

West Texas A&M University

Department of Psychology, Sociology & Social Work

Social Work Student Handbook (MSSW)

This handbook provides information to social work graduate students and other interested constituents about the policies and procedures of the MSSW program at West Texas A&M University.

August 2021*

*Updated Faculty Contact information, Advisory Council, Graduate Student Organization, and Advising.

For further information, please contact:

Social Work Program
Department of Psychology, Sociology & Social Work
Old Main, Room 414
Main Office: (806) 651-2590

Mailing Address: WTAMU Box
60876
Canyon, TX 79016

www.wtamu.edu

MSSW Program Director
Henry Poduthase MA, MSW, Ph.D.
hpoduthase@wtamu.edu

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The mission of the MSSW program at West Texas A&M University is to:

prepare advanced generalist practitioners who are equipped with an eclectic knowledge base, professional values, and a wide range of advanced skills to assume the professional responsibilities of change agents in our rapidly changing, culturally diverse, global society. She or he should enhance the social functioning and interactions of her/his client systems, help clients develop resources, alleviate human suffering in the pursuit of the improvement of quality of life and conditions of people living in the rural Texas panhandle region, the state, the nation, and the world.

FULL TIME MSSW FACULTY

Henry Poduthase, MA, MSW, Ph.D.
MSSW Program Director and
Associate Professor

(806) 651-2628
AMA, Room 381
hpoduthase@wtamu.edu

Felina Franklin, Ph.D., LCSW

Assistant Professor

(806) 651-2624
AMA, Room 380 B
ffranklin@wtamu.edu

Margaret Dejong-Shier, MSW
Field Work Coordinator

(806) 651-2628
Old Main, Room 426

mdejong-
shier@wtamu.edu

Areen Omary, MSW, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

AMA, Room 380 A
aomary@wtamu.edu

Alyson Morgan, LCSW-S

Instructor of Social Work
Department of Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work
Old Main 428
806-651-4257
amorgan@wtamu.edu

Sara Alamdari, Ph.D., MSW, MA, BSc

Assistant Professor of Social Work
West Texas A&M University
salamdari@wtamu.edu

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WTAMU – THE UNIVERSITY

West Texas A&M University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees. Additionally, the University offers programs accredited by the Texas Education Agency, the State Board for Educator Certification, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the National Association of Schools of Music, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Programs, the Mechanical Engineering Program – Engineering Accreditation Commission, the Council on Social Work Education and the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs. The University also holds membership in the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the American Council on Education, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools, the Association of Texas Graduate Schools, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY INSTITUTION

West Texas A&M University offers all of its educational opportunities and extracurricular advantages to students without regard to race, creed, national origin, gender, age, or disability, except where gender, age or disability is a bona fide occupational qualification. WTAMU is an affirmative action/equal employment opportunity institution.

WTAMU MISSION STATEMENT

West Texas A&M University is a diverse and inclusive student-centered community of learners that

- provides a technology-rich, academically rigorous educational experience at the undergraduate and graduate levels;
- cultivates opportunities to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, information literacy, and ethical behavior;
- directs resources in support of empowering co-curricular experiences;
- maintains focus on the development of future leaders for our community, the state, the nation, and the world; and
- serves through education, research, and consultation as a catalyst for economic development and enhancement of the quality of life for the region.

WTAMU VISION STATEMENT

Guided by its pioneering spirit, West Texas A&M University will be recognized for its excellence in teaching and learning, with a strong focus on engaging students in challenging and meaningful experiences that will aid in their intellectual and personal development. WTAMU

alumni will be scholar-leaders empowered to advance their chosen field, to impact their communities, and to pursue excellence.

SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM – GENERAL INFORMATION

WHAT IS SOCIAL WORK?

Social Work is a profession that exists to promote or restore a mutually beneficial interaction between individuals and society in order to improve the quality of life for everyone. Social Workers work with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations, whose diverse problems, issues, and needs interfere with adequate social functioning.

The Social Work profession provides opportunities to work in different practice settings such as mental health, health and rehabilitation, hospice, Veteran's Affairs, probation and parole, adult protective services, foster care and adoption, schools, family and children's services, and income maintenance. The possibilities are endless!

Social workers focus on the environment as the target of change, and sometimes the target of change is both the client and the environment. As generalist practitioners, social workers facilitate problem solving, obtain or create resources, provide education, influence the development of social policy, and engage in research and practice evaluation.

ADVANCED GENERALIST PRACTICE

An advanced generalist practitioner has acquired a deeper understanding of theory and is able to practice social work with a greater depth and breadth of knowledge. Building upon the basic skills, advanced generalist practitioners are able to apply theory, intervene on multiple levels, and apply advanced social work knowledge and skills. The advanced generalist practitioner has a more nuanced understanding of values and ethics, and a deeper level of self-awareness regarding culture, both for self and others, and the impact of oppression.

In the rural setting, an advanced generalist practitioner is able to assume multiple roles in diverse practice settings.

Graduates will be prepared with advanced practice skills which allow them to:

- Differentially assess problems,
- Employ specialized interventions,
- Develop more rigorous evaluation techniques, and
- Establish themselves as leaders with systems of all sizes and levels of complexity.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Participation in any of the campus organizations is strictly voluntary. Students may also choose to start their own organization, following the appropriate channels and guidelines, which are available through the Office of Student Engagement and Leadership, located in the Jack B. Kelley Student Center.

GRADUATE SOCIAL WORK ORGANIZATION

The purpose of the Graduate Social Work Organization is to enhance the graduate school experience by providing opportunities to serve both the students of West Texas A&M University and the surrounding communities, network with local and state agencies, and supplement the students' education through extracurricular and academic learning experiences. It is composed of current graduate students at both the Advanced and Foundation levels, with officers elected each year. The President of the Graduate Student Organization, or their designee, will be appointed to the Social Work Advisory Council.

Students are invited and encouraged to participate in the GSWO in order to provide feedback regarding program experiences and curriculum, as well as to provide service to the community. Officers of the GSWO attend the Social Work Advisory Council meetings each semester and are provided program assessment data and updates, along with being afforded the opportunity to introduce concerns voiced by the students and give input on policies and procedures. The GSWO represents the needs, concerns, and feedback of the overall graduate student body in terms of curriculum, content, and programmatic characteristics, and conveys those to the Program Director and graduate faculty as needed. This organization, when active, meets at Chase Tower at times and dates mutually agreed-upon by the officers, members, and advisor.

Interested students contact Dr. Henry Poduthase (hpoduthase@wtamu.edu)

UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK ORGANIZATION

The purpose of the club is to explore the field of social work and to promote a spirit of community within the program. Membership is open to all students enrolled at West Texas A&M University. Organizational meetings vary by semester.

Interested students should contact the club advisors, Ms. Kristy Bartlett (kbartlett@wtamu.edu) for further information.

PHI ALPHA ALPHA NU HONOR SOCIETY

WTAMU has a chapter of the Phi Alpha Honor Society (Alpha Nu), to which graduate Social Work students may apply. Students must meet the minimum requirements in order to be

inducted into Phi Alpha Alpha Nu. Membership is open to all social work majors who meet the honor society's eligibility standards. Requirements for induction include:

- (a) declared social work major;
- (b) achieved junior status in their undergraduate program (BSW) or have completed a minimum of one semester of their graduate program (MSSW);
- (c) completed 9 credit hours in major courses (SOCW prefix) at the undergraduate level or graduate level;
- (d) achieved an all-college GPA of 3.00 and
- (e) achieved a 3.25 GPA in social work (Undergraduate) or 3.5 GPA (Graduate)

The purposes of Phi Alpha Alpha Nu are to:

1. Recognize and promote scholastic achievement among students and faculty involved in the undergraduate and/or graduate social work program at West Texas A&M University;
2. Recognize, improve, and further the goal of social work in the community, state, nation, and world;
3. Stimulate interest in preparation for a career in social work;
4. Encourage continued study and research at the undergraduate level, the graduate level, and in professional practice;
5. Recognize those professional social workers whose service, contribution, and leadership are held in high esteem.

Interested persons should contact Ms. Kristy Bartlett (kbartlett@wtamu.edu) or Ms. Genevieve Sabala (gsabala@wtamu.edu), the faculty advisors for the society.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarship information can be found on the main WTAMU website. The deadline to submit the online application for consideration for scholarships is February 1st of each year.

Scholarships are generally awarded on the basis of GPA and financial need, although each scholarship has guidelines. A complete list of available scholarships can be found on the WTAMU website.

SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MSW PROGRAM

Foundation Courses, for students without a social work degree from a CSWE-accredited program, include:

- SOCW 5310: Groups and Community Processes
- SOCW 5321: Practice Methods with Diverse Populations
- SOCW 5362: Social Research
- SOCW 5380: Theory of Human Behavior
- SOCW 5381: Social Policy and Planning
- SOCW 5383: Micro Social Work Practice
- SOCW 5488: Field Instruction I
- SOCW 5498: Field Instruction II

After completing these courses, students enter into the Advanced Courses.

Advanced Courses, for students with a social work degree from a CSWE-accredited program, and students that have completed foundation core include:

SOCW 6310: Advanced Social Policy
SOCW 6321: Critical Social Work
SOCW 6331: Individual and Group Practice (Practice I)
SOCW 6341: Community and Organizational Practice (Practice II)
SOCW 6362: Program Evaluation in Social Work
SOCW 6380: Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Lifespan
SOCW 6397: Applied Social Work Practice I
SOCW 6398: Applied Social Work Practice II
SOCW 6399: Applied Social Work Practice III
SOCW 6305: Integrative Seminar

Two electives are required, and can come from related disciplines such as Sociology, Political Science, Speech Communications, Criminal Justice and Psychology based on their offerings each semester.

Graduate-level social work electives vary by semester, but may include:

- SOCW 5303: Social Services to Children & Families
- SOCW 5370: Comparative Social Welfare: Go Global (international short-term faculty-led study abroad)
- SOCW 5395: Current Issues in Social Work Practice (elective by semester)
- SOCW 6385: Clinical Social Work

Course descriptions are available in the online catalog at <http://catalog.wtamu.edu/index.php?catoid=13>

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS OF MSSW STUDENTS

Your career as a social worker begins when you enter the social work program. The social work program is accountable to the profession and society in making sure that graduates demonstrate qualities and abilities suitable to the social work profession. Your professional development involves not only attaining social work knowledge, skills, and values, but also attaining and maintaining high standards of personal conduct guided by the values and code of ethics ascribed to the social work profession.

Professional attitudes and behaviors toward self, clients, student peers, and faculty, are influenced by the core social work values of respecting the dignity and worth of each individual, the importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence.

Practicing respect for the individual in the classroom, for example, can be demonstrated by valuing the experiences, ideas, and work of other students and faculty. A student's responsibility to colleagues can be demonstrated by:

- contributing to the success of each class by regular attendance
- carrying out assignments
- participating in the open sharing of information, ideas, and opinions.

Social work students should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues, including demeaning comments about competence, personal characteristics or status. The cooperation needed for effective social work practice should be exhibited through supportive and collaborative behavior of students in their interaction both in class work and in field placement.

All written submissions MSSW program are expected to follow the formatting guidelines of the American Psychological Association's (APA) Publication Manual, 7th ed. **even if this is not stated in the course syllabus.**

RUBRIC FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

The MSSW program has adopted a rubric to help students understand and strive for professional behavior. Students will be evaluated in predetermined classes. Students are expected to maintain professional demeanor at all times, including in the classroom. The rubric may also be completed by an instructor who has concerns about a student's behavior as a means to provide the student with feedback so that he or she can correct the behavior. The RAPB form is included in the Appendix of this document, and is also available on the WTAMU MSSW website at the following link:

<http://www.wtamu.edu/academics/social-work-graduate-program.aspx>

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE BEHAVIORS)

Social Work education at West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) strives to enable students to integrate the knowledge, values and skills of the social work profession into competent practice. WTAMU's graduate social work education is based on an advanced generalist model of social work practice, focusing on advanced generalist practice within a rural context. Because of this rural context, an eclectic theoretical foundation will provide students with the tools to use in diverse settings. In this rural setting, advanced generalist practitioners must be prepared to wear many hats; students must be prepared to be practitioners and administrators, frequently within the same 24-hour period. The theoretical foundation will be eclectic, while emphasizing intersectionality is emphasized in all coursework, helping students to move beyond their personal worldview to see things from a different perspective, and to understand the complex nature of oppression and discrimination in today's society.

GOALS

The goals of the MSSW program at West Texas A&M University are to educate students who:

- Become Advanced Generalist Practitioners;
- Use a variety of theoretical perspectives;
- Develop interventions at all levels of systems practice, and
- Are knowledgeable in the unique aspects of rural communities.

The goals of the social work program at WTAMU complement and support the mission of the program and are directly derived from that mission. To be effective change agents in a rapidly changing society, social workers must become advanced general practitioners, use a variety of theoretical perspectives, develop interventions at all levels of practice, and for our region of the country, they must be knowledgeable in the unique aspects of rural communities. All of these components work in concert with the knowledge base gleaned from the courses required, and with the self-awareness that is cultivated throughout the curriculum.

West Texas A&M University intends to provide every student with a broad based academic background that promotes intellectual, cultural and social growth. The social work program builds on a broadly based liberal arts program to prepare students to assume professional responsibilities in meeting human needs.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the social work program at WTAMU are directly derived from the competencies established by the 2015 Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) established by the Council on Social Work Education.

Students successfully completing the MSSW Program will be able to:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
4. Engage in Practice-Informed Research and research-Informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

CSWE is the accrediting body for all Bachelor and Master's degree programs in social work in the U.S. The graduate social work program at WTAMU is accredited by CSWE. Candidacy was granted in 2010, with initial accreditation granted in 2013 and reaffirmation in 2017.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

STATEMENT ABOUT LIFE EXPERIENCE

The program does not give academic credit for life experience and previous work experience, in whole or in part, in lieu of the field practicum or courses in the professional foundation areas.

ADVISING

The educational planning process is the primary means by which students formulate their educational goals and professional career planning with the help of an assigned social work faculty advisor. All graduate social work students receive academic advising from the MSSW Program Director. The MSSW Field Coordinator acts as a resource to field education planning and field education learning. The choosing of field placements and the assignments of responsibilities in those placements is discussed by students and the Field Coordinator in line with their professional interests and career plans.

Students attend a mandatory Program Orientation during the summer before they begin coursework, at which time all information related to the program is provided and discussed. The Program Director and Field Coordinator discuss academic progress with students throughout their time in the program. At that time, expectations are conveyed related to decorum, professionalism and behavior, and professional ethics. Academic advisement is an essential component of a student's overall experience within the MSSW Program. Students are encouraged to bring their thoughts and concerns regarding classes, field placement, and other professional or career issues to the attention of the Program Director. If a problem or concern develops, they are encouraged to bring it forward in a timely manner. Academic and professional advising is delivered in three ways:

1. Academic Advising - Academic advising refers to the normal ongoing discussions between the Program Director and students regarding the students' educational and professional plans, progress, problems and grievances. Meetings between students and the Program Director can be initiated by either party and may occur at any time. Advisement meetings provide an opportunity for discussion of students' educational plans and goals and educational performance in the program.

These meetings also provide an opportunity for exploration of the existence of student grievances. Academic review does not formally alter a student's academic standing. The results of this review, however, may serve to initiate further action regarding both academic and/or non-academic problems and/or grievances.

Students also have responsibilities to obtain advising on academic and professional issues. The students should: initiate meetings with the advisor at any time that issues, concerns and/or grievances exist for them and to have a minimum of one contact each semester; use this opportunity to:

- consult with the Program Director in order to discuss the student's ideas regarding academic and career goals, and to engage in educational planning;
- receive guidance on selection of elective courses;
- obtain and share information about community activities related to the program;
- discuss any problems and/or grievances.

2. Field Advising – Field advising is another way that students receive academic and professional advising. Incoming students are required to attend a Field Orientation Seminar the semester prior to beginning field placement, in both the Foundation and Advanced years. The information provided at that seminar includes requirement and expectations about field education, as well as field education planning forms which request logistical information, interest areas and career goals. The Field Coordinator member begins the placement process by assessing a variety of factors including the student's interests, background, education, and previous experience. Students are provided a list of partner agencies and placements and schedule interviews with agencies with which they are interested in being placed. The student visits the agency and meets with the field instructor, or field education coordinator. The student, Field Coordinator, and prospective agency/field instructor engage in determining the suitability of the placement and the specifics of the educational plan in light of the student's career goals.

The Field Coordinator maintains contact with the student and the agency throughout the placement process and works with the agency, the student, and the field instructor to ensure that the agency is offering appropriate assignments and supervision, that the field instructor is working with the student to make use of their assignments to achieve competency, and the student is using all the opportunities to learn. Often, it is the Field Coordinator who knows the student's strengths, challenges, interests, and career goals most intimately. It is the Field Coordinator who often, in discussions around the placement, provides on-going professional advising.

3. Professional Advising – Professional advising is the vehicle by which students receive information and guidance that both reinforces the social work perspective and principles and prepares them for professional social work careers. This advising is done by graduate social work faculty, both within the classroom setting and in the course of outside discussion. It can be formal or informal, and may occur at the request of either the student or faculty.

STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Social work practice is based on professional education. The social work program expects much more of its students than non-professional programs do of their students. The standards are intertwined with students' abilities to become effective advanced generalist social work practitioners. The standards provide guidelines about expectations and procedures that address academic performance concerns.

Assessing a student's overall performance and evaluating if standards are met are the responsibilities of those who teach and supervise students including the Program Director, professors, field coordinator, field liaison, and agency supervisors. The involved faculty members, program directors and field supervisors will exercise their professional judgment to determine if the student is meeting all academic and professional standards.

All social work students will be provided with a copy of this Student Handbook, which includes the competencies established by the Council and Social Work Education Educational Policy & Accreditation Standards (EPAS) as well as the NASW (National Association of Social Workers) Code of Ethics. Students are expected to read and sign a form agreeing to abide by the program's academic integrity policy as well as the NASW Code of Ethics. This form will be kept in students' files.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The program will assess the academic performance of its students in four general areas:

1. Basic ability to acquire professional skills.
2. Mental and emotional ability necessary for performance in the program and professional practice.
3. Performance skills necessary for work with clients and professional practice, and
4. Scholastic performance.

Scholastic achievement of a student mandates that all of the above mentioned criteria are met. However, meeting the criteria alone does not guarantee the student's continued enrollment in the program. The student's professional behavior and his/her ability to follow procedures and rules governing student life and student conduct as prescribed in the Code of Student Life and the Rubric for the Assessment of Professional Behaviors are additional criteria that comprise academic standards, and those must be met as well.

Basic abilities to acquire professional skills include:

- Demonstration of communication skills, which includes sufficient written and oral skills.
- Demonstration of interpersonal skills to relate effectively to client systems, other students, faculty, staff and other professionals.
- Demonstration of sufficient knowledge of social work and clarity of thinking to process information and apply it to appropriate situations in classroom and field.
- Exhibiting sufficient motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in class and practicum placement, with or without accommodations. (For information and detailed explanation of the services provided by the Student Disability Services please see [Student Disability Services: Faculty Resource Guide](#) distributed by the office of Student Disability Services).

Mental and emotional capabilities include:

- Demonstration of the ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms such as self-care and developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others.
- Use of sound judgment including the ability to seek and effectively use help for medical or emotional problems that interfere with scholastic and professional performance. Actions that jeopardize the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility (as outlined in the current NASW Code of Ethics) will be considered in the assessment of the student.

Professional performance skills include:

- Demonstration of commitment to the goals of social work practice, including the ethical standards as specified by the NASW Code of Ethics, social work values and social justice.
- Behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, standards for professional ethics, and societal laws in the classroom, field, and community.
- Potential for responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, respecting others, and accepting supervision and criticism in a positive manner.
- Working effectively with others, regardless of the level of authority. Advocating for herself/himself in an appropriate and responsible manner. Using proper channels for conflict resolution.
- Cultivating self-Awareness: Exhibiting knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships. Accurately assessing one's own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice. A willingness to examine and change own behavior when it interferes in working with clients and other professionals.
- A commitment to professional ethics, which includes adherence to the ethical principles and obligations of professional practice, as noted in the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Adherence to the behavioral expectations and professional guidelines outlined in the Rubric for the Assessment of Professional Behaviors.

SCHOLASTIC PERFORMANCE

Graduate students must earn a C or above in every course, but **must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0** (a B in our four-point system). Courses with grades of "D," "F," "I" (incomplete), or "X" (drop or withdrawal) cannot be used to satisfy requirements of a graduate degree, but, where applicable, will be used in computing a student's academic standing.

A student who earns a D or F in a course will be terminated from the program, and can reapply for conditional admittance after sitting out two long semesters (fall/spring, spring/summer, or summer/fall). If a candidate's GPA falls below 3.0, the candidate will be placed on academic probation. The length of the probationary period will be determined by the dean of the Graduate School. Candidates who do not raise their grade point average to at least 3.0 by the end of the probationary period will be dismissed from the Graduate School and suspended from further work toward a master's degree at WTAMU. Students suspended from the Graduate School may request removal from suspension by reapplying to the MSSW program and then seeking a written request from the appropriate academic dean to the graduate dean.

To request readmission to the MSSW program, students must

- Reapply to WT through the graduate school (students do not need to pay the application fee a second time);
- Write a letter to the MSSW Admissions Committee, submitting it to the MSSW Program Director, outlining
 - What contributed to the student's lack of success
 - What the student has done to remediate the situation, circumstances, or academic deficits;
 - How the student plans to be successful if readmitted.

Students may or may not be granted readmission by the MSSW Admissions Committee. Evidence of the student's ability to articulate why he/she failed a course, the steps taken to remediate the deficiency, and the ways the candidate will approach his/her education differently will all be factors in the admissions decision. Students must repeat the course in which they received a D or F prior to earning credit for any additional coursework, although the student may be enrolled in other required classes at the same time. Students receiving a D or F in the course for a second time will be terminated from the program and not allowed to reenroll. Students must complete the failed course at WTAMU; no course from any institution of higher learning will be transferrable to satisfy the failed course. Additionally, coursework taken during a suspension from WTAMU will not count toward the student's degree.

Students with documented cases of plagiarism or cheating may be terminated from the program and may not be allowed to reapply to the MSSW program. Students acknowledge in writing that they understand what plagiarism is and that they agree to abide by an Academic Integrity Code. Violation of this Code may result in expulsion from the MSSW Program.

The Program follows University's procedures and policies on judicial/disciplinary and academic suspension (see WTAMU University Catalog, 2015-2016 and the Code of Student Life).

Evidence of meeting academic performance criteria in the social work program may include but is not limited to any of the following:

- Feedback or reference letters from faculty, work supervisors, or supervisors of volunteer human service agencies or other field experiences.
- Feedback from agency based field supervisors.
- Observations of classroom, volunteer, or field behaviors.
- Performance in oral and written assignments, examinations, social work skills labs or other appropriate coursework.
- Student personal statements or self-assessments.
- Interviews with faculty or other professionals
- Taped interview situations (audio-video).

REVIEW OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Review of a student's academic and professional performance in the social work program can occur at three levels. The level of review will depend upon the potential severity of the concern. Information disclosed during student meetings with faculty, program coordinators, or administrators will not be kept confidential if the information raises concerns about professional performance. Faculty and/or program coordinators will share pertinent information with each other for the educational purpose of identifying student issues and enhancing problem solving about the concerns. They will follow university procedures related to student performance issues.

Student reviews can occur under any of the following circumstances:

- Failure to meet or maintain academic requirements as stated under scholastic performance.
- Scholastic dishonesty, including cheating, lying, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, or any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student in accordance with university guidelines.
- Behavior judged to be in violation of the current NASW Code of Ethics.
- Any threat or attempt to harm oneself or someone else.
- Commission of a criminal act that is contrary to professional practice, occurring during the course of study or occurring prior to admission to the program and becoming known after admission.
- Consistent pattern of unprofessional behavior.
- Failure to meet any of the Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) established by the Council on Social Work Education.
- Violation of rules and procedures of Code of Student Life.

LEVELS OF REVIEW

LEVEL 1

This review will take place when a faculty member has concerns about a student enrolled in the social work program meeting any of the academic criteria, whether related to professional behavior or scholastic performance.

The faculty member will:

1. Discuss those concerns directly with the student and seek to resolve the problem;
2. Apprise Program Director and/or Field Coordinator of the concerns in order to identify potential patterns and issues related to the student; and
3. Document dates and content of meetings with the student.

If a problem arises in field, the agency-based supervisor will discuss concerns directly with the student and the faculty liaison. The faculty liaison will apprise the Field Coordinator and the Program Director of the concerns.

LEVEL 2

A level 2 review is undertaken when concerns have not been resolved at Level 1, or if the issue is of sufficient gravity to move directly to Level 2. A level 2 review involves the faculty member, student, and Program Director. If the problem is related to Field Instruction, the agency supervisor, faculty liaison, and Field Coordinator may also be involved in the review with the student.

At this level, the Program Director will collect all relevant information and will determine the nature of the concern and, if needed, develop a plan to address that concern. No further action may be required, or the student may be asked, in writing, to modify his or her behavior and/or seek appropriate help. This process is designed to assist students in dealing with identified concerns that have an impact on their performance.

The Program Director or the Field Coordinator will assess the nature of these concerns with appropriate faculty, consult with the student's advisor and the Department Head, maintain documentation, and decide if it is necessary to conduct a more comprehensive review, pursuant to Level 3.

LEVEL 3

A level 3 review is undertaken when concerns have not been resolved in prior reviews; when issues relate to a student not meeting the criteria for academic performance (often involving professional or ethical behaviors); or when the student is being considered for withdrawal or discontinuance in the program. Please note that the student may not have had a Level 1 or Level 2 review; the level of review is dependent upon the alleged issue. This review involves the faculty member, student, Program Director, Department Head, and faculty who have had direct experience with the student in classroom or field. Appropriate faculty to be involved in a review will include but is not limited to those who have direct knowledge of or experience with the student.

The student will be notified in writing of the concerns and meeting date, with sufficient time to prepare for and attend the meeting.

After the meeting has occurred, the Program Director will consult with the Department Head and/or the Dean of the College of Education and Social Sciences to discuss the problem situation and make recommendations regarding the student. The Program Director will inform the student, in writing, within ten calendar days of any decision, which can include one or more of the following:

- Continue in the program with no conditions.
- Establish formal conditions for the student's continuance in the program.
- Consult with and/or refer to the Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Consult with and/or refer to the Vice President for Student Affairs.
- Counsel the student to change majors/degree programs.
- Terminate the student from the program with the opportunity to reapply within a given time frame.
- Terminate the student from the program without the opportunity to reapply.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Social Work Program is committed to the recruitment and retention of minority students and employs every effort to administer to all students equally and fairly in academic and personal matters. The Department of Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work works closely with Admissions in the recruitment of minority students. It is the policy of the Department and the Social Work Program not to discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, political, or sexual orientation.

STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES

West Texas A&M University seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. WTAMU will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required for equal educational opportunity.

Students with documented special needs should contact the Office of Student Disability Services for assistance. Services provided include: books read to tape, interpreters for the hearing impaired, reading of tests, extended time on tests, secluded location for tests, arrangement for appropriate desks, chairs, or other material, assistance with research and special computer software needs.

It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of Student Disability Services at 806-651-2335 and to contact the faculty member in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodations. The Office of Student Disability Services is located in the Student Success Center, Room CC 106. More information is available at www.wtamu.edu/sdservices

JUDICIAL AFFAIRS

Due process for students involved in judicial/disciplinary situations is provided through the Office of Judicial Affairs. Hearings are assigned to various hearing bodies, such as the Student Judicial Board, the University Judicial Officer and/or area coordinators. The *Code of Student Life* includes rules and procedures for students and is available on the Website at www.wtamu.edu/codeofstudentlife or hard copies are available in the Office of Student Affairs, located in the Jack B. Kelley Student Center, Room 102.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Pursuant to the grievance procedures for students provided in the Code of Student Life, social work students have the right to redress grievances related to academic matters, including decisions that are the result of reviews outlined in the above Standards of Social Work Education. Students are assured freedom from reprisals for bringing a grievance.

A social work student who has an academic grievance involving a grade dispute shall discuss the matter with the faculty member involved. If the dispute is not resolved the student can appeal the matter to the Program Director. If the grievance involves field instruction, the student can appeal to the Field Coordinator and then to the Program Director. If the Program Director is the faculty with whom the student is filing a grievance, the student would request a meeting with

the Department Head following their attempt to resolve the situation with the Program Director/Faculty. If the problem is not resolved at the Program, the Department, and College levels, then the student can pursue the concern at the University level following the rules and procedures outlined in the Code of Student Life, a copy of which can be obtained from the Office of University Student Affairs or online at www.wtamu.edu/codeofstudentlife.

STUDENT COURSE LOAD

The maximum semester load for graduate students is 15 hours during the full semesters, and seven hours during each summer session.

GRADING SYSTEM

The grade chart below indicates grade symbols and the numerical equivalents for evaluating course work.

<i>GRADE SYMBOL</i>	<i>EXPLANATION</i>	<i>GRADE POINTS</i>
A	Excellent	4
B	Good	3
C	Average	2
D	Below Average*	1
F	Failing*	0
I	Incomplete	
X	Drop/Withdraw by the official drop date (not calculated in GPA)	
S	Pass in CLEP, SAT, ACT and other specially approved courses Thesis in progress	

*At the graduate level, a C or better is required in all coursework. Please note, however, that the student *must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 (a B average) or better to remain in good standing.*

INCOMPLETE GRADE ("I")

A grade of "I" indicates a **small** portion of required coursework has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed time period due to unforeseen, but fully justified (i.e. hospitalization, personal injury). It is the student's responsibility to bring pertinent information to the instructor and request the incomplete option. Students electing the incomplete option must normally complete the required course work within the time designated by the instructor but not to exceed 12 months. If a student fails to complete the required course work within 12 months, the grade will be changed to an "F". Once a grade of "I" is assigned by the instructor, the student cannot drop the course. Students with an "I" may be prohibited from proceeding with other coursework if the incomplete course is a prerequisite for another course.

FIELD PLACEMENT AND FIELD INSTRUCTION

ADMISSION AND CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION INTO FIELD

Student selection and assignment includes meeting the minimum standards and requirements for admission for Field Instruction as set out below.

1. The student must have satisfactorily completed all academic prerequisites for Field Instruction. (See Social Work Field Application in Field Instruction Manual). An overall cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required for admission into Field Practicum courses.
2. An appraisal of the student's motivation and capacity to meet the goals and objectives of the Social Work program will be assessed by the Field Coordinator. Whenever questions arise as to the suitability of a given student for field placement, the issue will be resolved by an evaluation by a faculty committee with consultation, if necessary from the department head. A recommendation of denial of admittance into Field Instruction courses will be prepared in writing, for confidential inclusion into the student's file.
3. For the purpose of evaluating potential candidates for entry into Field Instruction, the procedures will focus on the following: (a) protecting the client served by the student from unwitting and unintentional abuse or harm; (b) promoting student success; (c) assurance that Social Work Program at West Texas A&M University and the Social Work profession are well represented.

The Field Instruction Program is designed to provide students with practice experiences commensurate with the individual's academic and experiential preparation.

Foundation students will complete two field practicum courses, SOCW 5488 and SOCW 5498 for a total of 400 clock hours of internship. The courses are worth four credits each for a total of 8 credit hours of field instruction. SOCW 5488 will be completed in the second semester of the foundation year, while SOCW 5498 will be completed in the third semester of the foundation year.

Advanced standing students (and second year non-advanced standing students) will complete 500 clock hours of internship across three semesters. SOCW 6397, SOCW 6398, and SOCW 6399 will be completed in the second, third, and fourth semesters of the advanced standing program, respectively.

The Social Work Program at WTAMU contracts with a wide variety of social agencies in the Texas panhandle to provide field experience to social work students. The social agencies involved with field placement vary from medical and clinical settings to social service and community center settings offering the student a wide range of social work experiences.

The foundation level (non-advanced standing) field instruction experience places emphasis on basic fundamental knowledge for generalist social work practice. The overall content of field instruction relates to the total social work curriculum by providing, under direct field instruction supervision and classroom instruction, a solid foundation and knowledge of the generalist approach to practice including:

- social work skills and values;
- social work practice skills with individuals, families, groups, and communities;
- social work intervention skills; and
- communication and relationship skills.

Field experience intensifies in depth as the student progresses through the levels of social work field instruction. The two levels of field instruction at the foundation level provide measurable integrated learning experiences. Students are actively and directly involved in pursuing preparation for a wide range of social work activities and translating these learning experiences to deeper understanding and development.

The second year field experiences build upon the foundation level field placements by providing a varied experience in different levels of social work practice. By focusing on different levels of practice, MSSW students will gain valuable experience in advanced generalist practice skills. These experiences may all occur within the same agency, or students may be placed in different agencies to benefit fully from exposure to different levels of practice. Additionally, field experience provides a valuable opportunity for self-awareness and the development of professional relationships.

The responsibility for the field instruction and education provided to the student in the field placement rests jointly with the agency field instructor, field coordinator, and the field liaison of field instruction. The student is responsible for making the best possible use of the opportunity provided.

- (1) Students are given assignments balanced in such a way as to give a general exposure: agency function and clientele served.
- (2) Field experience includes the opportunity for meaningful and direct services to clients where the student is expected to develop relationships and to strengthen assessment and service skills.

PROCESS OF OBTAINING A PLACEMENT

Students are required to complete an application for field instruction, a form that provides confirmation of the student's eligibility for field instruction. The Field Coordinator reviews the applications, ascertains the availability of placements within the agencies, and determines

approval of field placement. Students make appointments to interview with the agencies they find interesting or that have the educational opportunities they seek.

Once interviews are complete, the student makes an appointment with the Field Coordinator. A joint decision by student and Field Coordinator determines the appropriate placement. In the event a student is accepted and accepts the field placement, the process ends with the student informing the agency of their choice and the completion of the disposition form. The student who is not accepted or does not accept the field placement schedules additional interviews and repeats the process.

GRADING OF FIELD PRACTICUM

The grade for all field instruction courses is pass/fail. The reason for this is to allow the student the opportunity to grow in areas that cannot be easily assessed and graded in a "letter grade" format. In addition, it allows the student more freedom in discussing weakness of their work with agency and faculty supervisors. The student receives a written evaluation of each placement that may be used in the provision of references for employment.

All work in the Field Instruction courses (journals, assignments, etc.) must be completed at a minimum of B-level in order to be granted passing credit.

INSURANCE

Malpractice Insurance: The University provides insurance for students. This insurance covers students interacting with clients in their field placement and their practice classes.

REMOVAL OF A STUDENT FROM FIELD PLACEMENT

The following are grounds to remove a student from field:

1. Failure to maintain confidentiality about a client as mandated by agency policy and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.
2. Failure to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics.
3. An attempt to harm oneself.
4. An attempt to harm someone else.
5. Repeated tardiness at the agency and/or tardiness without notification.
6. Repeated absences from the agency and/or tardiness without notification.
7. Repeated change in schedule field hours without prior approval.
8. Inappropriate behavior in connection with the field placement.
9. Inappropriate behavior as listed in the official Code of Student Life.
10. Failure to exhibit adequate knowledge, communication and interpersonal skills.

The final decision regarding removal from field will be made by the field coordinator, with documentation from the field instructor, field liaison, and agency. The student may appeal the decision following the guidelines in the official Code of Student Life. Agencies may request that students be removed. A new placement will be at the discretion of the Field Coordinator and is dependent upon the circumstances of removal.

A separate manual, the Field Practicum Manual, provides detailed guidelines, policies, and procedures as related to the Field Practicum. It is available at:

http://www.wtamu.edu/webres/File/Social%20Work/FieldInstructionManual_rev0315.pdf

SOCIAL WORK ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Social Work Advisory Council meets at least once every full semester, and consists of faculty, community partners and constituents, and social work students. Agencies represented on the Advisory Council provide MSSW students with internships, sharing expertise and their professional staff to supervise social work students. The council elects a chairperson and secretary. The primary function of the council is to provide advice and guidance in matters relating to the education of future social workers. The council, through its ad hoc committees, makes recommendations in matters such as eligibility criteria for admission into the social work program, criteria for admission into field placement and recruiting minority students. The council also advocates for the social work program in the wider community. Such inter-organizational relationship helps the social work program maintain a close relationship with the community.

The President of the Graduate Student Organization, or their designee, is appointed to the Advisory Council. The student is invited to attend the advisory council and is called upon to report on the GSO, and anything of interest regarding the MSSW program. The student serves as a liaison between all MSSW students and the members of the Advisory Council.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND LICENSURE

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION - NASW

The National Association of Social Workers is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, with nearly 150,000 members worldwide. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies. NASW has led the way in setting standards of professional practice since the establishment of the *Code of Ethics* in 1955. Texas is a state chapter member of NASW and Amarillo has a local branch of NASW. Social Work students at WTAMU are strongly encouraged to become members, attend NASW meetings and NASW workshops.

For more information contact:

National Association of Social Workers
750 First Street, NE, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20002-4241
Tel.: 800-638-8799 TDD: 202-336-8396
FAX: 202-336-8310
Website: www.socialworkers.org

NASW Texas Chapter
810 West 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701-2010
Tel.: 512-474-1454
Toll Free: 800-888-6279
FAX: 512-474-1317
Email: naswtex@naswtx.org
Website: www.naswtx.org

TEXAS STATE LICENSING

The Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners regulates the profession of Social Work in Texas. The TSBSWE is a state agency with rule making authority governed by a nine-member board appointed by the Governor, and is administratively attached to the Texas Department of Health. Students are encouraged to obtain their Social Work License as soon as possible; they may sit for their exam during their final semester of coursework. For information about social work licensing, application for licensure or licensure upgrade, list of current social workers or to receive supervision packets contact:

Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners
1100 W. 49th Street
Austin, TX 78756-3183
Toll Free: 800-232-3162
Tel.: 512-719-3521

Website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/>

E-mail: lsw@dshs.state.tx.us

APPENDIX

RUBRIC FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS (RAPB)

Students must demonstrate the ability to maintain scores of 3 or 4 in each of the following 15 professional behavior areas listed below to be considered for or to maintain a field placement, as these are the expected professional behaviors of social work interns and professional social workers.

Student: _____	Semester: _____
Date of Review: _____	Class or Context of Review: _____

Professional Behaviors	1 Unacceptable	2 Needs Improvement	3 Acceptable	4 Outstanding
1. Attendance: Attends classes and related meetings	Student has missed a significant (as determined by the instructor) number of classes and/or a sufficient number of meetings to impair performance	Student has missed several classes and/or moderate number meetings such that it impacts performance.	Student attends almost all classes and/or attends almost all meetings such that absence does not impact/impair performance.	Student attends all classes and/or meetings.
2. Punctuality: Is punctual and present	Student has been significantly late to class/meetings or left early from class/meetings 3 or more times in a semester	Student has occasionally (no more than 2 times) been late to class/meetings or left early from class/meetings in a semester	Student is on time to class/meetings and stays until the end except in truly rare or unusual circumstances that are considered excusable by the professor	Student is always on time and stays until the end of class/meetings
3. Initiation of Communication: Initiates communication with the professor/supervisor	Student rarely contacts the instructor or supervisor to inform of tardiness/absence, and/or student provides no reason for	Student may contact the professor or supervisor to inform of tardiness or absence, but generally does so	Student almost always contacts the professor or supervisor prior to the occurrence to inform of tardiness or absence. In rare instances when this	Student always contacts the professor or supervisor prior to the beginning of class to inform of anticipated tardiness/absence

	tardiness/absence.	after the occurrence.	is not done prior, the student contacts the professor or supervisor immediately after.	except in an emergency and then contracts the professor/supervisor immediately after.
4. Respect: Demonstrates respect and support in relationships	Student is frequently disrespectful to and non-supportive of classmates, staff, faculty, and/or community members	Student is occasionally disrespectful to and non-supportive of classmates, staff, faculty, and/or community members	Student is rarely disrespectful to classmates, staff, and/or faculty. Student almost always demonstrates support in these relationships and interactions	Student is never disrespectful to classmates, staff and/or faculty. Student always demonstrates support in these relationships or interactions
5. Self-Awareness	Student rarely shows self-awareness about the impact of verbal and non-verbal communications.	Student occasionally shows self-awareness about the impact of verbal and non-verbal communications.	Student usually shows self-awareness about the impact of verbal and non-verbal communications.	Student always shows self-awareness about the impact of verbal and non-verbal communications.
6. Diversity Awareness: Demonstrates awareness and responsiveness to diversity	Student's classroom or other student related interactions rarely reflect respect for and appreciation of diverse opinions, experiences, and/or people	Student occasionally reflects respect for and appreciation of diverse opinions, experiences, and/or people in the classroom or during other student related interactions	Student's classroom or other student related interactions almost always reflect for and appreciation of diverse opinions, experiences, and/or people.	Student's classroom or other student related interactions always reflect respect for and appreciation of diverse opinions, experiences, and/or people.
7. Collegiality: Demonstrates collegiality and collaborative interactions	Student rarely demonstrates collaborative skills in work with others, and/or student has poor relationships with classmates or others involved in student learning	Student is occasionally reluctant to collaborate with others and/or struggles with maintaining positive relationships.	Student almost always works collaboratively with team members, and/or student almost always engages positively with others.	Student always works collaboratively with all team members, and/or student always engages positively with others.
8. Course Engagement: Demonstrates appropriate engagement in class activities/discussions	Student rarely engages in class activities/discussions and does not make an effort to do so following feedback. Student may frequently monopolize the learning space, limiting others'	Student occasionally engages in class activities and discussions and makes some effort to do so following feedback. Student may occasionally monopolize the	Student almost always engages in class activities and discussions and rarely monopolizes the learning space in a way that limits others' engagement and/or the	Student always engages in class activities /discussions and never monopolizes the learning space in a way that it limits others' engagement and/or the learning environment.

	engagement and/or inhibiting the learning environment	learning space, limiting others' engagement and/or inhibiting the learning environment	learning environment.	
9. Written Expression: Strives for a high level of written expression	Student's writing shows significant impairment in content, grammar, spelling, structure, and/or flow. Writing grades are/would be a D or F.	Student's writing shows moderate impairment in content, grammar, spelling, structure, and/or flow. Writing grades are/would be a <u>low</u> C.	Student's writing demonstrates good content, grammar, spelling, structure, and/or flow. Writing grades are/would be a <u>high</u> C.	Student's writing demonstrates good to excellent content, grammar, spelling, structure, and/or flow. Writing grades are/would be a B or A.
10. Initiative & Reliability: Demonstrates initiative, reliability and dependability	Student rarely takes initiative to plan work and complete it in a timely manner, and/or student rarely gets assignments done and submitted on time.	Student only occasionally takes initiative to plan work and complete it in a timely manner, resulting in coming to class minimally prepared and occasionally missing assignment due dates	Student almost always takes initiative to plan work and complete it in a timely manner, and/or work is almost always submitted on time.	Student always takes initiative to plan and complete work in a timely manner, and/or is always submitted on time.
11. Responsiveness to Feedback: Demonstrates evidence of motivation to improve oneself	Student has not demonstrated receptiveness to suggestions and feedback from others and therefore, makes no effort to adjust performance accordingly.	Student is usually receptive to suggestions and feedback but does not adjust performance accordingly.	Student is almost always receptive to suggestions or feedback and adjusts performance accordingly.	Student is always receptive to suggestions or feedback from others and adjusts performance accordingly.
12. Compliance with professional Requirements: Demonstrates compliance with the professional conduct policy in the MSSW Program, WTAMU	Student demonstrates significant problems in complying with Program requirements, University requirements, and/or the Field manual.	Student occasionally demonstrates non-compliance with the Program requirements, University requirements, and/or the Field manual.	Student almost always demonstrates compliance with the Program requirements, University requirements, and/or the Field manual.	Student always demonstrates compliance with the Program requirements, University requirements, and/or the Field manual.

<p>13. Compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics and the Texas Code of Conduct. Demonstrates compliance with the Code of Ethics in its entirety and the Texas Code of Conduct.</p>	<p>Student is consistently non-compliant with one or more components of the Code of Ethics or the Texas Code of Conduct.</p>	<p>Student is only moderately compliant with components of the Code of Ethics or the Texas Code of Conduct.</p>	<p>Student is almost always compliant with the Code of Ethics or the Texas Code of Conduct.</p>	<p>Student consistently demonstrates compliance with the Code of Ethics or the Texas Code of Conduct.</p>
<p>14. Quality and Quantity of Work: Strives for high quality work that meets assignment guidelines.</p>	<p>Student submits assignments that frequently lack neatness, accuracy, organization, and thoroughness, and/or the work submitted is incomplete.</p>	<p>Student submits assignments that occasionally lack neatness, accuracy, organization, and thoroughness, and/or the work submitted is somewhat incomplete.</p>	<p>Student rarely submits assignments that lack neatness, accuracy, organization, and thoroughness, The work submitted is general complete.</p>	<p>Student always submits assignments that are neat, accurate, organized, and thorough. The work submitted is always complete.</p>
<p>15. Professional Appearance: Displays professional appearance that does not interfere with professional relationships/responsibilities.</p>	<p>Student's professional attire and presentation is consistently inappropriate for professional and classroom settings.</p>	<p>Student's professional attire and presentation is frequently inappropriate for professional and classroom settings.</p>	<p>Student's appearance is routinely appropriate for classroom and professional settings.</p>	<p>Student's appearance is consistently appropriate for classroom and professional settings.</p>

Comments (regarding ratings):

Action Plan (attach additional pages if necessary):

Professor's signature: _____ Date: _____

Student's signature: _____ Date: _____

(Adapted with permission from the University of Vermont Department of Social Work, created 6/17/10 and Texas A&M University- Central Texas, updated 2/2014; updated August 2014 by WTAMU for the MSSW Program)

Preamble

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living. Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems.

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

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

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

Ethical Principles

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

Value: *Service*

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

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

Value: *Social Justice*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers challenge social injustice.*

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

Value: *Dignity and Worth of the Person*

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

Value: *Importance of Human Relationships*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.* Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Value: *Integrity*

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

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

and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Value: *Competence*

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

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

Ethical Standards

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all social workers.

These standards concern (1) social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients, (2) social workers' ethical responsibilities to colleagues, (3) social workers' ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) social workers' ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the social work professions, and (6) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

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

1. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Clients

1.01 Commitment to Clients

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

1.02 Self-Determination

Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Social workers may limit clients' right

to self-determination when, in the social workers' professional judgment, clients' actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others.

1.03 Informed Consent

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

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

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

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

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

(F) Social workers should obtain clients' informed consent before audio taping or videotaping clients or permitting observation of services to clients by a third party.

1.04 Competence

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

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

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

1.05 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity

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

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

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

1.06 Conflicts of Interest

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

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

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

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

1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

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

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

(C) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that social workers will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or other identifiable person or when laws or regulations require disclosure without a client's consent. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.

(D) Social workers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the

disclosure is made. This applies whether social workers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(K) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members of the media.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.08 Access to Records

(A) Social workers should provide clients with reasonable access to records concerning the clients.

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

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

1.09 Sexual Relationships

(A) Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.

(B) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship has the potential to be harmful to the client and may make it difficult for the social workers and client to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Social workers--not their clients, their clients' relatives, or other individuals with whom the client maintains a personal relationship--assume the full burden for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

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

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

1.10 Physical Contact

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

1.11 Sexual Harassment

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

1.12 Derogatory Language

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

1.13 Payment for Services

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

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

(C) Social workers should not solicit a private fee or other remuneration for providing services to clients who are entitled to such available services through the social workers' employer or agency.

1.14 Clients Who Lack Decision-Making Capacity

When social workers act on behalf of clients who lack the capacity to make informed decisions, social workers should take reasonable steps to safeguard the interests and rights of those clients.

1.15 Interruption of Services

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

1.16 Termination of Services

(A) Social workers should terminate services to clients and professional relationships with them when such services and relationships are no longer required or no longer serve the clients' needs or interests.

(B) Social workers should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in need of services. Social workers should withdraw services precipitously only under unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects. Social workers should assist in making appropriate arrangements for continuation of services when necessary.

(C) Social workers in fee for service settings may terminate services to clients who are not paying an overdue balance if the financial contractual arrangements have been made clear to the client, if the client does not pose an imminent danger to self or others, and if the clinical and other consequences of the current nonpayment have been addressed and discussed with the client.

(D) Social workers should not terminate services to pursue a social, financial, or sexual relationship with a client.

(E) Social workers who anticipate the termination or interruption of services to clients should notify clients promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of services in relation to the clients' needs and preferences.

(F) Social workers who are leaving an employment setting should inform clients of appropriate options for the continuation of services and of the benefits and risks of the options.

2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues

2.01 Respect

(A) Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.

(B) Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals'

attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability.

(C) Social workers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the well-being of clients.

2.02 Confidentiality

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

2.03 Interdisciplinary Collaboration

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

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

2.04 Disputes Involving Colleagues

(A) Social workers should not take advantage of a dispute between a colleague and an employer to obtain a position or otherwise advance the social worker's own interests.

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

2.05 Consultation

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

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

2.06 Referral for Services

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

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

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

2.07 Sexual Relationships

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

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

2.08 Sexual Harassment

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

2.09 Impairment of Colleagues

(A) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's impairment that is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health

difficulties and that interferes with practice effectiveness should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(B) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague's impairment interferes with practice effectiveness and that the colleague has not taken adequate steps to address the impairment should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

2.10 Incompetence of Colleagues

(A) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's incompetence should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(B) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague is competent and has not taken adequate steps to address the incompetence should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

2.11 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues

(A) Social workers should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues.

(B) Social workers should be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about colleagues' unethical behavior. Social workers should be familiar with national, state, and local procedures for handling ethics complaints. These include policies and procedures created by NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, employers, agencies, and other professional organizations.

(C) Social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should seek resolution by discussing their concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive.

(D) When necessary, social workers who believed that a colleague has acted unethically should take action through appropriate formal channels (such as contacting a state licensing board or regulatory body, an NASW committee or inquiry, or other professional ethics committees.)

(E) Social workers should defend and assist colleagues who are unjustly charged with unethical conduct.

3. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities in Practice Settings

3.01 Supervision and Consultation

(A) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation should have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.

(B) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(C) Social workers should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with supervisees in which there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisee.

(D) Social workers who provide supervision should evaluate supervisees' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

Education and Training

(A) Social workers who function as educators, field instructors for students, or trainers should provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and competence and should provide instruction based on the most current information and knowledge available in the profession.

(B) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

(C) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.

(D) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

3.03 Performance Evaluation

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

3.04 Client Records

(A) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation in records is accurate and reflects the services provided.

(B) Social workers should include sufficient and timely documentation in records to facilitate the delivery of services and to ensure continuity of services provided to clients in the future.

(C) Social workers' documentation should protect clients' privacy to the extent that is possible and appropriate and should include only information that is directly relevant to the delivery of services.

(D) Social workers should store records following the termination of services to ensure reasonable future access. Records should be maintained for the number of years required by state statutes or relevant contracts.

3.05 Billing

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

3.06 Client Transfer

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

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

3.07 Administration

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

(B) Social workers should advocate for resource allocation procedure that are open and fair. When not all clients' needs can be met, an allocation procedure should be developed that is non-discriminatory and based on appropriate and consistently applied principles.

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

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

3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development

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

3.09 Commitments to Employers

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

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

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

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

(E) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the employing organization's work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.

(F) Social workers should accept employment or arrange student field placements only in organizations that exercise fair personnel practices.

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

3.10 Labor-Management Disputes

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

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

4. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities as Professionals

4.01 Competence

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

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

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

4.02 Discrimination

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

4.03 Private Conduct

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

4.04 Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception

Social workers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.

4.05 Impairment

(A) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.

(B) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

4.06 Misrepresentation

(A) Social workers should make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of the social work profession, a professional social work organization, or the social worker's employing agency.

(B) Social workers who speak on behalf of professional social work organizations should accurately represent the official and authorized positions of the organizations.

(C) Social workers should ensure that their representations to clients, agencies, and the public of professional qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided, or results to be achieved are accurate. Social workers should claim only those relevant professional credentials they actually possess and take steps to correct any inaccuracies or misrepresentations of their credentials by others.

4.07 Solicitations

(A) Social workers should not engage in uninvited solicitation of potential clients who, because of their circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence, manipulation, or coercion.

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

4.08 Acknowledging Credit

(A) Social workers should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed.

(B) Social workers should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others.

5. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Social Work Profession

5.01 Integrity of the Profession

(A) Social workers should work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.

(B) Social workers should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession. Social workers should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the profession through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of the profession.

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

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

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

5.02 Evaluation and Research

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(H) Social workers should inform participants of their right to withdraw from evaluation and research at any time without penalty.

(I) Social workers should take appropriate steps to ensure that participants in evaluation and research have access to appropriate supportive services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society

6.01 Social Welfare

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

6.02 Public Participation

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

6.03 Public Emergencies

Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.

6.04 Political Action

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

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

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

(D) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability.



SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

I, _____, do hereby acknowledge receipt of the MSSW program manual, and certify that I understand the guidelines and policies contained in this document and agree to abide by them. I understand that there may be consequences imposed by the Graduate School, the College of Education & Social Sciences, the Department of Psychology, Sociology & Social Work, or the MSSW Program for any violation or noncompliance relating to the policies contained within this document.

Student Signature

Date