additional information on course offerings and see the Field Director for additional information.

Student Services

Appalachian State University has a strong commitment to providing services for students enrolled in the university. An overview of student services can be accessed on the website for ASU's Student Life⁵².

Health Services

Medical services are provided to qualified students by the Mary S. Shook Student Health Services⁵³ 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 policy⁵⁴ 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 Services⁵⁵ (ODS), 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. Consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, it is the policy of Appalachian State University that "no qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance."

⁵¹ <http://socialwork.appstate.edu/graduate/field-education>

⁵² <http://www.appstate.edu/studentlife/services.php>

⁵³ <http://healthservices.appstate.edu/>

⁵⁴ <http://healthservices.appstate.edu/pagesmith/203>

⁵⁵ <https://ods.appstate.edu/>

Individuals seeking accommodations are responsible for providing ODS with current, comprehensive documentation to support the request for reasonable accommodations. ODS 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 ODS process has been followed, ODS has granted accommodations, and instructors have received the proper official notification of relevant accommodations through the automated notification system. ODS 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.

Multicultural Student Development

The Office of Multicultural Student Development⁵⁶ at Appalachian State University 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. Multicultural Student Development 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 Center⁵⁷, 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 which 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

⁵⁶ <http://multicultural.appstate.edu/>

⁵⁷ <http://counseling.appstate.edu/index.php>

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 at <http://eit.appstate.edu/>

EIT is not an appropriate referral for in 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.”

Additional Student Services

Additional services are available through the Belk Library⁵⁸, the Career Development Center⁵⁹ and the Learning Assistance Program⁶⁰. A full listing of Student Development services is available on their website⁶¹. These include services for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender students at the Bo Henderson and Ed Springs LGBT Center, Women’s Center, University Recreation, as well as programs, resources and special events. A range of Health and Wellness Programs⁶² is also available for enrolled students.

⁵⁸ <http://www.library.appstate.edu/>

⁵⁹ <http://careers.appstate.edu/>

⁶⁰ <http://lap.appstate.edu/>

⁶¹ <http://studentdev.appstate.edu/>

⁶² <http://www.appstate.edu/studentlife/health.php>

Appendix A: MSW Foundation Competencies and Practice Behaviors

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.
 - a. Advocate for client access to the services of social work;
 - b. Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;
 - c. Attend to professional roles and boundaries;
 - d. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;
 - e. Engage in career-long learning; and
 - f. Use supervision and consultation.
2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
 - a. Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;
 - b. Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles;
 - c. Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts; and
 - d. Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.
3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
 - a. Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom;
 - b. Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and
 - c. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.
4. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
 - a. Recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;
 - b. Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;
 - c. Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences; and
 - d. View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.
5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
 - a. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;
 - b. Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice; and
 - c. Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.
6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
 - a. Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and
 - b. Use research evidence to inform practice.
7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
 - a. Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and
 - b. Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.
8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
 - a. Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being; and
 - b. Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

9. Respond to contexts that shape practice.
 - a. Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services; and
 - b. Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.
10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
 - a. Engagement
 - i. Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
 - ii. Use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and
 - iii. Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.
 - b. Assessment
 - i. Collect, organize, and interpret client data;
 - ii. Assess client strengths and limitations;
 - iii. Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives; and
 - iv. Select appropriate intervention strategies.
 - c. Intervention
 - i. Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals;
 - ii. Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;
 - iii. Help clients resolve problems;
 - iv. Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients; and
 - v. Facilitate transitions and endings.
 - d. Evaluation
 - i. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

Appendix B: MSW Concentration Competencies and Practice Behaviors

Individuals and Families Concentration Competencies and Practice Behaviors

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.
 - a. Attend to complex interpersonal dynamics.
 - b. Utilize supervision for ongoing professional development.
2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
 - a. Recognize own biases, values, and frameworks as they apply to clients and minimize the impact of these as necessary.
 - b. Analyze ethical issues and apply ethical decision-making models across a range of complex practice contexts.
3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
 - a. Critique and apply multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom in work with individuals, groups, and families.
 - b. Communicate effectively and professionally, both orally and in writing, with a wide range of clients, colleagues, and organizations.
4. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
 - a. Integrate cultural frameworks and respect for diversity in practice with individuals, groups, and families.
5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
 - a. Advocate for equitable access to high quality services to enhance the well-being of individuals, groups, and families.
 - b. Promote human rights and social and economic justice for individuals, groups and families.
6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
 - a. Utilize the best available evidence in practice with individuals, groups, and families.
 - b. Use practice experience to inform research or resource development.
7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
 - a. Integrate relevant conceptual frameworks in practice with individuals, groups, and families.
8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
 - a. Advocate for community, policy, and social change with and in support of individuals, groups, and families.
9. Respond to contexts that shape practice.
 - a. Integrate existing and emerging knowledge of policies, communities, and societies in working with individuals, groups, and families.
10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
 - a. Engagement
 - i. Use empathic and effective interviewing skills to build collaborative working relationships with individuals, groups, and families.
 - b. Assessment

- i. Apply advanced theoretical perspectives and assessment models in practice with individuals, groups, and families.
 - ii. Assess clients using a strengths perspective.
- c. Intervention
 - i. Apply advanced theoretical perspectives in selection of interventions for individuals, groups, and families.
 - ii. Implement interventions that effectively address the needs of individuals, groups, and families.
- d. Evaluation
 - i. Evaluate practice and modify interventions to maximize the well-being of individuals, groups, and families.

Community and Organizational Practice Concentration Competencies and Practice Behaviors

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.
 - a. Attend to complex interpersonal dynamics.
 - b. Engage effectively with diverse stakeholders across settings.
 - c. Develop leadership skills, including skills necessary to supervise others in a human services setting.
2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
 - a. Recognize own biases, values, and frameworks as they apply to communities and organizations and minimize the impact of these as necessary.
 - b. Analyze ethical issues and apply ethical decision-making models across a range of complex organizational and community contexts.
3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
 - a. Critique and apply multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom in work with communities and organizations.
 - b. Communicate effectively and professionally, both orally and in writing, with a wide range of clients, colleagues, and organizations.
4. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
 - a. Integrate cultural frameworks and respect for diversity in practice with communities and organizations.
5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
 - a. Advocate with and on behalf of communities and organizations to promote human rights and social and economic justice
 - b. Develop leadership to promote human rights, and social and economic justice.
6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
 - a. Utilize the best available evidence in practice with organizations and communities.
 - b. Use practice experience to inform research or resource development.
7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
 - a. Integrate relevant conceptual frameworks in practice with communities and organizations.
8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
 - a. Apply policy practice skills with communities and organizations.
9. Respond to contexts that shape practice.

- a. Integrate existing and emerging knowledge of individuals, groups, and families in working with communities and organizations.
 - b. Develop leadership in engaging constituents to promote community, societal, and policy change.
10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- a. Engagement
 - i. Use empathic and effective interviewing skills to build collaborative working relationships with communities and organizations.
 - b. Assessment
 - i. Apply advanced theoretical perspectives and assessment models in practice with communities and organizations.
 - ii. Conduct strategic planning with communities and organizations.
 - c. Intervention
 - i. Apply advanced theoretical perspectives in selection of interventions with communities and organizations.
 - ii. Develop or improve community and organizational structures, programs, and policies that are responsive to stakeholder needs.
 - iii. Implement interventions that effectively address the needs of communities and organizations.
 - d. Evaluation
 - i. Evaluate practice and modify interventions to maximize the well-being of communities and organizations.

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. To do so, the concern must be brought to the attention of the MSW Program Director who chairs the APR committee or the Department Chair. A student who has a concern about another student may bring that concern to the MSW Program Director or 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, 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 10 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 who are dissatisfied with an APR decision have the right to appeal. If the decision results in termination from the program or from an assistantship, students should follow those

[Grievance Procedures](#). Otherwise, students may 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: Academic Standards Concerns Form

Date: _____ **Student name:** _____

Faculty member or agency representative: _____

An *Academic Standards Concerns Form* is completed by a faculty member or agency representative when there are concerns about a student's performance. It is typically best practice to review and share the form with the student. 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	Concern	Is it resolved?
Is frequently absent or tardy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Turns in incomplete or late work; is frequently unprepared for class or service learning/field	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Sleeps through class or service learning/field	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Uses phone, laptop, or other electronic devices inappropriately	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates incivility in interactions with instructor, students, or others in the classroom, Department of Social Work, or other settings	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates other disruptive behaviors in class, community, Department- or University-related trips, or service learning/field agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Makes inappropriate comments including inappropriate personal sharing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is unable or unwilling to behave according to professional values; imposes personal values on others	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates an inability or unwillingness to work in groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Ignores feedback, becomes defensive, or responds inappropriately when feedback is given	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is disrespectful in discussing sensitive issues, such as diversity; is insensitive to the feelings or needs of others	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibits evidence of substance abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates dishonesty	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Plagiarizes an assignment, exam, or other activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Cheats on an assignment, exam, or other activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Exhibits evidence of volatility; demonstrates a lack of self-control	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates personal problems and issues that interfere with learning and performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibits difficulty in demonstrating competency(ies) or academic standards as developmentally appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Other agency concerns. Please describe:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Other. Please describe:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

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

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.

Has the student received a copy of this form? Yes No

If no, reasons not provided to date:

Student’s comments (if desired):