



MSW Student Handbook

MSW Program

Mount St. Joseph University

2026-2027

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Welcome to the MSW Program! Social work is an exciting profession and provides a diverse selection of career opportunities.

The social work profession historically worked with the poor, advocated for social justice, and empowered communities to create social change. Throughout history, social workers responded to emerging social problems by mobilizing people to care for each other. Today, our graduate degree in social work prepares students to use professional knowledge, values, and skills to help alleviate a variety of social problems and advocate for social, economic, and environmental justice through advanced generalist and behavioral health areas of specialization. At Mount St. Joseph University, your social work education includes courses about what social workers know (knowledge), who they are (values), what they can do (skills), how they think (cognitive processing), and what they feel (affective processing).

In order to promote a successful learning environment, the *MSW Student Handbook* serves as a guide for completing a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree at Mount St. Joseph University. Its purpose is:

- To provide information regarding the mission, goals, and curriculum of the MSW Program
- To articulate the program requirements, policies, procedures, and practices
- To inform students of their rights and responsibilities

The handbook should be used with the *MSW Field Manual* and the *Graduate Catalog* developed by the university. Together, these references provide supporting information about the policies, procedures, expectations, and curriculum for students pursuing an MSW degree at Mount St. Joseph University. If you have questions, please ask. Social work faculty are happy to help.

Along with the social work faculty, I wish you all the best in your educational journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lisa Clifton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Lisa Clifton, MSW, JD
MSW Program Director
Department of Social Work

MSW Program Overview

The Master of Social Work (MSW) Program offers graduate education preparing social workers to enter the workplace as specialized social work practitioners. In order to ensure a quality social work education, the program's mission, goals, and curriculum align with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) competencies and behaviors. The following section articulates the program's mission, goals, and curriculum in relation to the CSWE competencies and behaviors.

MSW Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Master of Social Work program at Mount St. Joseph University is to prepare students for advanced generalist practice with a strong emphasis on behavioral health. Our goal is to instill in graduates the knowledge, values, and skills necessary to accurately address the needs of diverse populations and to provide ethical and competent services to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Through a focus on interdisciplinary collaboration, excellence in education, and applied research, the program aims to develop leaders who are skilled in integrating behavioral health approaches within social work practice. We strive to cultivate a commitment to diversity and lifelong learning, ensuring our graduates are well-prepared to navigate the evolving landscapes of local, national, and global health contexts.

MSW Curriculum

MSW students complete their graduate social work education through one of two options: Traditional MSW Program or Advanced Standing MSW Program. The Traditional MSW Program is for students without a CSWE-accredited, undergraduate degree in social work. Their curriculum requires courses in generalist (in the first year) and advanced social work practice in an area of specialization, advanced generalist or behavioral health (in the second year).

The Advanced Standing MSW Program is for students with a CSWE-accredited undergraduate degree in social work. Like second-year traditional students, their coursework focuses on an area of specialized practice, either advanced generalist or behavioral health. The following provides definitions of generalist and specialized social work practice, identifies the CSWE competencies and behaviors associated with each area of specialized practice, and describes the traditional and advanced standing curricula.

Generalist Social Work Practice Definition

Generalist practice requires collaboration with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. In order to help others, generalist social workers use a variety of practice roles. They may work as an advocate, broker/linker, case manager, community developer, educational trainer, fundraiser, grant writer, program planner, researcher, social change activist, or volunteer coordinator. To fulfill the professional responsibilities related to each role, generalist social workers use their skills to engage, assess, plan, intervene, and evaluate their practice with their clients. Therefore, generalist social workers use an intentional helping process with multiple roles.

The person-in-environment framework and a strengths-based practice model are foundational to generalist practice. Social workers assess the internal and external strengths, challenges, and needs of people and their social environments. In order to intervene, they apply evidence-informed knowledge while building on the strengths and resiliency of their clients and social systems. Hence, generalist social workers help people achieve their goals through the application of strengths-based, research-supported interventions.

The relationship between practice, research, policy, and ethics directs the decision-making processes of generalist practitioners. Research provides foundational knowledge, and practice produces new research questions. The NASW Code of Ethics (2017) presents guidelines for ethical, responsible social work practice. Organizational and social policies establish the parameters of practice. Therefore, generalist social workers value the process whereby research, policy, and ethics inform their practice.

Generalist social workers are professionals committed to helping people reach their fullest potential. They value service, social justice, the dignity and worth of all people, the importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. Their practice demonstrates respect for all people regardless of differences, empowerment of human and social wellbeing, and advocacy for social, economic, and environmental justice.

References

Kirst-Ashman, K.K., & Hull, Jr., G.H. (2017). *Understanding generalist practice* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

Miley, K. K., O'Melia, M., & Miley, K. K. (2013). *Generalist social work practice: An empowering approach* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

National Association of Social Workers (NASW). (2017). *NASW code of ethics*.

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

Generalist Social Work Competencies & Behaviors

The generalist social work definition aligns with the competencies outlined in the 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards from CSWE. Based on these competencies, the MSW Program developed essential behaviors related to generalist knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes. To complete the generalist curriculum, students must demonstrate the following:

Competency 1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

1. make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;
2. demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
3. use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
4. use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.
5. Communicate strengths & limitations related to personal & professional development with insight into self-reflection.

Competency 2 – Advance Human Rights & Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

1. Advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
2. engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 3 - Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

1. demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
2. demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts in their lived experiences.

Competency 4 – Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

1. apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
2. identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

Competency 5 – Engage in Policy Practice

1. use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
2. apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

1. apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
2. use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

Competency 7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

1. apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
2. demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan.

Competency 8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

1. engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
2. incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with

and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

Competency 9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

1. select and use culturally responsive methods to evaluate outcomes; and
2. critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Advanced Generalist Practice Definition

Advanced generalists possess the skills to help clients, advocate for community change, and design programs, among other professional and managerial roles. They are trained to view social work from the micro and macro levels, thus understanding the root causes of client issues. MSW-trained advanced generalists can oversee teams and conduct research in addition to managing cases/programs.

The Advanced Generalist specialization equips MSW graduates with the capacity to apply advanced social work competencies across multiple system levels—micro, mezzo, and macro—ensuring they are prepared to respond effectively to complex and multifaceted social problems.

Key Elements of Definition

1. **Integration Across System Levels**
Advanced generalist social workers are adept at applying knowledge, values, and skills across individual, family, group, organizational, and community settings. They are prepared for both specialized and macro-level responses to systemic issues.
2. **Breadth and Depth of Competence ("Both/And" Approach)**
This specialization embodies a “both/and” philosophy—equipping practitioners with the breadth to navigate diverse settings and the depth to address complexity in human systems.
3. **Enhanced Professional Judgment and Leadership**
Advanced generalists demonstrate elevated levels of professional judgment and behavior, including leadership, supervision, policy work, program administration, and ethical decision-making across domains.
4. **Strengths-Based and Systems-Oriented Framework**
Grounded in a strengths-based, ecological perspective, the advanced generalist applies multiple theoretical frameworks and evidence-informed practices to enact systemic change, rooted in human rights and social justice.

Advanced Generalist Practice is a specialization in MSW education that prepares graduates to practice autonomously and competently across micro (individual), mezzo (family/group), and macro (organization/community/policy) levels. Rooted in the liberal arts and person-in-environment framework, this approach emphasizes both breadth and depth—enabling practitioners to integrate clinical skills, policy analysis, leadership, program development, and advocacy into their work. They demonstrate advanced professional judgment, ethical behavior, and a commitment to social, economic, and environmental justice, applying evidence-informed interventions across settings.

Advanced Generalist Social Work Competencies & Behaviors

In order to complete the advanced generalist area of specialization curriculum, students must demonstrate the following:

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behaviors

Advanced generalist social workers exemplify a deep integration of ethical principles and professionalism across micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. They draw upon complex ethical decision-making models that are grounded in a rights-based, anti-oppressive, and trauma-informed lens. Their practice is informed by evolving ethical standards and human rights doctrines, and they maintain a high level of professional conduct in all forms of communication. Advanced generalists engage in continuous self-reflection and critical self-awareness to monitor the impact of personal experiences, values, and biases on their professional roles. They prioritize self-care as a foundational element of ethical practice, recognizing its centrality to long-term professional sustainability.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- Integrate multiple ethical frameworks and culturally informed codes of conduct in complex practice situations;
- Demonstrate excellence in written, oral, and digital professional communication and presentation;
- Employ advanced-level knowledge of digital ethics, including telehealth best practices;
- Use advanced supervision techniques, peer consultation, and interdisciplinary collaboration to inform decision-making and ethical dilemmas.
- Actively participate in professional social work associations/organizations; and
- Design and manage effective self-care strategies to reduce the likelihood of compassion fatigue and burnout.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Advanced generalist social workers actively confront systemic oppression and inequities through advocacy, coalition-building, and policy analysis. They are skilled at applying intersectional frameworks and human rights-based approaches to address structural barriers and promote justice at all levels of practice. Their work is informed by a global perspective and a historical understanding of systemic injustices, including the social work profession's own complicity. They lead initiatives to disrupt power imbalances and amplify marginalized voices.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- Critically analyze the intersections of social, racial, economic, and environmental justice contexts;
- Lead human rights-based advocacy initiatives across diverse practice contexts; and
- Design, implement, and evaluate social action strategies that address systemic injustice and structural inequality.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Advanced generalist practitioners embrace a lifelong commitment to anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice, understanding a wide range of diversity dimensions, including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability, and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expressions,

generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion, and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. They critically analyze the role of intersectionality in shaping individual and collective experiences. Through the application of cultural humility and intentional engagement, they create inclusive spaces that honor diverse lived experiences. They work across systems to dismantle White supremacy and institutionalized oppression while modeling reflective practice and self-regulation.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- Lead equity audits, anti-racism training, and organizational change efforts to promote inclusive systems thus demonstrating anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at all systems levels;
- Utilize intentional & advanced self-reflection and cultural humility tools to address internalized bias and power dynamics in practice
- Promote accessible and inclusive practices by evaluating barriers related to language, disability, immigration status, and legal systems; and
- Apply intersectional frameworks to assess and disrupt power imbalances in service delivery, policy development, and community engagement.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Advanced generalist social workers integrate empirical knowledge with critical theories and experiential insights to inform ethical, culturally responsive practice. They lead or collaborate on research projects that address complex social issues and use findings to improve service delivery. With a strong grasp of both qualitative and quantitative methods, they are capable of designing, analyzing, and applying research that is anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and contextually relevant. They approach research through a critical lens, recognizing historical and systemic biases in traditional methodologies. Advanced generalists advocate for and use participatory and community-based research approaches that center the voices of marginalized populations. They demonstrate advanced skills in synthesizing literature, formulating research questions that reflect real-world concerns, and disseminating findings to diverse stakeholders in accessible, inclusive formats.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- Design and implement original research or program evaluations that improve practice and policy;
- Evaluate and critique research methods and findings through a lens of equity, cultural relevance, and power dynamics;
- Employ advanced qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches tailored to diverse populations and complex social issues;
- Synthesize research literature to identify gaps, formulate questions, and generate hypotheses grounded in anti-oppressive frameworks;
- Lead or collaborate on interprofessional and community-based research projects that are responsive to culturally specific needs; and
- Translate and present research findings in formats accessible to clients, community stakeholders, and practitioners.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Advanced generalists influence policy across multiple systems and scales by applying analytic and strategic thinking skills. They have deep knowledge of social policy processes, understand systemic inequality in policy design, and advocate for policy reforms that center marginalized communities. Their practice involves mobilizing coalitions, drafting legislation, and evaluating policy implementation with an emphasis on justice and equity.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- Analyze the impact of local, state, and federal policies on specific populations and develop advocacy plans to mitigate disparities;
- Collaborate with community partners and decision-makers to shape and evaluate anti-oppressive policies by utilizing policy mapping and power analysis to identify structural barriers and leverage points for advocacy;
- Draft policy briefs, public testimony, and/or legislative proposals that elevate lived experiences and reflect anti-oppressive values; and
- Evaluate the equity and effectiveness of social policies using frameworks that highlight racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Advanced generalist social workers build and sustain authentic, empowering, and reciprocal relationships with clients and stakeholders across diverse social, cultural, and organizational settings. Their engagement strategies reflect a deep commitment to cultural humility, trauma-informed care, intersectionality, and anti-oppressive principles. They understand that engagement is not a one-time activity but a continual process rooted in transparency, trust, respect, and mutual learning. These practitioners skillfully navigate complex power dynamics and institutional barriers to establish meaningful connections and foster shared decision-making. They create inclusive spaces where individuals and communities feel seen, heard, and valued, regardless of background or status.

Advanced generalists demonstrate leadership in interdisciplinary teams and community networks, understanding the critical role of relational practice in promoting healing, social justice, and sustainable change. They are also proficient in leveraging engagement as a strategic tool for mobilizing collective action, enhancing service accessibility, and strengthening community capacity. With an awareness of historical trauma and marginalization, they strive to restore trust where systems have failed. Whether engaging one-on-one or at the systems level, advanced generalists prioritize dignity, empowerment, and collaboration as essential elements of ethical and effective practice.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- Demonstrate expert-level communication strategies that prioritize active listening, emotional intelligence, and responsiveness to verbal and nonverbal cues across cultural and linguistic differences;
- Facilitate co-created engagement processes that center client voice and foster shared power in planning and decision-making;
- Engage in trauma-informed relational practices that are attuned to the impacts of systemic violence, intergenerational trauma, and community disinvestment;

- Build and maintain interdisciplinary and interprofessional partnerships that promote holistic, coordinated support systems for clients and communities;
- Adapt engagement strategies to suit digital platforms, organizations' hybrid service environments, and evolving technologies, while maintaining ethical and culturally competent standards; and
- Serve as facilitators or conveners in community dialogue processes that promote healing, inclusion, and collaborative problem-solving.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Advanced generalist social workers approach assessment as a dynamic, collaborative, and justice-oriented process rooted in the strengths, histories, and voices of those they serve. Their assessments move beyond surface-level data collection to include deep inquiry into social, structural, cultural, ecological, psychological, and systemic dimensions of human experience. They employ critical, intersectional, trauma-informed, and anti-oppressive frameworks to understand the full context of individuals' and communities' lives. Rather than positioning themselves as experts over clients, advanced generalists adopt a co-constructive stance, viewing those they assess as experts in their own lives. They incorporate clients' lived experiences, cultural identities, historical traumas, and collective wisdom alongside evidence-informed theories and tools. Their assessments acknowledge and address institutional and systemic barriers, such as racism, poverty, gender-based violence, and ableism, as central to understanding needs and capacities. Advanced generalist practitioners integrate interprofessional and community-based insights when appropriate and use both formal and informal assessment methods, adapting to the needs of the setting and population. They continuously reflect on the ethical implications of assessment, including the potential for harm, cultural misattunement, or unacknowledged bias, and take deliberate steps to ensure that their processes are affirming, inclusive, and empowering.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- Conduct multidimensional assessments that integrate ecological, cultural, psychological, historical, and systemic factors influencing client and community well-being, utilizing critical and anti-oppressive tools that acknowledge the impact of intersectionality, power, and marginalization on client functioning and system interaction;
- Co-create assessment processes with individuals, families, and communities that honor their narratives, strengths, values, and self-identified goals, integrating formal assessment instruments with informal, culturally relevant methods (e.g., storytelling, genograms, community mapping, culturally specific wellness indicators);
- Apply trauma-informed, resilience-oriented, and healing-centered engagement strategies during assessment to reduce retraumatization and foster trust;
- Evaluate organizational, policy, or community systems as part of macro-level assessments to inform systems change or community development initiatives;
- Collaborate with interdisciplinary teams to share and interpret assessment data in ways that reflect cultural humility and professional ethics;
- Engage in reflective practices to identify and address implicit bias and assumptions that may shape assessment conclusions or decision-making; and

- As applicable, use digital and technological platforms to conduct equitable and accessible assessments, while safeguarding privacy, consent, and data ethics.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Advanced generalist social workers integrate a wide range of culturally grounded, evidence-informed, and justice-oriented intervention models to address the complex and evolving needs of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Their interventions are deeply responsive to the socio-cultural, political, and systemic contexts that shape human experience. These practitioners are skilled at tailoring interventions to align with the unique identities, lived experiences, and expressed goals of those they serve, ensuring that services promote autonomy, self-determination, and equity. Advanced generalists apply critical thinking, community engagement, and systems knowledge to select and adapt practice models that address not only individual symptoms or presenting issues but also the root causes of injustice and structural oppression. They work collaboratively with clients, community stakeholders, and interdisciplinary partners to foster healing, resilience, and sustainable change. Their interventions span direct practice, organizational change, community development, and policy implementation, and they maintain a trauma-informed, anti-oppressive, and culturally humble lens throughout. They intervene across ecological levels and remain grounded in ethical practice, client-centered collaboration, and the principles of liberation, social justice, and collective well-being.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- Select, adapt, and apply advanced intervention strategies that integrate cultural, systemic, and trauma-informed knowledge with evidence-based and community-driven models;
- Collaborate with clients to co-design intervention plans that reflect their strengths, cultural identities, priorities, and definitions of well-being;
- Implement interventions across ecological systems (individual, family, group, organizational, community) that address both immediate needs and structural barriers;
- Facilitate group interventions that promote collective empowerment, peer support, and shared resilience;
- Apply organizational and community-level interventions to promote equity, leadership development, and systems transformation, including but not limited to, advocacy, mediation, negotiation, and coalition-building as strategic intervention tools within systems and institutions; and
- Utilize technology, telehealth, and digital tools to provide accessible and ethically sound interventions in diverse practice settings.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Advanced generalist social workers view evaluation as an essential, ongoing, and justice-oriented element of professional practice. They approach evaluation not simply as a measurement tool but as a transformative and participatory process that deepens understanding, improves practice, promotes equity, and amplifies the voices of those most impacted by social services and systems. They actively engage clients, stakeholders, and communities as collaborators in designing, implementing, and interpreting evaluations, ensuring that the methods and outcomes reflect lived realities and culturally relevant definitions of success.

These practitioners employ a wide range of advanced qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches that are informed by anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and trauma-informed principles. They understand the historical misuse of evaluation tools in marginalized communities and work to decolonize evaluative practice by integrating Indigenous, Afrocentric, feminist, and community-based participatory research (CBPR) frameworks. Their evaluations aim to challenge dominant narratives, redistribute power, and foster learning and accountability at individual, organizational, and systemic levels. Advanced generalists use evaluation data to guide critical reflection, enhance service delivery, strengthen partnerships, and advocate for equitable policies and funding. They are also skilled in translating data into accessible, meaningful insights that inform ethical decision-making, program design, and systems change efforts across practice contexts.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- Engage in ongoing evaluation and reflective supervision to monitor intervention effectiveness and adapt strategies in real time, evaluating personal effectiveness in upholding cultural humility, equity, and accountability in practice.
- Design and implement comprehensive evaluation plans that are participatory, culturally responsive, and rooted in anti-oppressive and decolonizing methodologies by collaboratively engaging clients, communities, and stakeholders in defining success indicators, designing data collection tools, and interpreting findings;
- Use evaluation to examine power dynamics, structural barriers, and inequities within programs, policies, and systems of care;
- Integrate critical reflection and feedback loops into ongoing practice, using evaluation results to inform service refinement and innovation;
- Translate evaluation findings into accessible formats (e.g., infographics, community briefs, storytelling, policy memos) for diverse audiences; and
- Apply ethical decision-making frameworks to ensure transparency, confidentiality, and consent throughout the evaluation process.

Behavioral Health Practice Definition

Behavioral health social work builds on the knowledge and skills of generalist practice. A behavioral health social worker applies the strengths and person-in-environment perspectives to the holistic assessment of individuals, families, couples, and groups. In addition, a clinical practitioner recognizes the value of referring clients to community services and effectively collaborates with other professionals to enable and advocate for clients to receive those services.

The goal of behavioral health social work practice is to facilitate cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes consistent with treatment goals. Social workers in behavioral health settings use assessment, diagnostic, prevention, and intervention skills to provide counseling, case management, consultation, client-centered advocacy, and psychosocial education. Clinical knowledge develops competence in applying evidence-informed interventions such as trauma-informed, cognitive behavior, crisis prevention, substance abuse, solution-focused, and family systems treatment models. Therefore, a behavioral health social worker applies specialized knowledge and skills to promote the human and social well-being of their clients.

Behavioral health social work is adaptable to a variety of client-centered settings. Community mental health centers, hospitals, substance use treatment, recovery programs, domestic violence shelters, youth services centers, schools, primary health care centers, child welfare agencies, aging services, employee assistance programs, law enforcement, probation, and private practice settings commonly employ behavioral health social workers. Ultimately, these social workers strive to offer their clients hope by empowering them to heal from life situations and challenges.

Behavioral Health Social Work Competencies & Behaviors

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers specializing in behavioral health understand the profound ethical responsibilities inherent in integrating social work values within healthcare and behavioral health systems. Grounded in the NASW Code of Ethics and relevant legal and professional guidelines (e.g., HIPAA, informed consent), they uphold the principles of client self-determination, confidentiality, and culturally responsive care, particularly within systems that have historically marginalized vulnerable populations.

They critically examine ethical dilemmas arising from systemic inequities, dual relationships, interprofessional disagreements, and the use of technology in service delivery. Through reflective practice and cultural humility, they explore how their own identities, beliefs, and biases influence professional decision-making. Advanced practitioners recognize that ethical practice is not neutral but must be informed by anti-racist and anti-oppressive lenses that challenge the status quo and center equity. These practitioners demonstrate leadership in modeling ethical integrity, maintaining professional boundaries, engaging in continuous learning, and fostering ethical climates within interdisciplinary teams. They utilize technology ethically and effectively to expand access to care, while ensuring client privacy, informed consent, and digital equity.

Social workers specializing in behavioral health:

- Apply ethical decision-making frameworks to navigate complex behavioral health dilemmas involving competing values, systemic constraints and interdisciplinary tensions, ensuring adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics and relevant healthcare regulations (e.g., HIPAA);
- Engage in ongoing reflective practice to examine the influence of personal values, social identities, and biases on professional judgment and client engagement;
- Maintain strong professional boundaries across settings—including in-person, virtual, and hybrid environments—while building trust and rapport in ethically sound ways, ensuring ethical and inclusive use of technology (i.e., telehealth platforms, electronic health records, digital communication, data integrity);
- Demonstrate fluency in federal and state healthcare regulations, including HIPAA, 42 CFR Part 2, informed consent laws, and ethical standards in integrated care settings;
- Educate clients on their rights, including privacy, autonomy, and informed participation in behavioral health treatment and care decisions; and
- Prioritize practitioner well-being through self-care, ethical workload management, and boundary-setting to promote sustainability and reduce compassion fatigue or moral injury.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers specializing in behavioral health champion the right to health and well-being as a core human right and a fundamental element of social justice. They understand that systemic inequities—rooted in racism, classism, colonialism, ableism, and other forms of oppression—directly shape behavioral health outcomes. These practitioners are critically aware of the ways historical trauma, intergenerational marginalization, environmental degradation, and discriminatory healthcare policies have limited access to equitable and responsive care for many communities. Grounded in anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and rights-based approaches, behavioral health social workers advocate for structural changes that dismantle barriers to care, advance culturally grounded and community-driven services, and uplift the dignity and autonomy of those most affected by injustice. They identify and disrupt the institutional mechanisms—such as biased diagnostic practices, discriminatory policies, and profit-driven models of care—that perpetuate disparities in behavioral health.

Social workers specializing in behavioral health also recognize that the health of individuals and communities is shaped by broader social, economic, and environmental conditions. As such, they address social determinants of health (e.g., housing, food access, environmental safety, employment, education) through interdisciplinary collaboration, policy advocacy, and systems change strategies. By integrating micro and macro practice strategies, these practitioners work across clinical, organizational, and policy landscapes to advance equity, uphold human rights, and create conditions where individuals and communities can thrive.

Social workers specializing in behavioral health:

- Recognize and address the impact of systemic health disparities on diverse populations accessing behavioral health services;
- Apply social determinants of health frameworks in assessment, intervention, and advocacy to address the root causes of behavioral health disparities;
- Use intersectional analysis to understand and respond to how overlapping identities (e.g., race, gender identity, disability, immigration status) shape experiences of oppression and access to behavioral health care;
- Promote environmental justice by recognizing and addressing the mental health impacts of environmental degradation, displacement, and climate change on vulnerable populations;
- Incorporate human rights principles (e.g., autonomy, dignity, participation) into all levels of practice, from clinical interventions to systems-level change;
- Adapt behavioral interventions to meet clients' cultural, spiritual, and linguistic needs; and
- Advocate for inclusive policies and practices within healthcare systems to improve access and outcomes for underrepresented populations.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Social workers in behavioral health practice with a deep awareness of how systems of power, privilege, and oppression intersect to produce and perpetuate health inequities. They understand that behavioral health outcomes are not solely individual or biological but are profoundly shaped by structural racism, cultural erasure, xenophobia, ableism, colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and other forms of systemic injustice. These practitioners actively interrogate their own positionality and implicit biases, acknowledging how their social identities and institutional affiliations influence their practice and

relationships with clients. Behavioral health social workers view cultural identity and lived experience as essential sources of knowledge, and they work to build practice environments where clients' whole selves—including their race, ethnicity, language, spirituality, sexual orientation, gender identity, dis/ability, class, and immigration status—are acknowledged, affirmed, and centered. They understand that healing is not culturally neutral, and they critically evaluate dominant clinical models that may pathologize or exclude marginalized ways of knowing, coping, and surviving.

Social workers specializing in behavioral health:

- Identify and address barriers to equitable access to behavioral health care, including those related to insurance coverage, systemic discrimination, and geographic constraints.
- Critically reflect on and challenge personal biases, assumptions, and privileges that impact clinical decision-making and therapeutic relationships;
- Integrate intersectionality frameworks to assess and understand the complex, overlapping identities that shape clients' behavioral health experiences;
- Create inclusive and affirming therapeutic spaces where clients' racial, gender, spiritual, and cultural identities are recognized and supported as central to healing;
- Engage in continuous learning about the historical and present-day impacts of racism, colonization, and systemic violence on behavioral health outcomes;
- Collaborate with culturally specific organizations and leaders to co-design interventions and programs that reflect community needs and knowledge;
- Ensure accessibility and inclusion in services by addressing barriers related to language, immigration status, disability, literacy, and digital access; and
- Collaborate with clients and communities to challenge and transform policies that perpetuate health inequities.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Behavioral health social workers recognize that research and practice are inextricably linked and that each informs and improves the other. They understand that behavioral health research has historically excluded or harmed marginalized populations through biased methodologies, pathologizing narratives, and culturally inappropriate frameworks. As a result, these practitioners approach the research process with cultural humility, ethical responsibility, and a critical awareness of historical and systemic injustices. Advanced generalist practitioners in behavioral health prioritize inclusive, participatory, and decolonizing research approaches that elevate the voices, lived experiences, and cultural knowledge of clients and communities. They scrutinize traditional evidence hierarchies and advocate for an expanded definition of evidence that includes community wisdom, narrative data, and holistic models of healing. These social workers are committed to producing and applying knowledge that is grounded in equity, client empowerment, and contextual relevance. They are adept at evaluating the appropriateness of research for diverse populations and using findings to shape interventions, policies, and organizational practices. Behavioral health social workers not only use existing evidence to guide ethical, culturally responsive care—they also engage in the co-creation of new knowledge through community-based participatory research (CBPR), practice-based evidence, and equity-focused program evaluation.

Social workers specializing in behavioral health:

- Critically evaluate behavioral health interventions for evidence-based efficacy and cultural appropriateness;
- Critically appraise behavioral health research for cultural relevance, methodological bias, and alignment with anti-oppressive values;
- Apply mixed-methods and narrative-based approaches to capture the complexity of client experiences and systems of care;
- Promote and apply practice-based evidence models, especially in underrepresented communities where traditional research may be limited or misaligned;
- Collaborate across disciplines and sectors to develop, adapt, and evaluate interventions that promote mental health equity and social justice;
- Stay current with developments in behavioral health research, prioritizing literature and frameworks that reflect diverse epistemologies and community-defined success; and
- Contribute to interdisciplinary research initiatives aimed at improving outcomes in behavioral medicine.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers in behavioral health view policy practice as a core dimension of ethical, client-centered, and justice-oriented care. They recognize that policy is a primary determinant of access, quality, and equity in behavioral health services and that clinical outcomes are deeply influenced by laws, regulations, and institutional practices. These social workers understand that systemic inequities—such as structural racism, ableism, heteronormativity, and economic injustice—are often embedded in policy frameworks that govern behavioral health systems.

Behavioral health social workers analyze and address how policies impact marginalized communities differently, perpetuating disparities in mental health care, substance use treatment, and access to integrated services. They actively participate in shaping local, state, and federal behavioral health policies through research, coalition building, stakeholder engagement, legislative testimony, and strategic advocacy. They promote policies that integrate behavioral and primary health care, increase culturally and linguistically responsive services, expand parity and reimbursement protections, and ensure that care systems uphold the dignity and self-determination of individuals and communities. They understand policy not only as a tool for reform but also as a mechanism for reimagining systems of care that are equitable, inclusive, and rooted in justice.

Social workers specializing in behavioral health:

- Analyze the implications of health policies through anti-racist, anti-oppressive and intersectional frameworks (such as the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansions), on the delivery of behavioral health services, identifying disparities and systemic injustices;
- Advocate for parity in behavioral health insurance coverage, access to integrated care, and removal of barriers to services for historically marginalized populations;
- Draft policy briefs, position statements, or legislative testimony that reflect the priorities of clients and underrepresented communities by using data and storytelling efforts, combining quantitative analysis with client narratives to humanize policy impacts;
- Monitor emerging behavioral health legislation and regulatory changes, interpreting their implications for service delivery, ethics, and social justice;
- Advocate for policies that promote integrated care models combining behavioral and physical health care; and

- Collaborate with stakeholders to influence public health initiatives addressing behavioral health issues, such as substance use or chronic illness management.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, and Groups

Social workers specializing in behavioral health recognize the profound influence of social, cultural, and historical contexts on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. They understand that engagement in behavioral health settings must be rooted in an appreciation for these contexts, including the effects of systemic inequities and collective trauma on clients' experiences and trust in care systems. These social workers approach engagement with a deep respect for the lived experiences and resilience of the people and communities they serve.

They critically reflect on their own positionality—acknowledging how their identities, biases, and privilege may shape their interactions with clients and communities—and actively work to foster trust, authenticity, and mutual understanding. Social workers specializing in behavioral health are attuned to the ways that systemic oppression, cultural displacement, and intergenerational trauma may influence clients' willingness and ability to engage in behavioral health services. These practitioners prioritize the strengths and wisdom embedded within families, groups, and communities, recognizing these as vital resources for healing and growth. They tailor engagement strategies to honor clients' cultural and social identities, employing approaches that integrate rather than separate clients from their familial and societal networks. Social workers actively seek alternatives to standard engagement practices that may disregard or undermine these connections, ensuring that their methods align with clients' values, preferences, and broader social contexts.

By fostering meaningful, respectful engagement with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, social workers specializing in behavioral health create collaborative partnerships that promote empowerment, healing, and systemic change. Through these efforts, they advance equitable and inclusive care, building relationships that honor the dignity and humanity of all clients and communities.

Social workers specializing in behavioral health:

- Build therapeutic alliances with clients by demonstrating empathy and understanding of their unique behavioral health challenges, acknowledging and responding to intergenerational, collective, & historical trauma that may influence clients' trust in behavioral health systems;
- Establish culturally responsive and trauma-informed engagement strategies that honor clients' lived experiences, community histories, and cultural identities, demonstrating relational attunement and cultural humility and validating potential client resistance, survival strategies, and resilience in the face of systemic oppression;
- Critically reflect on and address their own positionality, biases, and assumptions to promote trust and authenticity in therapeutic and community relationships;
- Incorporate individual and family-centered engagement models that strengthen connections to social supports and affirm cultural traditions and reflect clients' social realities, resisting deficit-based approaches and institutional norms that marginalize or pathologize;
- Use participatory and narrative methods to elevate client voice and choice in shaping behavioral health care goals and approaches;
- Anticipate and address institutional barriers to engagement, including language access, stigma, mistrust of systems, and socioeconomic constraints; and

- Partner with community organizations to improve behavioral health services and outreach efforts.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, and Groups

Social workers in behavioral health conduct comprehensive, ethical assessments that center client dignity, cultural identity, and the broader sociopolitical contexts that influence well-being. They recognize that assessments are not neutral but are shaped by dominant cultural norms, historical injustices, and systemic inequities that have often pathologized marginalized communities. As such, they approach assessment as a collaborative, relational, and justice-oriented process that affirms the lived experience and expertise of the client system. Behavioral health social workers critically evaluate the appropriateness of standardized tools and diagnostic frameworks, challenging practices that perpetuate bias, medicalization, or deficit-based assumptions. They give equal weight to cultural knowledge, community wisdom, and clients' own narratives of health, healing, and resilience. These practitioners actively seek alternatives to assessment approaches that fail to reflect the complexity of identity, trauma, and systemic oppression. By embedding assessments in anti-oppressive, trauma-informed, and strengths-based frameworks, social workers generate a nuanced understanding of clients' challenges and capacities. These assessments not only guide culturally responsive intervention strategies but also uncover systemic and institutional barriers that affect access to care and long-term recovery.

Social workers specializing in behavioral health:

- Conduct biopsychosocial and cultural assessments to identify clients' strengths, health challenges, and systemic influences in behavioral medicine contexts;
- Utilize evidence-based screening tools to assess behavioral health conditions (e.g., PHQ-9, GAD-7); and
- Integrate input from interdisciplinary teams into comprehensive treatment planning for clients with co-occurring behavioral and physical health conditions.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, and Groups

Social workers specializing in behavioral health embrace the principles of healing-centered practice when designing and implementing intervention strategies with individuals, families, and groups. They approach intervention with intentionality and accountability, recognizing their role in fostering meaningful change within the client system while remaining attuned to the broader structural forces that influence clients' lives. These social workers critically examine the assumptions underlying various intervention theories and frameworks, interrogating how dynamics of power, privilege, and oppression shape their application. They understand that interventions are not neutral but are embedded within social, cultural, and systemic contexts. By recognizing these dynamics, they work to ensure that their approaches are anti-oppressive, culturally responsive, and aligned with the values and strengths of the clients they serve.

Behavioral health social workers view interventions as multidimensional, recognizing that healing and change must often occur across multiple system levels. They address individual needs while also

engaging across systems. They understand that interventions extend beyond traditional clinical practices to include advocacy, policy reform, and community empowerment efforts that address the root causes of health inequities.

These practitioners reconceptualize what it means to intervene, shifting away from deficit-focused approaches to embrace strategies that center clients' strengths, resilience, and agency. By doing so, they create collaborative and transformative processes that honor the dignity and humanity of every client. Through their work, social workers specializing in behavioral health actively contribute to the creation of more equitable, inclusive, and healing systems of care.

Social workers specializing in behavioral health:

- Implement evidence-based behavioral health interventions (e.g., cognitive-behavioral therapy for chronic illness management);
- Apply healing-centered and culturally affirming intervention models that integrate clients' lived experiences, cultural identities, and community knowledge as central to the change process by co-creating intervention plans in partnership with individuals, families, and groups that reflect clients' goals, strengths, and definitions of healing, rather than imposing prescriptive or deficit-based strategies;
- Integrate systemic and structural analyses into intervention design, addressing social determinants of health, racism, poverty, and stigma as core components of behavioral health treatment;
- Facilitate group interventions focused on health behavior change (e.g., smoking cessation, weight management);
- Implement multi-level interventions that include clinical care, resource navigation, systems advocacy, and community mobilization to holistically address behavioral health needs;
- Engage in critical use of evidence-based practices, such as motivational interviewing to support clients in making health-promoting behavioral changes, recognizing limitations and adapting models to ensure relevance, accessibility, and cultural fit for marginalized and historically excluded populations; and
- Utilize narrative, relational, and creative modalities (e.g., storytelling, expressive arts, somatic practices) to support trauma healing and enhance client engagement, particularly in communities where traditional talk therapy may be less culturally aligned, as well as employing trauma-informed and resilience-focused strategies that avoid pathologizing client behavior, while supporting autonomy, safety, and empowerment in the intervention process.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups

Social workers specializing in behavioral health view evaluation as an essential tool for advancing equitable, evidence-informed, and person-centered practice. They integrate evaluation throughout all stages of clinical intervention to assess impact, support continuous improvement, and promote accountability to those served. Evaluation is viewed not only as a technical process, but as a justice-driven, ethical practice that reflects social work values of inclusion, empowerment, and respect for human dignity.

Applying anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives, they critically assess evaluation tools for systemic biases and ensure inclusivity. Integrating evaluation throughout their work fosters continuous improvement, refining interventions, advocating for systemic change, and developing evidence-informed practices that advance health equity and social justice.

Behavioral health practitioners approach evaluation with cultural humility, honoring the lived experiences, strengths, and needs of individuals and communities navigating behavioral health challenges. Drawing on theories of human behavior, trauma-informed care, and systems thinking, they evaluate the alignment of behavioral health services with the biopsychosocial-spiritual realities of diverse populations. These practitioners are fluent in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and recognize the value of participatory, community-based, and interdisciplinary approaches to evaluation. They actively collaborate with healthcare professionals, educators, policy makers, and community leaders to examine service effectiveness and drive improvements in behavioral health delivery systems.

Social workers specializing in behavioral health:

- Use client feedback and outcome measures to evaluate the effectiveness of behavioral health interventions;
- Design and implement behavioral health evaluations that integrate anti-oppressive, anti-racist, trauma-informed, and culturally affirming approaches;
- Apply advanced qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate behavioral health interventions across micro and mezzo levels;
- Integrate theories of human behavior, trauma, resilience, and ecological systems to guide evaluation design and interpretation in behavioral health settings;
- Evaluate and strengthen interprofessional collaborations that support behavioral health goals, including coordination of care, continuity of services, and integrated treatment approaches;
- Collaborate with interdisciplinary teams to monitor and adjust treatment plans based on client progress; and
- Apply program evaluation methods to assess the impact of behavioral health initiatives on population health outcomes.

Traditional MSW Program Plan

To graduate with an MSW degree, the traditional program plan requires 60 credit hours. A traditional student has an undergraduate degree in any field or discipline. Therefore, the first year of the traditional program provides a generalist social work education. At the end of the first year, traditional students join the advanced standing students & continue their education in a specialized area of social work practice (advanced generalist or behavioral health). The required course sequence for the traditional program plan is in the following list and table. Course descriptions are available in Appendix A.

Time period	Curriculum component	Time period	Curriculum component
<i>Year 1 Fall Semester</i>	Generalist Courses/Activities	<i>Year 1 Spring Semester</i>	Generalist Courses/Activities
	SWK 510: Crisis Intervention		SWK 523: Social Policy and Issues
	SWK 527: Interviewing and Assessment		SWK 623: HBSE macro – systems & theories
	SWK 622: HBSE micro – individuals & families		SWK 517: Interdisciplinary Approach to Diversity and Social Justice
	SWK 536: Theory-Informed Practice with Groups		SWK 610: Research Methods
Time period	Curriculum component	Time period	Curriculum component
<i>Year 1 Summer Semester</i>	Courses/Activities		
	SWK 538: Clinical Skills I Assessment and Treatment Planning		
	SWK 500: Foundational SWK Field Work & Seminar		
	SWK 532: Psychopathology and Diagnosis for Social Work Practice		
	SWK 580: Behavioral Health Interventions in Social Work Practice or SWK 680: Trauma-Informed Care in Social Work Practice		

Time period	Curriculum component	Time period	Curriculum component
<i>Year 2 Fall Semester</i>	Advanced Standing Courses/Activities	<i>Year 2 Spring Semester</i>	Advanced Standing Courses/Activities
	SWK 692: Anti-Oppressive Practice		SWK 530 Policy Analysis
	SWK 534 Theory-Informed Practice with Individuals and Families		SWK 620 Applied Research/Capstone
	SWK 600 Advanced SWK Field Work & Seminar I		SWK 700 Field Work & Seminar III
	SWK 582 Social Work in Behavioral Medicine and Healthcare Settings Or SWK 682 Clinical Skills II Groups & Communities		SWK 584 Substance Use Disorders and Integrated Care Or SWK 684 Supervision, Leadership, and Administration in Social Work Organizations

Notes about Field Courses in Year One for Traditional Students

- SWK 500 *Foundational Social Work Field Work and Seminar* occurs as a block placement during the summer following the first year of enrollment in the program. Students accrue 300 clock hours over 14 weeks, which is approximately 21-22 hours a week in the field agency and is taken concurrently with other courses. Field hours take place during the hours the agency is open.

Note: For additional details about the field experience, see the MSW Field Manual.

Advanced Standing MSW Program Plan

To graduate with an MSW degree, this option requires 30 credit hours. An advanced standing student earned an undergraduate degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program or has a degree recognized by the International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Services of CSWE. Advanced standing students join the second-year traditional students to complete their graduate work in the specialized area of social work practice (advanced generalist or behavioral health). The required course sequence for the advanced standing program is listed in the following table. Course descriptions are available in Appendix A.

Time period	Curriculum component	Time period	Curriculum component
<i>Year 1 Summer Semester</i>	Courses/Activities blue highlight: Advanced Generalist Courses *Orange highlight: Behavioral Health Courses *All other courses required in both areas of specialization		
	SWK 530 Policy Analysis		
	SWK 532 Psychopathology and Diagnosis for Social Work Practice		
	SWK 580 Behavioral Health Interventions in Social Work Practice or SWK680 Trauma-Informed Care in Social Work Practice		
Time period	Curriculum component	Time period	Curriculum component
<i>Year 2 Fall Semester</i>	Courses/Activities	<i>Year 2 Spring Semester</i>	Courses/Activities
			SWK 692 Anti-Oppressive Practice
	SWK 534 Theory-Informed Practice with Individuals and Families		SWK 620 Applied Research/Capstone
	SWK 600 Advanced SWK Field Work & Seminar I		SWK 700 Field Work & Seminar III
	SWK 582 Social Work in Behavioral Medicine and Healthcare Settings Or SWK 682 Clinical Skills II Groups & Communities		SWK 584 Substance Use Disorders and Integrated Care Or SWK 684 Supervision, Leadership, and Administration in Social Work Organizations

Note: SWK 600 *Advanced Social Work Field Work & Seminar II* /SWK 700 *Advanced Social Work Field Work & Seminar III* (3 credit hours each) happen concurrently with other coursework in the fall and spring semesters. Students accumulate 600 clock hours over both semesters, 300 hours each semester. Each semester is 14 weeks (not including fall or spring break); therefore, students spend approximately 21-22 hours a week in the field agency. Field hours take place during the hours the agency is open.

Course Delivery

All social work courses are 14-week terms, except summer non-field courses that run 7 weeks. The delivery method is hybrid, with students attending classes on campus 7 of the 14 weeks, on an every other week basis during the fall and spring semesters. One course per semester will be delivered online, asynchronously.

In addition to classes, students complete their field experience in community-based agencies. The students in the Traditional MSW Program complete one 300-hour field practicum during the summer following their first academic year in the program. For the specialized curriculum, students complete one field practicum course during the fall semester and spring semesters. The specialized field practicum is concurrent with the academic courses in specialized social work. Additional information about field requirements is in the MSW Field Manual.

The design of the course sequence requires dedicated time for study and completion of field practicum activities. As such, students are advised to find employment positions with flexibility and, if possible, to reduce the number of hours of employment. In addition, the program recommends students develop time management, assertive communication, and professional self-care skills along with a strong social support system.

MSW Program Accreditation

Accreditation is a system for recognizing professional degree programs as having a level of performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public they serve. The Board of Accreditation (BOA) of the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) is authorized to accredit baccalaureate and master's degree programs in social work. The MSW Program at MSJ is in pre-candidacy status, moving toward full accreditation, which, upon completion, will retroactively apply full accreditation to students who began the program in Fall 2026.

MSW Program Policies

MSW Program policies guide the academic and professional development of the MSW students.

Each policy contains a rationale explaining the purpose of the policy and offers the policy statement. In some cases, program practices and procedures describe the implementation of the policy.

The policies in this section of the handbook include:

- Academic & Professional Advising Policy
- Academic & Professional Performance and Academic Progress Policy

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Appeals & Grievance Policy
- Attendance & Participation Policy
- Life-Work Experience Policy
- Non-discrimination Policy
- Social Media & Technology Policy
- Student Rights & Responsibilities Policy
- Textbook Policy
- Transfer of Credit Policy

Academic & Professional Advising Policy

Rationale

The MSW Program views advising as a holistic and relational process requiring teamwork between students and social work faculty members. As such, advising is a mentoring process whereby faculty guide students as they make academic, professional, and career choices. The goal is to enhance professional skills, create realistic career goals, and offer opportunities to socialize students into the profession.

Advising Policy

Upon enrollment in the MSW program, all students are assigned social work faculty members as advisors. In most cases, each student receives academic and professional guidance from multiple individuals. Those include the MSW Field Director, MSW Program Director, and MSW faculty members. Their responsibilities are as follows:

- The MSW Field Director provides field advice throughout the field placement process and field experience.
- The MSW Program Director assists students with university policies and procedures related to academic courses and non-academic concerns.
- Each MSW faculty member serves as a faculty advisor and provides academic advising and professional mentoring. Faculty advisors are available to discuss career planning, professional development, licensure process, and doctoral program interests.

Academic & Professional Performance and Academic Progress Policy including Student Excellence Standards

Rationale

Students must demonstrate scholarly and professional behaviors in the classroom, field agencies, university, and broader community. Their academic and professional performance must be consistent with the social work profession, NASW Code of Ethics, and policies

articulated by the MSW Program, field agency, and university. By doing so, students display knowledge, values, skills, and the cognitive and affective processing required for competent social work practice. The expected academic and professional performance behaviors are the Student Excellence Standards.

By virtue of enrollment in the MSW Program, all students agree to practice within the framework of the Academic and Professional Performance policy. The policy has three sections:

1. Academic & Professional Performance: Student Excellence Standards
2. Process for Evaluating Academic & Professional Performance
3. Remediation of Academic & Professional Performance

Academic & Professional Performance: Student Excellence Standards

The Student Excellence Standards integrate the MSW Program and Mount St. Joseph University policies regarding academic and non-academic performance. Four areas of academic and professional performance comprise the Student Excellence Standards. More specifically, the areas are:

1. Basic Abilities to Acquire Professional Skills
2. Mental and Emotional Abilities
3. Professional Performance Skills
4. Scholastic Performance

Student Excellence Standards

1. Basic Abilities Necessary to Acquire Professional Skills

- a. Communication Skills - Demonstrates sufficient written and oral skills to comprehend information and communicate ideas and feelings.
 - i. Written
 - Writes clearly
 - Uses correct grammar and spelling
 - Applies appropriate writing style, including the American Psychological Association (APA) referencing, with appropriate source citation and documentation
 - Demonstrates sufficient skills in written English to understand the content presented in the program
 - Adequately completes all written assignments, as specified by faculty
 - ii. Oral
 - Effectively and sensitively communicates with other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals
 - Expresses ideas and feelings clearly
 - Demonstrates willingness and ability to listen to others
 - Demonstrates sufficient skills in spoken English to understand the content presented in the program
 - Adequately completes all oral assignments and meets the objectives of field placement experiences, as specified by faculty
 - iii. Technology

- Applies the rules of respectful communication when using technology ([Netiquette](#))
- b. Interpersonal Skills
 - i. Demonstrates the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals and to fulfill the ethical obligations of the profession. These include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, and demonstration of respect for and consideration of others
 - ii. Takes appropriate responsibility for their actions and consider the impact of these actions on others
- c. Cognitive Skills
 - i. Exhibits sufficient knowledge of social work and clarity of thinking to process information and apply it to appropriate situations in the classroom and field
 - ii. Demonstrates grounding in relevant social, behavioral, and biological science knowledge and research, including knowledge and skills in relationship building, data gathering, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of practice
 - iii. Exhibits the ability to conceptualize and integrate knowledge and apply that knowledge to professional practice

2. Emotional and Mental Abilities

- a. Stress Management
 - i. Demonstrates the ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms
 - ii. Handles stress effectively by using appropriate self-care and developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others
- b. Emotional and Mental Capacities
 - i. Uses sound judgment
 - ii. Seeks and effectively uses help for medical or emotional problems that interfere with scholastic and professional performance
 - iii. Engages in counseling or seeks support and help if personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties do any of the following:
 - Compromise scholastic and other performance.
 - Interfere with professional judgment and behavior.
 - Jeopardize the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility (as outlined in the current Codes of Ethics by the National Association of Social Workers).

3. Professional Performance Skills

- a. Professional Commitment
 - Exhibits a strong commitment to the goals of social work and the ethical standards of the profession, as specified in the [NASW Code of Ethics](#)
 - Demonstrates a commitment to the essential values of social work, including the respect for the dignity and worth of every individual, the importance of human relationships, and his/her

right to a just share of society's resources (social, economic, and environmental justice)

b. Professional Behavior

- Exhibits behaviors that comply with program policies, institutional policies, professional ethical standards, & societal laws in the classroom, field, and community.
- Appearance, dress, and general demeanor reflect a professional manner
- Shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior to practice within the scope of social work by:
 - Respecting others
 - Being punctual and dependable
 - Prioritizing responsibilities
 - Attending class regularly
 - Observing deadlines
 - Completing assignments on time
 - Keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements
 - Accepting supervision and criticism in a positive manner
- Works effectively with others, regardless of authority level
- Advocates for self appropriately and responsibly and uses proper channels for conflict resolution
- Shows a willingness to accept feedback and supervision positively, as well as to use such feedback to enhance professional development

c. Self-awareness

- Shows awareness of self and how one is perceived by others
- Exhibits knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and past experiences affect thinking, behavior, and relationships
- Accurately assesses one's strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice
 - Reflects on one's limitations as they relate to professional capacities
 - Is willing to examine and change behavior when it interferes with working with clients and other professionals

d. Ethical Obligations

- Demonstration of adherence to the ethical expectations and obligations of professional practice as noted in the NASW Code of Ethics
- Systematic evaluation of clients and their situations in an unbiased, factual way
 - Suspension of personal biases during interactions with others
 - Comprehension of another individual's way of life and values
 - Empathic communication and support of the client as a basis for a productive professional relationship
 - Appreciation of the value of diversity
 - Effective and nonjudgmental work with others who are different from oneself

- Appropriate service to all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious beliefs, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or value system
- No imposition of personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on clients
- Demonstration of respect for the rights of others.
- Commitment to clients' rights to freedom of choice and self-determination
- Maintenance of confidentiality as it relates to human service, classroom activities, and field placement
- Demonstration of honesty and integrity by:
 - Being truthful about background, experiences, and qualifications
 - Doing one's work
 - Giving credit for the ideas of others
 - Provide proper citation of source materials
- Demonstration of clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries
 - A history of and/or current charges and/or convictions of an offense may impact admission and status in the program as well as create challenges with obtaining a field placement
 - Do not sexually harass others; make verbal or physical threats; become involved in sexual relationships with clients, supervisors, or faculty; abuse others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways; or participate in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.

4. Scholastic Performance

- a. Maintain a cumulative 3.0 or higher grade point average
- b. Earn a grade of B or above in all social work courses
- c. Uphold academic integrity by doing their work and giving credit where credit is due. Accurate use of APA writing style helps avoid plagiarism. Academic integrity is defined as not engaging in plagiarism or cheating. The MSW program aims to prepare students to meet licensure requirements post-MSW. To best prepare our students at this time, the MSW program excludes the use of AI on any written assignments unless a specific assignment integrates AI as part of the assignment prompt/requirement.

(Note: These standards have been adapted with permission from the University of Texas, Standard for Social Work Education. Mount St. Joseph University policies are also part of the excellence standards.)

Process For Evaluating Academic & Professional Performance

MSW students must demonstrate academic and professional behaviors as outlined in the Student Excellence Standards. MSW Program faculty and field instructors engage in an ongoing evaluation of the students. Evaluation occurs within the classroom, in field practicum settings, and in the broader community. Students are responsible for acting within the guidelines of the Student Excellence Standards and engaging in self-assessment of their own academic and professional performance.

When a student demonstrates academic and professional performance as noted in the Student Excellence Standards, the student remains in good standing within the MSW Program and university. In this case, the student progresses through the MSW curriculum as outlined in the MSW Student Handbook.

Remediation Of Academic & Professional Performance

If a student does not meet the academic and/or professional performance criteria as noted in the Student Excellence Standards, then the MSW Program Director engages students in developmental activities. Those activities may include the use of an Informal Written Plan, a Student Success and Development Plan, and/or a change of academic standing and progress within the MSW Program and university. The following narrative describes the processes of empowering the student to remediate academic and professional performance.

Informal Written Plan & Student Success & Development

If a student does not meet the academic and/or professional performance criteria as noted in the Student Excellence Standards, then the MSW Program may require the student to complete additional tasks. Developmental activities increase the knowledge, values, skills, and/or cognitive and affective processing needed for competent social work practice. The process of doing so may be either an informal written plan or a student development plan.

- ***Informal Written Plan:*** The social work faculty member, MSW Field Director, and/or MSW Program Director meet with the student to discuss the problematic areas and the strengths while referencing the Student Excellence Standards. Based on this information, all parties collaboratively develop an Informal Written Plan. This plan guides the professional and academic development of the student. The plan contains measurable tasks with a review date and becomes a documentation of the meeting. An example of an Informal Written Plan is available in Appendix B.
- ***Student Success & Development Plan:*** Sometimes the Informal Written Plan does not create the desired academic and/or professional performance, or the infringement of the Student Excellence Standards warrants a more structured plan. In these cases, the student, field instructor, social work faculty member, MSW Field Director, and/or MSW Program Director meet to develop a Student Success and Development Plan. This plan guides the professional and academic development of the student by identifying measurable tasks with a review date and becomes a documentation of the meeting. An example of the Student Success and Development Plan is available in Appendix B.

MSW Program Standing and Progress Through The Curriculum

If a student does not meet the academic and/or professional performance criteria as noted in the Student Excellence Standards, then the student's standing in the MSW Program may change to probationary status or dismissal from the program. The following discussion describes the impact of the change in program standing and subsequent progress through the curriculum.

- ***Probation:*** A student may be on probationary status if one of the following occurs.
 - A Student Development Plan has not been successful in helping the student remediate academic and/or professional performance concerns.

- A cumulative grade point average drops below a 3.0
- A grade of C or below in any MSW course.
- A field agency terminates a field placement due to unsatisfactory academic and/or professional performance related to the Student Excellence Standards.
- A course instructor attempts to remediate unsatisfactory academic and professional performance related to the Student Excellence Standards yet persistent problems impact the learning environment in the classroom setting.
- A field instructor and MSW Field Director attempt to remediate unsatisfactory academic and professional performance related to the Student Excellence Standards yet persistent problems impact the field agency and the clients served.

Whenever a student is on probationary status for GPA reasons in the MSW Program, the student meets with the MSW Program Director and, as appropriate, others involved in the situation. During the meeting, all participants collaboratively create a Student Development Plan. The plan contains measurable tasks with a review date and becomes a documentation of the meeting. On the review date, all parties meet to review the student's progress. If the problem persists, a change of academic standing to dismissal from the MSW Program may occur. The student may reapply for admission into the MSW Program; however, the readmission process follows the MSW Admission Policy.

Note: If a student receives a grade of C, the student will be placed on a probationary status and will not be able to move forward in the MSW program until the student retakes the course and successfully passes the course with a B or better.

If a student earns a grade of D or F in a course, the student will be placed on probation or suspension depending on the circumstances. Courses in which a student receives a grade of less than a C will not be counted toward degree completion. If the course is required for degree completion, the course must be retaken with a minimal grade of B. A course may be repeated only once.

- ***Dismissal:*** In the event a student consistently fails to meet the Student Excellence Standards as described in the Student Success and Development Plan or displays grossly disruptive, incompetent, or unprofessional behavior violating the NASW Code of Ethics, agency policies, university policies, or Student Excellence Standards, the student may be dismissed from the MSW Program. Circumstances resulting in termination from the MSW Program include, but are not limited to:
 1. Failure to demonstrate or maintain one or more of the qualities or conditions required in the admission criteria or the Student Excellence Standards.
 2. Failure to satisfy requirements for the removal of academic probation.
 3. Failure to meet or maintain academic requirements established by the faculty for the MSW Program. This includes maintaining an overall minimum GPA of 3.0.
 4. Failure to use practice skills and demonstrate Social Work values in ways judged to be in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics.

5. Failure to fulfill the conditions of a Student Development Plan designed to remediate issues that may warrant dismissal from the program.
6. Consistent and repeated tardiness and/or absence from class.
7. Scholastic dishonesty, including cheating, lying, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, or any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student.
8. Inability to develop the interpersonal skills necessary for effective clinical social work practice with clients and diverse populations or inability to establish and maintain functional and collegial relationships with fellow students, faculty members, and field educators.
9. Failure to apply the knowledge, skills, and values learned in the classroom to the field experience as evidenced by unsatisfactory performance in the field.
10. The student earned a D or F and was placed on academic suspension.
11. Evidence of chemical dependency or illegal use of drugs while enrolled in the program impacting their classroom or field performance.
12. Gross misconduct, which may result in immediate dismissal from the program.
13. Any threat or attempt to harm oneself or someone else.
14. Commission of a criminal act that is contrary to professional practice, occurring either during the course of study or before admission to the Master of Social Work and becoming known after admission. This may include the discovery of a felony conviction the student did not reveal during the admissions process.

Academic Standing and Progress at the University

Likewise, if the student does not meet the academic policies as stated in the [Graduate Catalog of The Mount St. Joseph University](#), then the student may be on academic probation or suspension. Infringements of the Academic Integrity policy may also result in a change of academic status and progression through the MSW Program curriculum. Students are responsible for reading the university catalog and knowing the academic progress standards and academic integrity consequences for plagiarism and cheating. The following discussion describes the impact of university-imposed academic probation or suspension related to the student's enrollment in the MSW Program.

- ***Academic Probation.*** If a student is on academic probation by the university, the duration of the probationary period is one semester or term. The student remains on academic probation until he or she attains a cumulative average of 3.0 or higher. Probationary status permits the student to continue in the program while working with his or her academic advisor to address deficiencies and take corrective action for improvement. A student placed on academic probation may not enroll for more than 9 semester hours.

If the proceeding situation occurs, the student collaboratively works with the MSW Program Director and academic advisor to develop a Student Development Plan.

- ***Academic Suspension.*** A probationary student may be suspended from the program for one semester or term. In this event, the Registrar issues a letter of notification to the student, and the student's transcript shows a permanent entry about the suspension.

While suspended from the MSW (degree) program on academic grounds, a student may only attempt to improve his or her cumulative average by repeating courses in which a grade is less than a B. If the cumulative average reaches 2.5 or higher, the student may apply for readmission to the degree program. However, the MSW Program requires a cumulative average of 3.0. The student may reapply for admission into the MSW Program; however, the re-admission process follows the MSW Admission Policy.

Grading Scale

The following grading scale is used to determine students' grades for each assignment and students' final grades:

<i>Point Range</i>	<i>Grade</i>
90-100	A
80- 89	B
70- 79	C
60 - 69	D
50 – 59	F

Academic Integrity Policy

Rationale

Integrity is a value of the social work profession. The NASW Code of Ethics (2017) requires social workers to be trustworthy, honest, and responsible within all areas of social work practice. In other words, social workers should respect the work of others by giving credit where credit is due.

Policy

MSW students can face immediate dismissal from the MSW program for an instance of plagiarism or cheating, whether intentional or unintentional.

The university identifies two types of violations of academic integrity. Those infringements include cheating and plagiarism.

Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty is a form of theft and is a serious offense and ethical abuse. It undermines the educational process and, when done intentionally, violates the integrity of the community and the social work profession. Plagiarism and cheating occur when a writer uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original material without acknowledging its source.

Students should consult the APA manual or use a reliable online source, such as [Purdue OWL](#), for the proper referencing and citation of sources.

Plagiarism includes the unattributed use of any source, in any medium, published, or unpublished. Some examples of plagiarism include:

- Quoting or paraphrasing material without attributing it to its source
- Copying segments from the work of others without giving proper credit
- Submitting as original work written entirely by someone else (this also includes the use of artificial intelligence (AI) software that was not prompted in an assignment description).

Widely known facts do not require citation and do not count as plagiarism if they are communicated in the writer's own words. Ideas and observations original to the writer also do not require citation. Work previously submitted for a grade in one course may not be submitted for another course unless the professor specifically states otherwise.

Each time an instance of plagiarism occurs in a class, the professor may do the following:

- a. Determine the level of the offense and the appropriate consequences according to the guidelines listed in the student handbook.
- b. Communicate with the offending student to discuss the nature of his or her plagiarism, the plagiarism policy, and the consequences to be assigned; and
- c. Submit a plagiarism report to the Office of Student Conduct.

Please refer to the academic honesty policy in the [MSJ Graduate Catalog](#) for further information.

Admissions Policy

Admission to the MSW Program Policy

Rationale

The Master of Social Work (MSW) is a professional degree based on the mission and values of the social work profession. In the interest of serving vulnerable and diverse populations, all applicants admitted to the MSW Program must be committed to promoting the human and social well-being of all people. Thus, the program emphasizes admitting professionals who endeavor to value diversity within society, advocate for social, economic, and environmental justice, practice with integrity and competence, and view serving others as integral to their life purpose.

To ensure a goodness-of-fit between individuals seeking admission to the MSW Program and the social work profession, the program requires applicants to demonstrate the ability for scholarly work in graduate school and potential for advanced social work practice. The following sections discuss the admission process, criteria, application documents, due dates, and decision-making process.

Policy

The admission policy for the MSW Program is composed of the following:

- Admission Process
- Admission Roles & Responsibilities
- Admission Criteria & Supporting Documents
- Admission Committee Decisions
- Admission Notification

Admission Process

The MSW Program uses the following admission process.

1. The applicant works with a graduate admission counselor regarding questions about the MSW Program. The MSW Program Director is also available to meet with applicants or answer questions.
2. The applicant applies for admission to the university by completing an online application. To do so, go to www.MSJ.edu and click on Apply > Graduate Applicants.
3. The applicant applies to the MSW Program by submitting all admission documents online.
4. The MSW Program Admission Committee decides the admission status by using an admissions rubric. The admission committee decides the admission status of each applicant. The admission decision may be acceptance or denial into the MSW Program. Acceptance into the program may be full, full with conditions, or conditional/provisional. The following descriptions delineate each admission status.
5. An email message notifies the applicant of the admission decision.

Admission Roles & Responsibilities

The following description articulates the roles and responsibilities of the applicant, graduate enrollment counselor, and MSW Program Admission Committee.

Applicant Role & Responsibilities

Those considering social work as a career must carefully evaluate their professional commitment to caring for others who are hurting, embracing all people regardless of differences, and advocating for the needs of vulnerable and oppressed people. An applicant applying for admission to the MSW Program must also commit to upholding the ethical standards of the profession. In addition, the applicant must be willing to participate in challenging experiences where knowledge deepens, values are clarified, scholarly and clinical skills are developed, and advocacy occurs with and on behalf of vulnerable and hurting people.

Throughout the application process, the applicant should engage in self-assessment regarding goodness of fit with the social work profession. The admission documents should demonstrate the best scholarly and professional work aligning with the mission, vision, and values of the social work profession. In addition, the applicant self-manages the submission of all the required documentation.

Graduate Enrollment Counselor

The Graduate Enrollment Counselor answers questions about the university and the MSW Program. They guide the applicant throughout the admission process and are the recipients of all admission documents. After the MSW Program Admission Committee makes an admission decision, the Graduate Enrollment Counselor notifies the applicant of the decision and a welcome letter is sent from the MSW Program Director.

MSW Program Admission Committee Role & Responsibilities

The MSW Program Admission Committee consists of the MSW Program Director, BSW Program Director, MSW Faculty, and MSW Field Director as needed. The purpose of the committee is to evaluate the potential of an applicant for scholarly and professional work in graduate school. The committee uses a review process and an admission rubric to evaluate each document submitted by the applicant. Once the committee makes an admission decision, the MSW Program Director notifies the Graduate Enrollment Counselor. The Social Work Department Chair and Dean of the School of Health Sciences provide consultation as needed.

Admission Criteria & Supporting Documents

The MSW Program establishes admission criteria indicating the potential for success in graduate school. The supporting documentation submitted for admission to the MSW Program must represent the best professional and scholarly work of the applicant. The ability to write with correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and use of APA writing style is necessary.

Admission is not contingent on age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity or national origin, gender, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, tribal sovereign status, or veteran status. While past convictions do not necessarily preclude admission to the MSW Program, they may affect the availability of field practicum placements and future employability. In addition, individuals with felony convictions might not be eligible for licensure in the State of Ohio or other jurisdictions within the United States.

The MSW Program offers admission to the following categories:

1. Traditional MSW Program Admission
2. Advanced Standing MSW Program Admission

The following information outlines the admission criteria for each category and describes the required documentation.

Traditional MSW Program Admission

Generalist social work applicants who want to begin their MSW Program may begin submitting their applications as early as the fall semester before the new academic year and as late as the summer before the start of the academic year. See the admissions website for specific deadlines. The applicant must submit:

- Educational Background: A bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited university, including a "C" or higher grade in a college-level statistics course. Applicants with undergraduate degrees in any field are eligible to apply
- GPA Requirements: A minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA of 2.5.

- Transcripts: Official transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate institutions attended must be submitted with the application
- Recommendations: Three professional or academic reference contacts who can attest to the applicant's suitability for graduate-level social work education and commitment to the profession. Links will be sent to contacts for evaluation completion.
- Writing Sample (narratives included focus on social work goals, diversity & values, & professional self-awareness)
- Resume or Curriculum Vitae
- If requested by the admission committee, complete an interview to clarify information in the application documents.

Advanced Standing MSW Program Admission

Advanced standing social work applicants who want to begin their MSW Program may begin submitting their applications as early as the fall semester before the new academic year and as late as the Spring before the start of the academic year. See the admissions website for specific deadlines. The applicant must submit:

- Educational Background: A Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)-accredited program, or program recognized through ISWDRES earned within the last 10 years, including a "C" or higher grade in a college-level statistics course.
- GPA Requirements: A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 from the applicant's BSW program
- Transcripts: Official transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate institutions attended.
- Recommendations: Three professional or academic reference contacts who can attest to the applicant's suitability for graduate-level social work education and commitment to the profession. Links will be sent to contacts for evaluation completion.
- Writing Sample (narratives included focus on social work goals, diversity & values, & professional self-awareness)
- Resume or Curriculum Vitae

Avoidance of Duplication of Generalist-Level Content for Advanced Standing Students

Policy Statement

The MSW Program is committed to upholding the standards set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and ensuring that students admitted under the Advanced Standing designation do not repeat generalist-level coursework already mastered during their CSWE-accredited BSW education. This policy guarantees that the curriculum for Advanced Standing students builds upon, rather than duplicates, the competencies achieved at the undergraduate level.

The policy's purpose is to protect the integrity of the Advanced Standing MSW curriculum by ensuring an efficient, advanced-level educational experience that:

- Honors prior learning and competencies gained in BSW programs,
- Complies with CSWE EPAS regarding curriculum sequencing and advanced specialization,
- Reduces redundancy and accelerates progress toward advanced practice readiness.

Students must meet the following conditions to be admitted under Advanced Standing:

- Hold a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree from a CSWE-accredited program earned within the past 10 years.
- Have earned a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 in their BSW program.

- Have received a grade of C or higher in a college-level statistics course.

As part of admission, students' transcripts must demonstrate a BSW degree (or recognized degree) ensuring that the generalist competencies across the nine CSWE standards were demonstrated.

Curricular Structure

Advanced Standing students do not take the following generalist-level courses required in the traditional two-year MSW track:

Generalist Courses Not Required for Advanced Standing

SWK 510 – Crisis Intervention
 SWK 517 – Interdisciplinary Approach to Diversity and Social Justice
 SWK 522 – HBSE: Individuals and Families
 SWK 523 – Social Policy and Issues
 SWK 527 – Interviewing and Assessment
 SWK 536 – Theory-Informed Practice with Groups
 SWK 538 – Clinical Skills I: Assessment and Treatment Planning
 SWK 610 – Research Methods
 SWK 622 – HBSE: Macro Systems and Theories
 SWK 500 – Foundational Social Work Field Work & Seminar

Instead, Advanced Standing students begin in the second-year curriculum, focusing exclusively on advanced practice and specialization. Their program begins in the summer semester, moving directly into specialization-specific and advanced-level coursework such as:

- SWK 532 – Psychopathology and Diagnosis for Social Work Practice
- SWK 580 or SWK 680 – Behavioral Health Interventions or Trauma-Informed Care
- SWK 534 – Theory-Informed Practice with Individuals and Families
- SWK 692 – Anti-Oppressive Practice
- SWK 600 and SWK 700 – Advanced Field Work & Seminars I & II
- Additional specialization electives depending on Behavioral Health or Advanced Generalist focus.

The MSW Program Director oversees implementation of this policy, ensuring all advanced standing students:

- Are placed into the correct curriculum sequence,
- Are not required to repeat generalist-level content,
- Progress toward advanced competencies as outlined in the program's specialization areas.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in response to CSWE accreditation updates.

The secondary process/mechanism for ensuring baccalaureate social work graduates do not repeat generalist content achievements, when applicants do not qualify for advanced standing status

In alignment with CSWE's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), the MSW Program ensures that students with a BSW degree from a CSWE-accredited program who do not qualify for Advanced Standing (due to time since graduation, GPA, or other factors) do not unnecessarily repeat

generalist content already mastered. This policy outlines the secondary mechanism to assess prior generalist-level learning and apply curricular flexibility when appropriate.

The purpose of this policy is to promote equitable, individualized curriculum planning for BSW-prepared students who are not eligible for Advanced Standing but who may have demonstrated prior achievement of generalist social work competencies, while maintaining academic integrity and accreditation compliance.

This process applies to students who:

- Hold a BSW degree from a CSWE-accredited program earned more than 10 years ago, or
- Do not meet the GPA threshold for Advanced Standing, or
- Are missing specific required coursework (e.g., statistics), despite completing a BSW degree.

Process:

1. Transcript Review and Prior Learning Evaluation:

Upon admission to the traditional MSW program, eligible students may request a generalist content review by submitting syllabi, course descriptions, and/or field evaluations from their BSW program. The MSW Program Director and a designated faculty committee conduct a competency mapping review against the MSW generalist curriculum.

2. Student Development Plan:

If evidence demonstrates that the student has previously achieved equivalent generalist competencies, the program may:

- Allow the student to substitute more advanced or elective coursework in place of selected generalist courses, or
- ~~Modify~~ Waiving of field placement – applicants who have completed a BSW but do not qualify for advanced standing may submit their BSW final field evaluation for review and possible waiver. Students requesting a waiver of generalist field practicum must also provide a written statement including a competency self-assessment describing how the applicant has obtained and maintained proficiency in foundational social work competencies. Students must have earned a minimum of “B” in their field practicum for waiver consideration.
- A formal curriculum modification/student development plan will be developed in writing, approved by the MSW Program Director, and placed in the student’s academic record. This plan will detail:
- Courses waived - A waiver allows the student to bypass a required generalist-level course based on prior equivalent learning and demonstrated competency. No graduate credit is awarded for waived courses; students must complete an equal number of credits toward the MSW degree through other approved coursework. Students must earn a B or better in courses for which they are requesting a waiver.
- Rationale based on documented competency achievement,
- How the modified plan still meets the generalist level competencies outlined in the 2022 CSWE EPAS and/or does not repeat generalist content

3. Advising and Monitoring:

Students with approved modifications will be assigned a faculty advisor who monitors progress to ensure all generalist competencies are addressed (if not repeated), and that advanced competencies are being built progressively.

Admission Committee Decisions

The admission committee seeks to understand the academic potential for the study of social work at a graduate level. To do so, the admission committee evaluates the documents

submitted by each applicant. The evaluation process uses a rubric with the following rating scale.

- Not Acceptable is 0 points.
- Below Expected Potential is 1 point.
- Expected Potential is 2 points.
- Above Expected Potential is 3 points.

In total, seven rubrics appraise the potential of each applicant by evaluating the admission documents. These include transcripts, references, a resume, and a writing sample. The following descriptions explain the content evaluated and the number of rubrics used to assess each document.

- **Official transcript:** One rubric measures academic performance such as the GPA. For traditional standing in generalist social work, the rubric assesses grades from the prerequisite courses. For advanced standing, the rubric assesses course grades in all social work practice and field courses.
- **Academic and Professional References:** One rubric measures professional dispositions and academic performance.
- **Resume:** One rubric measures life experiences and goodness-of-fit with the social work profession.
- **Writing Sample:** One rubric measures scholarly writing using APA style and another three rubrics measure content about social work goals, diversity and values, and professional self-awareness.

Since the admission committee has up to three raters, the committee averages the scores for each rubric. To determine admission status, the committee calculates the mean score of the seven criteria. This score is the Overall Average Score (OAS). If the OAS is 2.0 or higher, the applicant receives full acceptance or full acceptance with contingencies. If the OAS is lower than 2.0, the applicant may receive a conditional/provisional acceptance or be denied admission. The following descriptions delineate each admission status.

- **Full acceptance.** Full admission allows the applicant to matriculate into the MSW Program.
- **Full acceptance with contingencies.** Full admission with contingencies is for an applicant who is completing a Bachelor of Social Work degree while applying to the MSW Program. After the applicant furnishes an official transcript showing a conferred Bachelor of Social Work degree, a GPA of 2.5 or higher, the contingency will be lifted, and the status changed to full acceptance. Matriculation occurs after verification of the official transcript.
- **Conditional/Provisional acceptance.** Provisional admission allows the applicant to matriculate into the MSW Program with provisions. Requirements to achieve full acceptance are in the admission letter. In cases where provisional admission warrants a Student Development Plan, the MSW Program Director meets with the student to create the plan.
- **Denial of admission.** Denial of admission does not permit the applicant to matriculate into the MSW Program. The program is not obligated to provide a rationale for the denial.

Admission Decision Notification

Applicants receive information about their admission status from the Graduate Enrollment Counselor. Communication of the decision occurs through an email message. If granted full,

full of contingencies, and conditional/provisional admission, the Graduate Enrollment Counselor continues to provide instructions about the next steps for matriculation into the program. The MSW Program Director also sends a welcome email to admitted applicants with a formal acceptance letter.

Appeals & Grievance Policy

Rationale

Students have a right to seek academic appeal and review. The MSW Program follows the university guidelines governing the redress of concerns and complaints through university-wide policies. Concerns and complaints about the MSW Program use the procedures described below.

Resolving Concerns

Professional social workers encounter situations where disagreements or concerns arise. According to the NASW Code of Ethics (2017), social workers should make every reasonable attempt to resolve issues with those involved in the situation. MSW students make efforts to resolve problems ethically.

To engage in seeking solutions to problems, students use the following protocol:

1. Schedule a meeting time to privately discuss the matter with the professor, field instructor, or academic advisor
2. Clearly state the problem using behavior-specific language. Ask the professor, field instructor, or academic advisor to communicate his or her perspective on the problem. Summarize what you heard the other person say, then ask questions to clarify the problem
3. Identify the strengths and resources available to resolve or reconcile the problem
4. Collaboratively generate possible solutions, building on current strengths.
5. Agree on a possible solution
6. Implement the solution
7. Meet to discuss progress. If the solution is working, continue. If the solution is not working, discuss another alternative, and try it.
8. Document your discussions and any paperwork.
9. If the above process is not successful, then contact the MSW Field Director or MSW Program Director.

MSW Program Appeal Process

Once students matriculate into the MSW Program, they have a right to file an appeal related to program decisions about their academic and professional performance, including their program standing such as probationary status, termination, etc.

University Appeal Processes: Academic & Professional

Students have a right to seek academic appeal and review. The MSW Program follows the university guidelines governing the redress of concerns and complaints through university-wide policies. Concerns and complaints about the MSW Program use the procedures described below.

Consistent with the University's mission, course instructors have both the right and responsibility to render constructive and critical judgment regarding the quality of the academic work performed by students according to the grading criteria stated in the respective course syllabus. While a University student may appeal a final course grade consistent with this policy, a student must prove that the University's course instructor issued the final grade in an "inaccurate or unfair" manner to be successful. Consequently, a final course grade appeal is a significant assertion by a student against a course instructor that is taken seriously by the University.

A student may appeal a final grade received in any University course (the "Grade") within ten (10) business days (excluding University holidays) of a final course grade being posted to the University's electronic grade posting system(s) (the "Appeal Deadline").

Standard on Appeal

A student may appeal a Grade only when the student believes that the Grade is inaccurate or unfair based on the grading criteria stated in the course syllabus. In all Grade appeals, the student has the burden of proof. All of the student's test results, work-product, and/or other grade criteria set forth in the course syllabus may be considered in the Grade appeal process.

Grade Appeal Procedure

The following procedure must be followed by a student when making a grade appeal:

1. **Written Notice of Appeal:** On or before the Appeal Deadline, the student must provide written notice to the course instructor and dean of the school in which the course is taught (the "Dean") that the student is appealing the Grade. The written notice of appeal must include:
 - a. Confirmation of the date, time, and location when the student discussed the student's concerns about the Grade with the course instructor prior to submitting the written notice of appeal;
 - b. Details supporting the student's position that the Grade is inaccurate or unfair based on the grading criteria stated in the course syllabus; and,
 - c. A request by the student for a conference with the course instructor and school dean to discuss the Grade appeal.

In the event that the course instructor is also the Dean, another full-time faculty member in the school in which the course is taught shall be appointed by the Office of the Provost to preside over this Grade appeal process instead of the Dean (the "Appeal Faculty") to permit the Dean to serve in the course instructor role during the appeal.

2. **Appeal Conference:** Following receipt of the Notice of Appeal, the Dean or Appeal Faculty shall schedule an appeal conference with the course instructor and

student, which conference shall occur within ten (10) business days (excluding University holidays) of receipt of the Notice of Appeal (the “Appeal Conference”). Prior to the Appeal Conference, the course instructor shall provide documentation to the Dean or Appeal Faculty supporting the Grade. The Dean or Appeal Faculty presides over the Appeal Conference. The student may be accompanied to the Appeal Conference only by (a) the student’s assigned University academic advisor, or (b) another full-time member of the University faculty. Any individual who accompanies a student to an Appeal Conference shall not advocate for the student and may only provide support to the student.

3. **Grade Appeal Decision:** The Dean or Appeal Faculty shall render a written decision granting or denying the Grade appeal to the student and course instructor within five (5) business days (excluding University holidays) of the Appeal Conference (the “Grade Appeal Decision”).
4. **Provost Review of Grade Appeal Decision:** In the event that the Grade Appeal Decision is unsatisfactory to either the student or course instructor, both the student and the course instructor shall have five (5) business days (excluding University holidays) from the receipt of the Grade Appeal Decision to request that the Office of the Provost review the Grade Appeal Decision (the “Provost Review Notice”). A Provost Review Notice shall be in writing and must include:
 - a. All documents comprising the Notice of Appeal;
 - b. A copy of the Grade Appeal Decision;
 - c. A cover letter detailing the specific reasons that the student or course instructor believes that the Grade Appeal Decision is incorrect.

In its sole discretion, the Office of the Provost may request additional documentation from the Dean or Appeal Faculty who presided over the Appeal Conference. The Office of the Provost shall review the collective documentation related to the Grade and render a final decision regarding the Grade appeal (the “Provost Final Decision”) within ten (10) business days (excluding University holidays) of receiving the Provost Review Notice. The Provost's Final Decision is binding and is not subject to further appeal.

5. If the course for which the Grade is being appealed is a prerequisite to another course, the student appealing the Grade may seek written permission from the Office of the Provost to enroll in the next course in the sequence while the appeal is pending, which permission shall be granted or denied in the sole discretion of the Office of the Provost.
6. No legal counsel for the student or course instructor may be involved in any step of the Grade appeal process.
7. A student may withdraw a Grade appeal at any juncture by making a written request to the Dean or Appeal Faculty, who will notify the Office of the Provost.

University Sexual Misconduct Grievance

MSJ has a responsibility to respond quickly, equitably, and effectively when the university becomes aware of sexual misconduct and any other conduct that is motivated by sex, gender, or gender expression that creates a hostile educational environment for MSJ students. MSJ is committed to the prevention of all forms of sexual misconduct as well as the protection and rehabilitation of victims of such acts.

Investigations of reported conduct must be impartial and reliable. Responses to reported conduct must adequately stop the behavior, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects.

Mount St. Joseph University is committed to upholding Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. § 1681). The Statute is an all-encompassing federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of the sex of students and employees of educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance.

Title IX reads:

“No person in the United States, shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...” Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. Part 106

(Title IX). For MSJ’s full Sexual Misconduct Policy, please see <https://www.msj.edu/about/title-ix/index.html>

Attendance & Participation Policy

Rationale

Students are to behave in a way that demonstrates a professional integration of the core values and skills of the social work profession. Professional behavior includes punctuality to field and class, timely submission of assignments, and regular participation in class and at the field agency, as well as all professional work environments.

Policy

The following attendance policy applies to all classes in the MSW program and is in the syllabus for each social work course:

Graduate education requires a professional commitment to learning beyond that of undergraduate education. Most classes in the MSW Program require significant work and participation. Participation in class will be monitored by the course instructor.

MSW students must also actively participate and be engaged with their peers.

The written and verbal participation (as is applicable to each class) of the student should show an ability to:

- a. Make conscious, purposeful use of self in interactions.
- b. Display an awareness of her or his feelings, behaviors, and motivations.
- c. Express receptiveness to feedback and an ability to integrate feedback into behavioral change.
- d. Respect differences and for others' feelings, including a nonjudgmental attitude, sensitivity to ethnic diversity and oppressed groups, and respect for confidentiality and client self-determination; and
- e. Demonstrate an ability to contribute to comments that are clearly stated and immediately relevant to the focal issues under discussion.

The student's comments should demonstrate that assigned readings, lectures, or assignments were completed on time and were understood, that opinions are supported by data and/or

logical argument, and that class content is integrated with field experiences (when applicable).

Life-Work Experience Credit Policy

Rationale

The MSW Program recognizes the value of life and previous work experiences. The knowledge and skills gained from these experiences are beneficial because they often increase professional and critical thinking skills and provide valuable connections to social work theory and social issues. Student contributions in the classroom and field experiences enhance their own and other students' learning experiences; however, life and previous work experiences are not a replacement for academic learning.

Policy

The following policy describes the life and work experience policy.

Life or Work Experience Credit

In accordance with the education policies and academic standards of the Council on Social Work Education, the Social Work Program does not grant social work course credit for life or previous work experience. In other words, life or previous work experience does not translate or transfer into credit for social work courses including the field practicum experiences and seminars.

Nondiscrimination Policy

Rationale

Social Work faculty members educate students who are equipped to work respectfully with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. To do so, faculty integrate diverse content throughout the explicit and implicit social work curriculum. Faculty also assess student preparedness to practice with diverse people groups by assessing cultural competence.

Social work students uphold ethical standards and best practices related to culturally competent social work. To do so, students engage in an ongoing assessment of their personal backgrounds, values, worldviews, and biases. Regardless of differences, the students demonstrate the ability to provide culturally competent services to diverse people groups.

The Social Work Program provides a variety of learning experiences with diverse populations. These activities may include field trips, guest speakers, cross-cultural experiences, student organization speakers, diverse faculty, and staff, reading and research assignments, instructional methods, and field practicum experiences.

Policy

The Social Work Program at the Mount St. Joseph University maintains a policy of nondiscrimination based on race, color, gender, age, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability. This policy is consistent with the rich tradition and values of the social work profession, which celebrates diversity and stands against social injustice.

Social Media & Technology Policy

Rationale

Technology, including social media, is a tool used to promote effective communication. As such, technology should enhance the academic learning environment and foster respectful, professional relationships. The following policy takes into consideration the legal, moral, and ethical guidelines for the prudent use of technology.

Public social networks are not private. Even with networks for invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, students should assume anything posted may be seen, read, and critiqued. Online information is accessible and archived and potentially poses harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social Media – Technology Policy

Social work students who use social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) and other forms of electronic communication (e.g., email and blogs) must be mindful of how others perceive their communication. Because of this, social work students should manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information or photos or reusing language that might jeopardize their professional image.

Students should consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and block any client access to their social networks. Students should not mention client information in any form of electronic media, including *any* information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in *any* way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the Social Work Department at Mount St. Joseph University and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they are representing professional social work practice and Mount St. Joseph University while in the classroom, the university, and broader communities.

Social Media – Technology Practices

Students are responsible for using social media and technology to enhance their learning, especially when using Mount St. Joseph University technology services and equipment. The following practices and online learning tools are required of all MSW Students.

1. **Canvas:** The Learning Management System (LMS), used by the university, is Canvas. Course communication occurs through this LMS.
2. **Grades:** The points or grades for each assignment are in Canvas. Students should read the professor's feedback and make changes in future assignments.
3. **Help Desk:** Do you need help? Ask the Help Desk by emailing iss.helpdesk@msj.edu
4. **Internet Browsers:** Having more than one browser is wise. If one browser is not working, try another.
5. **Procrastination:** Technology often fails at the last minute. Technology failures are not an excuse for a late assignment. Tips to work around technology failures:
 - a. Plan and work ahead.
 - b. Switch to alternative browsers.
 - c. Plan a time to submit assignments using campus computers.
6. **Social media and e-Communication:** E-communication becomes an "official document in perpetuity." Carefully think about what you say and how you say it. Use [netiquette](#). Helpful hints include:
 - a. Brief and concise is best.
 - b. Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Do not use symbols and shortened words typically used in texting.
 - c. Professionally present yourself by using respectful communication. If you disagree with a discussion board posting, then restate the other person's position following your position. Several ways to communicate differing views are:
 - "I hear that you are saying _____; however, I have been thinking that _____."
 - "On the one hand I am hearing _____, but on the other hand I am thinking _____."
 - "I can tell that you are passionate about _____. I am viewing this situation a little differently and would like to have us discuss _____."
 - d. Feelings do not communicate well via online postings and email messages. If you are angry, frustrated, irritated, confused, etc., please contact the professor for a phone or face-to-face meeting to discuss your feelings. The professor can help you find the appropriate words to convey your message.
 - e. Plagiarism guidelines are also applicable to online writing. If you use someone else's work, you must reference the information. APA guidelines require references to include the author and year and citations to include the author, year, and page or line number. The page number is for a paper copy; the paragraph number is for an electronic copy with no page numbers.
 - f. Abide by all policies covering written work as noted above under Classroom Policies.
 - g. Recognize the difference between the use of social media and professional academic use of technology. Professionalism is required at all times.
7. **The Mount St. Joseph University Library:** Social work courses rely on resources available through the university's library. Supplemental readings and videos are available via links. Please acquaint yourself with the [library home page](#).

8. **Uploading Assignment Problems:** If a social work course requires the uploading of any assignments in Canvas, do so. Most professors have a late assignment submission policy, so leave ample time for technology failure. Please carefully read the course syllabus for your professor's assignment policy. Helpful hints to ensure the successful uploading of an assignment:
- Double-check Upload:** After uploading an assignment, double-check to make sure you can see the correct assignment in the proper formatting. Scroll through the entire assignment to make sure the correct document and formatting are appearing in the assignment window.
 - Ensure that you upload a Word document or PDF document only** so that the rubrics, Turnitin features, etc., can properly be applied to your work.
 - Technology Failures while Uploading:** If a problem with uploading occurs, the student must submit a Help Desk ticket. After submission, someone from the Help Desk will respond via the student's MSJ email. The response helps identify the problem and solution. The student is responsible for working with the Help Desk to resolve the technical problem. If an assignment is late due to a university technology problem, the Help Desk ticket response will say so.

Student Rights & Responsibilities Policy

Rationale

Critical and reflective thinking is foundational to life-long learning. The learning process also depends on reciprocity in the relationship between learners – the student and the teacher. As a result, students have rights and responsibilities related to taking ownership of their learning and, subsequently, their academic success. This policy discusses the rights and responsibilities of students as related to the learning process and learning relationship.

Policy

Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for choosing behaviors supportive of the integration of professional ethics in their social work practice. Graduate school is an opportunity to identify a professional identity congruent with a responsible, ethical social work practitioner. The following sections more clearly identify student responsibilities related to the MSW Program, Mount St. Joseph University, and the social work profession.

Student Responsibilities – MSW Program

The MSW Student Handbook and the MSW Field Manual outline policies specifically associated with the responsibilities of social work students. Those policies include, but are not limited to:

- Expectations of academic and professional performance
- Responsibilities for ethical, responsible use of social media and technology
- Protection of students, such as the nondiscrimination policy of the social work program

- Opportunities for students to advocate for themselves by organizing and providing feedback to the program

Students are responsible for reading, asking questions about, and following the policies and procedures provided in the MSW Student Handbook and Field Manual. The dissemination of these documents occurs by posting them in social work courses and the MSW Program Community.

Student Responsibilities – Mount St. Joseph University

The university also articulates student responsibilities in the [Mount St. Joseph University graduate handbook](#). Students are responsible for reading and asking questions about the graduate handbook of the institution.

Student Responsibilities – Social Work Profession

In addition, students are responsible for practicing within the guidelines set forth by the NASW Code of Ethics. Students are to read and adhere to the ethical standards of the social work profession as defined by the [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\)](#).

Social work students are eligible to join the National Association of Social Workers and attend local chapter meetings, as well as state and national conferences. Student membership is available at one-quarter of the regular dues, and following graduation, the graduate pays only one-half the regular dues for two years. Benefits of NASW membership include discounted or free local training, eligibility for NASW's professional liability insurance at competitive rates, a full subscription to the journal, *Social Work*, and the periodical, *NASW News*, along with opportunities for leadership and interaction with local social workers and resources.

Student Rights

The MSW Student Handbook and the MSW Field Manual outline policies specifically associated with the rights of social work students. Those policies include, but are not limited to:

1. Students have the right to be treated, in all aspects of the MSW Program, without discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation.
2. Students have the right to privacy of personal information, especially as outlined by [FERPA](#) and the [NASW Code of Ethics](#).
3. Students have the right to express grievances and make appeals within the MSW Program and through the university.
4. Students have the right to an environment that is free of harassment or any other unreasonable interference with the student's performance per Title IX requirements.
5. Students have the right to have a voice in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of program policies and curricula.
6. Students have the right to form their own organizations.

Student Responsibilities

1. Students have the responsibility to pursue excellence in their academic and career development.
2. Students have the responsibility to act ethically and follow the NASW Code of Ethics.
3. Students have the responsibility to behave professionally as beginning, master 's-level social workers.
4. Students have the responsibility to provide input into the planning, revision, and evaluation of program policies and curricula.
5. Students have the responsibility to observe all duly established university, local, state, and federal regulations.
6. Students have the responsibility to refrain from actions that deny other members of the community their rights as listed above.
7. Students have the responsibility to give correct contact information, including local and permanent addresses and telephone numbers, to both the Office of the Registrar and the MSW Program Office. Students should immediately notify both offices of any changes in telephone numbers or addresses. The last address available through the Registrar's Office is the official mailing address. If the student has moved and failed to provide updated contact information, he or she will not be relieved of responsibility based on the grounds the correspondence was not delivered or received.
8. Students have the responsibility of checking their university-sponsored email accounts regularly, as that will be the official and primary mode of communication for the MSW Program.
9. Students have the responsibility of purchasing or renting all required course materials, including textbooks.
10. Students are responsible for reading, asking questions about, and following the policies and procedures provided in the MSW Student Handbook and Field Manual. The dissemination of these documents occurs by posting them on the course sites in Canvas and the MSW Program Community.
11. The university also articulates student responsibilities in the [Mount St. Joseph University graduate handbook](#). Students are responsible for reading and asking questions about the graduate handbook of the institution.

Student Input into the Implicit Curriculum

Student Organizations

Students have the right to organize and advocate for their best interests. The MSW Program offers students the opportunity to participate in student clubs and organizations where they may formulate and modify policies affecting academic and student affairs. In addition, the MSW Program Director is available to speak with students on an individual or small group basis about their concerns and advocacy intentions.

Social Work Ambassador Team

The program uses a student–Social Work Ambassador Team to engage students in the formulation and modification of policies affecting academic and student affairs.

The student–Social Work Ambassador Team is an advisory group designed to give voice to the comments and concerns of MSW students. The purpose of the team is to engage social work graduate students in the formulation and modification of policies affecting academic and student affairs and, to do so, within the University policies for academic and student affairs. The ambassador team suggests improvements in the areas of course- related curriculum, implicit curriculum, professional development activities, program policies and procedures, and program recruiting efforts. More specifically, ambassadors provide feedback on professional development activities preferred by MSW students.

The team is composed of student ambassadors, who are in the MSW Program. Ambassadors include students who are in the generalist and specialized social work curricula. At the beginning of the academic year, the program seeks students to volunteer for ambassador positions.

The ambassadors are responsible for gathering peer feedback and presenting suggestions for program improvements. The program may ask ambassadors to gather information related to specific questions. In addition, MSW students may ask one of their ambassadors to bring concerns or comments to the MSW Program Director.

Student Social Work Organization

The Student Social Work Organization is a student-led organization focusing on student social work activities. The organization has an executive council that consists of at least three officers (President, Vice President, and Secretary). The elected officers meet to plan activities for social work students. The club charges no dues for membership and is open to all undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at the university. The Social Work Organization President represents the club and interests of Social Work students along with other students from different disciplines on the Student Government Organization and the Advisory Board. The Student Social Work Organization advisor/sponsor is a social work faculty member. The Student Social Work Organization is run by faculty and undergraduate students; however, MSW students are informed of all events and are invited to participate as their schedule permits. Meetings are also offered virtually to accommodate MSW students who wish to participate but are not able to attend in person.

Phi Alpha Honor Society

Phi Alpha is the Social Work National Honor Society at MSJ. Phi Alpha members have many fundraisers, which provide them with the resources to conduct service projects within the community. Phi Alpha also co-sponsors the annual spring end-of year celebration, where new members are inducted. Students are encouraged to become members of Phi Alpha in several ways:

1. Formal invitations are sent to eligible students.
2. Announcements are made regarding criteria.
3. Eligible students are invited to an induction ceremony for new members.
4. Members submit articles to the campus publications, highlighting one of the group's service projects.

For a graduate student to receive an invitation to join Phi Alpha, the student must meet the following requirements:

- Completed a minimum of nine credit hours of social work courses
- Rank in the top 35% of their class

Students who meet the qualifications will be invited to become a member of Phi Alpha. After payment of the national and local lifetime membership fee, students participate in an induction ceremony, typically in the Spring semester. Phi Alpha Honor Society members are signified at The Mount St. Joseph University's graduation ceremonies by the wearing of honor cords.

Student Input into the Explicit Curriculum

Students in the Social Work program have several opportunities to provide input into the explicit curriculum which are articulated below:

- 1) Students complete course evaluations for each SWK course in which they are enrolled providing anonymous input and feedback regarding the course, the course content, the teaching methods, recommendations for textbooks, etc. Course evaluations are completed and reviewed by the faculty member teaching the course, as well as the MSW Program Director. The MSW Program Director and faculty members hold meetings, as needed, to discuss updates/changes to course structure/content based on student feedback.
- 2) Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the duration of courses through qualitative discussions with faculty as the courses progress, so as to allow faculty to improve upon course delivery and development throughout the semester in which the course is offered.
- 3) Students in their final semester as a social work student all participate in a focus group- exit interviews where they discuss their experiences in the social work program, providing feedback regarding the program as a whole, sharing what courses they most appreciated, what courses they wished had been offered, where the program could improve, what the program is doing well, and any additional items students want to share with the program. This discussion is a rich and beneficial opportunity for all students to have a voice in the explicit curriculum of the MSW program that is inclusive, equitable, and takes place at a point in time where students have experienced the program in its entirety.

Textbook Policy

Rationale

Graduate school offers an opportunity to develop curiosity and critical thinking through reading. In turn, students give back to the profession through their scholarly activities by publicly sharing their thoughts and ideas. To do so, students are responsible for their learning. The first step is to purchase and read the required texts and other identified learning resources. Specific required readings are outlined in the syllabus.

Policy

At the graduate level, students are to take ownership of their learning. Part of this ownership is by gaining access to all required course materials promptly. MSW students are required to purchase or rent ALL required textbooks before the start of each class.

The MSW Program makes every effort to select the most affordable textbooks when possible. However, textbook costs at the graduate level can be high, so students are encouraged to budget accordingly. Students will not continue in the class or the MSW Program without the purchase or rental of required textbooks. Unless otherwise directed by the professor, students must bring the assigned textbook(s) and/or readings to each class.

Transfer of Credit Policy

Rationale

The Transfer of Credit policy intends to:

- a) Establish MSW Program policies consistent with institutional policies and the Council on Social Work Education policy and academic standards
- b) Ensure transfer courses are earned from an MSW Program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education
- c) Avoid academic redundancy by recognizing the prior achievement of BSW graduates from CSWE-accredited programs
- d) Promote the academic integrity of the MSW Program by verifying the transfer courses are aligned with the academic standards set forth by the Council on Social Work Education

Policy

The following policy elaborates on the institutional and MSW Program policies for transfer of credit regarding graduate social work courses.

Transfer of Credit – Institutional Policy

The MSW Program adheres to the institutional policies as outlined in the [University graduate student handbook](#). In order for a course to be considered for transfer of credit, the applicant must submit an official transcript in a sealed envelope from the college or university awarding the credit OR the institution issuing the official transcripts sends an electronic copy directly to the Director of Graduate Enrollment. Credits for academic courses accepted in transfer must be graded with a “B” or higher.

The MSW Program follows MSJ’s Graduate transfer policies:

- Graduate credits earned at another institution with accreditation from one of the following accrediting agencies may be reviewed for transfer.
 - Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) Western Association of Schools and Colleges
 - Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
 - Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)

- New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
- WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)
- Credit earned at institutions with accreditation from other agencies will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. To be considered for transfer purposes, the accrediting agency must be recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or the US Department of Education (USDE).
- Official college transcripts from all schools attended must be sent directly from the previously attended college(s) to the Office of Admission. Hand delivered transcripts will not be accepted.
- A maximum of 25% of the credit hours related to the student's program may be accepted as elective or required credit, as determined by the graduate program director or designee at the time of admission.
- Graduate credits over seven years old will be accepted at the discretion of the respective department chair.
- A minimum of a "B" grade is required for each transfer course. A maximum of two pass/fail grades may be accepted. A passing grade is equivalent to a grade of "B" or above.
- Only credit hours are transferred to the Mount transcript.
- Grades for credits do not transfer and do not count in the student's cumulative grade point average at the Mount.
- Students should consult with their graduate program director or chair for other limitations on transfer credit which may apply in their program. For social work courses to be considered for transfer credit, the student must supply a copy of the course syllabus from a CSWE-accredited program for review by the MSW Program Director.

Decisions regarding credit transfer are made independently of admissions decisions. The MSW Program Director must approve transfer courses. Students are not eligible to receive academic credit for life experiences or previous work experiences and should be aware that transfer credit is not guaranteed for all courses.

Transfer of Credit – MSW Program Policy

Once a course has met the institutional transfer of credit requirements, the Registrar's Office and the MSW Program Director collaboratively decide on the acceptance of social work courses from other MSW Programs accredited by CSWE. During the review of transfer courses, the MSW Program Director may request additional documentation such as university catalogs, course syllabi, and completed assignments. The applicant is responsible for submitting the requested documentation. In some cases, the MSW Program Director may ask the applicant for permission to communicate with the applicant's previous social work instructors.

Each transfer of credit situation is unique; therefore, the MSW Program Director makes decisions on a case-by-case basis.

Appendices

Appendix A Course Descriptions

Generalist Course Descriptions

Course # and Name All new 3 credit hours	Course Description
SWK 500: Foundational SWK Field Work & Seminar	This course is the first course in the three-part field practicum sequence. Students are required to complete 300 hours in an approved social services agency under the supervision of a professional social worker. The practicum experience introduces students to the role of a professional social worker. Students demonstrate skills in maintaining boundaries and ethics while interacting professionally with clients. They also participate in a weekly hour-long seminar with their instructor and peers, demonstrating their integration of classroom knowledge with professional practice skills.
SWK 510: Crisis Intervention	This course provides a comprehensive, interdisciplinary exploration of crisis intervention within the context of social work and clinical practice. Students will develop the knowledge, skills, and ethical frameworks necessary to effectively respond to crises across various populations and settings. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the dynamics of crisis situations, assessing risk and safety, implementing evidence-based interventions, and promoting resilience and empowerment among individuals, families, groups, and communities.
SWK 517: Interdisciplinary Approach to Diversity and Social Justice	This course serves as an introduction to diversity and social justice in the context of social work practice. The course aims to enhance cultural competence by raising students' awareness of their own values, assumptions, and biases, as well as their relationships and styles of interaction and communication with people from cultures different than their own. Competence is considered in dimensions of values, knowledge, skills, and cognitive and affective processes. This course will examine social justice issues through an interdisciplinary lens.
SWK 523: Social Policy and Issues	A problem-focused analysis of past and current social policies: income maintenance, family, educational, social service, environmental, and civil rights. Political analysis includes factors which influence policy development, policy implementation. Attention is given to local, state and federal policies.
SWK 527: Interviewing and Assessment	Assessment, relationship-building and problem-solving with individuals, groups and organizational systems with the emphasis on work with individuals. Students learn how to integrate knowledge and values of social work as they learn interviewing techniques and the skills of assessment, goal setting and intervention. Students are expected to participate in practice exercises and observational activities outside of class meeting time.

SWK 536: Theory-Informed Practice with Groups	This course overviews ten major group counseling theories and their application to social work practice. Students explore group dynamics and develop skills to implement these frameworks in diverse settings, synthesizing theoretical perspectives for a culturally responsive approach. The course integrates ethics and cultural sensitivity with theory and provides a basis for group practice. Multimedia resources, including a video series, illustrate theories in action. After completing this course, students will have the knowledge to design, lead, and evaluate group interventions.
SWK 538 Clinical Skills I: Assessment & Treatment Planning	This course provides a foundation in assessment and treatment planning for social work practice, emphasizing diagnostic and treatment tools. Grounded in the DSM-5-TR, it explores the interplay between assessment, case conceptualization, and treatment planning through diverse case illustrations. The course fosters critical thinking, cultural humility, and ethical decision-making, preparing students to address client complexities and provide personalized interventions. By the end, students will be able to conduct assessments, formulate treatment plans, and navigate social work practice in diverse environments.
SWK 610: Research Methods	This course teaches students evidence-based social work practice through research methodology. Using realistic scenarios, it illustrates designing and evaluating social work programs, emphasizing ethical decisions, operationalizing variables, and utilizing valid measurement tools. Key topics include comparison groups, instrument development, sampling techniques, and single-system designs. Students will analyze research from social work journals and apply findings to complex social issues.
SWK 622: HBSE Micro – individuals & families	This course is designed to provide the student with a descriptive overview of the theoretical and conceptual diversity framework that is used to understand the complexities of interactions of human behavior within the social environment. The course provides an in-depth description of the intervention approaches which impact the human condition and the dynamic developmental components that creates unique relationship and adaptations to their environment. The course will also describe the systems which create, shape, and influence the social structures, organizations and communities in which we live. The course provides a particular emphasis on the generalist approach, (systems), while also providing information regarding the theories and/or models that identify the biological, psychological, sociological, and ecological influences that influence
SWK 623: HBSE Macro – systems & theories	This course addresses foundation-level components of theory, practice, and evaluation related to generalist social work practice with families and groups. Students will explore key explanatory theories about family and group dynamics and learn evidence-based practice models for effective intervention. The course emphasizes Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) principles, preparing students to engage with diverse populations through culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and anti-oppressive approaches. Students will also learn how to evaluate practice outcomes with families and groups, integrating theories and research to advance effective, ethical social work practice.

MSW Specialized Practice Course Descriptions (blue highlight – advanced generalist; orange highlight – behavioral health)

Course (name/number)	Course Description
SWK 530: Policy Analysis	This course explores policy analysis through a social justice lens, examining how policies affect marginalized populations and perpetuate systemic inequities. Students will evaluate policy effectiveness, its impact on social work, and develop actionable policy recommendations and advocacy plans to promote justice, equity, and anti-racist practices.
SWK 532: Psychopathology and Diagnosis for Social Work Practice	This course provides a comprehensive foundation in the assessment and diagnosis of mental health conditions using the DSM-5-TR. Students will develop skills to conduct biopsychosocial assessments that integrate client strengths, cultural identities, and systemic factors. The course emphasizes the application of theories of human behavior, person-in-environment perspectives, and culturally responsive frameworks in clinical assessment. Students will explore evidence-based interventions and learn to collaborate with clients and interdisciplinary teams to create effective, individualized treatment plans. This course prepares social work practitioners to deliver client-centered, ethical, and contextually informed mental health services.
SWK 534: Theory-Informed Practice with Individuals and Families	This course explores advanced therapeutic models and methods in social work practice, integrating thinking, feeling, and behaving. Students examine theoretical approaches (psychoanalytic, Adlerian, existential, person-centered, Gestalt, reality, behavior, cognitive-behavioral, family systems, feminist, postmodern, and integrative) and learn to apply them in diverse settings. Using case studies and media, students develop skills to analyze and apply theoretical models to real-world scenarios, integrating multiple approaches into an individualized, culturally responsive practice. By the end of the course, students will have advanced skills to assess, intervene, and promote well-being across diverse populations and practice contexts.
SWK 580: Health Interventions in Social Work Practice	This course explores evidence-based interventions for addressing behavioral health challenges, including anxiety, depression, substance use, and chronic illness. Students will learn how to apply therapeutic techniques such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Motivational Interviewing within the context of behavioral medicine. The course emphasizes working with clients in medical, psychiatric, and community-based settings.
SWK 582: Social Work in Behavioral	This course provides a comprehensive overview of social work roles in behavioral medicine, focusing on intervention strategies for patients with mental and physical

Medicine and Healthcare Settings	health needs. Students will develop skills in psychosocial assessments, care coordination, and patient advocacy within hospital, clinic, and community health settings.
SWK 584: Substance Use Disorders and Integrated Care	Focusing on the intersection of substance use disorders and behavioral medicine, this course prepares students to work in integrated care settings. It covers assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning for clients experiencing co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.
SWK 600: Advanced SWK Field Work & Seminar I	This field practicum course (the second for two-year students and the first for advanced-standing students) requires 300 hours in an approved social services agency, supervised by a professional social worker. The practicum allows students to develop and demonstrate skills in client engagement, goal setting, needs and strengths identification, assessments, and professional documentation. Students also identify relevant organizational, local, state, or national policies impacting the client system. A weekly hour-long seminar with the instructor and peers facilitates the integration of classroom learning with professional practice.
SWK 620: Applied Research/Capstone	This course provides students with the opportunity to design and implement a culminating project that utilizes qualitative and/or quantitative research methods. Students will engage in the entire research process, from formulating research questions and designing data collection instruments to collecting and analyzing data. Through hands-on experience with data analysis techniques, students will develop the skills necessary to interpret research findings and translate them into actionable recommendations. These recommendations will be designed to inform and enhance agency practice and policy decisions, bridging the gap between research and real-world application. By engaging in this comprehensive research process, students will gain a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in social science research and its potential to impact social change. This course prepares students to assess and enhance social service programs and practices. With a practical approach, students learn evaluation methods for programs and individual cases applicable to real-world situations. The curriculum includes outcome measurement, study design, data analysis, and integrating evidence-based programs with cultural humility and ADEI principles. Students will learn how to perform impactful evaluations to improve results for diverse communities.
SWK 680: Trauma Informed Care in Social Work Practice	This course provides an in-depth exploration of trauma-informed care (TIC) principles and practices within social work, grounded in SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach. Students will examine the prevalence and impact of trauma across diverse populations and learn to integrate trauma-informed principles into practice, policy, and organizational settings. Key topics include understanding the neurobiology of trauma, recognizing trauma's impact on individuals and systems, fostering resilience, and promoting safety and

	empowerment. Emphasis is placed on culturally responsive and anti-oppressive approaches to trauma care.
SWK 682: Clinical Skills II Groups & Communities	This course prepares students for community organizing and macro practice careers, developing skills to facilitate culturally relevant, equitable, and just social change. Students explore diverse engagement strategies with communities and organizations, emphasizing community assessment, dialogue, strategic planning, and implementing/evaluating change. They'll learn trauma-informed and resiliency-focused approaches to community development, interorganizational collaboration, and integrating technology for macro practice, focusing on practitioner readiness, leadership, and self-care. Topics include participatory research, empowerment evaluation and environmental justice. Experiential learning, case studies, and projects will develop competency in leading change, fostering collaboration, and addressing systemic inequities, equipping students to advance positive, sustainable social change in diverse settings.
SWK 684: Supervision, Leadership, and Administration in Social Work Organizations	This course examines supervision, leadership, and administration within social work practice. It investigates professional supervision for managing challenging circumstances, utilizing supervision and leadership theories and models to promote ethical decision-making and organizational effectiveness. Using narratives from experienced supervisors, students dissect essential aspects of supervision and explore leadership principles to motivate teams and champion social justice. Upon completion, students will be equipped to establish encouraging environments for social workers, guaranteeing superior services and enhancing their leadership and supervisory skills.
SWK 692: Anti-Oppressive Practice	This course explores the principles and application of anti-oppressive practice (AOP) within social work. Grounded in the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) nine competencies, the course examines how systemic oppression, privilege, and intersectionality shape individual and collective experiences. Students will critically analyze the historical, social, and institutional forces that contribute to marginalization and inequality while developing strategies for advancing social, economic, and environmental justice. Emphasis will be placed on fostering self-awareness, cultural humility, and anti-racist practices at micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Through case studies, reflective exercises, and experiential learning, students will gain the skills necessary to advocate for equity and inclusion in diverse practice settings.
SWK 700: Advanced SWK Field Work & Seminar II	This field practicum course (the third for two-year students and the second for advanced-standing students) requires 300 hours in an approved social services agency, supervised by a professional social worker. The practicum allows students to develop and demonstrate skills in client engagement, goal setting, needs and strengths identification, assessments, and professional documentation. Students also identify relevant organizational, local, state, or national policies impacting the client system. A weekly hour-long seminar with the instructor and peers facilitates the integration of classroom learning with professional practice.

Appendix B

Informal Written Plan, Student Success & Development Plan, and Student Success & Development Plan Review

Informal Written Plan

Student Name	Date
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Purpose

The Informal Written Plan is an agreement between the MSW Program and the student. The purpose of the plan is to improve academic scholarship and/or non-academic professionalism while empowering a student to complete the MSW curriculum. The *Student Excellence Standards* guide the selection of student strengths and development areas.

Informal Written Plan (Check one type of plan)

☐
☐
☐

Informal Written Plan –

First Plan Informal

Written Plan – Second Plan

Other:

Program Status (Check one type of program status before the writing of the plan)

☐
☐
☐

Provisional admission before matriculation into the MSW Program

Good standing

Probationary standing

Student Strengths (List strengths by referencing the Standards of Excellence)

1.	
2.	
3.	

Student Development Areas (Check all areas of concern then reference the Standards of Excellence)

☐	Basic Abilities to Acquire Professional Skills
☐	Communication/Interpersonal Skills
☐	Cognitive Skills
☐	Emotional and Mental Abilities

	Stress Management
	Professional Performance Skills
	Professional Commitment
	Professional Behavior
	Self-Awareness
	Ethical Obligations
	Scholastic Performance

Rationale (Describe concerns)		
Academic and/or Professional Performance Goals		Review Date
1.		
2.		
3.		
Strategy (Who will do what to achieve goals)		
Anticipated Outcomes for Satisfactory Completion of the Plan (Check the anticipated outcomes.)		
	Provisional admission status will be changed to good standing. The student may matriculate into the MSW Program	
	Good standing status in the program continues. The student continues with the academic progression of MSW courses	
	Probationary status in the program changes to good standing. The student continues with the academic progression of MSW courses	
	Other:	
Anticipated Outcomes for Unsatisfactory Completion of the Plan (Check the anticipated outcomes.)		
	Write an initial Student Development Plan	
	Write a second Informal Written Plan	
	Standing in the program changes to probationary status	
	Dismissal from the program	
	Other:	

Student Response (May be attached.)

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Signatures and Dates

My signature represents my: 1) participation in reviewing the plan, 2) understanding that I have the opportunity to make written comments about the plan, and 3) understanding that I agree to demonstrate the Standards of Excellence and work toward developing my competencies as a professional social worker. My signature further indicates that I have read, agree with, and wish to continue

with the **Informal Written Plan**. I also acknowledge that I had an opportunity to ask questions and understand the review date to be on or before _____(date).

Student Signature	Date
Field Instructor and/or Course Instructor, if applicable	Date
MSW Advisor and/or Field Director, if applicable	Date
MSW Program Director	Date

Student Success & Development Plan

Student Name

Date

Purpose

The Student Development Plan is an agreement between the MSW Program and the student. The purpose of the plan is to improve academic scholarship and/or non-academic professionalism while empowering a student to complete the MSW curriculum. The *Student Excellence Standards* guide the selection of student strengths and development areas.

Type of Plan (Check one type of plan)

- ☐ Student Development Plan – First Plan
- ☐ Student Development Plan – Second Plan
- ☐ Field
- ☐ Performance Improvement

Program Status (Check one type of program status before the writing of the plan)

- ☐ Provisional admission before matriculation into the MSW Program
- ☐ Good standing
- ☐ Probationary standing

Student Strengths (List strengths by referencing the Standards of Excellence)

1.	
2.	
3.	

Student Development Areas (Check all areas of concern then reference the Standards of Excellence)

☐	Basic Abilities to Acquire Professional Skills
☐	Communication/Interpersonal Skills
☐	Cognitive Skills
☐	Emotional and Mental Abilities
☐	Stress Management
☐	Professional Performance Skills
☐	Professional Commitment
☐	Professional Behavior
☐	Self-Awareness
☐	Ethical Obligations
☐	Scholastic Performance

Rationale (Describe concerns)

Academic and/or Professional Performance Goals	Review Date
4.	

5.		
6.		
Strategy (Who will do what to achieve goals)		

Anticipated Outcomes for Satisfactory Completion of the Plan (Check the anticipated outcomes.)	
	Provisional admission status will be changed to good standing. The student may matriculate into the MSW Program
	Good standing status in the program continues. The student continues with the academic progression of MSW courses
	Probationary status in the program changes to good standing. The student continues with the academic progression of MSW courses
	Other:
Anticipated Outcomes for Unsatisfactory Completion of the Plan (Check the anticipated outcomes.)	
	Extend the initial Student Success and Development Plan
	Write a second Student Success and Development Plan
	Standing in the program changes to probationary status
	Dismissal from the program
	Other:

Student Response (May be attached.)

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Signatures and Dates

*My signature represents my: 1) participation in reviewing the plan, 2) understanding that I have the opportunity to make written comments about the plan, and 3) understanding that I agree to demonstrate the Standards of Excellence and work toward developing my competencies as a professional social worker. My signature further indicates that I have read, agree with, and wish to continue with the **Student Success and Development Plan**. I also acknowledge that I had an opportunity to ask questions and understand the review date to be on or before _____ (date).*

Student Signature	Date
Field Instructor and/or Course Instructor, if applicable	Date
MSW Field Director, if applicable	Date
MSW Program Director	Date

Student Success & Development Plan Review

Student Name	Date
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The original Student Success and Development Plan written on _____ (date) is attached.

This is the ☐ first review ☐ ongoing review ☐ final review.

Goal Number	List goals from the original SDP and then mark one of the following: FC= fully completed PC=partially completed	Comments
1		
2		
3		
4		

This student has:

- ☐ Fully met the objectives
- ☐ Has partially met the objectives
- ☐ Has not met the objectives

Recommendations:

- ☐ Remove from provisional admission status
- ☐ Retain in the program
- ☐ Remove from probationary status
- ☐ Revise plan and review again on _____
- ☐ Dismiss this student from the program
- ☐ Other:

Student Comments:

Faculty Comments:

My signature represents my: 1) participation in reviewing these objectives, 2) understanding that I have the opportunity to make written comments about the outcome of this review, and 3) understanding that I may pursue the review process outlined in the MSW Student Handbook if I do not believe this review was fair or objective.

Student Signature	Date
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MSW Field Director (if applicable)	Date
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MSW Program Director