

MSW Student Handbook

Updated for the 2021-2022 academic year

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Dear MSW Student:

Welcome to the graduate program of the School of Social Work. We are pleased that you chose to study with us and look forward to working with you to achieve your academic and professional goals. We hope that working toward these goals will be both exciting and challenging for you.

You have the primary responsibility for planning your academic program and making certain that your program fulfills degree requirements. To do that, you will need information, suggestions and guidance from your faculty advisor and other faculty, ideas from fellow students, and a clear understanding of the policies and procedures of the University, the College, and the School of Social Work.

We have prepared this handbook to help you understand how we work. The handbook contains information on the policies and procedures of the School of Social Work and, where they are also pertinent, refers you to the policies of the College and University. Our policies and procedures are built upon the general rules and regulations of the University. These are presented in the document Academic Rules and Regulations, included at the front of the Graduate Course Catalog. Please review them as you begin your degree program.

Have a great year and, when in doubt, ask questions so that you have the information you need to complete your course of study successfully. Again, welcome aboard!

Sincerely,

Carrie Jefferson Smith, ACSW, DSW
Professor, Department Chair, School of Social Work

Jennifer C. Genovese, Ph.D., ACSW, LCSW
MSW Program Director, Assistant Teaching Professor

Introduction

The School of Social Work is located on the second floor of White Hall in the Falk Complex at Syracuse University. White Hall is situated on a hill and has two levels: the west side has four stories and the east has three. The Arnold M. Grant Auditorium was added in 1966. It is attached to the southern end of White Hall. White Hall is named for Ernest I. White, a lawyer who served as president of The Post-Standard. A 1997 expansion project included renovations to White Hall as part of the \$12.5 million budget when MacNaughton Hall was added to the north. White Hall's campus location is north of the Carrier Dome, west of Heroy Geology Building and south of Crouse College. Made of reinforced concrete with brick facing and limestone trim, it was begun by architect Lorimer Rich and Associates, and completed by King & King Architects.

The School of Social Work offers educational programs leading to the Bachelor of Science in Social Work and the Master of Social Work degrees. The School is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. A copy of the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards for Master's Degree Programs is provided in Appendix E. Both the BSSW and MSW programs of the School of Social Work are offered in collaboration with participating human service agencies across Central New York that provide professional internship settings. These agency collaborations are vital to the field instruction programs of the School.

The Director/Department Chair is the chief administrator in the School of Social Work, responsible for all budgetary, personnel, and programmatic operations of the School in collaboration with the appropriate College and University officers. The Master of Social Work Program Director is responsible for the implementation of the graduate social work degree program. The Baccalaureate Program Director is responsible for the implementation of the undergraduate social work degree program. The Director of Field Instruction oversees the field placement process for students in both the graduate and undergraduate programs.

The School of Social Work is one of eight units within Falk College. Some of the services utilized by graduate students are provided centrally by the College or the University. For other aspects of the graduate experience, such as academic advising, registration, student progress evaluation, degree certification, and certification for licensing, faculty and staff within the School of Social Work are the primary resources. The Social Work faculty and professional staff are responsible for the development, delivery, and continuous evaluation of the MSW curriculum.

Students are encouraged to participate in the formulation and implementation of policy affecting academic and student affairs through membership in standing or ad hoc committees of the School of Social Work and Falk College. The major standing committees of the School of Social Work are the Administrative Committee, the Promotions and Tenure Committee, the Faculty Recruitment Committee, and the two Program committees (MSW and BSSW).

There are two student organizations within the School of Social Work. Social Workers United is a graduate student organization. The purpose of this organization is to encourage broader acquaintances among social work students, to discuss academic and career interests, and as a channel for student activities and participation on the School's policy-making committees.

The second organization is the Zeta Gamma Chapter of Phi Alpha Honor Society in the School of Social Work. To be eligible for Phi Alpha, graduate students must have completed nine semester hours of required social work graduate courses, or at least 37.5% of the total credits for the graduate degree and rank in the top 35% of their class.

School of Social Work Faculty and Staff

[Visit the Falk College online directory for an updated listing of staff and contact information.](#)

MSW Program

Full-Time Master of Social Work (MSW) Degree

Full-time students typically complete the MSW degree in two academic years. Degree requirements for the MSW appear in the [Syracuse University Graduate Course Catalog](#). The Foundation Curriculum is taken by all students except those with a BSW degree and who have been admitted to the Advance Standing MSW Degree program, who complete only the concentration-level curriculum within what is called the Advanced Standing Program. All students choose one of the two Advanced Concentrations: Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) or Advanced Integrated Practice (AIP). Only limited variations in this plan are possible and then only after discussions with a student's academic advisor and approval by the MSW Program Director and Department Chair. Please refer to the Graduate Course Catalog or your academic advisor for the MSW degree requirements and course sequence plan.

Part-Time Master of Social Work (MSW) Degree

Part-time students may complete the MSW degree in four years, although many accelerate their pace in the 2nd and 3rd years and finish in three years. Degree requirements for the MSW appear in the [Syracuse University Graduate Course Catalog](#). The Foundation Curriculum is taken by all students except those with a BSW degree, who complete only the concentration-level curriculum (Advanced Standing Program). All students choose one of the two Advanced Concentrations: Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) or Advanced Integrated Practice (AIP). Only limited variations in this plan are possible and then only after discussions with a student's academic advisor and approval by the MSW Program Director and Department Chair. Please refer to the Graduate Course Catalog or your academic advisor for the MSW degree requirements and course sequence plan.

NOTE: All students must take 6 credits per semester. If there are extenuating circumstances that require a student to take less than 6 credits per semester, the student must have approval by the academic advisor and the MSW Program Director and submit a Petition to Faculty requesting the reduction in required credits.

Non-Matriculated Students

Non-Matriculated students may take up to a maximum of six (6) graduate credits in the MSW program with permission of the MSW Program Director and the Director/Department Chair. Courses must be selected from the following list:

SWK 611: Social Welfare Policy (3)

SWK 626: Persons in Social Context (3)

SWK 628: Human Diversity in Social Context (3)

SWK 662: Applied Research in SW (3)

SWK 724: Psychopathology (3)

Passing graduate social work courses is **not** an automatic acceptance into program. Students are admitted based on a number of criteria, only one of which is grades. [Learn more about getting admitted.](#)

Field Education

Field education occurs throughout the graduate social work curriculum and is concurrent with specific coursework. Please see the [MSW Field Instruction Manual](#) for specific field education policies and procedures.

For MSW 60 Credit Program: Students are required to engage in two separate internships, one at the foundation level and one at the concentration level, either Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) or Advanced Integrated Practice (AIP). Each field placement is a minimum of 500 hours (250 per semester) and typically occurs across two consecutive semesters in one academic year.

MSW Advanced Standing Program: Advanced Standing students are required to complete one internship at the concentration level, either Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) or Advanced Integrated Practice (AIP). This field placement is a minimum of 500 hours and typically occurs across two semesters in one academic year.

MSW/MFT Dual Degree: Students are required to complete separate internships with the Social Work and Marriage and Family Therapy programs. In Social Work, students follow curriculum specific requirements as appropriate to their status.

Master of Social Work (MSW) /Marriage and Family Therapy (MA) Dual Degree

The dual degree is offered as a 96-credit, three-year program (for students not admitted to the MSW Advanced Standing Program), or a 78-credit, two-year program (for students who are admitted to the MSW Advanced Standing program). A student's degree will be conferred upon successful completion of the academic requirements for both the social work and marriage and family therapy components of the dual master's program. The program extends the advanced clinical preparation of the master of social work program to include an additional year of intensive marriage and family therapy clinical supervision. It combines the MSW ability to work in systems of all sizes with the focus on families and relationships systems by MFT Full-time (96 credit) students will complete the MSW/MFT dual degree in three academic years, including two summers.

Effective Fall 2018, students will initially apply to either the MSW or MA program only, with admission to the Dual MSW/MA program at the end of year one via an internal admission process. A part-time option is not available to dual degree students.

Academic Advising

Each matriculated graduate student is assigned an academic advisor who is a member of the faculty or professional staff in their degree program(s). Academic advising is a shared responsibility between the student and the academic advisor. The student has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring academic progress. Efforts are made to preserve continuity of advisor assignment throughout the student's course of study and changes to advisor assignments are only done in exceptional situations with the approval of the Director of the MSW program. The academic advisor provides the consultation and guidance necessary to foster the professional development of the student. The advisor aids the student in the selection of courses, in registration, in meeting degree certification requirements, and in assessing professional interests and development. Students are **required** to meet with their advisors before registering for courses each semester and submit an electronic SCORE registration form, signed by the advisor and the student, and electronically to the Social Work office before completing the registration process online in MySlice.

If a course-related problem arises, students are advised first to discuss the problem with the instructor involved. If it cannot be satisfactorily resolved through this action, the matter should then be discussed with the academic advisor. For students in academic difficulty, the academic advisor is expected to assist the student in decision-making around the academic difficulty and in the development of a plan aimed at returning the student to good academic standing.

Students are responsible for seeking the advice and consultation of their academic advisors when they perceive they are having academic problems. They also are responsible for making and keeping advising appointments during the advising period that precedes course registration for the following term. (See Problem Solving in Advising – Appendix G)

Registration

Information regarding advising and registration dates is emailed to students prior to the advising and registration period. Both full-time and part-time students may register for courses after meeting with their advisors and obtaining a signed electronic SCORE registration form. The signed form is submitted electronically to the Social Work office. Any changes to the student/advisor agreed upon course registration schedule must be reported to and approved by the academic advisor in writing. Faculty advisors must also approve summer enrollment. Students authorized to register will do so on their own using the university's web-based online registration system. For information on how to use this system, visit the [Registrar's Office website](#). Information regarding dates that registration is available for the upcoming semester can also be found at the [Registrar's Office website](#). Courses may be added after initial registration through the first two weeks of the semester. There are two deadlines for dropping courses. If a course is dropped before the financial drop deadline, the tuition for that course will be refunded. Tuition for a course dropped after the financial drop deadline, but before the academic drop deadline, **will not be refunded**. More detailed information about this and the exact dates for adding and dropping courses can also be found on the [University Registrar's website](#).

Academic Progress and Professional Behavior

Academic Standing

University Rules and Regulations set out the minimum GPA that graduate students in good academic standing must maintain. Students in the School of Social Work must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0. You cannot receive the MSW degree without attaining a final cumulative GPA of 3.0 and good standing regarding professional behavior. The standards for good academic standing and the procedures that the School of Social Work follows when a student's GPA falls below 3.0 are described in Appendix C. Students must be aware that they bear the risk and responsibility for the financial investment involved when continuing in the MSW program with a GPA below a 3.0 and/or when not in good academic standing.

Professional Behavior

The Code of Ethics as adopted by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) serves as the primary basis for judgments concerning the appropriateness of the behavior of students, as well as relevant sections of the New York State Education law regarding the professions and New York State Regents Rules and Regulations. A student whose actions have raised concerns about professional behavior may be brought before the Academic Hearing Board of the School of Social Work under the policy for Academic Progress and Professional Behavior. The standards for Academic Progress and Professional Behavior and the procedures of the Academic Hearing Board are described in Appendix C.

While recognizing a responsibility to guide and support students during the course of their professional education, the faculty and professional staff also recognize a responsibility to the profession of social work and to the people it serves. Consistent with the Council on Social Work Education Evaluation Standards and the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (see Appendix F), the School of Social Work considers both the performance and behavior of students in the classroom, in the field placement, and in and around the university as matters of academic standing. Performance and behavior are treated as indicative of likely performance as a social work practitioner. In addition to poor performance in the classroom, as indicated by course grades, performance or behavior that demonstrates poor interpersonal skills, unethical, threatening or otherwise unprofessional conduct will be considered grounds for academic disciplinary action. This may include, but it is not limited to, academic probation or dismissal.

Essential Abilities for Performance in the School of Social Work

The following standards, distinguished from academic standards, describe the cognitive, emotional and character requirements necessary to provide reasonable assurance that students can complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of social work education and practice. Acquisition of competence as a social worker is a lengthy and complex process that will be undermined by significant limitations of the student's ability to participate in the full spectrum of the experiences and the requirements of the curriculum.

Students in the Syracuse University School of Social Work are expected to possess the following abilities and attributes at a level appropriate to their year in the program. They are expected to meet these standards in the classroom, in their practice, and elsewhere. Attention to these standards will be part of evaluations made by those responsible for evaluating students' practicum and academic performance.

Academic Integrity: Upon entrance into the program, the student is expected to demonstrate academic integrity in the preparation of written assignments, research and scholarly papers and must understand and adhere to the [Syracuse University Policy on Academic Integrity](#) which prohibits academic dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, internet plagiarism.

Communication Skills: The social work student must communicate effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients and other professionals. Students must express their ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to listen to others. They must have sufficient skills in spoken and written English to understand the content presented in the program.

Self-Awareness: The social work student must know how his/her values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect his/her thinking, behavior and relationships. The student must be willing to examine and change his/her behavior when it interferes with work with clients and other professionals and must be able to work effectively with others in subordinate positions as well as with those in authority.

Professional Commitment: The social work student must have a strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession. The student must be committed to the essential values of social work, which are the dignity and worth of every individual and one's right to a just share of society's resources.

Knowledge Base for Social Work Practice: The professional activities of social work students must be grounded in relevant social, behavioral and biological science knowledge and research. This includes knowledge and skills in relationship-building, data-gathering, assessment, interventions and evaluation of practice.

Objectivity: The social work student must be sufficiently objective to systematically evaluate clients and their situations in an unbiased, factual way.

Empathy: Upon entrance into the program and increasingly as the student progresses through the program, one is expected to work diligently to understand and appreciate the way of life and value system of others. Students must be able to communicate empathy and support to clients and community members as a basis for a productive professional relationship.

Self-Care: The social work student must be resistant to the undesirable effects of stress, exercising appropriate self-care and developing cooperative and facilitative relationships with faculty, field educators, administrators, colleagues and peers.

Acceptance of Diversity: As the student progresses through the program, one is expected to demonstrate an appreciation for the value of human diversity. In the field practicum, one must serve and be willing to serve in an appropriate manner, all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation (or lack thereof), gender, ability, sexual orientation, and value system.

Interpersonal Skills: The social work student must demonstrate the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients and other professionals. These include compassion, altruism, integrity, and the demonstration of respect for and consideration of others.

Professional Behavior: The social work student must behave professionally by practicing within the scope of ones skills and knowledge, adhering to the profession's code of ethics, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, and completing assignments on time. The social work student must demonstrate a willingness to accept feedback and must not practice outside ones areas of competence without engaging in training, consultation and supervision.

Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures for Allegations of Academic Dishonesty or Violation of Other University Policies

Academic Dishonesty

The faculty and professional staff of the School of Social Work consider academic dishonesty a very serious matter. This includes how students utilize and quote (or fail to quote) documents found on the web. Inadequate attribution is considered plagiarism, a type of academic dishonesty, and will result in sanction. If you are uncertain about how to properly use others' writings or cite the work of others, you should not hesitate to seek guidance.

[Read the complete University Academic Integrity Policy effective January 1, 2017.](#)

Disciplinary, Grievance, and Appeal Procedures

Formal disciplinary and grievance procedures exist at both the College and University level for handling allegations of academic dishonesty or violation of other university policies. The document, "[Falk College Grievance Policies and Procedures](#)," issued by Falk College, explains where different types of allegations are heard.

Violations of Other University Policies

The University has offices and committees that are responsible for hearing complaints of both student and faculty violations of conduct and policy. Tables 1 and 2 in the College Grievance Committee Policies and Procedures document outline where in the University various issues are handled (these tables are reprinted in Appendix D). Should you have a complaint involving potential violation of university policy with regard to racial or sexual harassment, disability accommodation, or the Code of Student Conduct, consult these tables to learn where in the University you should direct your complaint. You may also consult the Office of the Associate Dean of Falk College. They will assist you in determining whether the problem can be handled informally or whether it should be directed to the appropriate University office.

General Information

Audit

Matriculated graduate students wishing to audit a course (no credit) must have approval of the faculty advisor and the course instructor. Auditing requires formal registration, and is not available to non-matriculated students. No tuition is charged for students registered full-time (9 or more credits) or appointed as Graduate Assistants during a Fall or Spring semester. Students registered for fewer than 9 credit hours are charged 60% of the tuition rate for courses audited.

Degree Certification

In order to certify your master's degree at the end of your study, we must have a degree-bearing transcript from your baccalaureate program.

All students must submit acceptable documentation of previous degrees to the Graduate School by the end of their first semester of study. After completion of the first semester of graduate study, the Graduate School may withhold registration for any student who has not produced documentation of completion of the undergraduate degree for the date reported on the application by the student, or who has not been granted a written waiver by the Academic Unit and the Graduate School. The hold on registration will only be released when the documentation has been provided.

No graduate degree will be granted unless the student has complied with the items described in the preceding paragraph. No credit that is applied to the undergraduate degree may be applied to the graduate degree, unless such double-counting falls under explicit articulation of a combined bachelor's and master's program that has been approved by, and registered with, the New York State Education Department. (Drawn from Academic Rules and Regulations, IX, Admission, Section 23.0 General Policies, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, 1995-96. See this document for more detail.)

No graduate course credit toward the master's degree is granted for life experience.

Email

Much of the internal communication of the School of Social Work is conducted via email. This includes general announcements to students. All graduate students are required to have a Syracuse University email account. All students currently registered and matriculated at Syracuse University automatically have an email account with the University. All communication from the School of Social Work and the University will be sent to your Syracuse University e-mail address. Information about accessing your S.U. email account or forwarding your S.U. email to another address can be found on the [ITS website](#).

Grades

Official grade reports will be available on MySlice from the University Registrar's Office after the end of the semester. You can view your grades online using the MySlice system.

Health Forms & Immunization Policy

In accordance with New York State Public Health Law, Health Services requires that all students provide documentation of immunization. [Visit the Patient Portal](#).

Incomplete Grades

The grade of "I" (incomplete) may be granted to a student only if it can be demonstrated that it would be unfair to hold the student to the normal limits of the course. This may include illness, job conflict, or other exceptional circumstances that prevent them from fulfilling all course requirements on time. An Incomplete Grade Request must be approved by the instructor, with all requirements and provisions agreed upon beforehand. A student will need the instructor's approval and will need to have completed enough course content to have a grade assigned based on the work to date. An Incomplete is not available if the student has not completed enough work on which to base a grade. If the student takes a leave of absence or is withdrawn from the University, the student cannot receive Incompletes for courses in which the student was registered.

To receive an incomplete, you must complete the [Request for Incomplete Form](#) and obtain appropriate signatures. The form represents a contract between you and the faculty member and specifies the reason for granting an incomplete and the conditions and time limit for removing it. Approval of that request is to be granted by the faculty member teaching the course and the MSW Program Director of the School of Social Work.

An Incomplete calculates as an F in the student's GPA. The instructor calculates a grade for the student based on work completed to date, counting unsubmitted work as zero.

Petition Process

The petition to faculty form is the process by which the student obtains approval to make variations from established academic requirements, and University or School of Social Work policies and procedures. All student forms can be found on the [Office of the Registrar - Student Forms](#).

References

In response to requests for references from prospective employers and academic programs, the School of Social Work provides only the following information: dates of enrollment, date of degree award, and concentration. This limitation complies with current legislation regarding individual rights and privacy. Candidates and graduates seeking personal references should arrange to have such requests forwarded directly to individuals (i.e., academic advisor, classroom instructor, field instructor, etc.). Personal references are those that deal with character, quality of performance, and potential for practice and academic endeavors. Transcripts are available by request to the [Office of the Registrar - Transcripts](#).

School of Social Work Governance Committees

Opportunities for involvement in the School of Social Work exist for graduate students through participation in the School's self-governance committees. Students are represented on the Social Work Promotion and Tenure Committee, Faculty Recruitment Committee, the MSW Program Committee, and the BSSW Program Committee. More information is available from the MSW Program Director.

Transfer Credit

Matriculated graduate students enrolled in the regular 60 credit hour MSW program may petition to transfer previously earned graduate credit consistent with policies of the School of Social Work as specified in Appendix A and the university Academic Rules and Regulations. Students enrolled in the Advanced Standing Program may not transfer graduate credit from other institutions.

University Rules and Regulations

Syracuse University policies prescribing student rights and obligations are presented in "University Rules and Regulations" located in the [Graduate Course Catalog online](#).

Withdrawal/Leave of Absence

If it becomes necessary for the student to withdraw from school or take a leave of absence the student must submit a "withdrawal/leave of absence" form. To initiate this process students should contact their academic advisor. Withdrawals and leaves of absence must be signed by the MSW Program Director and the Department Chair of the School of Social Work.

The University treats "withdrawal" and "leave of absence" differently. A leave of absence is student initiated and signals that the student left the University in good standing. A leave of absence that is taken for medical reasons will require clearance from the Health Service before the student may return. A withdrawal is School or University initiated and signals that the student did not leave the University in good standing. Generally, the student returning from a School or University initiated withdrawal must meet specific conditions before being re-admitted.

All students returning from a leave of absence or withdrawal must contact the School of Social Work in writing to request permission to re-enroll. Permission to re-enroll is not granted automatically. The student's record and the conditions surrounding the student's earlier departure from the university will be reviewed by the MSW Program Director of the School of Social Work to assist in the decision to allow the student to re-enroll.

Writing Standard

Graduate students are expected to prepare all written papers consistent with the most recent version of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Additional assistance can be found through links on the [Syracuse University Library website](#).

Appendices

Appendix A: Petitions for, and Evaluation of Graduate Transfer Credit

Students in the regular MSW program may transfer a maximum of 12 credits from graduate institutions other than a CSWE accredited school of social work. They may transfer up to 30 credits from a CSWE accredited school of social work. No more than 30 credits may be transferred in. All credit applied toward the graduate degree must be completed within the seven years preceding the student's graduation date (under exceptional circumstances courses older than seven years may be petitioned in). All courses must be at the graduate level, be considered appropriate for the student's program of study, and a grade of B or better must be earned (transcript must be provided).

MSW students who are planning to transfer graduate credits from other institutions must follow the procedures outlined below. No credit is granted for life experience. The School of Social Work has developed its own policy about the transfer of courses taken online (see below). Students in the Advanced Standing Program may not transfer any credits from other institutions toward the MSW.

For Graduate Credits Earned Prior to Matriculation in the MSW Program

1. A petition requesting that transfer credit be posted to the Syracuse transcript must be filed with and approved by the School of Social Work and the Graduate School during the student's first twelve credits of registration at Syracuse.
2. The petition must be clear and specific, including the following information:
 - a. the institution at which the credit was earned
 - b. when the credit was earned
 - c. the course number, title, and credit hours earned for the course to be transferred
 - d. the Syracuse MSW degree requirements for which the course substitutes
3. The petition requires the signature of these people:
 - a. Student
 - b. Academic Advisor
 - c. MSW Program Director
4. The signed petition must be accompanied by an official transcript showing the course(s) involved before the petition for transfer credit can be approved.

Students petitioning for transfer credit to meet a required course should be aware that the review ordinarily requires evidence, beyond the transcript, that clarifies the substance of the course (e.g. course outline, papers or exams, catalog description, etc.). Such information is often necessary to render a reasonable judgment on equivalence of content. All student forms can be found on the [Office of the Registrar - Student Forms](#).

For Graduate Credits Earned After Matriculation in the MSW Program

Students are required to complete a petition requesting permission to complete the course at another graduate institution. The petition must include clear and specific information about the course to be completed and how that credit is to be used in the student's program of study. (See Item # 2 above).

Appendix B: Policy on Allowing Visitors in the Classroom

Students are not permitted to bring visitors (friends, spouses, partners, children, clients, etc.) to class sessions. Clinical cases may be discussed and/or students may disclose sensitive or confidential information about clients or themselves during class discussions. Social Work students have a code of professional conduct that is reviewed during orientation and is available online on the [Code of Student Contact page](#). There is a mechanism in place for sanctioning students if they violate professional behavior in any way. Interpreters, medical providers and other such assistants are expected to behave within the school's professional code of conduct and are only permitted to participate in class discussions with permission of the instructor.

Appendix C: Academic Progress and Professional Behavior

General Principles: School of Social Work

Academic performance relates both to grades and to personal qualities including values and interpersonal skills that demonstrate the potential for effectively working with clients in the field placement component of the MSW degree program. The School of Social Work embraces its ethical responsibility to protect clients from harm. In the field placement, the importance of the student-client relationship supersedes that of classroom performance. Unethical, threatening, or otherwise unprofessional conduct will be closely examined. The School of Social Work retains the right to take academic disciplinary action in accordance with the procedures described in this statement when the student's behavior indicates an inability to effectively communicate and to develop the type of interpersonal relationships that are required in social work practice.

The formal process for handling such concerns will observe the following principles:

1. Identification, assessment, and notification of the student in academic difficulty will occur as early and often in the course of graduate study as possible and necessary.

2. Policy and procedures governing graduate student academic progress will be routinely and regularly publicized to inform students and faculty.
3. Appropriate due process will be observed for the benefit of the student and the faculty member(s). All actions taken, within procedures, are to be placed in writing addressed to the relevant party with copies to others involved.
4. All policies developed will be coordinated with other aspects of the School of Social Work (e.g. grading policies), College policies, and with the "University Rules and Regulations" as they apply to graduate students.
5. The Director of the School of Social Work is responsible for the termination of a given student's matriculated status in the MSW program, working with the Falk College Dean's office and the Graduate School.
6. All matters related to identification, assessment, and notification of the matriculated student in academic difficulty will be coordinated by the Director of the MSW Program.
7. Individual faculty members are responsible for the evaluation of student academic performance, the preparation of reports on student progress, and the award of grades in courses they teach.

Criteria for Determining Student Standing

The criteria for determining student standing in the graduate program may include:

- Attendance in the classroom;
- Attendance in field instruction;
- Behavior that provides relevant information reflecting likely performance as a social work practitioner;
- Performance in classroom tests or other evaluation exercises;
- Performance in field instruction assignments as defined by the field learning contract and/or field evaluation instruments;
- Overall GPA.

Standards

Student standing in the MSW program will be determined through application of the following standards:

Good standing: Cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 and P for all field instruction registrations to date

Probation: Cumulative GPA less than 3.0, or I for any field instruction registration to date; or poor interpersonal skills, unethical, threatening or otherwise unprofessional conduct

Dismissal: Probationary status for two consecutive semesters; or F for any field instruction registration; or unacceptable interpersonal skills, unethical, threatening or otherwise unprofessional conduct

When computing the GPA, the grade I is calculated as an F, and the grade P and its associated credits are excluded from the calculation. Grades of I (Incomplete) awarded in classroom courses, and accompanied by complete and unexpired Request for Incomplete forms that indicate the student's work to date is satisfactory, will not be considered in the cumulative GPA for purposes of rendering decisions regarding a student's academic standing. However, a letter from the Director of the School may be sent to a student who has a grade of I at the end of a semester, reminding them of the policies associated with an I grade and the fact that an I will revert to an F if the work is not completed in the agreed upon time.

- Matriculated, part-time graduate students will be subject to review for probation at the conclusion of each term.
- Advanced Standing students will be evaluated after their first semester. If the cumulative GPA is less than 3.0, F for any field instruction, unacceptable interpersonal skills, unethical, threatening or otherwise unprofessional conduct, students will be referred for an academic hearing and subject to dismissal from the program.

Procedures

1. The Office of the MSW Program Director is responsible for the identification, assessment, and notification of the student in academic difficulty. Procedures identified below are to guide the execution of that responsibility in conjunction with teaching faculty, faculty advisors, and the Academic Hearing Board.
2. Faculty and professional staff are responsible for early identification of students in academic difficulty within the courses they teach.
3. Faculty and professional staff are responsible to submit to the School of Social Work Office mid-semester deficiency reports on each student in academic difficulty in their classes and/or field liaison assignments.
4. The School of Social Work Office is responsible for informing the academic advisor and the student of the mid-semester deficiency report(s). Academic advisors are responsible for helping the student clarify the nature of the academic difficulty and assisting the student in developing a plan for corrective action.
5. Each student's academic standing that is based upon student transcript data will be reviewed at the conclusion of each semester, and the summer session for Advanced Standing students.
6. Field Placement Coordinators and field instructors are responsible for informing the Office of Field Instruction of students whose behavior shows potential for serious risks to clients in the field placement. The Director of the Office of Field Instruction is responsible for determining whether to work with the student, field instructor, and field coordinator to develop a plan for corrective action, terminate the placement or refer the issue to the Academic Hearing Board for more formal review and action. The National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics serves as a guide in making professionally responsible decisions, as well as relevant sections of the New York State Education Law and Regents Rules and Regulations, regarding good moral character and conduct in the social work profession.
7. The Director of the School of Social Work shall be responsible for action on all students not in good academic standing as follows:
 - Probation:** The MSW Program Director sends written notification to the student of their placement on academic probation, with a copy of that notification sent to the advisor.
 - Dismissal:** The MSW Program Director shall notify students of their dismissal from the program based upon the standards previously described.

Hearings for Academic Progress and Professional Behavior

I. The School of Social Work Academic Hearing Board

The School of Social Work policy for academic progress and professional behavior addresses two distinct areas of student academic standing:

1. The grade point average and academic standing of graduate students;
2. Professional behavior and ethical conduct of both graduate and undergraduate students.

The Academic Hearing Board of the School of Social Work is responsible for hearings arising from the implementation of School of Social Work policy in these areas. Thus, the Academic Hearing Board has two purposes:

1. The first purpose is to hear graduate student appeals of pending dismissal from the MSW program because the student's overall grade point average has been below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters.
2. The second purpose is to hear and respond to allegations of unprofessional conduct or inadequate professional performance by a graduate student. These are both issues of concern because knowledge, skill, and value expectations can be considered academic criteria in a professional program as they relate to a student's likely performance as a social work practitioner. Applying a knowledge base in practice, demonstrating professional relationship skills and behavior with clients and colleagues (in the agency or classroom) that is consistent with the values and ethics of the profession are all components of academic standing in a professional program. Inadequacies in these areas can affect standing in the MSW program and be the basis upon which a hearing is convened.

II. Convening the Academic Hearing Board

The Academic Hearing Board shall convene when:

- A student files an appeal of his or her pending dismissal from the MSW program. For an appeal of dismissal, the student shall initiate the appeal with a written request to the Director of the MSW Program. The request must be filed by the deadline established in the notification letter. It is to include a statement of specific reasons for the request, a plan of action proposed in lieu of dismissal, and a signed petition to support that plan if it includes repeating a course or courses. If the written appeal is not received by the date in the letter of notification, application for re-admission will be required to pursue further study.
- A member of the faculty or School administration submits a written request for a hearing based upon a student's unprofessional conduct or inadequate professional performance. A member of the faculty, the Director of Field Instruction, or another Social Work administrator shall initiate the process by submitting a written request to the Director of the School of Social Work. The request must outline briefly the basis for the hearing request.

III. Academic Hearing Board Composition

The Academic Hearing Board shall be comprised of three voting members, consisting of two full time teaching faculty and one full time professional field staff. All voting members serve on the Hearing Board in rotation. In instances where any member of the Hearing Board has direct involvement in the circumstances of the particular case or other conflict of interest, that member shall recuse him/herself and the Director of the School shall arrange for a substitute for that hearing.

IV. Academic Hearing Board Procedures

1. When there is a case to be heard, the MSW Program Director shall convene the Academic Hearing Board to conduct the hearing, and will submit a summary to the Board prior to the hearing detailing the student's academic history.
2. When the Hearing is being called for reasons other than pending dismissal for academic reasons (i.e. GPA below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters), the MSW Program Director shall notify the student and the Academic Hearing Board of the request for a hearing and provide both with a statement that forms the basis of the request.
3. The student shall be invited to appear before the Academic Hearing Board. Other persons also may be invited to appear as follows:
 - a. In the case of an appeal of dismissal, the student will elaborate grounds for the appeal and the plan of study proposed in lieu of dismissal. The student may also request that the Academic Hearing Board invite a faculty or professional staff member, student, or other person with information relevant to the case to testify before the committee on the student's behalf. The Hearing Board may seek advisory testimony from any administrative or faculty sources within the School of Social Work regarding the student's appeal, and/or plan of study proposed in lieu of dismissal.
 - b. In the case of a hearing based upon an allegation of unprofessional conduct or inadequate professional performance, the student may request that the Academic Hearing Board invite a faculty or professional staff member, student, or other person with information relevant to the allegation to testify before the committee on the student's behalf. The Hearing Board may seek advisory testimony from any administrative, faculty or professional staff sources within the School of Social Work or persons from the student's field agency (where appropriate) regarding the behavior that forms the basis for a hearing on professional conduct.
4. The Academic Hearing Board must reach a unanimous recommendation regarding one of the following outcomes:
 - a. Reverse the decision to dismiss the student with no contingencies required;
 - b. Conditionally continue a student's enrollment based on an agreement developed in collaboration with the student (including the option of a Leave of Absence). The agreement will specify:
 - i. Plans for meeting program requirements
 - ii. Procedures for monitoring progress in executing those plans
 - iii. A timetable for the completion of those plans
 - c. Dismiss the student from the program.
5. The Academic Hearing Board shall convey its written recommendation (including the plan for meeting program requirements where continued enrollment is permitted) to the Director of the School and the MSW Program Director.
6. Decisions by the Director of the School of Social Work are final and exhaust appeals options in the School of Social Work. Other avenues of appeal may be available through the Grievance Procedures of Falk College or the University Judicial System.
7. The MSW degree will not be conferred upon students who do not have a final minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 and are not in good standing regarding professional behavior. The student must be aware that they bear the risk and responsibility for the financial investment involved when continuing to pursue the MSW degree despite concerns regarding academic standing.

V. Issues Not Adjudicated by the Academic Hearing Board

The Academic Hearing Board will not hear the following:

1. Appeals of faculty-imposed sanctions for academic dishonesty (academic dishonesty is covered by the University and Falk College policies on academic integrity with appeal of faculty action heard by the Falk College Grievance Committee).
2. Appeals of the final grade awarded in a course (heard by the Falk College Grievance Committee).
3. Appeals of determinations with regard to academic standing or student conduct made by the Falk College Grievance Committee, the Dean of the College, the University Judicial System, university committees outside of the College, or senior administrators of the University.

Appendix D: Grievance and Appeals Procedures

University, College, and School Policies for Conduct and Grievance

Formal disciplinary and grievance procedures exist at both the College and University level for handling allegations of academic dishonesty or violation of other university policies. The document, "College Grievance Committee Policies and Procedures," issued by the Falk College, explains where different types of allegations are heard. The kinds of issues covered by University-wide offices outside of the School of Social Work and the College include accusations of sexual or racial harassment and violations of the Student Code of Conduct. The College Grievance Committee is responsible for appeals of a grade, or of sanctions imposed by units within the College regarding academic dishonesty and unprofessional conduct. Additionally, the College Grievance Committee may adjudicate complaints involving academic dishonesty and unfair academic treatment of a student that come to it directly. The College grievance policy and procedures can be obtained from the [Falk College Student Rights, Academic Integrity & Grievance Policies page](#).

Student behaviors consistent with professional standards in human services professions are expected within the academic area and clinical or field practicum. Each department within Falk College has its own statement of professional standards of behavior to which students are expected to conform. Procedures within each school or academic program are spelled out for the first response to allegations of professional misconduct. The College Grievance committee may hear an appeal of the School or Department formal action.

Violations of professional standards and integrity include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors: 1) entry into clinical/field placement before completion of clinical clearance and faculty approval, 2) violation of confidentiality, 3) breach of civil/courteous behavior, 4) failure to maintain drug and alcohol sobriety, 5) failure to practice safe and professional actions in clinical/field placement settings, 6) failure to be punctual and/or provide timely notifications of absence from clinical/field placement due to illness, and 7) failure to follow agency standards of dress, language and institutional policies. Students engaged in research are expected to comply with all policies set by the Institutional Review Board and the provisions of the academic integrity policy.

Students in the School of Social Work who wish to file a grievance in accordance with Grievance Types Handled by the College Grievance Committee within 2 weeks (14 business days) following notice of a decision or action made by the School of Social Work, a student wishing to appeal this decision should do the following:

1. Contact the Senior Associate Dean of Falk College to request a grievance hearing regarding the actions or decisions originating in the School of Social Work.
2. Summarize your concerns in writing including major issues, specific grievances, actions taken to resolve the matter and your desired outcome and deliver a copy of this document to the Falk College Dean's Office within 5 business days from initial contact with the Senior Associate Dean.
3. Decisions made by the College Grievance Committee are bound by procedures and policies of the College and University.

Appendix E: Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) Statement for Degree Programs in Social Work Education: Council on Social Work Education

[2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards for Baccalaureate and Master's Social Work Programs](#)

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Appendix F: Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 2017 NASW Delegate Assembly

The [NASW Code of Ethics](#) is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers. This Code includes four sections:

- The first Section, "Preamble," summarizes the social work profession's mission and core values.
- The second section, "Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics," provides an overview of the Code's main functions and a brief guide for dealing with ethical issues or dilemmas in social work practice.
- The third section, "Ethical Principles," presents broad ethical principles, based on social work's core values, that inform social work practice.
- The final section, "Ethical Standards," includes specific ethical standards to guide social workers' conduct and to provide a basis for adjudication.

Appendix G: Problem Solving in Advising

Academic advising is a shared responsibility between the student and the advisor. Although the student is charged with taking leadership in managing his /her academic path, the academic advisor provides the consultation and guidance necessary to foster the professional development of the student.

The advisor aids the student in the selection of courses (see Program of Study/Record of Student Progress) in the registration in meeting degree certification requirements, and in assessing professional interests and development. Students are required to meet with their advisors before registering for courses each semester and submit a registration form, signed by the advisor and the student, to the Social Work office before completing the registration process online.

In all cases regarding course registration, the student comes prepared with the necessary information to address the purpose of the advising meeting. The following steps should be taken if problems arise and the student seeks assistance from their advisor.

Student identifies a question or concern:

1. Student consults the MSW Handbook and/or other documents that the Handbook directs the student to, in order to address the concern (See end of document: Possible Resolutions)
2. If concern remains, the student schedules a meeting with the advisor to discuss the issue.
3. In preparation for the meeting, the student emails the advisor an outline of the concern that they wish to address. They will include in an email the steps they have taken to resolve the concern and the hoped outcome for the concern.
4. Student meets and/or consults with the academic advisor who coaches student regarding potential solutions.
5. If there is no resolution, the advisor consults with appropriate other parties and then sets a meeting with student and/or other persons as appropriate and necessary to discuss solutions. Academic hearing may be among potential solutions at this point.
6. If no resolutions are found and an academic hearing is not requested, the Academic Advisor alerts the MSW Program Directions who consults to develop a plan.

Possible resolutions include:

1. Individualized modifications related to the classroom – (including, but not limited to assignments, course content, student behaviors, etc.)
2. Student may be counseled out of the program
3. Student may take a leave of Absence
4. Request for an Academic Hearing