The Department’s BSW & MSW Programs are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)
# Table of Contents

Welcome! .................................................................................................................. 3

SOCIAL WORK AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY .................................................. 4
  A Brief History of the Social Work Department at GMU ................................... 4
  Department of Social Work Mission and Philosophy ....................................... 5

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM ................................................................ 5
  Program Mission & Goals .................................................................................. 5
  Mission ............................................................................................................ 5
  Goals .............................................................................................................. 6
  Core Competencies (CSWE, 2008) ................................................................... 6

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK FACULTY/STAFF PROFILES ......................... 7
  Full-Time Faculty .......................................................................................... 7
  Administrative Staff ......................................................................................... 14

GETTING STARTED .............................................................................................. 16
  Is Social Work Right for You? .......................................................................... 16
  Transfer Students/Transferring Credits .......................................................... 16
  Non-Degree Enrollment .................................................................................... 17
  Registering for Classes ..................................................................................... 17
  Credit for Life or Work Experience .................................................................. 17
  Students who have been convicted of a felony ............................................... 17

THE MSW CURRICULUM ...................................................................................... 19
  Certificate in Gerontology ............................................................................... 20
  Field Education ............................................................................................... 20

CLASSROOM POLICIES ...................................................................................... 21
  Course Syllabi .................................................................................................. 21
  Attendance and Participation .......................................................................... 21
  Slowing Down or Speeding Up ......................................................................... 21

Grading Policies ................................................................................................... 21
  Late Papers, Late Exams, and Incompletes ....................................................... 22
  Adding, Dropping, or Withdrawing from Social Work Classes ...................... 23

TIPS & TRICKS .................................................................................................... 24

PROGRAM INFORMATION ................................................................................... 25
  Program Accreditation ..................................................................................... 25
  Departmental Advisory Committees .............................................................. 25
  MSW Student Association (MSWSA) ............................................................... 25
  Academic Advising ......................................................................................... 25
  Communication: Email & Facebook ............................................................... 26
  Problem Resolution Within the Social Work Department ............................ 26

DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES ............................................................................... 27
  Immunization and Fees .................................................................................... 27
Sexual Harassment Policy ................................................................. 27
Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy........................................ 27
Honor System .................................................................................... 27
Conduct within the University Community ................................................. 28
Departmental Professional Standards and Behavior ...................................... 29
  Process for Addressing Violations of the Professional Standards and Behaviors ... 31
Student Status Review ........................................................................ 33
Student Termination Policy ...................................................................... 33
Drug and Alcohol Use .......................................................................... 38
Criminal Background Policy .................................................................... 40
PREPARING FOR YOUR SOCIAL WORK CAREER .................................. 41
  Fields of Practice ............................................................................. 41
  Social Work Licensure ..................................................................... 41
  Finding the Job of Your Dreams .......................................................... 42
OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES .................................................. 42
  Students with Special Needs .............................................................. 42
  Leadership Opportunities for Students ................................................ 42
  Phi Alpha Honor Society ................................................................... 43
  Library and Research Services ............................................................. 43
  Social Work Department Lending Library ............................................. 43
  Graduate Assistants ........................................................................ 43
  Certificate Programs ......................................................................... 43
  University Services for Students ........................................................ 44
  Accreditation .................................................................................. 44
APPENDIX A: REQUEST CHANGE TO FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME PROGRAM ...... 45
APPENDIX B: CONTRACT FOR FINISHING AN INCOMPLETE GRADE .................... 46
APPENDIX C: George Mason University Honor Code ...................................... 47
APPENDIX D: NASW Code of Ethics .......................................................... 52
  Preamble ...................................................................................... 52
  Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics .................................................. 53
  Ethical Principles ............................................................................ 55
  Ethical Standards .......................................................................... 56
APPENDIX E: NASW Standards of Cultural Competence .................................. 73
APPENDIX F: Consent for Exchange of Information .......................................... 74
APPENDIX G: Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards ......................... 75

Revised 2020
Welcome!

The faculty and staff of the Department of Social Work welcome you to George Mason’s Master of Social Work (MSW) program. The MSW program has been fully accredited since 2006, joining a well-established BSW program that has graduated over 1,200 undergraduate social work majors over a period of more than 35 years.

We believe you will find your education here to be challenging and rewarding. Social work is a profession that requires intellectual integrity, emotional strength, and boundless creativity. Your first year, referred to as the Generalist Year curriculum, will equip you with the basic knowledge, skills and values required for generalist social work practice. Your second year, referred to as the Specialization Year, will provide you with the opportunity to select an area of concentration in Children, Youth & Families or Adults & Healthy Aging. Both years of classroom instruction are accompanied by supervised field instruction in a practicum setting. For some of you, the Generalist and Specialization years may be divided for the three and four year programs, and some of you coming in as Advanced Standing will only have your Specialization year.

Some of you are starting your MSW education directly from the baccalaureate level. Others are returning to school after raising families or pursuing a different career. Still others are coming with a BSW degree and/or many years of human services work experience. Everyone has something to contribute and we cherish our diversity in the Program. Likewise, our faculty has much to contribute. They bring a wealth of both academic and “real world” experience to the program. They have expertise in a wide range of subject areas and are recognized as leaders in their respective fields of practice.

Your faculty advisor will work with you to ensure that you meet all academic requirements and that your questions are answered. We strongly encourage your participation in all aspects of the program. You will find many opportunities to enrich your education through relationships with faculty and colleagues, through active engagement in the MSW Student Association, and through participation in professional development activities.

Again, welcome to the MSW program and may your journey be a phenomenal one!

Respectfully yours,

Evelyn Tomaszewski, M.S.W.
Director, MSW Program
George Mason University began as the Northern Virginia branch of the University of Virginia in 1957. In 1958, the town of Fairfax donated 150 acres for a new site and the name George Mason College was selected for the new institution. In 1964, the first four buildings were completed; student enrollment totaled 356. At that time, the Virginia General Assembly authorized the expansion of George Mason College into a four-year, degree-granting institution. The first undergraduate degree was conferred in 1968 and the first master’s degree was conferred in 1971. On April 7, 1972, the governor signed the legislation that established George Mason University as an independent member of the Commonwealth’s system of colleges and universities. The university received permission to grant doctoral degrees in 1979 and also acquired the George Mason University School of Law. Today, enrollment at George Mason exceeds 30,000 and the University occupies 86 acres of land on three campuses located in Fairfax County, Arlington County, and Prince William County.

The Bachelor in Social Work (BSW) Program was established in 1971 as part of the Department of Sociology in the College of Arts and Sciences. Over the years, it has been relocated to other units including the College of Professional Studies and the College of Nursing and Health Science, only to return to the College of Arts and Sciences as a separate department in fall 2000. That same year, the Board of Visitors and the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) approved the creation of a Master of Social Work (MSW) program at George Mason. This program, initially located on the Arlington campus, opened its doors in fall 2002 with an inaugural class of 24 students, and has held full accreditation from the Council on Social Work Accreditation (CSWE) since February 2006. The program has since relocated to Fairfax and in July 2006, the Department of Social Work became part of the new College of Health and Human Services.

Today, the BSW Program and MSW Program together comprise the Department of Social Work with Dr. Daniel Freedman as the BSW Program Director, Professor Evelyn Tomaszewski as the MSW Program Director, and Dr. Emily Ihara as the Interim Department Chair. The Department has 19 full-time faculty members in addition to four administrative specialists, a number of part-time adjunct faculty, about 200 undergraduate social work majors, and over 225 MSW students. A Ph.D. program in social work is currently under development.
Department of Social Work Mission and Philosophy

Our mission is to promote human well-being by ensuring economic and social justice, as well as human rights for all. We work to meet these goals by:

- Providing an academically rigorous education that develops social work leaders and practitioners who engage in critical thinking. We seek to develop effective social work leaders, scholars and practitioners who both challenge injustice and institute interventions grounded in theory and science. With a campus located in an area of enormous cultural plurality, we seek to train leaders, practitioners and scholars equipped to serve diverse populations.
- Conducting applied social science research that aims to solve personal and social problems, and investigates systemic inequities in power and unequal access to resources. We seek to identify and develop effective interventions based on scientific theory.
- Engaging in public service that cultivates community partnerships, enhances capacity, and provides technical expertise to human service organizations caring for diverse local, national and global communities.

We build upon a foundation of generalist social work knowledge and skills that emphasizes empowerment, inclusion, and systems transformation.

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

Program Mission & Goals

Mission

The Program seeks to prepare social workers for advanced professional practice who are innovative leaders bringing superior management, interpersonal, technological, research, and communication skills to the human service delivery system. Through a concentration in either Children, Youth & Families or Adults & Healthy Aging, graduates will be prepared to strengthen their communities, stimulate positive change through advocacy, social and political action, and help meet the local, national, and global challenges of the new century.

The Program builds upon a foundation of generalist social work knowledge and skills that integrates micro and macro theory and practice, and emphasizes empowerment and systems transformation. This foundation equips students to enhance human well-being and to promote social and economic justice and human rights through ethical professional practice with culturally diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
Goals

1. To prepare social workers with knowledge and advanced skills in direct and clinical practice, organizational leadership, social policy, and community practice to enhance social functioning and alleviate poverty, oppression, and injustice.
2. To prepare ethical social work leaders who facilitate positive social change locally, nationally, and internationally/globally through direct and clinical services, advocacy, social action, and community empowerment in diverse social, cultural, and political and organizational contexts.
3. To prepare social workers with appropriate knowledge and skills for practice with culturally diverse colleagues and client systems of all sizes in a variety of professional contexts.
4. To prepare social workers who contribute to the social work profession through continuous professional development and leadership activities that promote competent social work practice.

Core Competencies (CSWE, 2008)

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.
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. (a) – (d) Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
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Jeanne Booth joined the Social Work Department as Assistant Professor in the fall of 2019 after serving as Adjunct Professor since 2016 with experience in teaching Social Policies, Programs, and Services and Influencing Social Policy. She joins the department with over 28 years of experience providing clinical and administrative social work practice in a variety of areas including clinical and crisis social work, housing and homelessness, community engagement and development, criminal and restorative justice, child welfare services, aging and developmental disability services. Her professional experience includes twenty years in local government. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker by the Virginia Department of Health Professions and received her MSW from the University of Michigan with a focus on Community Organization and Interpersonal Practice and a BA in Psychology from Agnes Scott College.

Carol Cleaveland, Ph.D., M.S.S., Associate Professor
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Dr. Cleaveland, who joined the faculty in the fall of 2007, teaches courses in social policy, immigration and in community clinical practice. Her research focus is immigration, with particular interest in human smuggling of migrants from Central America and Mexico. Using ethnographic and other qualitative methods, she has been seeking to understand the processes of becoming an immigrant. Dr. Cleaveland began studying immigration in 2004, with an ethnographic study of Mexican day laborers in New Jersey. Her previous research was a longitudinal study of women in Philadelphia who had been forced off welfare and into the low-wage labor sector. She has published in both social work and interdisciplinary social science journals. She has been a social work practitioner in clinical settings since 1994, having earned both her PhD (2002) and MSS from Bryn Mawr College, where she received the Hathaway award for academic excellence. Prior to entering graduate school, she was a newspaper reporter. She has a BA (1980) in political science/print journalism from American University.

Katherine Cornejo, M.S.W., L.G.S.W., Child Welfare Stipend Program Coordinator
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Katherine Cornejo joined George Mason University’s Social Work Faculty as the Title IV-E Child Welfare Stipend Program Coordinator in April, 2017. She has over 13 years of experience working survivors of domestic violence and child welfare within community based nonprofit settings in Washington DC and New York City. Katherine received her MSW from Fordham University and currently is licensed in the District of Columbia.
Dr. Molly Everett Davis is Associate Professor and Associate Director of Field Education. She has a diverse background as a faculty member teaching and developing curriculum related projects. She has an extensive background of training social work professionals and educators on a variety of issues at the national, state and local level. Her background is diverse but she has extensive experience in gerontology, trauma across the life course, disaster behavioral health, behavioral health issues and substance abuse (SBIRT) and is the author of her own model for developing cultural competence (Lifeways) and trauma transformation. She was recently designated as a Scholar with the Virginia Geriatric Education Center. She has received awards and acknowledgements for innovative projects, most recently receiving an award from the United States Public Health Services Corp. In addition to the areas listed above she served on the task force developing Advanced Competencies for working with Military Families and Veterans. Dr. Davis has been involved in curriculum development in the area, child welfare, interprofessional practice and trauma informed long term care.

Sharolyn Dugger, LMSW, joined the GMU Social Work faculty in 2015 as the Director of Field Education. Ms. Dugger received her MSW from the University of Kansas in 2000 with an emphasis in children and families and specializing in social administration. She became licensed in the state of Kansas as a LMSW in 2000 and has maintained her LMSW for 17 plus years. Ms. Dugger practiced community social work for 13 years, and had prior social service work experience. She has served in the non-profit sector of children and families, child welfare, medical, substance abuse prevention and developmental disabilities. Previously, she has served in social work positions, including six and half years as Executive Director of a non-profit. In addition, in her community-based career she served as a social work Field Instructor for both BSW and MSW students for Washburn University and Kansas State University. Ms. Dugger also has been an Adjunct professor for Washburn University Department of Social Work teaching a BSW child welfare practice class. Prior to coming to GMU, she was an Associate Director of Field Education at the University of Kansas.

Dr. Freedman is an experienced social work educator and licensed independent social worker. He earned undergraduate degrees in American Indian Studies and Psychology from the University of Minnesota and earned both an MSW and PhD in social work from The Ohio State University. He has been involved in social work education for over fifteen years and is a term associate professor and BSW program director with the Department of Social Work at George Mason University. Additionally, Dr. Freedman has over twenty years’ experience as a human service provider, most of which has been in
mental health, substance abuse, and integrated behavioral healthcare settings. Dr. Freedman is a published author and has conducted local, state, national, and international presentations.

Denise Hines, Ph.D., Associate Professor
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Dr. Hines joined the faculty in the fall of 2019. Her research focuses on issues of family and interpersonal violence. Specifically, she researches the intimate partner violence experiences of under-recognized victims, the sexual and dating violence experiences of college students, and effective violence prevention programs. She uses mostly quantitative designs, but also engages in mixed methods and qualitative work as well. In addition, she has over ten years of experience in translating hers and others’ research for policymakers, a practice she plans to continue with both the federal and Virginia state governments. At her prior university, she co-founded their nationally-recognized campus sexual violence prevention program, and she is an internationally-recognized scholar in intimate partner violence. She earned her B.A. in Psychology from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA, and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Psychology from Boston University. Prior to coming to Mason, she was a Research Associate Professor of Psychology at Clark University in Worcester, MA.

Emily S. Ihara, Ph.D., M.S.W., F.G.S.A., Associate Professor & Interim Chair
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Dr. Ihara joined the faculty in the fall of 2006 and teaches courses on research, social policy and social justice, the social determinants of health, and gerontology. Her research focuses on interventions, policies, and system changes necessary to eliminate health inequities for vulnerable populations across the life course. She uses a mixture of quantitative, qualitative, and agent-based modeling techniques to identify the conditions that may lead to health inequities and the subsequent policy levers and interventions that may work to decrease and eliminate them. Dr. Ihara has worked as a researcher and policy analyst for various organizations; she also brings her extensive social work clinical experience in health and mental health to her understanding of research and policy. Current research projects include examining the effects of music and creative arts interventions on the health and well-being of older adults with dementia; integrating systems science methods that may be used as tools to forecast and test levers that affect system outcomes; and investigating dialysis patient experiences with different dialysis modalities. Dr. Ihara is a graduate of UC Berkeley (A.B.), UCLA (M.S.W.), and the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University (Ph.D., M.A.).
Megumi Inoue, Ph.D., M.S.W., R.N., Assistant Professor
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Dr. Inoue joined the faculty in the fall of 2014. Her research focuses on health and aging, and she is particularly interested in advance care planning and patients’ autonomy in health care settings. She also studies the effects of personalized music intervention on behavior of people with dementia, as well as well-being of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Dr. Inoue teaches Clinical Practice with Older Adults, Death & Dying, Research in Social Work, and Advanced Research in Social Work. Dr. Inoue brings her extensive clinical experience as a social worker and a registered nurse to her understanding of these research areas. Dr. Inoue received her Ph.D. from Boston College (Graduate School of Social Work), MSW from Washington University in St. Louis (Brown School of Social Work), BSW from Kawasaki University of Medical Welfare in Japan (Department of Medical Social Welfare), and ADN from Kyushu University in Japan (College of Medical Technology Department of Nursing).

Vicki Kirsch, Ph.D., M.S.W., L.C.S.W., Associate Professor
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Dr. Kirsch joined the faculty in 2010 and has a focus in trauma and recovery as well as issues of spirituality and sexuality. Prior to coming to GMU, Dr. Kirsch was Head of Training at the Counseling Center at Wheelock College, Teaching Associate in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, and Clinical Coordinator at the Center for Women’s Development focusing on Trauma and Eating Disorders at Arbour-HRI Hospital. She previously held faculty positions at Emory University, the College of William and Mary, and at Goddard College. Dr. Kirsch is the faculty practice professor and in addition to a clinical social work practice focusing on a relational approach offering EMDR and DBT to trauma survivors, works with the transgender population in the Northern Virginia area. Dr. Kirsch received her Ph.D. (Women’s Studies) from Emory University, her MSW (Clinical Practice) from Boston University, her MA (History of Religions/Sanskrit) from the Divinity School of the University Chicago, and her BA (Philosophy and Theology) from Georgetown University.

JoAnn Lee, Ph.D., M.S.W., M.P.A., Associate Professor
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Dr. Lee joined the faculty in 2013 and teaches courses on social policy, child welfare, and research methods. Her research focuses on the role of public systems in preparing and supporting youth for the transition to adulthood. She focuses on marginalized youth such as those involved in the foster care and/or juvenile justice systems. Prior to George Mason University, Dr. Lee was a postdoctoral fellow at Seattle Children’s Research Institute. Her prior clinical work experiences include addressing substance use issues among juvenile justice and Asian American youth populations. She is a graduate of Stanford University (BA in Psychology), Columbia University (MSSW & MPA) and the University of Washington (PhD).
Dr. Matto (MSW, University of Michigan, PhD, University of Maryland) is Associate Professor in the College of Health and Human Services Department of Social Work at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. Prior to that Dr. Matto was at VCU School of Social Work for ten years where she taught theories of human behavior, direct practice, and research methods in the master’s and doctoral programs. She has over 15 years of research and practice experience in the field of addiction science and has conducted treatment intervention studies with diverse clinical populations, to include a clinical trial with Inova Fairfax Hospital and Georgetown University’s Center for Functional and Molecular Imaging that used neuroimaging technology to examine functional and structural brain change associated with behavioral health interventions for substance-dependent adults. She is most currently working on the prototype development of a wearable device to manage stimulus cues and reduce drug relapse by detecting neurophysiological reactivity and delivering a device-activated personalized recovery cue intervention (a STEAM-H: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math – Health Initiative).

Dr. Ritchie’s education and practice experience bridge the fields of social work and special education (Ph.D. in Special Education and Rehabilitation with concentration in Emotional Disturbance from Syracuse University, MSW with concentration in Health from University of Pennsylvania, and BA in Liberal Arts from State University of New York at Stony Brook). Practice experience includes providing consultation, education, and direct services in school settings and over the past 23 years he has been actively involved in international social work with a special interest in participatory action research and the linkage between social work and human rights. He has been a visiting professor at the University of Costa Rica, Vytautas Magnus University in Lithuania, and the National Autonomous University of Honduras as a Senior Fulbright Scholar. He has held a number of professional leadership positions related to national and international social work including, for example, serving on the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Commission on Accreditation and the Global Commission and Committee on Human Rights; chairing the CSWE Council on Global Learning, Research & Practice; and chairing the NASW National International Social Work Committee. He has served as national reviewer for all Fulbright Scholar applications, across all disciplines, to Mexico and Central America. Dr. Ritchie’s scholarship includes collaborative research with Central American and Mason colleagues focusing on issues related to child and family welfare, children’s and women’s human rights, and the Latino immigrant community. Prior to George Mason University, he held faculty appointments at Cornell University and Nazareth College where he served as Social Work Department Chair.
Sunny Harris Rome, J.D., M.S.W., Professor
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Professor Rome has an MSW degree from the University of Michigan and a JD from Georgetown University Law Center. She joined the full-time faculty at Mason in 1994. Recent teaching includes courses on Influencing Social Policy, Policies for Children & Youth, Political Social Work, Social Work and the Law, Forensic Social Work Practice, and Empowering Communities for Change. Her research interests encompass youth in foster care, immigrant families in the child welfare system, and social work advocacy. She is the author of a popular textbook entitled Social Work and Law: Judicial Policy and Forensic Practice. Professor Rome received the College of Health & Human Services’ Master Teacher Award in 2011 and was named Virginia’s Outstanding Social Work Educator of the Year in 2012. Before coming to Mason, she worked in the General Counsel’s Office of the U.S. Department of Education and later at the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) where she lobbied on issues including welfare reform, child welfare, education, civil rights, and social services. She currently serves as President of Influencing Social Policy (ISP), as a commissioner with the Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice in Social Work, and as co-chair of the Social Welfare Policy & Policy Practice Track for the Council on Social Work Education. She serves on the editorial boards of several journals and has been a leader in organizing regional and national events that advance social work’s role in policy research, teaching, and advocacy.

Steven R. Rose, Ph.D., M.S.W., Professor
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Dr. Rose (MSW, Washington University in St. Louis; Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison) is a Professor of Social Work in the George Mason University College of Health & Human Services. Dr. Rose’s areas of specialized competence include research and scholarship to expand the knowledge base about children’s and adolescents’ social skills and interpersonal-cognitive problem-solving skills, peer relationships, and social competence mediated by small group processes. His current work focuses on the application of social science knowledge to social work with groups. His work has been supported by grants and contracts. In addition to peer-reviewed journal articles and chapters, his publications include books on task groups in the social services, group work with children and adolescents, and social work practice with children and adolescents. He holds editorial board positions with academic and professional journals in the social sciences, social work, and social welfare. He teaches graduate courses in human behavior in the social environment; social policies, programs, and services for children and youth; and program evaluation. He has held professional consultation, administration, supervision, and clinical practice positions in child, youth, and family services, education settings, and mental health organizations. Prior to joining the George Mason University faculty, Dr. Rose was on the faculty of the graduate School of Social Work at Louisiana State University where he served as the Betty J. Stewart Endowed Professor of Social Work Practice with Children.
Catherine J. Tompkins, PhD., M.S.W., Associate Professor & Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, College of Health and Human Services  
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Dr. Tompkins joined the faculty in August, 2003 as the Director of the BSW Program. She is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Health and Human Services. Dr. Tompkins teaches courses in research methods, human behavior, gerontology, and introduction to social work. Her research areas include: caregiving, interventions for dementia care, kinship care, and undergraduate education. Prior to joining the faculty at George Mason University, Dr. Tompkins was the Faculty Development Coordinator for the John A. Hartford funded Faculty Development Project at the Council on Social Work Education, *Strengthening Aging and Gerontology Education for Social Work*. Dr. Tompkins received both her MSW and PhD from the University of Maryland School of Social Work. She was an assistant professor of Social Work and Gerontology at James Madison University from 1995–1998 and the Director of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education from 1998–2001. She is currently on the editorial board for three journals and serves on other local and national committees. Dr. Tompkins is a John A. Hartford Faculty Scholar in Geriatric Social Work.

Evelyn Tomaszewski, M.S.W., Assistant Professor and MSW Program Director  
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Evelyn P. Tomaszewski is the MSW Program Director and an assistant professor in the Department of Social Work at George Mason University. Prior to joining the social work department, she worked with the National Association of Social Workers; and consulted with non-profit public and private industry leaders in public health, mental and behavioral health, education, and social services focused on human rights, social justice, policy and workforce development initiatives in the US and globally. Professor Tomaszewski’s experience includes leading initiatives focused on HIV/AIDS syndemics, mental health and other NCDs, ethics and social work practice, LGBTQ youth, violence prevention, human rights of at-risk and marginalized communities, and increasing skills and capacity of health and social services workforce (providers, services, leadership and governance). She is interested in policy development and analysis, building social work visibility and leadership, and promoting stakeholder driven community and systems level change. Professor Tomaszewski holds a Master of Social Work and Bachelor of Social Work from West Virginia University and Graduate Certificate (Public Health) from George Mason University.

Eric Waithaka, Ph.D., M.P.A., M.S.W., Assistant Professor  
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Dr. Waithaka joined the faculty in the fall of 2017. His research focuses on intergenerational social and economic mobility during young adults’ transitions to adulthood, with a particular focus on the role of family capital (resources) and public policies influence on young adults’ life
outcomes. His research on young adults, both in the United States and in East Africa, focuses on educational attainment, economic engagement and asset development. He has taught a variety of courses including research methods, macro practice, poverty and inequality, human behavior and the social environment, and social work for social justice. He has practice experience in various capacities including non-profit consulting, survey research, program evaluation and being a community support worker for individuals living with disabilities. Dr. Waithaka is a graduate of Daystar University Kenya (BA), Washington University in St. Louis (MSW) and the University of Washington Seattle (PhD, MPA).

Michael Wolf-Branigin, M.S.W., Ph.D., PStat®, Professor
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Michael Wolf-Branigin, MSW, Ph.D., PStat® is Professor of Social Work at George Mason University. His research focuses on complex adaptive systems and their application to social work practice in relation to his substantive areas including behavioral health and intellectual and developmental disabilities. He worked for two decades in the addictions and disabilities fields. He received his graduate diploma in economics from the University of Stockholm, an MSW from the University of Michigan, and a PhD in research and evaluation from Wayne State University. He has consulted for governmental and non-governmental organizations in the United States and abroad. For 18 years, he has been an accreditation surveyor with CARF International. He is an Accredited Professional Statistician™ through the American Statistical Association, has written about 50 peer-reviewed articles and one book, and serves on the editorial boards and reviews for several academic journals.

Administrative Staff

Lisa Climer, MSW, Field Education Coordinator
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Lisa Climer joined the Social Work Department in 2019 as the Field Education Coordinator. In this capacity she advises graduate and undergraduate students entering practicum, and works with community agencies and faculty to support and develop field placements. Ms. Climer was previously with Piedmont Virginia Community College (2009-2018), where she designed and coordinated education, training and college transition programs for adult secondary students and English language learners. From 1994 to 2010 she practiced in the areas of child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice in Charlottesville, Virginia. Ms. Climer holds a B.A. from the University of Virginia (1991) and an M.S.W. from Virginia Commonwealth University (1994). She currently represents the city of Manassas on the Prince William - Manassas Regional Adult Detention Center Board.
Nina Kwartin, Administrative Assistant for Field Education
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Nina Kwartin joined the Department of Social Work in 2019. Nina holds a Bachelor’s in Biology from the State University College of New York at Buffalo. She holds dual Master’s degrees in Environmental Science and Policy from the University of Maryland. Prior to her work in the Department of Social Work, she worked for FCPS as a classroom assistant in Special Education.

Vannary C. Khov, Administrative Program Specialist
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Vannary C. Khov has worked for George Mason University since 1996 – in the College of Health and Human Services/ Dean’s office from 1996 to 2003, in the Doctoral Division in the School of Nursing from October 2003 to May 2012, and in the Department of Social Work from May 2012 to the present. Prior to that, she was employed by the Embassy of Liberia, in Reston, VA.

Le Anne Wisnieski, Administrative Assistant for Student Affairs
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Le Anne Wisnieski earned her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Old Dominion University and previously worked for the American Psychological Association in Washington, D.C. for 10 years. Prior to joining the staff in the Department of Social Work, she spent her time volunteering at schools and within the community around Fairfax County.
GETTING STARTED

Is Social Work Right for You?

Social work is a demanding and highly rewarding profession. It focuses on restoring, maintaining, and enhancing the social functioning of individuals, families, groups, and communities. The MSW is considered the terminal practice degree in social work. Is this the degree for you? Here are some items to consider:

- Social workers must be committed to working with people (classmates, clients, colleagues, faculty, and supervisors). They need superior interpersonal skills. Often they are required to undertake multiple tasks and assume awesome responsibilities.

- Many social work jobs require working unorthodox hours; schedules may be unpredictable. It is important to be able to make adjustments between one’s personal and professional lives, and to maintain a healthy balance between them.

- Social workers must be able to honestly acknowledge and examine their own biases and remain open to working with all kinds of people, including those who may challenge these biases.

- Social workers must be able to accept criticism and use it for self-improvement. Continued growth, personal as well as professional, is essential for effective practice.

- Social work practice can be emotionally challenging. Social workers must be willing to address any personal issues that may inhibit their ability to work effectively with clients.

- Social workers are expected to engage in lifelong learning. They are committed not only to taking their education seriously, but to staying current in the field by reading the professional literature, engaging in original research, evaluating their own practice, and participating in professional meetings and conferences.

- Social workers follow a Code of Ethics and a clear set of values. They must demonstrate adherence to those values in everything they do, be it work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities.

- Social workers need excellent analytical and communications skills. Practice at the organizational, community, or policy level requires being organized, prompt, thorough, and intellectually rigorous.

Questions about your suitability for social work education, and for master’s level social work practice, should be discussed with your academic advisor. You might also enjoy reading *Getting Your MSW: How to Survive and Thrive in a Social Work Program* by Karen Sowers and Bruce Thyer (Lyceum Books, 2006).

Transfer Students/Transferring Credits

Students wishing to transfer to the George Mason University MSW Program need to submit the University Graduate Application, complete the Applicant Information Sheet, and send undergraduate and graduate transcripts from all institutions attended. A student also needs a letter from her or his previous program verifying that she or he is in good standing. Graduate
courses successfully completed with a B minus or better at another CSWE-accredited MSW program may be considered for transfer. No student will be granted transfer credit for SOCW 600 (Foundations of Social Work & Social Welfare) or for the following concentration year courses: SOCW 640, 645, 685, 687, 696/698. Up to 30 credits for courses successfully completed with a B minus or better at another CSWE-accredited MSW program may be transferred from generalist-year studies and up to 6 hours from specialization-year. This is at the discretion of the MSW Program Director and the Associate Dean of the College of Health and Human Services.

Non-Degree Enrollment
The MSW program has a once-a-year, fall admissions cycle, and each year receives many more applications than spaces available in the class. Thus, graduate MSW Social Work courses are restricted to students who have been admitted to the program and are not open to Non-Degree students. Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis for persons who are degree seeking students at another institution or hold an MSW degree and desire to enroll in courses needed to meet the educational requirements for eligibility to take the Virginia Licensed Clinical Social Worker exam. For admissions requirements and application deadline, please refer to CHHS Graduate Admissions.

Registering for Classes
All students in good standing may register for classes. Students are urged to consult with their faculty advisor and the respective plan of study before registering, since many courses must be taken in sequence or require prerequisites. Students must successfully complete all foundation year courses before they are eligible to register for concentration year courses. Students who attempt to register for courses out of sequence without prior written permission from the MSW Program Director may be dropped from those courses without warning. Registration for fall classes begins in mid-April, registration for spring classes begins in early November, and registration for summer classes begins in late March. Early registration is advisable if you are interested in a particular section of a course, as all courses have enrollment caps. The University publishes and distributes a Schedule of Classes prior to each registration period. Students may register by logging on to https://patriotweb.gmu.edu. Any questions regarding registration should be addressed to the MSW Administrative Support Specialist and/or MSW Program Director. For registration assistance, please contact chhsgrad@gmu.edu.

Credit for Life or Work Experience
While the MSW program values and appreciates the diverse life and work experiences our students bring to the program, in accordance with the CSWE accreditation standards, we do not offer academic credit for life or work experience, in whole or part, in lieu of the field practicum or other academic coursework.

Students who have been convicted of a felony
Students who have been convicted of a felony should contact the MSW Program Director and the Director of Field Education to discuss their options. Students should be aware that having a
felony conviction will preclude many types of field placements and may have implications for obtaining a social work license upon graduation. Please refer to the MSW Field Manual and to the website for social work licensure in Virginia for additional information: http://www.dhp.state.va.us/social/default.htm.
THE MSW CURRICULUM

Curriculum Overview
The MSW Curriculum is divided into two parts: a *generalist* curriculum and a *specialization* curriculum. The *generalist* curriculum (Year #1 for full-time students and Years #1 and #2 for part-time students) introduces all students to the generic knowledge, values and skills necessary for social work practice. Courses include: Foundations of Social Work & Social Welfare; Human Behavior and Social Systems; Community Practice across the Lifespan; Poverty, Oppression & Inequity; Organizing & Advocating for Change; Foundations of Social Work Practice; Psychopathology; Research Methods in Social Workers; and Generalist Field Practicum/Seminar. The *specialization* curriculum (Year #2 for all full time students, year #3 for 3-year students and years #3 and #4 for 4-year students) provides students with advanced knowledge and skills in one of the following specializations: Children, Youth & Families or Adults & Healthy Aging.

To graduate with an MSW degree from George Mason University, students must have completed 60 credit hours (33 credit hours for Advanced Standing students) at the graduate level, with at least a 3.0 (B) cumulative grade point average. Required courses for two-year, three-year, four-year, and advanced standing are listed below, and can be found on the social work website.

The standard MSW degree requirements can be completed on a two-year, three-year, or four-year basis. Advanced Standing students can complete the program in one or two years. Students may not enroll for fewer, or more than, the recommended number of credits each semester without prior departmental approval. **The University requires that all graduate students complete their degrees within a maximum of six years.** Students wishing to complete the MSW program by switching between the two-year, three-year, or four-year programs, may or may not be able to do so, depending on enrollment patterns. Students interested in this option need explicit, written departmental approval and should consult their academic advisor and the MSW program director.

Enrolled students with a Baccalaureate degree in Social Work from a CSWE accredited program who are not admitted to the Advanced Standing Program may request the opportunity to “test out” of specific foundation courses. This request must be made prior to the beginning of the first academic year enrolled in the program.

Students interested in an independent study should inquire with individual faculty members. If a faculty agrees to do an independent study, he or she must complete an independent study form and submit to the CHHS Office of Student Affairs, which will be forwarded to the Registrar. A special section will be created and assigned a CRN that the faculty will use to enter final grades.
Certificate in Gerontology

Point of Contact
Cathy Tompkins, Associate Professor & Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs
Phone: 703-993-2838
Email: ctompkin@gmu.edu

This 15-credit Certificate combines theoretical and applied course work in aging with the student’s graduate curriculum in any department of the university. The program is for current graduate students seeking additional knowledge and skills for working with older adults and professionals needing additional training in the area of gerontology.

Field Education

Field education is a vital component of the MSW degree program. It affords students the opportunity to apply their social work learning in real-world, supervised agency settings. Students complete two supervised field practica, designed to help them achieve the MSW program objectives. Students must make themselves available for field practicum during regular business hours, commonly understood as between 8am-6pm, Monday through Friday, or as agreed upon with the agency or organization serving as the approved practicum site. In addition, students will be required to attend an integrative seminar twice a month, to be facilitated by their assigned faculty liaison.

The first (generalist) practicum occurs approximately 15 hours per week throughout the student’s first year of study (three-year and four-year students complete the foundation practicum during their second year) for a minimum total of 225 hours per semester. Practicum sites are selected from among those with which the Department of Social Work and George Mason University have developed legal affiliation agreements. The MSW Field Education Director reviews students’ backgrounds and work histories, and recommends a field placement for each student that will broaden his or her exposure to social work practice. Foundation placements are not designed to allow for specialization. Rather, they are designed to provide students with opportunities for generalist social work practice. Available placements typically involve direct service with individual clients, families, small groups, and/or communities. They address populations of various ages (infants, children, adolescents, adults, older adults), in a range of social work settings (schools, hospitals, nursing homes, mental health centers, homeless shelters, courts, social service agencies, etc.). Field placement experiences are monitored by faculty field liaisons, who also facilitate a bi-monthly integrative field seminar in which students are assisted in processing the field practicum and integrating classroom learning with their practice experience.

The second (specialization) practicum occurs 20 hours per week for a total of 300 hours per semester. Specialization practica provide advanced practice opportunities relevant to the Children, Youth & Families and Adults & Healthy Aging specializations, respectively. The MSW Field Education Director identifies eligible placements, discusses the student’s interests and learning goals, and suggests sites at which to interview. The final placement decision is made...
by the student and MSW Field Director. Specialization placement sites include: state and federal government agencies; legislatures; advocacy and education organizations; labor unions; community development organizations; and public, nonprofit, and for-profit human services agencies. Health and mental health agencies, hospitals, schools, and psychiatric inpatient and outpatient units are also utilized. As with the foundation practicum, faculty field liaisons monitor student progress in the field and facilitate a bi-monthly integrative seminar.

For additional information on field education, consult the MSW Field Education Manual.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Course Syllabi
Course instructors will provide syllabi to their students by the first class meeting, either electronically or in hard copy. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with each course syllabus and be prepared to raise with the instructor any questions or concerns they may have.

Attendance and Participation
Class attendance for face-to-face courses is required. Full participation in hybrid and distance education courses is also required. Social work education depends heavily on the processing of information, on interactions with others, and on the application and practice of professional skills. Students who miss class or do not fully participate in their hybrid or distance education courses will miss crucial opportunities that cannot be compensated for by copying a classmate’s notes or completing the readings. Students who must miss or be tardy to a class should notify their instructors ahead of time. It is the responsibility of the student to find out what he or she missed when absent, and to make up any outstanding class work.

Slowing Down or Speeding Up
Students wishing to switch from the 2-year program to the 3-year or 4-year program may request to do so. Requests must be made in writing (see Appendix A for form) and must be signed by the student and the MSW Program Director. Students are encouraged to speak with their advisor concerning their options. Approval is discretionary with the program, based on overall enrollment patterns.

Grading Policies
Consistent with University policy for graduate study, the MSW program recognizes “B minus” as the minimum passing course grade. Any course in which a student fails to earn at least a “B minus” must be repeated. Because most courses in the curriculum are sequenced, this may require the student to wait a full year before taking the course again. Students would also be precluded from enrolling in any course for which the failed course is a prerequisite until a passing grade is earned.

Students must also maintain at least a 3.0 (“B”) cumulative grade point average. Students dropping below the required 3.0 will be issued a warning letter and will have until the end of
the next semester to bring their cumulative grade point average up to the required level. If a student falls below a cumulative 3.0 grade point average for the second semester in a row (or during his/her final semester), the student will be terminated from the program and will not be able to graduate.

Receiving a grade of F in two courses or 9 credits of unsatisfactory grades (below B-) will result in termination from the program. Please see the George Mason University 2019—2020 Catalog for the procedure for appealing a grade.

Grading criteria:

Evidence of course learning
Overall quality

Grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>99-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-98</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;70</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Late Papers, Late Exams, and Incompletes

Unless otherwise noted in the course syllabus or by the instructor, late work is penalized one full letter grade if submitted within one week of the due date. Any work submitted after one week will not be accepted at all. If you are aware of circumstances that may inhibit your ability to submit an assignment on time, notify your instructor immediately. Exceptions to due dates are at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Exams must be taken on the date scheduled. Anticipated conflicts should be shared with the instructor as soon as they are known, so that alternate arrangements can be made. Rescheduling of exams is at the discretion of the instructor.

A grade of Incomplete in any course during a given semester must be completed before a student is allowed to begin the next course(s) in that particular sequence. In other words, a student must complete an Incomplete and receive a minimum grade of a B- for that Incomplete in order to take the next course in that sequence.

In concert with the university policy, an Incomplete grade may be given to a student who is passing a course but is unable to complete the required scheduled course work (i.e. final examination or major project), due to serious extenuating circumstances. A student must ask
for a grade of Incomplete, and a faculty member may assign an Incomplete grade. If an incomplete is assigned, all required course work must be completed by the end of the 9th week (unless the course is the first of a sequenced course; see above) of the following academic semester, not including summer term, and the instructor must turn in the final grade by the end of the 10th week.

The faculty and student must sign the Contract for Completing an Incomplete grade for a course. A copy of the form can be found in Appendix B or obtained from the Director of the MSW program. Please see your Academic Advisor and consult the University Catalog for additional information.

**Adding, Dropping, or Withdrawing from Social Work Classes**

Each semester’s Schedule of Classes includes a calendar that specifies the deadlines for adding and dropping courses, and withdrawing from the University. Students are responsible for being familiar with important add, drop, and withdrawal dates. To drop or add a course during this timeframe, access your schedule via the GMU Patriot Web system. Students must be officially registered for a course in order to receive credit. Likewise, a course will remain on the student’s official transcript unless the course is dropped in a timely fashion. Withdrawal from a course after the deadline—or withdrawal from the entire semester—may be granted by the Department Chair and the Dean’s Office only for non-academic reasons. Your faculty advisor can assist you with this process. **It is the responsibility of the student to know the deadlines for add/drop and to ensure that his/her registration is correct.**
TIPS & TRICKS

Here’s what some current and former students have to say about how to survive – and thrive! – in the MSW Program:

1 – **Get organized.** Print a copy of each course syllabus and keep it with you. Post assignment due dates in your date book, on your online calendar (if you use one), and on your fridge at home.

2 – **Do the reading.** Most instructors expect students to have completed the readings assigned for each class. Check to see if recommended readings are on e-reserve before you rush out and buy them. If you find you do need to purchase them, try Amazon or other online book sellers. They may also have the best prices for required texts.

3 – **Start early.** Start research for your papers immediately. Just settling on a topic often requires a fair amount of reading. Purchase APA formatting software. Use the library online databases, especially ProQuest, Psych Info, JSTOR, Social Work Abstracts, and Expanded ASAP. Don’t be shy about asking the reference librarians for help.

4 – **Develop expertise.** If you have an interest in a particular topic, find opportunities to learn about it through classroom assignments, term papers, or outside events. Take control of your learning and build a knowledge base.

5 – **Ask questions.** Don’t hesitate to ask questions in class, especially if the instructions for an assignment are unclear to you. Often your classmates have the same questions, but are reluctant to ask. If you’ve asked in class and are still uncertain, approach or email your instructor. They’ll be more than happy to clarify.

6 – **Keep copies.** Keep a copy of everything you produce: your research notes, sources, personal contacts, assignments, and papers. You may want them again, even if a particular course is finished. Rubbermaid containers work well!

7 – **Make the most of your field practicum.** Make a good first impression, ask questions, be on time, show initiative, and work hard. Even if it’s not your dream placement, it may be an unforeseen opportunity. Try to meet agency staff who are outside your team or department. Tag along to meetings whenever possible and request permission to attend outside events that could enhance your experience. Volunteer for additional responsibility. Maintain an open channel of communication with your field instructor. Notify your field liaison promptly if you experience any significant problems.

8 – **Take care of yourself.** Talk honestly with your family about what being in graduate school will entail. Negotiate help with household chores. Do not be a martyr. Schedule time to relax, exercise, socialize, sleep, and eat. On class days, you may get a dinner break – so bring something healthy to share! Finally, make friends in the program. You may think you do not have the time, but it makes all the difference.
PROGRAM INFORMATION

The MSW Program offices are located on the Fairfax Campus.

Department of Social Work Office:
Peterson Family Health Sciences Hall, Suite 3600
4400 University Drive, MS 1F8
Fairfax, VA 22030

Program Accreditation
The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) regulates the quality of social work programs through a process known as “accreditation.” The George Mason University MSW Program is fully accredited. Any questions regarding accreditation should be directed to the Department Chair. Standards for CSWE accreditation may be found at their website (www.cswe.org).

Departmental Advisory Committees
The Social Work Department has two external committees—the Program Advisory Committee and the Field Advisory Committee—that act as a link between the department and area human service agencies. Both committees include faculty and student representatives, in addition to community practitioners. These committees provide guidance to the Department related to curriculum development and field education, and assist with program assessment and community relations. They meet several times throughout the year. Each has an MSW student representative, appointed by the faculty.

MSW Student Association (MSWSA)
The Social Work Department has a University-supported MSW Student Association which all students are invited to join. Election of officers takes place annually. The MSWSA provides an opportunity for students to exercise leadership, organize around their interests, help shape departmental policies, and become involved in social, political, cultural, and volunteer activities that will enrich their educational experience and prepare them for professional social work practice.

Academic Advising
Every student admitted to the MSW Program is assigned a faculty academic advisor. Students are provided with the name and contact information for their advisor in their admission offer and at the MSW Orientation.

Every student has an advising file (located in the administrative specialist’s office) that tracks student progress toward meeting graduation requirements and briefly summarizes each contact between the student and advisor. Students should consult with their advisor before
registering for classes each semester. The advisor can also assist a student in interpreting departmental or University policies and help ensure that a student is on-track for graduation.

Finally, feel free to share your thoughts and concerns about the program, your interests, and your career goals, too. We encourage you to engage your advisor in discussions of substance about the social work profession and your future!

**Communication: Email & Facebook**

**Official Communication:** All students are expected to keep the MSW office informed of their current phone number and mailing address. Every student will also need to activate a GMU email account and is expected to check it daily when school is in session, and weekly during vacations. The Social Work Department will not keep track of students’ personal email addresses. All communication from the University and the Department of Social Work will be directed to the GMU email address only. If you anticipate any problem in checking your GMU account regularly, please notify your advisor or the MSW Program Director so a satisfactory alternative can be arranged.

**Facebook:** In addition to official communication, students are encouraged to become members of the “Friends of George Mason Social Work Group” in Facebook, using the email address of your choice. The group provides a forum for students, alumni, faculty, and friends of social work at George Mason University. Upcoming events, news items, and items of interests to students and alums are posted.

**Problem Resolution Within the Social Work Department**

Sometimes things do not go as smoothly as we would hope. It is helpful to know whom to contact in such cases. Problems concerning an individual course should first be discussed with the course instructor. If, for some reason, additional consultation is necessary, students should speak with their faculty advisor. If concerns remain, students may speak with the MSW Program Director. Issues concerning field practica should first be shared with the student’s faculty field liaison. If additional consultation is needed, students should speak with the MSW Field Education Director. If further resolution is needed, students should speak to the Department Chair. Finally, issues pertaining to University or departmental policies should be shared initially with the student’s advisor. Further clarification or consideration is available from the Department Chair.

**Program Assessment**

The Social Work Department is continually evaluating the MSW Program in order to make it the best program possible. Students will be asked to participate in this evaluation process through a series of program assessments. Examples include standardized tests, interviews, self-assessments, exit interviews, and alumni surveys. The resulting data will be aggregated and used by the faculty, the Program Advisory Committee, and the Field Advisory Committee to evaluate the Program’s strengths and challenges on a regular basis. We appreciate students' cooperation.
DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

Immunization and Fees
All students who are enrolled in a course involving a field placement (SOCW 672-673, 692-693, and 694-695) must have annual tuberculosis screening (PPD) and the entire Hepatitis B immunization series in accordance with U.S. Public Health Service recommendations. The cost of the immunizations is the responsibility of the student. Some agencies that serve as field placement sites also require fingerprinting, a criminal background check, and/or a child protective services check. Any cost related to these requirements is also the responsibility of the student.

Sexual Harassment Policy
Sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct and will not be condoned in any form at George Mason University or in the Social Work Department. GMU has adopted the following definition of sexual harassment:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute harassment when: (1) submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s academic performance or employment; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions about academic evaluation, employment, promotion, transfer, selection for training, performance evaluation, or selection for academic awards or benefits, etc.; (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment or substantially interferes with a student’s academic or an employee’s work performance.

Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy
GMU and the Department of Social Work are committed to a learning environment that supports tolerance and values diversity. The policy on equal opportunity and affirmative action is as follows:

George Mason University and the social work program are an equal opportunity and affirmative action institution and the program is committed to the principle that access to study or employment opportunities afforded by the university and program, including all benefits and privileges, be accorded to each person—student, faculty, or staff—on the basis of individual merit and without regard to race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, veteran status, disability, sexual or political orientation, sex, or age (except where sex or age is a bona fide occupational qualification).

Honor System
The Department of Social Work abides by the University’s honor system, as outlined in the University Catalog. Specifically prohibited are: cheating, attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying,
and stealing. Alleged violations of the Honor Code are heard by the University Honor Committee (see Appendix C).

In addition, social work students are required to comply with the NASW Code of Ethics (see Appendix D).

**Conduct within the University Community**

The Mason community respects and protects the individual dignity, integrity, and reputation of all its members. All students, faculty, and staff must comply with the conventions and regulations of university life that are necessary to maintain order, protect individuals and property, and fulfill the purposes and responsibilities of a university. This includes ensuring our commitment to high standards of civility and decency toward all.

Students enrolling in the university assume an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the university’s function as an educational institution. The Code of Virginia (Section 23-9.2:3) confers upon the university the responsibility for maintaining order within the university and the right to exclude those who are disruptive.

The Office of Student Conduct is administratively responsible for supervising student conduct on campus. Questions regarding student conduct should be directed to the Office of Student Conduct, SUB I, Suite 4100, 703-993-6209, [http://studentconduct.gmu.edu/](http://studentconduct.gmu.edu/).
### Departmental Professional Standards and Behavior

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Behavior and Core Standard</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attendance:</strong> Student will attend classes, field practicum, and scheduled meetings.</td>
<td>Student has missed a number of classes, field practicum and/or scheduled meetings.</td>
<td>Student consistently attends classes, field practicum, and/or scheduled meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Punctuality:</strong> Student will be punctual to classes and practicum activities.</td>
<td>Student has been frequently late to class/practicum/meetings or left early.</td>
<td>Student is on time to class/practicum/ meetings and stays until the end except in unusual circumstances that are considered excusable by the professor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initiation of Communication:</strong> Student will initiate communication regarding challenges and concerns.</td>
<td>Student neglects to initiate contact with instructors/supervisors in a timely manner regarding challenges and concerns.</td>
<td>Student contacts instructor/supervisor with challenges and concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal Skills:</strong> Student will demonstrate the ability to relate effectively to other students, faculty staff clients and other professionals.</td>
<td>Student is rarely able to demonstrate empathy, compassion, objectivity, respect and consideration of others, or appropriate ability to relate to faculty, staff, clients and professionals.</td>
<td>Student consistently relates well with others, and is able to demonstrate appropriate interaction with faculty, staff, clients and other professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respect and Collegiality:</strong> Student will demonstrate respect and collegiality in professional relationships.</td>
<td>Student is disrespectful to classmates, staff, faculty, and/or community members.</td>
<td>Student is consistently respectful to classmates, staff, faculty, and/or community members, and demonstrates support in these relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Awareness:</strong> Student will demonstrate self-awareness and appropriate self-disclosure.</td>
<td>Student rarely demonstrates self-awareness of impact of personal experiences, beliefs, culture, bias’, etc., and/or engages in inappropriate self-disclosure.</td>
<td>Student consistently demonstrates a high level of self-awareness about the impact personal experiences, beliefs, culture, bias’, etc. , and engages in appropriate self-disclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diversity Awareness:</strong> Student will demonstrate awareness and responsiveness to diversity and difference.</td>
<td>Student’s classroom or other student related interactions rarely demonstrates respect for and appreciation of diverse opinions, experiences and/or people.</td>
<td>Student’s classroom or other student related interactions consistently demonstrates respect for, and appreciation of, diverse opinions, experiences, and/or people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration:</strong> Student will engage in collaborative interactions.</td>
<td>Student rarely demonstrates collaborative skills in work with others, and/or has poor relationships with classmates or others involved in student learning.</td>
<td>Student consistently works collaboratively with team members, and engages positively with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Course Engagement:</strong> Student will appropriately engage in class activities/discussions.</td>
<td>Student rarely engages in class activities/discussions and does not make an effort to do so following feedback, or student frequently monopolizes the learning space, limiting others’ engagement and/or inhibiting the learning environment.</td>
<td>Student consistently engages in class activities/discussions and does not monopolize the learning space in a way that it limits others’ engagement and/or the learning environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written Expression:</strong> Student will demonstrate a high level of written expression.</td>
<td>Student’s writing demonstrates significant impairment in content, grammar, spelling, syntax, and/or flow. Has not demonstrated sufficient writing skills to express ideas and feelings.</td>
<td>Student’s writing demonstrates very good to excellent content, grammar, spelling, structure, and/or flow. Demonstrates good to excellent writing skills in expressing ideas and feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal Expression:</strong> Student will demonstrate a high level of verbal expression.</td>
<td>Student’s has not demonstrated sufficient verbal skills to express ideas and feelings.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates good to excellent verbal skills in expressing ideas and feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reliability:</strong> Student will demonstrate reliability.</td>
<td>Student rarely completes and submits assignments and/or work on time.</td>
<td>Assignments and/or work is almost always submitted on time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsiveness to Feedback:</strong> Student will demonstrate evidence of motivation to improve performance.</td>
<td>Student has not demonstrated receptiveness to suggestions and feedback from others and, therefore, makes no effort to adjust performance accordingly.</td>
<td>Student is consistently receptive to suggestions or feedback and adjusts performance accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compliance with Social Work Department Requirements:</strong> Student will comply with the professional conduct policies in the BSW, MSW and field handbooks.</td>
<td>Student is minimally compliant with department policies.</td>
<td>Student is fully compliant with department requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics:</strong> Student will demonstrate a professional commitment to, and compliance with, the NASW Code of Ethics.</td>
<td>Student minimally abides by the NASW Code of Ethics.</td>
<td>Student is fully compliant with the Code of Ethics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation:</strong> Student’s presentation will be appropriate for the setting.</td>
<td>Student’s presentation is consistently inappropriate for professional and classroom settings.</td>
<td>Student’s presentation is consistently appropriate for classroom and professional settings.</td>
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<td><strong>Stress Management:</strong> Student will recognize and manage current life stressors through the use of appropriate self-care.</td>
<td>Student identifies significant life stressors, but refuses to seek appropriate support or to engage in proper self care.</td>
<td>Student consistently seeks help when needed in managing life stressors. Student identifies and practices appropriate self-care activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional and Mental Capacities:</strong> Student will prevent personal and professional issues from impairing performance and judgment, and impacting professional responsibilities.</td>
<td>Student misses days and/or assignments at practicum, supervision, appointments or classes due to impairment, or behaves in ways that are disturbing. Student behaves in ways at practicum that cause clients and/or supervisor to question competence and/or judgment.</td>
<td>Student behaves in ways that demonstrate sound judgment. Medical and emotional problems are contained so as not to impede functioning and are not noticeable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional judgement:</strong> Student will engages in a problem-solving approach to determine appropriate action.</td>
<td>Student does not engage in a problem-solving approach when considering how to respond to classroom and/or practicum issues.</td>
<td>Student consistently engages in a problem-solving approach when considering appropriate action.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

April 5, 2016

**Process for Addressing Violations of the Professional Standards and Behaviors**

Provided below is a description of the process for addressing unacceptable student behavior, as identified in the Professional Standards and Behavior document. At any stage of the process, it may become necessary for the faculty, the program or field directors, or the department chair to consult, refer and/or coordinate with other members of the University in order to assist with addressing concerns.

1. **Procedures**

   A. If appropriate, and the violation is not unethical or one that creates a safety concern, the faculty/staff member may have an informal discussion with the student.

   B. If the violation is deemed by the faculty or staff member to be repetitive, severe, unethical, and/or puts people at risk, a Student Feedback for Growth form will
be completed, provided to the student, and provided to the appropriate Program Director. The Program Director will do the following:

1. Meet with all relevant individuals
   a. Students may be accompanied to the meeting by one advisor of the student’s choosing and at the student’s own expense. Advisors may only consult with the student and are not permitted to speak on the student’s behalf.
   b. Students may request postponement of a disciplinary proceeding if circumstances warrant. In most cases, a postponement will only be granted for an academic or medical situation. The decision to postpone a disciplinary proceeding rests with the Program Director.
   c. Students may present other information. This additional information must be provided to the Program Director at least two business days in advance of the scheduled meeting.
   d. Students have the right to decide not to participate in the meeting or provide additional information; the Program Director will render a decision in the absence of such information.
   e. Students have the opportunity to challenge the objectivity or fairness of the meeting by engaging in the Student Status Review process.

2. Create a remediation plan with timelines for action (to be documented on the Student Feedback for Growth Form). A copy will be provided to the student.

3. If significant progress has been made on the remediation plan, but goals have not been fully met, and relevant individuals agree, a one-time extension may be granted.

C. If any of the above has not resulted in change the Program Director will refer the issue to the Department Chair for consideration of termination from the social work program. At that time, the procedures in the Department of Social Work Student Termination Policy will be followed.

2. Behaviors Addressed by Other University Departments and/or Policies

A. Office of Academic Integrity:
   • Addresses plagiarism, and academic cheating, stealing, and lying.

B. Office of Student Conduct:
   • Non-academic acts of misconduct that may include, but are not limited to: alcohol and drug use; illegal gambling; disorderly conduct; infliction or threat of physical harm; unwanted sexual behavior; threatening or
intimidating behavior/ harassment/ stalking; hazing; misuse and unauthorized use of technology; interfering with the normal operation of the teaching environment; violation of policies or regulations in official publication (e.g., University Catalog, policies in Social Work Department Handbooks); alleged or actual violation of local, state, federal or international law; retaliation against another student or employee for their participation in any portion of a student conduct process. Misconduct may be directed at a student or employee.

C. Office of Student Support and Case Management:
- Provides assistance to students who are experiencing difficulty achieving academic success, when they may harm themselves or others, or are in need of support. The office connects students with on-campus and off-campus resources.

Student Status Review

Following receipt of notice of disciplinary action and/or termination from the BSW or MSW program, if a student can demonstrate that due process was not followed, the student may ask the Department Chair in writing to call a Student Status Review Committee (SSRC) to review the process. The purpose of the SSRC is to ensure that due process procedures were followed. Due process involves a determination of whether the departmental procedures and policies have been followed leading to a decision of disciplinary action and/or termination of a student from the program. Requests for review by the SSRC must be made by the student directly to the Department Chair. The Department Chair will then follow these procedures:

- The Department Chair will appoint two social work faculty members and a faculty member from the College of Health and Human Services to form a committee to review the procedures followed by the department and determine if due process was afforded to the student.
- The committee will send a recommendation to the Department Chair, who will make the final decision regarding due process and notify the student in writing of that decision.
- If the committee and the Department Chair concur that due process was followed, the disciplinary action and/or termination decision will remain. However, if the committee and/or Department Chair find that due process was not followed, the Department Chair will take appropriate action to reassess the original disciplinary action and/or termination decision in order for a student to be provided with due process.
- Students who wish to appeal the Departmental decision may follow the procedures outlined in the University catalog for appealing a decision made by the department.

Student Termination Policy

Purpose:
To maintain the academic integrity of the program and to prepare quality social work
practitioners, students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic performance levels and adhere to standards of professional behavior.

I. Policy Statement
The Department of Social Work retains the right to terminate from the BSW or MSW program students who are unable to meet performance or behavioral standards. It should be noted that termination is considered a rare occurrence and that students have a right to appeal a termination decision.

II. Termination From Program - Terminations are categorized as either academic or non-academic.

A. Graduate Students
The Department of Social Work follows the university policies for graduate academic termination. Please refer to the George Mason University catalog policy on Graduate Grading in the Grading section of the catalog, and the Academic Termination policy and Requirements for Master’s Degrees under the Graduate Policies section of the catalog for policies governing master’s degrees.

A notation of academic warning is entered on the transcript of a graduate student who receives a grade of C or F in a graduate course while a grade of IN is in effect.

Students may be academically terminated from the MSW program for any of the following reasons:
- Failure to make satisfactory progress toward degree completion as determined by the department;
- Accumulating grades of F in two graduate courses or 9 credits of unsatisfactory grades in graduate courses.

In addition to the above mentioned reasons for termination, provisionally admitted students may be terminated for:
- Failure to meet the conditions of admission within time limits;
- Accumulating 12 credits of unsatisfactory grades in undergraduate courses.

Students eligible for academic termination are notified by e-mail by the Office of the Registrar, followed by a letter from the CHHS Assistant Dean of Student Affairs with instructions on appealing the termination. Students have ten-days to appeal an academic termination and must submit the Graduate Termination Appeal form found on the Registrar’s web site at: http://registrar.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/GTA.pdf. A student in the appeal process may not register for the next semester of classes until a decision is rendered on the appeal. If the appeal is denied, an official termination letter is sent to the student by the CHHS Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, and notification of academic termination is affixed to the graduate student’s official record.
Former graduate students who have been terminated, dismissed, or have resigned from a Mason graduate program are not permitted to re-enroll in the program and are not eligible to take any additional course work at Mason unless a new graduate program application has been submitted and the applicant has been admitted to a graduate program. Please refer to the Readmission to Graduate Study at Mason policy in the Graduate Academic Standing section of the catalog for additional information.

B. Undergraduate Students
The Department of Social Work follows the university policy regarding termination from the major. Please refer to AP.5.2.4 Termination from the Major in the Undergraduate Policies section of the university catalog. If the student does not have the minimum 2.50 GPA for admission into the social work major, the student will not be admitted into the major. Undergraduate students without the minimum GPA are not permitted to continue into the senior-level social work courses (please see University Catalog).

C. A student may enroll in the following classes a maximum of two times during the program:
   BSW Program: SOCW 495, 496
   MSW Program: SOCW 672, 673, 692, 693, 694, 695
   Earning a second unsatisfactory grade in any of these courses warrants academic termination from the program.

D. Cause for Termination

The following applies to both undergraduate and graduate students:

a. If a student interviews with an agency identified by the Field Director and the student is not accepted for placement due to reasons under the control of the student, the Field Director may consider providing a referral to a second placement interview for the student. If the student interviews for a second placement and is not accepted for placement due to reasons under their control, the student will need to resubmit practicum planning materials for the following academic year.

b. If a student is disrupted from their field practicum for non-ethical violations, the Field Director may consider replacing the student in a new agency the same academic year. If the student is disrupted from a second agency, the Field Director will request termination from the program. Regardless of the timeframe between disrupted placements a student will be recommended for termination from the Social Work program immediately after a second failed field placement.

c. The student is convicted of a felony during the educational program.
d. The student possesses, uses, sells, trades, or offers for sale alcohol, illegal drugs, or intoxicants while in the classroom, practicum, or junior service learning.

e. The student abuses, sells, trades, or offers for sale over-the-counter or prescription drugs while in the classroom, practicum, or junior service learning affecting their ability to perform learning experiences.

f. The student engages in misconduct of any kind to include stalking, sexual harassment or assault, or any other behavior considered inappropriate.

g. Problematic behavior that impairs the student’s ability to maintain professional decorum in the classroom or practicum.

h. The student falsifies program or agency documents.

i. The student violates a University policy (Honor Code, Sexual Harassment, Substance Abuse, etc.), resulting in suspension.

j. The student fails or refuses to comply with remediation plans generated by the faculty in concert with the student.

k. The student violates the NASW Code of Ethics.

l. The student fails to comply with the Social Work Departmental criminal background policy.

III. Termination Process

A. The referring faculty member notifies the student and the Program Director (BSW or MSW) in writing of the grounds of misconduct and recommendations of termination from the program. If the Program Director is the faculty member directly involved with the termination circumstances, a second faculty member will be designated by the Department Chair to consider the termination case.

B. Within 5 business days of the termination recommendation, the Program Director or designee will notify the student in writing to include the following:

1. The reasons for the recommended termination from the program;
2. A request for the student to schedule a departmental Conduct Review Hearing;

C. The departmental Conduct Review Hearing must be held within 10 business days of the original referral. Attendees of the Conduct Review Hearing may include the student, one advisor of the student’s choosing and at the student’s own expense
(advisors may only consult with the student and are not permitted to speak on the student’s behalf), the Program Director or designee, and the referring faculty.

1. Students may request postponement of the Conduct Hearing Review proceeding if circumstances warrant. In most cases, a postponement will only be granted for an academic or medical situation. The decision to postpone a disciplinary proceeding rests with the Program Director or designee.

2. Students may present information in writing. This additional information must be provided to the Program Director or designee at least two business days in advance.

3. Students have the right to decide not to participate in the Conduct Hearing Review or to not provide additional information. The Program Director or designee will render a decision in the absence of such information.

D. Results of the Departmental Conduct Review Hearing:

1. If the Program Director or designee and the referring faculty member determine that termination is not necessary, a remediation plan with a completion date will be written, provided to the student, and implemented immediately. If the remediation plan is not completed by the date specified, the Program Director or designee will recommend termination from the program to the Department Chair.

2. If the Program Director or designee and the referring faculty member determine that the student should be terminated, the Program Director will notify the referring faculty member and the Department Chair in writing within 5 business days.

E. The Department Chair will review the findings and make a determination of the results and will notify the student, Program Director or designee, and the referring faculty member in writing within 3 business days of receiving the Conduct Review Hearing results. The Department Chair may uphold the request of termination or request that the Program Director or designee and the referring faculty member write a remediation plan with the student.

F. If the student is terminated and believes due process was not followed, the student may follow the procedures outlined in the Student Status Review Process.

G. If the student is terminated and disagrees with the decision, the student may appeal the termination decision through the Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs in the College of Health and Human Services. The student must contact the Assistant/Associate Dean within 5 business days of the written termination
notification by the Department Chair.

Drug and Alcohol Use

Purpose and Goal
George Mason University’s MSW Program is committed to protecting the safety, health and well-being of all students enrolled in the program and who are engaged in a practicum experience in the workplace. We recognize that alcohol abuse and illicit drug use pose a significant threat to our goals of preparing students for professional practice. We have established a drug-free workplace/practicum policy that balances our respect for individual students, clients and agencies with the need to protect against alcohol and drug use violations of university and agency policy. Social Work students are expected not to be under the influence of any illegal substance or any substance that impairs their ability to perform within the University and practicum environment. The Department of Social Work encourages students to voluntarily seek help with drug and alcohol problems from the appropriate professionals, using on-campus or off-campus resources.

Covered Students
This policy covers all students enrolled in a Department of Social Work class and/or who are involved in a practicum or community-based learning experience within an organizational setting, as a part of a course representing George Mason University. It is a supplement to the GMU Drug and Alcohol Policy found on the Student Conduct website (studentconduct.gmu.edu). Students are expected to comply with the GMU Drug and Alcohol policy in its entirety as well as this policy. Students should review both policies. This policy is in addition to the University Drug and Alcohol Policy summarized below.

Prohibited Behavior
It is a violation of our drug-free practicum policy to use, abuse, possess, sell, trade, and/or offer for sale alcohol, illegal drugs or intoxicants while enrolled in a practicum or community-based learning experience. This includes over-the-counter prescription drugs that impair functioning. Students who fail a drug test as a condition of applying for or continuing in an agency practicum or community-based learning experience must immediately advise the Director of Field Education. As a condition for consideration of continuance in the program, students will need to sign a release of information to share the results of any failed drug tests with the Director of Field Education. Failure to do so will result in termination from the program.

Consequences
One of the goals of our drug-free practicum policy is to encourage students to voluntarily seek help with alcohol and/or drug problems. If, however, an individual violates the policy, the
consequences are serious. Students may be subject to university judicial review and can be reported to local law enforcement authorities.

If a student violates the drug-free practicum policy, they will be **withdrawn and terminated** immediately from the practicum placement and the MSW Program. The student may reapply after one year and must successfully pass a **pre-practicum evaluation** that will include:

- Evidence of treatment to address drug or alcohol use, with documentation from providers.
- At least three clean drug tests, with the last one being no more than two weeks prior to re-admittance into a practicum experience.
- If criminal charges have been made, students must bring official documents detailing the status of the adjudication. If a felony charge has been made, the criminal background policy described in this manual will apply.

If a student violates the policy, he or she will be subject to simultaneous disciplinary action in both the MSW Program and the University (under current **GMU Drug and Alcohol Policy**) and may be required to enter rehabilitation. If a student fails to successfully complete rehabilitation, and/or repeatedly violates the policy, or fails to meet the terms of the pre-practicum evaluation (described above) he/she will be terminated from the MSW Program. Nothing in this policy prohibits the student from being disciplined or discharged for other violations within the agency, within the University or through local law enforcement. Non-compliance with any remediation plan developed to assist the student will result in termination from the MSW Program.

**Assistance**

The MSW Program recognizes that alcohol and drug abuse and addiction are treatable illnesses. We also realize that early intervention and support improve the success of rehabilitation:

- Students are encouraged to self-identify if they are having problems with using drugs or alcohol. They should receive help from qualified professionals to assess the seriousness of suspected drug or alcohol problems and identify appropriate sources of help. Serving clients while impaired is a violation of the NASW Code of Ethics. The University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and Wellness, Alcohol, and Violence Education and Services (WAVES) on campus are also resources.

**Excerpts from the George Mason University Drug and Alcohol Policy**

“The abuse of drugs and alcohol by members of the campus community is not compatible with the goals of the university. Mason attempts to prepare individuals to act responsibly by defining standards of behavior and providing education al programs to create an awareness of drug and alcohol related problems.”

- Use and/or possession of illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia are prohibited on the campuses of George Mason University. Violation of this community standard will be
considered a serious offense. Implementation of this policy will be in accord with established university procedures as contained in the University Judicial Code.

- The University Police will enforce all applicable local, state, and federal laws in accord with established standing orders, procedures and guidelines.
- There will be a university judicial review of all reports of drug offenses occurring on campus. Action under the University Judicial Code will neither prejudice nor be prejudiced by action taken either in the criminal justice system or by the management of University Housing.
- Any student found responsible for a violation of law or regulation involving illegal drugs may, at the discretion of the hearing officer, be required to undergo an evaluation administered by personnel of the University’s Office of Wellness, Alcohol, and Violence Education and Services (WAVES) prior to re-admittance to the University.

George Mason University and the MSW Program consider alcohol and drug use (illicit or prescription drug abuse) a serious offense. The legal and health consequences of such actions to students or those in close proximity warrant immediate actions to prevent personal harm or harm to others.

**Criminal Background Policy**

All social work students entering the practicum are expected to notify the Director of Field Education of criminal charges which will be reflected in criminal background checks. Virginia State Criminal Code section § 63.2-1719 identifies a list of “barrier crimes” which preclude students and employees from working in a number of specific settings. Prior to beginning the placement process, students with prior convictions must provide a complete official copy of any and all convictions (i.e., rap sheet), and sign a consent form that allows the Field Education Office Director to share information with appropriate field education faculty and prospective field instructors. Students should be prepared to discuss this with a prospective agency. Failure to comply with this policy or to sign a consent form for release of this information (Appendix F) may result in the student being unable to receive a placement. Providing incorrect information on applications is considered application fraud and an honor code violation, and may lead to a student not being able to be placed in an agency. Students with a criminal history should understand that some agencies are unwilling and unable to host and supervise such students. Depending on the specific charge, some students may find it difficult to obtain employment in a human service agency. Faculty advisors are available to counsel students in this area.
PREPARING FOR YOUR SOCIAL WORK CAREER

Fields of Practice
As you will learn throughout your graduate studies, the MSW program is preparing you for a career as a professional social worker. There are a wide variety of opportunities open to graduate-level social work practitioners. Examples include:

- Aging/Gerontology
- Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services
- Child Protection, Foster Care & Adoption
- Community Development
- Forensic Social Work
- Disabilities
- Domestic Violence
- Employee Assistance

- Family Services
- International governmental & NGOs
- Housing/Homelessness Programs
- Health & Mental Health Practice
- Lobbying/Advocacy
- Nonprofit Agency Management
- Poverty/Welfare
- School Social Work

Social workers use an array of skills in their professional work: case management, direct service, clinical treatment, grant writing, management, supervision, consultation, marketing, program development, social planning, community organizing, policy and advocacy, research and evaluation, and education and training.

A graduate-level social worker is expected to enter the workforce with a strong set of foundational skills; a keen understanding of how people and their environments impact one another; a commitment to cultural competency, human rights and social justice; and a set of specialized practice skills.

Social Work Licensure
Some jobs for social workers require that they be licensed. Others merely require a social work degree. Virginia recognizes two types of licenses: an LSW (Licensed Social Worker) and an LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker). As a graduate of GMU’s MSW Program, you may be eligible to sit for either licensing exam – though the Licensing Board may require that you complete additional training or experience before taking the LCSW exam. The Licensing Board of Virginia makes this determination on a case-by-case basis. Maryland, the District of Columbia, and other states also have their own social work licensing and one must obtain relevant information regarding licensing from the particular jurisdiction of interest.

Remember that many social work jobs – including those involving direct work with clients – do not require a social work license. Typically, the clinical license (LCSW) is required for providers of private, mental health services (psychotherapy). Take the time to research the types of jobs
you’re interested in and the qualifications they require. Remember, too, that your interests are likely to change and evolve over the course of your career.

For more information on Licensure, please refer to the Virginia Board of Social Work (licensure) (http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/social/).

Finding the Job of Your Dreams
Finding the job of your dreams will require going beyond the Classified listings under “social worker” and using some ingenuity. Our graduates, in particular, often find jobs in settings not typically dominated by social work professionals. To learn more, you may want to consult Social Work Career Development: A Handbook for Job Hunting and Career Planning by Carol Doelling. It is available at the Arlington Campus Library, the GMU Career Services Resource Library on the Fairfax campus (www.careers.gmu.edu), or through the NASW Press (www.naswpress.org).

OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES

Students with Special Needs
George Mason University and the Department of Social Work are committed to ensuring that students with special needs receive appropriate accommodations. Any student who believes he or she has a bona fide disability should contact the University’s Disability Resource Center, located in Student Union I on the Fairfax Campus (703-993-2474). Official paperwork identifying required accommodations must be shared with individual course instructors at the beginning of each semester. A copy should also be shared with the student’s faculty advisor and placed in the student’s file.

Leadership Opportunities for Students
We hope that you will make the most of your social work education. This includes devoting time and energy not just to your studies, but also to leadership in the MSW Program, the community, and the profession. Students can assume leadership within the program by:

- Participating in the MSW Student Association
- Representing the students at departmental and MSW program faculty meetings
- Representing the students on the Program Advisory Committee
- Representing the students on the Field Advisory Committee
- Representing the students on various Department and/or MSW Program Committees
- Serving on the Board of NASW-VA

Students can also, either independently or through the Student Association, participate in community activities, volunteer to sit on community boards, organize efforts to strengthen the voice of our students as citizens, and provide support to community members in need. This is a great time to start identifying as a social worker. Attend professional conferences and meetings, participate in rallies, walks, and other activities that support professional social work
priorities, and join the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, your professional organization) at the earliest opportunity.

**Phi Alpha Honor Society**

Students who have achieved a cumulative grade point average of 3.90 or higher in graduate-level social work courses by the end of the Specialization year and demonstrated the qualities that embody the goals of the national social work honor will be invited to join GMU’s chapter of Phi Alpha, the national social work honor society. These students will enjoy a special induction ceremony. The fee includes lifetime membership.

**Library and Research Services**

The Department of Social Work has access to a variety of library and research services at the Arlington campus. Material from the GMU libraries on the Fairfax and Prince William campuses can be sent to the Arlington campus library within 2-4 days via inter-campus lending. The GMU library system also participates in the Washington Research Libraries Consortium, through which students can obtain materials from other area universities.

Many courses require readings beyond those in the course texts. These readings may be placed “on reserve” in hard copy at the circulation desk in the library, or they may be available by computer through e-reserve. For additional information about any library service, or for assistance in your research efforts, contact the library’s liaison to the MSW Program.

**Social Work Department Lending Library**

The Social Work Department maintains a lending library with a variety of social work texts, journals, and books.

**Graduate Assistants**

The Department of Social Work may be able to provide financial support to students who wish to work as graduate research assistants. The positions may be for either 10 or 20 hours per week and involve work within the Department of Social Work, under the supervision of Social Work faculty. Additional information is available from the Director of the MSW Program or the Department Chair.

**Certificate Programs**

The University has a number of certificate programs available to graduate students. Examples include: Gerontology, Nonprofit Management, and Women’s Studies.

For additional information, see the University Catalog.
University Services for Students

The Fairfax campus houses a wide array of support services. Many services are also available on the Arlington campus. Selected services include:

Fairfax Campus

**Career Services**
Student Union I, Rm. 3400, 703-993-2370

**Counseling Center**
Student Union I, Rm. 3129, 703-993-2380

**Disability Resource Center**
Student Union I, Rm. 2500, 703-993-2474

**Writing Center**
Robinson Hall, Rm. A114, 703-993-1200

Accreditation

The MSW Program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. It is important for students to become familiar with the Educational Policy Statement that guides the MSW curriculum ([https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Standards-and-Policies/2008-EPAS](https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Standards-and-Policies/2008-EPAS)).
APPENDIX A: REQUEST CHANGE TO FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME PROGRAM

Student Name: ________________________________________ Admit Year: __________
Address: ____________________________________________ Phone: _________________
City: __________________________ State: __________________ Zip: ________________
Expected Date of Graduation: _________________________

___ Request to change from 2 year program to 3 year program
___ Request to change from 2 year program to 4 year program
___ Request to change from 3 year program to 2 year program
___ Request to change from 4 year program to 2 year program
___ Request to change from 3 year to 4 year program
___ Request to change from 4 year program to 3 year program
___ Request to change from Advanced Standing to 2 year program
___ Request to change from Dual Degree to 2 year program
___ Request to change from Dual Degree to 3 year program
___ Request to change from Dual Degree to 4 year program

_________________________________________________  _______________________
Student Signature                                                                 Date

_________________________________________________  _______________________
MSW Program Director Signature                                                              Date
APPENDIX B: CONTRACT FOR FINISHING AN INCOMPLETE GRADE

Student Name

Course #/Name

The following work needs to be completed:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

*Required date of completion:

________________________________________________________________________

Student’s Signature

Date

Instructor’s Signature

Date

Program Director or Chair’s Signature

Date

* This date cannot exceed the end of the 9th week of the following semester. Any Incomplete grade not changed by that date will automatically become an F.

NOTE THAT IF THE INCOMPLETE GRADE IS FOR A COURSE THAT HAS A SEQUENCE COURSE THE FOLLOWING SEMESTER, THE INCOMPLETE MUST BE CHANGED TO A SATISFACTORY GRADE (B- OR ABOVE) PRIOR TO BEGINNING THE SEQUENCE COURSE. ALSO NOTE THAT SPECIALIZATION YEAR COURSES CANNOT BE TAKEN UNTIL ALL FOUNDATION COURSES ARE SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED.
APPENDIX C: George Mason University Honor Code

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of George Mason University, and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the members of George Mason University, have set forth the following code of honor.

I. **The Honor Committee**
   The Honor Committee is a group of students elected from the student body whose primary and indispensable duty is to instill the concept and spirit of the Honor Code within the student body. The secondary function of this group is to sit as a hearing committee on all alleged violations of the code.

II. **Extent of the Honor Code**
   Duties of the Honor Committee:
   The Honor Code of George Mason University deals specifically with:

   A. **Cheating and attempted cheating,**
   B. **Plagiarism,**
   C. **Lying,** and
   D. **Stealing.**

   A. Cheating encompasses the following:
      1. The willful giving or receiving of an unauthorized, unfair, dishonest, or unscrupulous advantage in academic work over other students.
      2. The above may be accomplished by any means whatsoever, including but not limited to the following: fraud; duress; deception; theft; trick; talking; signs; gestures; copying from another student; and the unauthorized use of study aids, memoranda, books, data, or other information.
      3. Attempted cheating.

   B. Plagiarism encompasses the following:
      1. Presenting as one's own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment.
      2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment.

   C. Lying encompasses the following:
      The willful and knowledgeable telling of an untruth, as well as any form of deceit, attempted deceit, or fraud in an oral or written statement relating to academic work. This includes but is not limited to:
      1. Lying to administration and faculty members.
      2. Falsifying any university document by mutilation, addition, or deletion.
      3. Lying to Honor Committee members and counsels during investigation.
and hearing. This may constitute a second charge, with the committee members who acted as judges during that specific hearing acting as accusers.

D. Stealing encompasses the following:

Taking or appropriating without the permission to do so, and with the intent to keep or to make use of wrongfully, property belonging to any member of the George Mason University community or any property located on the university campus. This includes misuse of university computer resources (see Responsible Use of Computing Policy under General Policies). This section is relevant only to academic work and related materials.

IV. Responsibility of the Faculty

Professors are responsible, to the best of their ability, for maintaining the integrity of the learning and testing process, both in the classroom and outside of it, and for fostering conditions of academic integrity. Faculty members may actively proctor examinations in situations which they believe warrant it.

To alleviate misunderstandings, all professors are required to delineate at the beginning of each semester what constitutes a violation of the Honor Code in their classes. This should include an explanation of:

A. The extent to which collaboration or group participation is permissible in preparing term papers, laboratory exhibits or notebooks, reports of any kind, tests, quizzes, examinations, homework, or any other work.

B. The extent to which the use of study aids, memoranda, books, data, or other information is permissible to fulfill course requirements.

C. Guidelines on what constitutes plagiarism, including requirements for citing sources.

All professors are encouraged to send the Honor Committee a written copy of their Honor Code policies, which are kept on file. These requirements should also be stated before each test, examination, or other graded work to clarify what is permissible.

Faculty members who witness an Honor Code violation should proceed as outlined under Procedure for Reporting a Violation.

V. Responsibility of the Students

Students should request a delineation of policy from each professor if none is given at the beginning of each semester. Students should also request an explanation of any part of the policy they do not understand. Students are responsible for understanding their professors' policies with regard to the Honor Code. Students are also responsible for understanding the provisions of the Honor Code.

As participating members of this community, all students have the duty to report to a member of the Honor Committee, within the prescribed time outlined under Procedures for Reporting a Violation, any violations of the Honor Code. This duty is important not only because it enforces the Honor Code, but also because it gives all
students the opportunity to express their respect for personal integrity and an honest academic community.

VI. Procedure for Reporting a Violation

All students or faculty members witnessing or discovering a violation of the Honor Code should enlist, wherever and whenever possible, one or more corroborating witnesses to the overt act. The accuser(s) (student, faculty, or staff), within 15 working days from date of realization, notifies the Honor Committee.

The Honor Committee will, within five working days, mail a letter of accusation to the suspected party. This letter is addressed to the accused student's current mailing address listed with the Registrar's Office. The letter informs the suspected parties that they have five Honor Committee working days to contact the Honor Committee office and make an appointment to see the committee chair, who advises them of their rights and options. The Honor Committee begins an investigation, which does not involve a presumption of guilt on the part of the accused. Any member of the George Mason University academic community who knows of but does not report an Honor Code violation may be accused of lying under the Honor Code.

VII. Counsel for the Accused and Accuser

Counsel for the accused and accuser may be provided by any member of the George Mason University student community, including members of the Honor Committee, but not including students of the School of Law.

VIII. Appearance of Witnesses

The Honor Committee may require any member of the university community to appear as a witness before the Committee at the time of the hearing. All requests for such appearances are issued by the chair of the Honor Committee, or by the counsel appointed to that case. The appearance of the accuser is required.

IX. Verdict

To find a student guilty of an honor violation, there must be a four-fifths majority vote (four to one) for a verdict of guilty. Clear and convincing evidence must be presented to find the student guilty.

A student may not be tried more than once for the same offense except when an appeal is granted.

X. Penalty

If the accused is found guilty of an honor violation, the Honor Committee determines the nature of the penalty by majority vote.

The Honor Committee is not restricted to one kind of penalty but determines one commensurate with the seriousness of the offense. Typical of the range of penalties that may be given are:

A. Oral reprimand: An oral statement to the student given by the chair of the hearing. No entry is made on the student's scholastic record.

B. Written reprimand: A written censure placed in the confidential files of the Honor Committee and in the student's academic file but not made part of the student's scholastic transcript records.
C. Nonacademic probation: Exclusion from holding or running for an elected or appointed office in any organization or activity associated with the university. Ineligibility to participate in any activity representing the university on either an intercollegiate or club level and ineligibility to serve as a working staff member of any student organization. This action is noted in the judicial administrator's file but is not made a part of the student's scholastic record.

D. Service hours: Library or other supervised university service hours to be completed by a specific time. Upon completion the hold on the student's records is removed.

E. Failing grade: Recommendation in writing to the instructor for a grade of F for the work involved, or for the entire course. The student's permanent record reflects the academic evaluation made by the instructor.

F. Recommendation of suspension from the university for one or more semesters: A student's scholastic record would read: "Nonacademic suspension from (date) to (date)." The recommendation is made to the appropriate Associate Provost.

G. Recommendation of expulsion from the university: A student's scholastic record would read: "Nonacademic expulsion as of (date)." This penalty is recommended to the appropriate Associate Provost only in extraordinary circumstances, such as for repeated offenses.

XI. Appeal
A written request for an appeal, detailing new evidence, procedural irregularities, or other sufficient grounds that may have sufficient bearing on the outcome of the trial, must be presented to the chair of the Honor Committee within seven working days after the date on which the verdict was rendered.

The written request is reviewed by at least three voting members who were not involved with the original case. If a new hearing is granted, no voting member from the original hearing may vote in a second or subsequent hearing of the same case.

XII. Keeping of Records
The records of the hearing are kept in the Honor Committee's files. These records include a tape or a full transcript of the hearing and all evidence presented at the hearing. If the evidence belongs to any person other than the accused, the original is returned to the owner and a copy kept with the records of the Honor Committee.

XIII. Composition of the Committee
The Honor Committee is proportionally composed of students from each school and faculty adviser(s), although the latter are nonvoting members. Undecided majors, B.I.S. students, and continuing education students are considered together as a school. The total number of members is as close to one-half of one percent of the student body as possible. Freshmen are appointed in the fall to serve until the following spring election.
One or more clerks appointed by the committee from the student body serve as aides to the chair.

The chair of the committee is elected by majority vote of the committee members. For each hearing, five members of the Honor Committee are designated as voting members.

A faculty hearing adviser, acting as a nonvoting member of the committee, sits with and advises the committee at all hearings. The faculty adviser and faculty hearing adviser are chosen by the Honor Committee.

Previous Honor Committee members may serve during the Summer Term.

XIV. **Eligibility of Members**

Any student who maintains a 2.0 grade-point average and is in good standing with the university is eligible for the Honor Committee. A committee member must maintain a 2.0 average to continue in office.

XV. **Election of the Honor Committee**

The Honor Committee is elected in the spring semester. The term of office begins upon election and runs until the following spring election.

In the fall semester the chair appoints new members to fill any vacancies that have occurred and to fill the freshman seats on the committee.

XVI. **The Challenging and Voluntary Withdrawal of a Member of the Committee from Participation in a Particular Hearing**

An accused person who challenges the right of any member of the Honor Committee to sit in judgment on him or her must present cause to the chair of the hearing.

The hearing committee then decides the validity of the challenge with the challenged member abstaining from voting. A simple majority decides the validity of any challenge. A successfully challenged committee member must not be present during the hearing.

A member of the Honor Committee who feels prejudiced as to the facts of the case, is a close friend or relative of the accused, or would not be able to render an impartial judgment must withdraw from a specific hearing.

XVII. **Provision for Amendments**

Upon petition of 20 percent of the student body, amendments to or revisions of the Honor Code may be proposed for ratification. Said amendments and/or revisions are voted on by the student body as a whole. A two-thirds majority of the votes cast is necessary for acceptance of any amendment or revision.

The Honor Committee may also propose amendments to be voted on by the student body as described in paragraph one of this section.

Approved amendments take effect immediately for all new cases. New provisions are not applied to cases initiated prior to the amendments.
APPENDIX D: NASW Code of Ethics
Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly, revised by the 2008 NASW Delegate Assembly
http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp

Preamble

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 well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. “Clients” is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals’ needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession’s history, are the foundation of social work’s unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence.

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.
Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The NASW Code of Ethics sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers’ conduct. The Code is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

The NASW Code of Ethics serves six purposes:

1. The Code identifies core values on which social work’s mission is based.
2. The Code summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession’s core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide social work practice.
3. The Code is designed to help social workers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
4. The Code provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.
5. The Code socializes practitioners new to the field to social work’s mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.
6. The Code articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct. NASW has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members.* In subscribing to this Code, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in NASW adjudication proceedings, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

The Code offers a set of values, principles, and standards to guide decision making and conduct when ethical issues arise. It does not provide a set of rules that prescribe how social workers should act in all situations. Specific applications of the Code must take into account the context in which it is being considered and the possibility of conflicts among the Code’s values, principles, and standards. Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional.

Further, the NASW Code of Ethics does not specify which values, principles, and standards are most important and ought to outweigh others in instances when they conflict. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist among social workers with respect to the ways in which values, ethical principles, and ethical standards should be rank ordered when they conflict. Ethical decision making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual social worker and should also consider how the issues would be judged in a peer review process where the ethical standards of the profession would be applied.

Ethical decision making is a process. There are many instances in social work where simple answers are not available to resolve complex ethical issues. Social workers should take into consideration all the values, principles, and standards in this Code that are relevant to any
situation in which ethical judgment is warranted. Social workers’ decisions and actions should be consistent with the spirit as well as the letter of this Code.

In addition to this Code, there are many other sources of information about ethical thinking that may be useful. Social workers should consider ethical theory and principles generally, social work theory and research, laws, regulations, agency policies, and other relevant codes of ethics, recognizing that among codes of ethics social workers should consider the NASW Code of Ethics as their primary source. Social workers also should be aware of the impact on ethical decision making of their clients’ and their own personal values and cultural and religious beliefs and practices. They should be aware of any conflicts between personal and professional values and deal with them responsibly. For additional guidance social workers should consult the relevant literature on professional ethics and ethical decision making and seek appropriate consultation when faced with ethical dilemmas. This may involve consultation with an agency-based or social work organization’s ethics committee, a regulatory body, knowledgeable colleagues, supervisors, or legal counsel.

Instances may arise when social workers’ ethical obligations conflict with agency policies or relevant laws or regulations. When such conflicts occur, social workers must make a responsible effort to resolve the conflict in a manner that is consistent with the values, principles, and standards expressed in this Code. If a reasonable resolution of the conflict does not appear possible, social workers should seek proper consultation before making a decision.

The NASW Code of Ethics is to be used by NASW and by individuals, agencies, organizations, and bodies (such as licensing and regulatory boards, professional liability insurance providers, courts of law, agency boards of directors, government agencies, and other professional groups) that choose to adopt it or use it as a frame of reference. Violation of standards in this Code does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law. Such determination can only be made in the context of legal and judicial proceedings. Alleged violations of the Code would be subject to a peer review process. Such processes are generally separate from legal or administrative procedures and insulated from legal review or proceedings to allow the profession to counsel and discipline its own members.

A code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a code of ethics cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes or capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community. Rather, a code of ethics sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which professionals aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Social workers’ ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical practice. The NASW Code of Ethics reflects the commitment of all social workers to uphold the profession’s values and to act ethically. Principles and standards must be applied by individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments.
Ethical Principles

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work’s core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

**Value: Service**

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

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

**Value: Social Justice**

**Ethical Principle:** Social workers challenge social injustice.

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

**Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person**

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

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

**Value: Importance of Human Relationships**

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

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

**Value: Integrity**

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

Social workers are continually aware of the profession’s mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers 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.

**Ethical Standards**

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all social workers. These standards concern (1) social workers’ ethical responsibilities to clients, (2) social workers’ ethical responsibilities to colleagues, (3) social workers’ ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) social workers’ ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) social workers’ ethical responsibilities to the social work profession, and (6) social workers’ ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

Some of the standards that follow are enforceable guidelines for professional conduct, and some are aspirational. The extent to which each standard is enforceable is a matter of professional judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical standards.

**1. Social Workers’ Ethical Responsibilities to Clients**

1.01 Commitment to Clients

Social workers’ primary responsibility is to promote the wellbeing of clients. In general, clients’ interests are primary. However, social workers’ responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised. (Examples include when a social worker is required by law to report that a client has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

1.02 Self-Determination
Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Social workers may limit clients’ right to self-determination when, in the social workers’ professional judgment, clients’ actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others.

1.03 Informed Consent

(a) Social workers should provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship based, when appropriate, on valid informed consent. Social workers should use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purpose of the services, risks related to the services, limits to services because of the requirements of a third-party payer, relevant costs, reasonable alternatives, clients’ right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent. Social workers should provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions.

(b) In instances when clients are not literate or have difficulty understanding the primary language used in the practice setting, social workers should take steps to ensure clients’ comprehension. This may include providing clients with a detailed verbal explanation or arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator whenever possible.

(c) In instances when clients lack the capacity to provide informed consent, social workers should protect clients’ interests by seeking permission from an appropriate third party, informing clients consistent with the clients’ level of understanding. In such instances social workers should seek to ensure that the third party acts in a manner consistent with clients’ wishes and interests. Social workers should take reasonable steps to enhance such clients’ ability to give informed consent.

(d) In instances when clients are receiving services involuntarily, social workers should provide information about the nature and extent of services and about the extent of clients’ right to refuse service.

(e) Social workers who provide services via electronic media (such as computer, telephone, radio, and television) should inform recipients of the limitations and risks associated with such services.

(f) Social workers should obtain clients’ informed consent before audiotaping or videotaping clients or permitting observation of services to clients by a third party.

1.04 Competence

(a) Social workers should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, license, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience.

(b) Social workers should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques.

(c) When generally recognized standards do not exist with respect to an emerging area of practice, social workers should exercise careful judgment and take responsible steps (including
appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision) to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients from harm.

1.05 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity

(a) Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.

(b) Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients’ cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients’ cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.

(c) Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability.

1.06 Conflicts of Interest

(a) Social workers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. Social workers should inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients’ interests primary and protects clients’ interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting clients’ interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client.

(b) Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.

(c) Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, social workers should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (Dual or multiple relationships occur when social workers relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.)

(d) When social workers provide services to two or more people who have a relationship with each other (for example, couples, family members), social workers should clarify with all parties which individuals will be considered clients and the nature of social workers’ professional obligations to the various individuals who are receiving services. Social workers who anticipate a conflict of interest among the individuals receiving services or who anticipate having to perform in potentially conflicting roles (for example, when a social worker is asked to testify in a child custody dispute or divorce proceedings involving clients) should clarify their role with the parties involved and take appropriate action to minimize any conflict of interest.

1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

(a) Social workers should respect clients’ right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to providing services or conducting social
work evaluation or research. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply.

(b) Social workers may disclose confidential information when appropriate with valid consent from a client or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a client.

(c) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that social workers will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or other identifiable person. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.

(d) Social workers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the disclosure is made. This applies whether social workers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.

(e) Social workers should discuss with clients and other interested parties the nature of confidentiality and limitations of clients’ right to confidentiality. Social workers should review with clients circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. This discussion should occur as soon as possible in the social worker/client relationship and as needed throughout the course of the relationship.

(f) When social workers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, social workers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual’s right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. Social workers should inform participants in family, couples, or group counseling that social workers cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.

(g) Social workers should inform clients involved in family, couples, marital, or group counseling of the social worker’s, employer’s, and agency’s policy concerning the social worker’s disclosure of confidential information among the parties involved in the counseling.

(h) Social workers should not disclose confidential information to third party payers unless clients have authorized such disclosure.

(i) Social workers should not discuss confidential information in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semipublic areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.

(j) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders social workers to disclose confidential or privileged information without a client’s consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the client, social workers should request that the court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.
(k) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members of the media.

(l) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients’ written and electronic records and other sensitive information. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients’ records are stored in a secure location and that clients’ records are not available to others who are not authorized to have access.

(m) Social workers should take precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information transmitted to other parties through the use of computers, electronic mail, facsimile machines, telephones and telephone answering machines, and other electronic or computer technology. Disclosure of identifying information should be avoided whenever possible.

(n) Social workers should transfer or dispose of clients’ records in a manner that protects clients’ confidentiality and is consistent with state statutes governing records and social work licensure.

(o) Social workers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker’s termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.

(p) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients for teaching or training purposes unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information.

(q) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients with consultants unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information or there is a compelling need for such disclosure.

(r) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of deceased clients consistent with the preceding standards.

1.08 Access to Records

(a) Social workers should provide clients with reasonable access to records concerning the clients. Social workers who are concerned that clients’ access to their records could cause serious misunderstanding or harm to the client should provide assistance in interpreting the records and consultation with the client regarding the records. Social workers should limit clients’ access to their records, or portions of their records, only in exceptional circumstances when there is compelling evidence that such access would cause serious harm to the client. Both clients’ requests and the rationale for withholding some or all of the record should be documented in clients’ files.

(b) When providing clients with access to their records, social workers should take steps to protect the confidentiality of other individuals identified or discussed in such records.

1.09 Sexual Relationships

(a) Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.
(b) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients’ relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Sexual activity or sexual contact with clients’ relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a personal relationship has the potential to be harmful to the client and may make it difficult for the social worker and client to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Social workers—not their clients, their clients’ relatives, or other individuals with whom the client maintains a personal relationship—assume the full burden for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients because of the potential for harm to the client. If social workers engage in conduct contrary to this prohibition or claim that an exception to this prohibition is warranted because of extraordinary circumstances, it is social workers—not their clients—who assume the full burden of demonstrating that the former client has not been exploited, coerced, or manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally.

(d) Social workers should not provide clinical services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship. Providing clinical services to a former sexual partner has the potential to be harmful to the individual and is likely to make it difficult for the social worker and individual to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

1.10 Physical Contact

Social workers should not engage in physical contact with clients when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client as a result of the contact (such as cradling or caressing clients). Social workers who engage in appropriate physical contact with clients are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern such physical contact.

1.11 Sexual Harassment

Social workers should not sexually harass clients. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

1.12 Derogatory Language

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about clients. Social workers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about clients.

1.13 Payment for Services

(a) When setting fees, social workers should ensure that the fees are fair, reasonable, and commensurate with the services performed. Consideration should be given to clients’ ability to pay.

(b) Social workers should avoid accepting goods or services from clients as payment for professional services. Bartering arrangements, particularly involving services, create the potential for conflicts of interest, exploitation, and inappropriate boundaries in social workers’ relationships with clients. Social workers should explore and may participate in bartering only in
very limited circumstances when it can be demonstrated that such arrangements are an
accepted practice among professionals in the local community, considered to be essential for
the provision of services, negotiated without coercion, and entered into at the client’s initiative
and with the client’s informed consent. Social workers who accept goods or services from
clients as payment for professional services assume the full burden of demonstrating that this
arrangement will not be detrimental to the client or the professional relationship.
(c) Social workers should not solicit a private fee or other remuneration for providing services
to clients who are entitled to such available services through the social workers’ employer or
agency.

1.14 Clients Who Lack Decision Making Capacity
When social workers act on behalf of clients who lack the capacity to make informed decisions,
social workers should take reasonable steps to safeguard the interests and rights of those
clients.

1.15 Interruption of Services
Social workers should make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of services in the event that
services are interrupted by factors such as unavailability, relocation, illness, disability, or death.

1.16 Termination of Services
(a) Social workers should terminate services to clients and professional relationships with them
when such services and
relationships are no longer required or no longer serve the clients’ needs or interests.
(b) Social workers should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in
need of services. Social workers should withdraw services precipitously only under unusual
circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to
minimize possible adverse effects. Social workers should assist in making appropriate
arrangements for continuation of services when necessary.
(c) Social workers in fee-for-service settings may terminate services to clients who are not
paying an overdue balance if the financial contractual arrangements have been made clear to
the client, if the client does not pose an imminent danger to self or others, and if the clinical
and other consequences of the current nonpayment have been addressed and discussed with
the client.
(d) Social workers should not terminate services to pursue a social, financial, or sexual
relationship with a client.
(e) Social workers who anticipate the termination or interruption of services to clients should
notify clients promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of services in relation to
the clients’ needs and preferences.
(f) Social workers who are leaving an employment setting should inform clients of appropriate
options for the continuation of services and of the benefits and risks of the options.
2. SOCIAL WORKERS’ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEAGUES

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

2.02 Confidentiality
Social workers should respect confidential information shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and transactions. Social workers should ensure that such colleagues understand social workers’ obligation to respect confidentiality and any exceptions related to it.

2.03 Interdisciplinary Collaboration
(a) Social workers who are members of an interdisciplinary team should participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the wellbeing of clients by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of the social work profession. Professional and ethical obligations of the interdisciplinary team as a whole and of its individual members should be clearly established.

(b) Social workers for whom a team decision raises ethical concerns should attempt to resolve the disagreement through appropriate channels. If the disagreement cannot be resolved, social workers should pursue other avenues to address their concerns consistent with client well-being.

2.04 Disputes Involving Colleagues
(a) Social workers should not take advantage of a dispute between a colleague and an employer to obtain a position or otherwise advance the social workers’ own interests.

(b) Social workers should not exploit clients in disputes with colleagues or engage clients in any inappropriate discussion of conflicts between social workers and their colleagues.

2.05 Consultation
(a) Social workers should seek the advice and counsel of colleagues whenever such consultation is in the best interests of clients.

(b) Social workers should keep themselves informed about colleagues’ areas of expertise and competencies. Social workers should seek consultation only from colleagues who have
demonstrated knowledge, expertise, and competence related to the subject of the consultation.

(c) When consulting with colleagues about clients, social workers should disclose the least amount of information necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation.

2.06 Referral for Services

(a) Social workers should refer clients to other professionals when the other professionals’ specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve clients fully or when social workers believe that they are not being effective or making reasonable progress with clients and that additional service is required.

(b) Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should take appropriate steps to facilitate an orderly transfer of responsibility. Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should disclose, with clients’ consent, all pertinent information to the new service providers.

(c) Social workers are prohibited from giving or receiving payment for a referral when no professional service is provided by the referring social worker.

2.07 Sexual Relationships

(a) Social workers who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual activities or contact with supervisees, students, trainees, or other colleagues over whom they exercise professional authority.

(b) Social workers should avoid engaging in sexual relationships with colleagues when there is potential for a conflict of interest. Social workers who become involved in, or anticipate becoming involved in, a sexual relationship with a colleague have a duty to transfer professional responsibilities, when necessary, to avoid a conflict of interest.

2.08 Sexual Harassment

Social workers should not sexually harass supervisees, students, trainees, or colleagues. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

2.09 Impairment of Colleagues

(a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague’s impairment that is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties and that interferes with practice effectiveness should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

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

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

3. SOCIAL WORKERS’ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN PRACTICE SETTINGS

3.01 Supervision and Consultation
(a) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation should have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.
(b) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.
(c) Social workers should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with supervisees in which there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisee.
(d) Social workers who provide supervision should evaluate supervisees’ performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.
3.02 Education and Training
(a) Social workers who function as educators, field instructors for students, or trainers should provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and competence and should provide instruction based on the most current information and knowledge available in the profession.
(b) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students’ performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.
(c) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.
(d) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

3.03 Performance Evaluation
Social workers who have responsibility for evaluating the performance of others should fulfill such responsibility in a fair and considerate manner and on the basis of clearly stated criteria.

3.04 Client Records
(a) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation in records is accurate and reflects the services provided.
(b) Social workers should include sufficient and timely documentation in records to facilitate the delivery of services and to ensure continuity of services provided to clients in the future.
(c) Social workers’ documentation should protect clients’ privacy to the extent that is possible and appropriate and should include only information that is directly relevant to the delivery of services.
(d) Social workers should store records following the termination of services to ensure reasonable future access. Records should be maintained for the number of years required by state statutes or relevant contracts.

3.05 Billing
Social workers should establish and maintain billing practices that accurately reflect the nature and extent of services provided and that identify who provided the service in the practice setting.

3.06 Client Transfer
(a) When an individual who is receiving services from another agency or colleague contacts a social worker for services, the social worker should carefully consider the client’s needs before agreeing to provide services. To minimize possible confusion and conflict, social workers should discuss with potential clients the nature of the clients’ current relationship with other service
providers and the implications, including possible benefits or risks, of entering into a relationship with a new service provider.

(b) If a new client has been served by another agency or colleague, social workers should discuss with the client whether consultation with the previous service provider is in the client’s best interest.

3.07 Administration

(a) Social work administrators should advocate within and outside their agencies for adequate resources to meet clients’ needs.

(b) Social workers should advocate for resource allocation procedures that are open and fair. When not all clients’ needs can be met, an allocation procedure should be developed that is nondiscriminatory and based on appropriate and consistently applied principles.

(c) Social workers who are administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate agency or organizational resources are available to provide appropriate staff supervision.

(d) Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment for which they are responsible is consistent with and encourages compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics. Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in their organizations that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with the Code.

3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development

Social work administrators and supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development for all staff for whom they are responsible. Continuing education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social work practice and ethics.

3.09 Commitments to Employers

(a) Social workers generally should adhere to commitments made to employers and employing organizations.

(b) Social workers should work to improve employing agencies’ policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their services.

(c) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that employers are aware of social workers’ ethical obligations as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics and of the implications of those obligations for social work practice.

(d) Social workers should not allow an employing organization’s policies, procedures, regulations, or administrative orders to interfere with their ethical practice of social work. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that their employing organizations’ practices are consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.

(e) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the employing organization’s work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.
(f) Social workers should accept employment or arrange student field placements only in organizations that exercise fair personnel practices.

(g) Social workers should be diligent stewards of the resources of their employing organizations, wisely conserving funds where appropriate and never misappropriating funds or using them for unintended purposes.

3.10 Labor/Management Disputes

(a) Social workers may engage in organized action, including the formation of and participation in labor unions, to improve services to clients and working conditions.

(b) The actions of social workers who are involved in labor/management disputes, job actions, or labor strikes should be guided by the profession’s values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. Reasonable differences of opinion exist among social workers concerning their primary obligation as professionals during an actual or threatened labor strike or job action. Social workers should carefully examine relevant issues and their possible impact on clients before deciding on a course of action.

4. SOCIAL WORKERS’ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES AS PROFESSIONALS

4.01 Competence

(a) Social workers should accept responsibility or employment only on the basis of existing competence or the intention to acquire the necessary competence.

(b) Social workers should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions. Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work. Social workers should routinely review the professional literature and participate in continuing education relevant to social work practice and social work ethics.

(c) Social workers should base practice on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics.

4.02 Discrimination

Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical disability.

4.03 Private Conduct

Social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

4.04 Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception

Social workers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.
4.05 Impairment
(a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.
(b) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

4.06 Misrepresentation
(a) Social workers should make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of the social work profession, a professional social work organization, or the social worker’s employing agency.
(b) Social workers who speak on behalf of professional social work organizations should accurately represent the official and authorized positions of the organizations.
(c) Social workers should ensure that their representations to clients, agencies, and the public of professional qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided, or results to be achieved are accurate. Social workers should claim only those relevant professional credentials they actually possess and take steps to correct any inaccuracies or misrepresentations of their credentials by others.

4.07 Solicitations
(a) Social workers should not engage in uninvited solicitation of potential clients who, because of their circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence, manipulation, or coercion.
(b) Social workers should not engage in solicitation of testimonial endorsements (including solicitation of consent to use a client’s prior statement as a testimonial endorsement) from current clients or from other people who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.

4.08 Acknowledging Credit
(a) Social workers should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed.
(b) Social workers should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others.

5. SOCIAL WORKERS’ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

5.01 Integrity of the Profession
(a) Social workers should work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.
(b) Social workers should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession. Social workers should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the profession through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of the profession.

(c) Social workers should contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, and competence of the social work profession. These activities may include teaching, research, consultation, service, legislative testimony, presentations in the community, and participation in their professional organizations.

(d) Social workers should contribute to the knowledge base of social work and share with colleagues their knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics. Social workers should seek to contribute to the profession’s literature and to share their knowledge at professional meetings and conferences.

(e) Social workers should act to prevent the unauthorized and unqualified practice of social work.

**5.02 Evaluation and Research**

(a) Social workers should monitor and evaluate policies, the implementation of programs, and practice interventions.

(b) Social workers should promote and facilitate evaluation and research to contribute to the development of knowledge.

(c) Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work and fully use evaluation and research evidence in their professional practice.

(d) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should carefully consider possible consequences and should follow guidelines developed for the protection of evaluation and research participants. Appropriate institutional review boards should be consulted.

(e) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should obtain voluntary and written informed consent from participants, when appropriate, without any implied or actual deprivation or penalty for refusal to participate; without undue inducement to participate; and with due regard for participants’ wellbeing, privacy, and dignity. Informed consent should include information about the nature, extent, and duration of the participation requested and disclosure of the risks and benefits of participation in the research.

(f) When evaluation or research participants are incapable of giving informed consent, social workers should provide an appropriate explanation to the participants, obtain the participants’ assent to the extent they are able, and obtain written consent from an appropriate proxy.

(g) Social workers should never design or conduct evaluation or research that does not use consent procedures, such as certain forms of naturalistic observation and archival research, unless rigorous and responsible review of the research has found it to be justified because of its prospective scientific, educational, or applied value and unless equally effective alternative procedures that do not involve waiver of consent are not feasible.

(h) Social workers should inform participants of their right to withdraw from evaluation and research at any time without penalty.
(i) Social workers should take appropriate steps to ensure that participants in evaluation and research have access to appropriate supportive services.

(j) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.

(k) Social workers engaged in the evaluation of services should discuss collected information only for professional purposes and only with people professionally concerned with this information.

(l) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should ensure the anonymity or confidentiality of participants and of the data obtained from them. Social workers should inform participants of any limits of confidentiality, the measures that will be taken to ensure confidentiality, and when any records containing research data will be destroyed.

(m) Social workers who report evaluation and research results should protect participants’ confidentiality by omitting identifying information unless proper consent has been obtained authorizing disclosure.

(n) Social workers should report evaluation and research findings accurately. They should not fabricate or falsify results and should take steps to correct any errors later found in published data using standard publication methods.

(o) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest and dual relationships with participants, should inform participants when a real or potential conflict of interest arises, and should take steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes participants’ interests primary.

(p) Social workers should educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices.

**6. SOCIAL WORKERS’ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE BROADER SOCIETY**

**6.01 Social Welfare**
Social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments. Social workers should advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and should promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice.

**6.02 Public Participation**
Social workers should facilitate informed participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.

**6.03 Public Emergencies**
Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.
6.04 Social and Political Action

(a) Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.

(b) Social workers should act to expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups.

(c) Social workers should promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within the United States and globally. Social workers should promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference, support the expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, advocate for programs and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence, and promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people.

(d) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical disability.
APPENDIX E: NASW Standards of Cultural Competence

Standard 1: Ethics and Values
Social workers shall function in accordance with the values, ethics, and standards of the profession recognizing how personal and professional values may conflict with or accommodate the needs of diverse clients.

Standard 2: Self Awareness
Social workers shall develop an understanding of their own personal and cultural values and beliefs as a first step in appreciating the importance of multicultural identities in the lives of people.

Standard 3: Cross Cultural Knowledge
Social workers shall have and continue to develop specialized knowledge and understanding about the history, traditions, values, family systems and artistic expression of major client groups served.

Standard 4: Cross Cultural Skills
Social workers shall use appropriate methodological approaches, skills, and techniques that reflect the workers’ understanding of the role of culture in the helping process.

Standard 5: Service Delivery
Social workers shall be knowledgeable about and skillful in the use of services available in the community and broader society and be able to make appropriate referrals for their diverse clients.

Standard 6: Empowerment and Advocacy
Social workers shall be aware of the effect of social policies and programs on diverse client populations, advocating for and with clients whenever appropriate.

Standard 7: Diverse Workforce
Social workers shall support and advocate for recruitment, admission and hiring, and retention efforts in social work programs and agencies that ensure diversity within the profession.

Standard 8: Professional Education
Social workers shall advocate for and participate in educational and training programs that help advance cultural competence within the profession.

Standard 9: Language Diversity
Social workers shall seek to provide and advocate for the provision of information, referrals, and services in the language appropriate to the client, which may include the use of interpreters.
APPENDIX F: Consent for Exchange of Information

I hereby authorize the GMU Field Education Director to share personal information pertaining to my criminal conviction(s) for ________________________________

Student Name: ___________________________ Student ID# ___________________________

With: ____________________________________________

Name of Person and /or Organization

I understand that this information will be used solely for the purposes of obtaining a field placement experience appropriate to the goals and objectives of the University MSW Program and my own educational needs.

This consent is in effect for the duration of my admission to the program, unless revoked by me in writing. I hereby hold harmless the Field Education Director and George Mason University from and against any and all claims resulting from the release of any information requested about me during or after the completion of my academic program. I understand that the decision to accept a student for a social work practicum is solely under the purview of the agency.

Student signature ___________________________ Date: _____________________________

A copy of this document shall be as valid as the original.
Purpose: Social Work Practice, Education, and Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person and environment construct, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, social work’s purpose is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons.

Social work educators serve the profession through their teaching, scholarship, and service. Social work education—at the baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral levels—shapes the profession’s future through the education of competent professionals, the generation of knowledge, and the exercise of leadership within the professional community.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) uses the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) to accredit baccalaureate- and master’s-level social work programs. EPAS supports academic excellence by establishing thresholds for professional competence. It permits programs to use traditional and emerging models of curriculum design by balancing requirements that promote comparability across programs with a level of flexibility that encourages programs to differentiate.

EPAS describe four features of an integrated curriculum design: (1) program mission and goals; (2) explicit curriculum; (3) implicit curriculum; and (4) assessment. The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards are conceptually linked. Educational Policy describes each curriculum feature. Accreditation Standards (in italics) are derived from the Educational Policy and specify the requirements used to develop and maintain an accredited social work program at the baccalaureate (B) or master’s (M) level.

1. Program Mission and Goals

Educational Policy 1.0—Program Mission and Goals
The mission and goals of each social work program address the profession’s purpose, are grounded in core professional values (EP 1.1), and are informed by context (EP 1.2).

Educational Policy 1.1—Values
Service, social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry are among the core values of social work. These values underpin the explicit and implicit curriculum and frame the profession’s commitment to respect for all people and the quest for social and economic justice.

Educational Policy 1.2—Program Context
Context encompasses the mission of the institution in which the program is located and the needs and opportunities associated with the setting. Programs are further influenced by their historical, political, economic, social, cultural, demographic, and global contexts and by the ways they elect to engage these factors. Additional factors include new knowledge, technology, and ideas that may have a bearing on contemporary and future social work education and practice.

Accreditation Standard 1.0—Mission and Goals
The social work program’s mission and goals reflect the profession’s purpose and values and the program’s context.
1.0.1 The program submits its mission statement and describes how it is consistent with the profession’s purpose and values and the program’s context.

1.0.2 The program identifies its goals and demonstrates how they are derived from the program’s mission.

2. Explicit Curriculum

Educational Policy 2.0—The Social Work Curriculum and Professional Practice

The explicit curriculum constitutes the program’s formal educational structure and includes the courses and field education used for each of its program options. Social work education is grounded in the liberal arts, which provide the intellectual basis for the professional curriculum and inform its design. Using a competency-based education framework, the explicit curriculum prepares students for professional practice at the baccalaureate and master’s levels. Baccalaureate programs prepare students for generalist practice. Master’s programs prepare students for generalist practice and specialized practice. The explicit curriculum, including field education, may include forms of technology as a component of the curriculum.

Educational Policy 2.1—Core Competencies

Competency-based education is an outcome performance approach to curriculum design. Competencies are measurable practice behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values, and skills. The goal of the outcome approach is to demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The ten core competencies are listed below [EP 2.1.1–EP 2.1.10(d)], followed by a description of characteristic knowledge, values, skills, and the resulting practice behaviors that may be used to operationalize the curriculum and assessment methods. Programs may add competencies consistent with their missions and goals.

Educational Policy 2.1.1—Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.

Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession’s history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession’s enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. Social workers

- advocate for client access to the services of social work;
- practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;
- attend to professional roles and boundaries;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;
- engage in career-long learning; and
- use supervision and consultation.

Educational Policy 2.1.2—Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers

- recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;
- 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;
- tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts; and
- apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

Educational Policy 2.1.3—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers

- distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom;
- analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and
- demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

**Educational Policy 2.1.4—Engage diversity and difference in practice.**
Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers

- recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;
- gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;
- recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences; and
- view themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.

**Educational Policy 2.1.5—Advance human rights and social and economic justice.**
Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers

- understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;
- advocate for human rights and social and economic justice; and
- engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

**Educational Policy 2.1.6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.**
Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers

- use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and
- use research evidence to inform practice.

**Educational Policy 2.1.7—Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.**
Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers

- utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and
• critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

Educational Policy 2.1.8—Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers
• analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being; and
• collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

Educational Policy 2.1.9—Respond to contexts that shape practice.
Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers
• continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services; and
• provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.

Educational Policy 2.1.10(a)–(d)—Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

Educational Policy 2.1.10(a)—Engagement
Social workers
• substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
• use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and
• develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.

Educational Policy 2.1.10(b)—Assessment
Social workers
• collect, organize, and interpret client data;
• assess client strengths and limitations;
• develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives; and
• select appropriate intervention strategies.

Educational Policy 2.1.10(c)—Intervention
Social workers
• initiate actions to achieve organizational goals;
• implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;
• help clients resolve problems;
• negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients; and
• facilitate transitions and endings.
Educational Policy 2.1.10(d)—Evaluation
Social workers critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

Educational Policy B2.2—Generalist Practice
Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice.

The baccalaureate program in social work prepares students for generalist practice. The descriptions of the nine Social Work Competencies presented in the EPAS identify the knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors associated with competence at the generalist level of practice.

Accreditation Standard M2.0—Generalist Practice

- **M2.0.1** The program explains how its mission and goals are consistent with generalist practice as defined in EP 2.0.

- **M2.0.2** The program provides a rationale for its formal curriculum design for generalist practice demonstrating how it is used to develop a coherent and integrated curriculum for both classroom and field.

- **M2.0.3** The program provides a matrix that illustrates how its generalist practice content implements the nine required social work competencies and any additional competencies added by the program.

Educational Policy M2.1—Specialized Practice
Specialized practice builds on generalist practice as described in EP 2.0, adapting and extending the Social Work Competencies for practice with a specific population, problem area, method of intervention, perspective or approach to practice. Specialized practice augments and extends social work knowledge, values, and skills to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate within an area of specialization. Specialized practitioners advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies in their area of specialized practice. Specialized practitioners synthesize and employ a broad range of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge and skills based on scientific inquiry and best practices, and consistent with social work values. Specialized practitioners engage in and conduct research to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

The master’s program in social work prepares students for specialized practice. Programs identify the specialized knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors that extend and enhance the nine Social Work Competencies and prepare students for practice in the area of specialization.

Accreditation Standard M2.1—Specialized Practice
. **M2.1.1** The program identifies its area(s) of specialized practice (EP M2.1), and demonstrates how it builds on generalist practice.

. **M2.1.2** The program provides a rationale for its formal curriculum design for specialized practice demonstrating how the design is used to develop a coherent and integrated curriculum for both classroom and field.

. **M2.1.3** The program describes how its area(s) of specialized practice extend and enhance the nine Social Work Competencies (and any additional competencies developed by the program) to prepare students for practice in the area(s) of specialization.

. **M2.1.4** For each area of specialized practice, the program provides a matrix that illustrates how its curriculum content implements the nine required social work competencies and any additional competencies added by the program.

**Educational Policy M2.2—Advanced Practice**
Advanced practitioners refine and advance the quality of social work practice and that of the larger social work profession. They synthesize and apply a broad range of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge and skills. In areas of specialization, advanced practitioners assess, intervene, and evaluate to promote human and social well-being. To do so they suit each action to the circumstances at hand, using the discrimination learned through experience and self-improvement. Advanced practice incorporates all of the core competencies augmented by knowledge and practice behaviors specific to a concentration.

**Educational Policy 2.3—Signature Pedagogy: Field Education**
Signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner. Professionals have pedagogical norms with which they connect and integrate theory and practice. In social work, the signature pedagogy is field education. The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies.

**Accreditation Standard B2.0—Curriculum**
The 10 core competencies are used to design the professional curriculum. The program

**B2.0.1** Discusses how its mission and goals are consistent with generalist practice as defined in EP B2.2.

**B2.0.2** Identifies its competencies consistent with EP 2.1 through 2.1.10(d).

**B2.0.3** Provides an operational definition for each of its competencies used in its curriculum design and its assessment [EP 2.1 through 2.1.10(d)].

**B2.0.4** Provides a rationale for its formal curriculum design demonstrating how it is used to develop a coherent and integrated curriculum for both classroom and field (EP 2.0).

**B2.0.5** Describes and explains how its curriculum content (knowledge, values, and skills) implements the operational definition of each of its competencies.

**Accreditation Standard M2.0—Curriculum**
The 10 core competencies are used to design the foundation and advanced curriculum. The advanced curriculum builds on and applies the core competencies in an area(s) of concentration. The program

**M2.0.1** Identifies its concentration(s) (EP M2.2).

**M2.0.2** Discusses how its mission and goals are consistent with advanced practice (EP M2.2).
Identifies its program competencies consistent with EP 2.1 through 2.1.10(d) and EP M2.2.

Provides an operational definition for each of the competencies used in its curriculum design and its assessment (EP 2.1 through 2.1.10(d); EP M2.2).

Provides a rationale for its formal curriculum design (foundation and advanced), demonstrating how it is used to develop a coherent and integrated curriculum for both classroom and field (EP 2.0).

M2.0.6 Describes and explains how its curriculum content (relevant theories and conceptual frameworks, values, and skills) implements the operational definition of each of its competencies.

Accreditation Standard 2.1—Field Education
The program discusses how its field education program

2.1.1 Connects the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practice setting, fostering the implementation of evidence-informed practice.

2.1.2 Provides generalist practice opportunities for students to demonstrate the core competencies.

2.1.3 Provides advanced practice opportunities for students to demonstrate the program’s competencies.

2.1.4 Provides a minimum of 400 hours of field education for baccalaureate programs and 900 hours for master’s programs.

2.1.5 Admits only those students who have met the program’s specified criteria for field education.

2.1.6 Specifies policies, criteria, and procedures for selecting field settings; placing and monitoring students; maintaining field liaison contacts with field education settings; and evaluating student learning and field setting effectiveness congruent with the program’s competencies.

2.1.7 Specifies the credentials and practice experience of its field instructors necessary to design field learning opportunities for students to demonstrate program competencies. Field instructors for baccalaureate students hold a baccalaureate or master’s degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program. Field instructors for master’s students hold a master’s degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program. For cases in which a field instructor does not hold a CSWE-accredited social work degree, the program assumes responsibility for reinforcing a social work perspective and describes how this is accomplished.

2.1.8 Develops policies regarding field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed. To ensure the role of student as learner, student assignments and field education supervision are not the same as those of the student’s employment.

Educational Policy 3.0—Implicit Curriculum: The Learning Environment
The implicit curriculum refers to the educational environment in which the explicit curriculum is presented. It is composed of the following elements: the program’s commitment to diversity; admissions policies and procedures; advisement, retention, and termination policies; student participation in governance; faculty; administrative structure; and resources. The implicit curriculum is manifested through policies that are fair and transparent in substance and implementation, the qualifications of the faculty, and the adequacy of resources. The culture of human interchange; the spirit of inquiry; the support for difference and diversity; and the values and priorities in the educational environment, including the field setting, inform the student’s learning and development. The implicit curriculum is as important as the explicit curriculum in shaping the professional character and competence of the program’s graduates. Heightened awareness of the importance of the implicit curriculum promotes an educational culture that is congruent with the values of the profession.

Educational Policy 3.1—Diversity
The program’s commitment to diversity—including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation—is reflected in its learning environment (institutional setting; selection of field education settings and their clientele; composition of program advisory or field committees; educational and social...
resources; resource allocation; program leadership; speaker series, seminars, and special programs; support groups; research and other initiatives; and the demographic make-up of its faculty, staff, and student body).

**Accreditation Standard 3.1—Diversity**

3.1.1 The program describes the specific and continuous efforts it makes to provide a learning environment in which respect for all persons and understanding of diversity and difference are practiced.

3.1.2 The program describes how its learning environment models affirmation and respect for diversity and difference.

3.1.3 The program discusses specific plans to improve the learning environment to affirm and support persons with diverse identities.

**Educational Policy 3.2—Student Development**

Educational preparation and commitment to the profession are essential qualities in the admission and development of students for professional practice. To promote the social work education continuum, BSW graduates admitted to MSW programs are presented with an articulated pathway toward a concentration. Student participation in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs are important for the student’s professional development.

**Accreditation Standard 3.2—Student Development: Admissions; Advisement, Retention, and Termination; and Student Participation**

**Admissions**

B3.2.1 The program identifies the criteria it uses for admission.

M3.2.1 The program identifies the criteria it uses for admission. The criteria for admission to the master’s program must include an earned bachelor’s degree from a college or university accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association.

3.2.2 The program describes the process and procedures for evaluating applications and notifying applicants of the decision and any contingent conditions associated with admission.

M3.2.3 BSW graduates entering MSW programs are not to repeat what has been mastered in their BSW programs. MSW programs describe the policies and procedures used for awarding advanced standing. These policies and procedures should be explicit and unambiguous. Advanced standing is awarded only to graduates holding degrees from baccalaureate social work programs accredited by CSWE, those recognized through its International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service, or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors.

3.2.4 The program describes its policies and procedures concerning the transfer of credits.

3.2.5 The program submits its written policy indicating that it does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience. The program documents how it informs applicants and other constituents of this policy.

**Advisement, retention, and termination**

3.2.6 The program describes its academic and professional advising policies and procedures. Professional advising is provided by social work program faculty, staff, or both.

3.2.7 The program spells out how it informs students of its criteria for evaluating their academic and professional performance, including policies and procedures for grievance.

3.2.8 The program submits its policies and procedures for terminating a student’s enrollment in the social work program for reasons of academic and professional performance.

**Student participation**

3.2.9 The program describes its policies and procedures specifying students’ rights and responsibilities to participate in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs.

3.2.10 The program demonstrates how it provides opportunities and encourages students to organize in their interests.
Educational Policy 3.3—Faculty
Faculty qualifications, including experience related to the program’s competencies, and an appropriate student-faculty ratio are essential for developing an educational environment that promotes, emulates, and teaches students the knowledge, values, and skills expected of professional social workers. Through their teaching, scholarship, and service—as well as their interactions with one another, administration, students, and community—the program’s faculty models the behavior and values expected of professional social workers.

Accreditation Standard 3.3—Faculty
3.3.1 The program identifies each full and part-time social work faculty member and discusses her/his qualifications, competence, expertise in social work education and practice, and years of service to the program. Faculty who teach social work practice courses have a master’s degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and at least two years of social work practice experience.

3.3.2 The program discusses how faculty size is commensurate with the number and type of curricular offerings in class and field: class size; number of students; and the faculty’s teaching, scholarly, and service responsibilities. To carry out the ongoing functions of the program, the full-time equivalent faculty-to-student ratio is usually 1:25 for baccalaureate programs and 1:12 for master’s programs.

B3.3.3 The baccalaureate social work program identifies no fewer than two full-time faculty assigned to the program, with full-time appointment in social work, and whose principal assignment is to the baccalaureate program. The majority and no fewer than two of the full-time faculty has either a master’s degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program, with a doctoral degree preferred, or a baccalaureate degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and a doctoral degree preferably in social work.

M3.3.3 The master’s social work program identifies no fewer than six full-time faculty with master’s degrees in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and whose principal assignment is to the master’s program. The majority of the full-time master’s social work program faculty has a master’s degree in social work and a doctoral degree preferably in social work.

3.3.4 The program describes its faculty workload policy and discusses how the policy supports the achievement of institutional priorities and the program’s mission and goals.

3.3.5 Faculty demonstrate ongoing professional development as teachers, scholars, and practitioners through dissemination of research and scholarship, exchanges with external constituencies such as practitioners and agencies, and through other professionally relevant creative activities that support the achievement of institutional priorities and the program’s mission and goals.

3.3.6 The program describes how its faculty models the behavior and values of the profession in the program’s educational environment.

Educational Policy 3.4—Administrative Structure
Social work faculty and administrators, based on their education, knowledge, and skills, are best suited to make decisions regarding the delivery of social work education. They exercise autonomy in designing an administrative and leadership structure, developing curriculum, and formulating and implementing policies that support the education of competent social workers.

Accreditation Standard 3.4—Administrative Structure
3.4.1 The program describes its administrative structure and shows how it provides the necessary autonomy to achieve the program’s mission and goals.

3.4.2 The program describes how the social work faculty has responsibility for defining program curriculum consistent with the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards and the institution’s policies.

3.4.3 The program describes how the administration and faculty of the social work program participate in formulating and implementing policies related to the recruitment, hiring, retention, promotion, and tenure of program personnel.
3.4.4 The program identifies the social work program director. Institutions with accredited BSW and MSW programs appoint a separate director for each.

B3.4.4(a) The program describes the BSW program director’s leadership ability through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and other academic and professional activities in social work. The program documents that the director has a master’s degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program with a doctoral degree preferred or a baccalaureate degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and a doctoral degree, preferably in social work.

B3.4.4(b) The program provides documentation that the director has a full-time appointment to the social work program.

B3.4.4(c) The program describes the procedures for determining the program director’s assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership to the program. To carry out the administrative functions of the program, a minimum of 25% assigned time is required at the baccalaureate level. The program demonstrates this time is sufficient.

M3.4.4(a) The program describes the MSW program director’s leadership ability through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and other academic and professional activities in social work. The program documents that the director has a master’s degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program. In addition, it is preferred that the MSW program director have a doctoral degree, preferably in social work.

M3.4.4(b) The program provides documentation that the director has a full-time appointment to the social work program.

M3.4.4(c) The program describes the procedures for determining the program director’s assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership to the program. To carry out the administrative functions of the program, a minimum of 50% assigned time is required at the master’s level. The program demonstrates this time is sufficient.

3.4.5 The program identifies the field education director.

3.4.5(a) The program describes the field director’s ability to provide leadership in the field education program through practice experience, field instruction experience, and administrative and other relevant academic and professional activities in social work.

3.4.5(b) The program documents that the field education director has a master’s degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and at least 2 years of postbaccalaureate or postmaster’s social work degree practice experience.

B3.4.5(c) The program describes the procedures for determining the field director’s assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership for field education. To carry out the administrative functions of the field at least 25% assigned time is required for baccalaureate programs. The program demonstrates this time is sufficient.

M3.4.5(c) The program describes the procedures for determining the field director’s assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership for field education. To carry out the administrative functions of the field at least 50% assigned time is required for master’s programs. The program demonstrates this time is sufficient.

Educational Policy 3.5—Resources
Adequate resources are fundamental to creating, maintaining, and improving an educational environment that supports the development of competent social work practitioners. Social work programs have the necessary resources to support learning and professionalization of students and program improvement.

Accreditation Standard 3.5—Resources
3.5.1 The program describes the procedures for budget development and administration it uses to achieve its mission and goals. The program submits the budget form to demonstrate sufficient and stable financial supports that permit program planning and faculty development.

3.5.2 The program describes how it uses resources to continuously improve the program and address challenges in the program’s context.

3.5.3 The program demonstrates sufficient support staff, other personnel, and technological resources to support itself.

3.5.4 The program submits the library form to demonstrate comprehensive library holdings and/or electronic access and other informational and educational resources necessary for achieving its mission and goals.

3.5.5 The program describes and demonstrates sufficient office and classroom space and/or computer-mediated access to achieve its mission and goals.

3.5.6 The program describes its access to assistive technology, including materials in alternative formats (e.g., Braille, large print, books on tape, assistive learning systems).

4. Assessment

Educational Policy 4.0—Assessment
Assessment is an integral component of competency-based education. To evaluate the extent to which the competencies have been met, a system of assessment is central to this model of education. Data from assessment continuously inform and promote change in the explicit and implicit curriculum to enhance attainment of program competencies.

Accreditation Standard 4.0—Assessment

4.0.1 The program presents its plan to assess the attainment of its competencies. The plan specifies procedures, multiple measures, and benchmarks to assess the attainment of each of the program’s competencies (AS B2.0.3; AS M2.0.4).

4.0.2 The program provides evidence of ongoing data collection and analysis and discusses how it uses assessment data to affirm and/or make changes in the explicit and implicit curriculum to enhance student performance.

4.0.3 The program identifies any changes in the explicit and implicit curriculum based on the analysis of the assessment data.

4.0.4 The program describes how it makes its constituencies aware of its assessment outcomes.

4.0.5 The program appends the summary data for each measure used to assess the attainment of each competency for at least one academic year prior to the submission of the self-study.

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1 These six value elements reflect the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.
Washington, D.C.: NASW.

Washington, DC: NASW.

