

# Social Work Student Handbook

2009-2010

**Missouri Western State University**

**Social Work Student Handbook**  
**MWSU Social Work program**  
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## **Welcome to MWSU's Social Work Program!**

We are pleased you have chosen Social Work as your career. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the national social work accrediting body, accredits MWSU's baccalaureate Social Work Program. Accreditation means that our Social Work Program meets CSWE's high standards of excellence and effectively prepares students for beginning-level careers in the social work field.

Social work is a rewarding field and we look forward to sharing our experiences with you. We anticipate a great year and hope you will become actively involved in the Program both academically and through extracurricular activities like the Organization for Student Social Workers (OSSW). We encourage you to take advantage of the many learning opportunities available both inside and outside the classroom.

The Social Work faculty created this handbook as a guide to the Program's policies, procedures, and resources. Your advisor will also be an invaluable resource and we encourage you to regularly meet with your advisor .

We constantly work to improve the Social Work Program, and as a result, we value your feedback. Please talk with us about your experiences. We want to know what is working well in the Program and your suggestions for improvement.

Have a great year,

**Dr. Kenneth White**  
Director  
Social Work Program

**Pam Clary, MSW, LCSW, LSCSW**  
Coordinator  
Field Education Practicum

## **History of the Social Work Profession**

Social work has a long and illustrious history in the United States. Between the Civil War and World War I, many social and economic changes (e.g., industrialization, immigration, and urbanization) led to severe social and economic problems. Two social and ideological movements evolved to address these social problems: the Settlement House Movement and Charity Organization Societies. These movements later became the foundation for social work practice and eventually consolidated to form the social work profession.

The profession is guided by two national organizations: The National Association of Social Work and the Council on Social Work Education. The National Association of Social Work was founded in 1955 and in 1960 adopted a formal code of ethics which identified the standards of ethical behavior that professional social workers were expected to honor (Goldstein & Beebe, 1995, p. 1750). Although the NASW Code of Ethics has gone through several revisions, it remains the foundation for ethical social work practice (see page 54).

The profession's accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), was established in 1952. Its purpose is to preserve and enhance "the quality of social work education for practice that promotes the goals of individual and community well-being and social justice" (CSWE, 1999). CSWE establishes standards for accredited social work educational programs. Initially, CSWE only established standards for MSW programs. However, it first established standards for baccalaureate programs in 1962 and began accrediting baccalaureate programs in 1974 (Beless, 1995). In contrast to MSW programs, BSW standards emphasize a generalist, rather than a specialist curriculum and prepare students to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

### **Missouri Western State University's Social Work Program**

Missouri Western State University (MWSU) started as St. Joseph Junior College in 1915. In 1969, it became Missouri Western State College and began offering four-year, baccalaureate degrees. MWSU inaugurated the Social Work Program that same year (September, 1969). The Council on Social Work Education granted the Social Work Program candidacy in 1977 and fully accredited the program in June, 1979. The Program has maintained its CSWE accreditation since that time. It is the only accredited social work program in northwest Missouri.

The Social Work Program prepares students as generalist social work practitioners to work with individuals, groups, families, organizations, communities, and society to achieve more effective and efficient functioning at the various system levels (micro, mezzo & macro). We have designed the curriculum to help students acquire important 1) knowledge, 2) skills, and 3) values in the areas of diversity, social and economic justice, populations-at-risk, human behavior and the social environment, social work research, values and ethics, social welfare policy and services, and social work practice. The program culminates in a 456 hour supervised field education practicum that allows students to work as an intern in one of Missouri's many human services agencies.

## Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The Social Work Program's Mission is integrally connected to Missouri Western State University's and the College of Language Arts and Sciences' missions and values.

### MWSU Mission

Missouri Western State University is a learning community that focuses on students as individuals and as members of society. As they prepare to be leaders in their work and in their communities, Western offers students at all stages of life the opportunity to achieve excellence in the classroom and beyond. Western is committed to the educational, economic, cultural, and social development of the people and the northwest Missouri region.

**Our Values:** In fulfilling our mission and pursuing our vision, we the people of Missouri Western State University hold in common these values:

**Service:** We share the common purpose of serving students, one another, and the people of the region.

**Quality:** We are committed to the quality of our programs, our students, and our partnership with the people of the region.

**Enthusiasm:** We are enthusiastic about learning and confident that we can make a difference in the lives of students through their learning.

**Freedom:** We promote the free exchange of ideas that makes education liberating and democracy unique.

**Respect:** We act as individuals and as a campus community with respect for diversity and for the best in human potential.

**Courage:** We seek the challenge and adventure of shaping the future with an increasingly global perspective.

### College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences includes the Departments of Art; Biology; Chemistry; Communication Studies, Theatre & Humanities; Computer Sciences, Mathematics & Physics; English, Foreign Languages & Journalism; Music; Psychology; Political Science, Social Work & Sociology.

Programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences provide opportunities for development of both the intellectual and technical skills necessary for professional competence. In class experiences are supplemented with laboratory classes, field experiences, student/faculty collaborative research, and internships. Additionally, students focus on formal and informal writing processes, and application of computer technologies. These experiences provide learning situations that emphasize the combination of theory and hands-on practice.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences faculty encourage students to reflect on the value of individual and organizational integrity, to develop personal and professional respect for others, to foster international/intercultural sensitivity, and to promote personal and social responsibility.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences provides the core of the University's general

education program. Individually, and collectively (team) learn to:

- communicate ideas effectively
- develop critical, analytical, and quantitative skills
- use the scientific process in daily living
- compare, contrast, and evaluate ideas
- develop historical frameworks in which to evaluate current and possible future events
- experience the arts and participate in the cultural life of the community

These components of a liberal arts education allow students to become capable, well-rounded human beings, knowledgeable citizens, and productive members of society. Liberal Arts and Sciences graduates are valued by graduate and professional schools, by employers in business and nonprofit organizations, and in other careers that require flexibility, creativity, and problem solving.

### **Social Work Program**

In keeping with the University's and College's goals, the Social Work Program's mission is to prepare undergraduate students for ethical and effective generalist social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, the largest society of northwest Missouri. Social work graduates will value human dignity, social and economic justice, and human and cultural diversity. They will competently serve individuals from diverse backgrounds, including persons who are poor, vulnerable, and oppressed and work to reduce poverty, oppression, and discrimination by making government and social service agencies more just and responsive to the needs of the consumer.

In addition to preparing competent social workers, MWSU's Social Work Program is dedicated to offering its professional expertise and academic resources to support community efforts devoted to enhancing human well being and promoting social and economic justice.

### **Program Goals and Objectives**

The MWSU Social Work Program's primary goal is to provide a quality undergraduate curriculum and a professional social work foundation that produces competent generalist BSW graduates.

#### **Goal 1 : Graduates will demonstrate a broad, liberal arts perspective.**

- 1.1: Graduates will develop knowledge and competencies in writing, math, communication, natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and physical education.

#### **Goal 2: Graduates will demonstrate competencies to practice with individuals, families, small groups, organizations, communities, and society in changing social contexts. Accordingly, they will be 1) knowledgeable of social work's history, values, ethics, and theories; 2) be sensitive to issues regarding diversity, social and economic justice, social advocacy, social change, and populations-at-risk; and 3) effectively**

**apply knowledge and skills related to human behavior in the social environment, social work practice, social work ethics, policy, practice evaluation and research, and professional and personal development in practice with diverse populations.**

- 2.1: Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.
- 2.2: Graduates will understand the social work profession's ethical values, principles, and standards.
- 2.3: Graduates will demonstrate the self-awareness, respect, and sensitivity needed to effectively work with all clients regardless of their age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 2.4: Graduates will understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination that exist in society and will demonstrate advocacy and social change skills that advance social and economic justice.
- 2.5: Graduates will demonstrate knowledge of the social work profession's history.
- 2.6: Graduates will understand and apply the knowledge of generalist social work practice with systems of all sizes.
- 2.7: Graduates will understand various theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence that help to explain and understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals, and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- 2.8: Graduates will analyze and evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions.
- 2.9: Graduates will employ existing research findings to evaluate social welfare policies.
- 2.10: Graduates will use communication skills differentially across client populations, colleagues and communities.
- 2.11: Graduates will use supervision and consultation appropriate to social work practice
- 2.12: Graduates will apply social work values and skills to make organizations and communities more responsive to clients and community members, respectively.

**Goal 3: Social Work Program will provide professional expertise and resources to community efforts designed to promote human well-being and social and economic justice.**

3.1: Faculty, students, and graduates will initiate and participate in collaborative community efforts designed to enhance the social functioning of client systems and eliminate social and economic injustice.

## **BSW Curriculum**

Missouri Western's Social Work Program combines theory with practice to prepare graduates for an entry-level, career in generalist social work practice. The Program organizes the curriculum in sequences: human behavior and the social environment (HBSE); social work generalist practice methods; social policy; social work research; and, the social work practicum. The Program integrates values, ethics, diversity, populations-at-risk in northwest Missouri, and social and economic justice content throughout the curriculum.

Students learn:

- Theories about different levels of client systems in the HBSE sequence;
- Practice skills and about ethical practice in the generalist practice sequence;
- The laws and regulations that affect our clients and how to make them more socially and economically just in the policy sequence;
- To understand and evaluate research, evaluate the efficacy of their own/organization's practice, and conduct original research in the research sequence; and,
- To integrate theories, skills, values, and knowledge in the 456 hour Social Work Field Education Practicum.

Throughout these courses, the Program challenges students to improve their critical thinking, self-awareness, and communication skills, to examine their own values, practice skills, and synthesize learning from other classes. Electives, such as Introduction to Aging Studies, Child Welfare, Death and Dying, Intimate Violence, Loss and Grief, Substance Abuse and Dependence, and Mental Health allow students to expand their knowledge in specific practice fields.

The Social Work Major requires students to complete 124 credit hours to graduate with a BSW degree. Seventy-four of these credit hours are in social work and related courses in other disciplines (see Curriculum Section below). In conjunction with required general education courses, the Social Work Program provides students with a **broad liberal arts and science** foundation and the specialized courses needed to effectively practice as generalist social workers.

## Curriculum

Students who declare the Social Work Major under the 2009-2010 University catalog will be required to complete the following classes.

Required Social Work Classes	Other Required Courses
SWK 250 (4): Introduction to Social Work	SOC 110 (3): General Sociology
SWK 320 (3): Philosophy and Policy in Social Services	SOC 230 (3): Social Problems
SWK 330 (3): Human Behavior and the Social Environment I	SOC 400 (3): Racial and Ethnic Relations
SWK 340 (3): Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	SOC 460 (3): Methods of Social Research
SWK 350 (4): Social Work Practice I	GOV 101 (3): American National Government
SWK 360 (3): Social Work Practice II	PSY 101 (3): General Psychology
SWK 415 (4): Social Work Practice III	PSY 300 (3): Psychological Statistics or equivalent***
SWK 420 (3): Philosophy and Policy in Social Services II	Biology (3-5): BIO 101, equivalent
SWK 465 (3): Social Work Research Project	ECO 101 (3) (Current Issues in the Economy) OR 260 (3) (Principles of Economics I)
SWK 480 (10): Practicum in Social Work (block placement)	**PSY 200 (3): Intermediate Psychology is a prerequisite for PSY 300
SWK 485 (2): Social Work Practicum Seminar	
Social Work Elective (SWK 260, SWK 270, SWK 325, SWK 345, SWK 365, SWK 450)	
<b>Total 45 Credits</b>	<b>Total 29 Credits</b>

## Sample Course Schedule

Below is a sample course schedule based on the new curriculum requirements. The schedule will differ for transfer students.

<b>Freshman Year</b>		<b>Sophomore Year</b>	
<b>Fall Semester</b>	<b>Spring Semester</b>	<b>Fall Semester</b>	<b>Spring Semester</b>
GOV 101: American National Government (3) PSY 101: General Psychology (3) ENG 104: College Writing and Rhetoric (3) MAT 116: College Algebra (3) PED 101: Concepts of Physical Activity (3)	SOC 110: General Sociology (3) BIO 101: Principles of Biology (5) ENG 108: College Writing & Rhetoric (3) PED Activity (1) COM 104: Oral Communication (3)	SWK 250: Introduction to Social Work (4) SOC 230: Social Problems (3) Elective: SWK 260, 270 or 365 (3) Category 4: General Studies (3) Category 4: General Studies (3)	ECO 101 or 260 (3) Category 4: General Studies (3) PSY 200 Intermediate Psychology (3) SWK Elective (SWK 260, SWK 270, SWK 365) (3) Science (4-5)
<b>15 credits</b>	<b>15 credits</b>	<b>16 credits</b>	<b>16 credits</b>
<b>Junior Year</b>		<b>Senior Year</b>	
<b>Fall Semester</b>	<b>Spring Semester</b>	<b>Fall Semester</b>	<b>Spring Semester</b>
SWK 330: Human Behavior and the Social Environment I (3) SWK 350: Social Work Practice I (4) Elective (3) PSY 300: Psychological Statistics (3) Elective (3)	SWK 320: Philosophy and Policy I in Social Services (3) SWK 340: Human Behavior and the Social Environment II (3) SWK 360: Social Work Practice II (3) SOC 400: Race and Ethnic Relations (3) Elective (3)	SWK 415: Social Work Practice III (4) SWK 420: Philosophy and Policy II (3) Elective (3) Elective (3) SOC 460: Methods of Social Research (3)	SWK 480: SWK Practicum Seminar (2) SWK 485: Practicum in Social Work (10) SWK 465: SWK Research Project (3)
<b>16 credits</b>	<b>15 credits</b>	<b>16 credits</b>	<b>15 credits</b>

## Additional Suggestions and Information

- **Graduate School:** Those students who plan to complete a Master's of Social Work (MSW) degree should contact their advisor to discuss their educational options. Students who hope to pursue an advanced standing MSW program immediately after graduation should maintain an undergraduate GPA of at least a 3.0. MSW programs often accept experienced BSW graduates into advanced standing programs with lower GPAs.
- **Graduate School:** Some graduate schools require applicants to take the Graduate Record Exam (G.R.E.) or the Miller Analogy Test as part of their entrance requirements. If so, students are advised to complete these tests during the Fall or Spring semester before graduation. Specific information about these tests can be obtained from the Department of Counseling and Placement. These tests may be taken more than once.
- **Field Education Practicum:** The Social Work Field Education Practicum (SWK 480) is scheduled in the last semester of the student's senior year. Students spend eight (8) hours, four days per week as a student practitioner in an assigned social service agency. Other than SWK 465 and SWK 485, which are scheduled on Mondays, students should not take any other courses or work during the semester they are enrolled in field education practicum.
- **Course Prerequisites:** Most social work courses have required prerequisites, which are listed in Western's University Catalog. Some classes may be taken concurrently. Students should consult their advisor for assistance in scheduling courses.
- **LAS Areas of Focus:** BSW students must fulfill the School of Language of Arts and Sciences "Areas of Focus" requirements by completing an intensive writing, computer literacy, ethics, and international/intercultural course. Social work students can fulfill these requirements by taking the following required courses:

<b>LAS Writing</b>	<b>SWK 480</b>
<b>LAS Computer Literacy</b>	<b>SOC 460</b>
<b>LAS Ethics</b>	<b>SWK 350</b>
<b>LAS International/Intercultural</b>	<b>SWK 330</b>

## Admissions into the Social Work Major

Majoring in social work typically involves a two-step process.

### Step 1: Premajor Status

Premajors are those students who 1) have Not yet completed one or more of the following courses: SWK 250, ENG 108, SOC 110, PSY 101, General Studies Math (MAT 112 or higher for Statistics or MAT 116 for graduate school recommended), BIO 101, and SOC 230 and; 2) have Not formerly applied to the Program. To declare social work as a premajor, students should meet with a social work faculty member to complete the necessary forms. The Social Work Program does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, political affiliation or sexual orientation.

### Step 2: Formal acceptance and admission into the Social Work Program

The Social Work Program operates under a selective admissions policy. Students are considered “pre-majors” until they meet the minimum requirements to be accepted as a Social Work major. Admission to the Social Work Program involves the completion of an application packet. Students can obtain an application packet from the department’s administrative assistant or go to <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/gsws/socialwork/forms.asp> to obtain the necessary forms.

Minimum requirements for admission into the Social Work Major include:

- Completion of the general studies math requirement (MAT 112 suggested for statistics,- Psychology statistics requires MAT 112 or higher, Nursing Statistics requires MAT 110 or higher; MAT 116 suggested for graduate school);
- Completion of the ENG 108 general studies requirement;
- Completion of Biology 101 (or equivalent); and,
- Completion of SWK 250, SOC 110, PSY 101, and SOC 230 with a minimum grade of C in each course.
- Must have a minimum overall GPA of 2.5;
- Must have earned a “C” or better in all completed SWK prefix classes required for the major;
- Must agree to and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with accepted professional social work practices and the current NASW Code of Ethics (see Social Work Student Handbook appendix);
- Cannot have exhibited behavior (past or present) that will infringe on their present or future ability to adequately fulfill professional social work responsibilities. The Social Work Program’s Admission Committee reserves the right to require applicants to submit additional materials if the Committee questions the student’s ability to adequately fulfill professional responsibilities; and,
- Must complete and pass a criminal background check

Students must be accepted into the Social Work Program prior to beginning SWK 360: Social Work Practice II and must submit the formal application packet to be considered (an application, a personal statement, three letters of reference, and a signed Code of Ethics and Student Handbook form) by the first Friday in October or March. **All reference letters are due 10 (ten) days before the packet due date.** Applications must contain all required material and submitted by the due date to be considered for review. Incomplete applications and/or late submissions will

be reviewed at a subsequent review date. The Social Work Admissions Committee will review all application packets and interview all applicants. Admission decisions are based on a student's academic performance, professional, personal and academic conduct, references, and responses to application and interview questions. All members of the Admissions Committee, by a simple majority vote will then make one of the following decisions:

- To unconditionally accept a student into the Program;
- To place a student on probationary status; or
- To deny formal acceptance.

Probationary status requires students to successfully address faculty-identified issues within a specified period of time before attaining full acceptance into the program. Students who fail to successfully address these provisional issues will not be allowed to enroll in the following SWK-prefix courses: SWK 360; SWK 415; SWK 420; SWK 465; SWK 480; and, SWK 485

Social Work majors must successfully complete a second formal application process before entering SWK 480 and SWK 485 (see page 14 in this handbook).

The Social Work Program does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, political affiliation, or sexual orientation. Students granted probationary status or denied acceptance will be sent a letter that specifies the social work faculty's reasons. The Admission's Committee also will identify the timeframe and the issues probationary status students need to address to continue to take required SWK-prefix courses. Students may appeal the admission decision using the procedure detailed below. Students who believe that discrimination has taken place should contact the Vice President of Student Affairs or MWSU's Affirmative Action Officer in the Human Resource Office (see Western's Student Handbook).

## Appeal Procedures

### Disciplinary and Grade Appeal Procedures

The Social Work Program follows Missouri Western State University's Student Disciplinary Code and Academic Honesty and Due Process procedures. Social Work students charged with disciplinary infractions or cheating or who plan to appeal a course grade should follow the procedures outlined in the *MWSU Student Handbook*. As a social work major or pre-major, students should follow the procedures outlined below to appeal their status:

#### BSW Appeal Guidelines for:

- Students **denied acceptance** into the social work major;
- Students granted **probationary status** in the social work major; or
- Students **terminated** from the social work major

The Social work profession is committed to serving individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities within society. Professional social workers often work with vulnerable individuals who have experienced abuse, discrimination, assault, and other adverse situations. Therefore, social workers must be intellectually, psychologically, ethically, emotionally, and

interpersonally prepared to work with vulnerable populations and not cause further harm. In accordance with the Council on Social Work Education and the National Association of Social Work guidelines, the Social Work Program expects all social work majors to conduct themselves in a professional manner consistent with the most recent NASW Code of Ethics. The Social Work Program at Missouri Western reserves the right to make one of the following decisions if a student exhibits deficiencies in academic and/or nonacademic areas:

- Deny admission into the major;
- Place an accepted/applying major on “probationary status; or
- Terminate a student from the major

### **Academic Considerations**

Future social workers must meet the ethical and intellectual demands required by the social work profession and outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics. Consequently, social work students who fail to meet the social work program’s educational expectations, may be denied admission into the social work program, placed on probationary status, or removed from the major. Examples of the types of behaviors that could negatively impact on a student’s status in the social work major include:

- A cumulative GPA below a 2.5
- Plagiarism: See MWSU Student Handbook ([www.missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf](http://www.missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf))
- Cheating; See MWSU Student Handbook ([www.missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf](http://www.missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf))
- A grade of “D” or “F” in any SWK prefix classes (students applying for admission must have a “C” or better in all completed SWK prefix classes required for the major)
- Falsification of information (oral or written) to gain admission into the major

### **Nonacademic Considerations**

The Council on Social Work Education defines nonacademic considerations as students’ “performance or behaviors . . . that provide relevant information regarding their likely performance as social work practitioners” (CSWE, 89). Students may be denied admission into the field education practicum program, placed on “probationary status”, or terminated from the Social Work Major or field education practicum for:

- Failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity or emotional stability requisite for professional practice (violations of NASW Code of Ethics);
- Inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty or staff (at school or field placement), and,
- Consistent failure to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills necessary for forming professional helping relationships (for example, unable to demonstrate nonjudgmental attitude; unable to allow client self-determination) (CSWE, 89)

## Appeal Process

### Low GPA or Earning a “D” or “F” in a Social Work Class<sup>1</sup>

Social Work students whose GPA falls below 2.5 or who receive a “D” or “F” in all completed SWK prefix courses required for the major may be denied admission to the program. Students receiving a “D” or “F” in any SWK prefix course may be placed on “probationary status” or removed from the program. The Program Director will review majors’ grades and cumulative GPAs each semester. She/he will notify the social work faculty, and the faculty and the Program Director will decide on a course of action. The Program Director will notify students who fail to meet the program’s academic standards in writing and will encourage students to schedule a meeting with the Program Director and their SW Advisor to discuss their status. Students may appeal the faculty’s decision (see appeal procedure described below). For appeal of Field Education Practicum decisions see Field Practicum section (pg. 15).

### Reasons Other than Low GPA

Anyone who witnesses behavior that calls into question a social work major’s or pre-major’s appropriateness for the social work profession must submit his/her allegation along with a description of the alleged behavior in writing to the Social Work Program Director. The Program Director shall notify the student in writing of the allegations against him/her and will begin to collect evidence regarding the allegation(s). The evidence shall include:

- Written and/or verbal statements made by the student, information provided by the complainant, and any information provided by individuals who might have knowledge of the alleged behavior;
- Related documents or reports (e.g., police reports)

The Program Director along with all members of the social work faculty will examine all of the evidence and based on the evidence, the faculty will make one of the following decisions:

- No further action—allegations unsubstantiated
- Student is placed on probationary status
- Student is terminated from the Social Work Major

If the student is placed on probationary status, a written plan of remediation/correction will be prepared by the Program Director in consultation with the social work faculty. The plan will be signed by the student (if the student agrees), the student’s SW advisor, and the Program Director. The plan will be placed in the student’s confidential file, and monitored by the Program Director and the student’s SW Advisor. The remediation plan will explicitly state the criteria for judging compliance, criteria for success or failure and timeframes for completion.

If the student is terminated from the program, the Program Director in conjunction with the SW faculty will prepare a written “reconsideration plan” for reinstatement that specifies when the student can apply for reinstatement, the criteria to be met, and the timeframe for completion of reinstatement. The written plan must be signed by the student, the SW advisor, and Program

<sup>1</sup> Students who wish to appeal a grade earned in a social work class should follow the appeal procedures outlined in the University’s Student Handbook.

Director and placed in the student's confidential file.

### **Appeal of Program Decisions**

If a student disagrees with the faculty's decision, the student may appeal by submitting a letter to the Program Director, within seven (7) days of being informed of the faculty's decision. The student's letter will need to provide specifics of the nature of the appeal and any other collaborating documents. After receiving the letter, the Program Director shall call a hearing of the social work faculty.

- The Program Director and the social work faculty shall review the student's appeal letter along with all collected documents.
- The student will receive a seven (7) day advance notice of a meeting with the social work faculty however; the meeting may be scheduled earlier, with the student's permission, if graduation occurs before the seven (7) day deadline.
- The Program Director shall facilitate the meeting, unless she/he is a primary party in the complaint. In such an instance, the Director shall appoint another member of the social work faculty to fulfill the role of chair.
- After hearing evidence presented by all parties, the faculty shall either uphold the original decision or make another determination.
- The findings of the panel shall be summarized in a written report and provided to the student. The report will be sealed and maintained by the Program Director. These findings shall not be revealed to other schools or to potential employers without the written consent of the student. If the student is terminated from the program, individuals inquiring into the student's status will be told that a hearing was held and that the student left the Program.

In cases where a student is removed from the BSW Program, the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Social Work and Sociology and the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will be notified of the dismissal and the reason(s) for this action.

If the student disagrees with the faculty's decision she/he may submit a letter of appeal within seven (7) days of the determination to the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Social Work and Sociology. This letter shall also outline the specifics of the student's complaint. The Chair and a panel of three faculty members (one from each discipline) will review all evidence after talking with all affected parties. They will either uphold the program's decision or make a different decision. The social work faculty member will be a nonvoting member on this panel. The student and Program Director will be informed of the panels' decision in writing within seven (7) days of the decision.

If the student disagrees with the departmental decision, she/he will submit a letter of appeal and other supporting documents within seven (7) days of the department's decision to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The Dean shall review all evidence and hear from all involved pertinent parties. The Dean will either decide to uphold the departmental decision or make a different determination. The Dean will notify the student, the Chair of the Department, and the Program Director in writing within seven (7) days of his review of the evidence.

Students who disagree with the Dean may appeal the Dean's decision to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

### **PROGRAM DIRECTOR/PRACTICUM COORDINATOR/FACULTY APPEAL PROCESS CONCERNING CONTESTED DECISIONS**

If the Program Director, the Field Education Practicum Coordinator, or a faculty member disagrees with the decision of the Program Panel, the disagreeing member will within seven (7) days of the panel's decision discuss his or her disagreement with the panel and request a reconsideration of that decision. The panel will either revise its initial decision or will uphold its initial decision. This information will be conveyed to the dissenting faculty member in writing within two (2) days of the decision. If the dissenting faculty member is dissatisfied with this decision, she/he may appeal the panel's decision within seven (7) days to the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Social Work, and Sociology. The appeal must be in writing and will outline the faculty member's reason for the appeal. The Chair will appoint a panel of three (3) faculty members from all three disciplines. The Social Work faculty member will be a non-voting member on this panel. The Chair and the panel will review all pertinent documents and will hear from all involved parties. The departmental panel will either uphold the program panel's original decision or may make another determination. The written decision will be conveyed to the involved parties within two (2) days of the decision. The decision of the Department Panel will be final.

### **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

Students must maintain certain standards to graduate with a B.S.W.:

- Maintain a 2.5 overall GPA;
- Earn at least a "C" or equivalent in all SWK prefix courses to graduate; and,
- Continue to meet the professional and academic standards of conduct.

Graduating students must submit an Application for Graduation to the Registrar's Office by the following deadlines.

- Fall graduates—July 1
- Spring graduates—November 1
- Summer graduates—March 1

All graduating students are required to take the designated exit exams. Contact the Office of Academic Affairs for more information (271-4586).

### **Minors/Certificates**

#### **Social Work**

The Social Work Program no longer offers a Social Work Minor.

## Minors in Other Disciplines

Social Work is considered a comprehensive major. Thus, students are not required to complete a minor. However, many students choose to do so. There are several minors students may want to consider.

**Childhood Studies:** Western offers an interdisciplinary minor in Childhood Studies intended for those students who plan to pursue careers working with children. Students must successfully complete at least eighteen hours from a list of approved classes (see University Catalog), including any 1-3 credit internship, special topics course, and/or independent study relevant to childhood studies and arranged through any academic department. To insure that the minor is a truly interdisciplinary experience, at least three disciplines must be represented with no more than nine hours coming from any one discipline.

**Sociology:** A Sociology minor requires the completion of SOC 110, SOC 230, SOC 400, SOC 440, SOC 460 and one additional SOC course numbered 300 or higher.

**Psychology:** The twenty-one (21) credit psychology minor requires several psychology courses beyond PSY 101 including PSY 200, one natural science core course (PSY 335, 340, 345, 350, 355, or 360), one social science core class (PSY 305, 310, 319, 325, or 365) and nine (9) hours of approved electives.

**Other:** BSW students have minored in other areas such as: Leisure Management, Criminal Justice, General Business, and Computer Science. Students are directed to review the MSWU Course Catalog for specifics for minors in other disciplines.

## Field Education Practicum

### Admissions into Field Education Practicum

Majors must successfully complete a second admission process before enrolling in SWK 480: *Practicum in Social Work*. To enroll in SWK 480, students must have satisfied all prerequisites, earned at least a "C" or equivalent in all SWK prefix courses and have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50 and have completed and adhered to the practicum application process and time guidelines.

The Field Education Practicum application process includes submission of a practicum application by the third Friday in February to the Field Education Practicum Coordinator. The application consists of the field application form, a field essay, and a signed Acknowledgment of Risk form. Additional placement steps include two meetings with the Field Education Practicum Coordinator, interviews with prospective field instructors, submission of a Family Safety Care Registry Form, and submission of Student Interview Forms to the Field Education Practicum Coordinator by their due date. Students will be referred to three field instructors for placement interviews. While every effort is made to identify those students ready for field practicum, it is the student's responsibility to notify the Field Education Practicum Director of his/her intent to qualify for the practicum. Admission decisions for practicum will be made by the Field

Education Practicum Admission Committee. The Field Education Practicum Admission Committee will be comprised of all social work faculty members. The Field Education Practicum Coordinator will notify students of the committee's decision.

Students not admitted into Practicum may appeal the Practicum Admission Committee's decision to the Program Director. The following factors are reasons for denial of entry into field (See Field Manual for reasons for termination from Field)

- \*Cumulative GPA below 2.5
- \*Prerequisites not met to enroll in SWK 480/485
- \*Received a "D" or "F" in any SWK prefix course
- \*Field application packet not submitted by due date
- \*Field placement process not completed by due dates (completion of all interviews, submission of Family Safety Care Registry form and submission of student interview forms)
- \*Falsification of information (written or oral) presented to the Field Director to gain entry into field
- \*Undisclosed criminal record or founded incidences of abuse/neglect, such as child, elderly, partner/spouse, disabled
- \*Upon completion of two rounds of interviews no field instructor has agreed to accept the student in placement
- \*Student demonstrates behavior that would jeopardize the field agency or the clients
- \*Documented incidences of violation of the MWSU and SW Academic Conduct Code
- \*Documented incidences of violation of the NASW Code of Ethics
- \*Substance use abuse and mental instability

If a student is denied admission into practicum, the Field Education Practicum Coordinator and the Field Education Practicum Admission Committee will develop a remediation plan. The plan will be signed by the student, the Field Education Practicum Coordinator and the Program Director. A copy of this plan will be given to the student, and a copy placed in the student's field file and advising file. If the student is removed from practicum, the Practicum Coordinator, the Field Instructor (if the student will remain with that field instructor), and the Field Education Practicum Admission Committee will develop a remediation plan. If the student will be placed with a different field instructor, the new field instructor may be involved in developing the plan if that field instructor will be involved in monitoring or implementing the plan. This plan will be signed by the student, the field instructor (if involved in developing or monitoring the plan), the Field Education Practicum Coordinator and the Program Director. A copy of this plan will be given to the student, the Field Instructor, the Practicum Coordinator and the Program Director.

### **APPEAL PROCEDURES FOR FIELD DECISIONS**

The student must first meet with the Field Education Practicum Coordinator within seven (7) days of the decision to discuss his/her concerns. If the student believes that the action is incorrect then the student will submit a letter of appeal along with any supporting documents to the

Program Director within seven (7) days of the meeting with the Field Education Practicum Coordinator. The Program Director will notify the Field Education Program Admission Committee of the appeal and will provide the committee with all pertinent documents. The committee will meet with the student and the Field Education Practicum Coordinator to review information presented by all parties involved and will review any written supporting documents obtained from the student and the Field Education Practicum Coordinator. The Field Education Admission Committee will decide to either uphold the original decision or to make another determination. The Field Education Admission Committee will convey this decision to the Practicum Coordinator and the student in writing within seven (7) days of the meeting with the student and Field Education Admission Committee.

If the student disagrees with the Field Education Admission Committee's decision, the student will follow the appeal process concerning Program Decisions (pg. 11).

If the Field Education Practicum Coordinator disagrees with the Field Education Committee's decision the Practicum Coordinator will first talk to the Field Education Practicum Committee within seven (7) days of the decision to seek a reconsideration of their decision. The Field Education Practicum Committee will meet with all parties involved to seek information and will review all submitted documents. The Field Education Practicum Committee will render a written decision to the affected parties within two (2) days of hearing and examining the evidence. If the Field Education Practicum Coordinator disagrees with the Field Education Practicum Committee's decision the Field Education Practicum Coordinator will follow the Program Director/Practicum Coordinator/Faculty Appeal process.

The Social Work Program does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, or political or sexual orientation. Students who believe that discrimination has taken place may contact the Vice President of Student Affairs or MWSU's Affirmative Action Officer in the Human Resource Office (see MWSU Student Handbook).

### **Social Work Program's Academic Policies**

#### **Transfer Credits**

The Social Work Program Director will determine whether courses transferred from another college or university will be considered equivalent to the Social Work major's required classes. The director will consult with faculty from other departments as necessary to make this decision. Accepted transfer courses must be similar in content and credit value to those they replace. *MWSU's Social Work Program will only accept social work courses transferred from CSWE accredited Social Work Programs other than Introduction to Social Work.* The Social Work Program will accept the equivalent of SWK 250 from a non-CSWE accredited institution, if the class was taught by a social worker and used a social work textbook.

#### **Credit for Life and Work Experience**

In accordance with CSWE standards, MWSU does not grant academic credit, course waivers, or field education practicum credit for previous life or work experience.

### **Dated Social Work Credits**

Social work is a dynamic, constantly changing field that requires social work programs to continuously update their curriculum. Courses taken more than five years ago may no longer reflect current knowledge. Consequently, the Social Work Program may require students to submit course syllabi for courses taken more than five years from the time they enter and complete practicum, and if the SW faculty by a simple majority vote deems the course content dated, students will repeat social work courses.

### **Evaluation of Faculty/Courses**

The Social Work Program uses faculty/course evaluations to obtain student views regarding the quality of their education. In accordance with MWSU Policy, students are not required to identify themselves on the evaluation form and evaluations can only be reviewed after grades are posted in the banner system. All social work instructors are open to informal, continuous student feedback regarding social work courses, the Program's policies, curriculum, procedures, etc.

### **Students with Disabilities**

The Social Work Program's educational programs, activities, and services offered to students are administered on a nondiscriminatory basis subject to the provisions of all civil rights laws and statutes. It is the policy of the Social Work Program to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Any student who needs accommodation because of a disability should inform the class instructor at the beginning of a course or contact the Program Director. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact the Disability Services office (271-4330).

### **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

The statement below is published in the University's Student Handbook and is University policy.

Missouri Western State University believes that the students enrolling at this University have as their goal the pursuit of education. It is recognized, however, that occasionally a student or students will violate the rules and regulations of the institution and that disciplinary action will be needed.

Upon enrolling in this University, each student assumes an obligation to conduct himself or herself in a manner compatible with the University's function as an educational institution and to obey the laws enacted by federal, state and local governments. If this obligation is neglected or ignored while on the campus or attending a University function, the University may, in the interest of fulfilling its function, institute appropriate disciplinary action. This obligation may extend to behavior of a student off-campus if such conduct interferes with, impairs, or obstructs the mission and functions of the University, or adversely affects the interests of the college community. (Student Handbook, p. 9)

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY AND DUE PROCESS**

### **Academic Honesty Policy**

Since honesty in the classroom, laboratory, or field education practicum agency is required, cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University or the practicum agency constitutes a violation of this policy. Please consult the MWSU Student Handbook for the student due process procedure.

## **GRADE APPEAL PROCESS**

Students are responsible for meeting the standards for academic performance established for each enrolled course. The establishment of the criteria for grades and the evaluation of student academic performance are the responsibilities of the instructor delegated by this University.

Please consult the MWSU Student Handbook for the Student Grade Appeal Process.

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

The following definition has been adapted from the EEOC Guidelines on Discrimination because of sex to encompass both employees and students.

*Unwelcome sexual favors, and other physical conduct and expressive behavior of a sexual nature where; (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or demeaning employment or education environment.*

Students should consult the MWSU Student Handbook if they are a victim of sexual harassment from a MWSU student, faculty or staff member.

## **SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM'S SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**

The Social Work Program strongly supports the University's Sexual Harassment Policy, violation of which may be grounds for termination of a student from the Social Work Program and/or the filing of a complaint with the NASW Committee on Inquiry. Social Work faculty is available to discuss student sexual harassment concerns.

### **Field Education Practicum Sites**

Student interns are expected to treat the staff and clients of their practicum agencies with respect and courtesy. Sexual harassment of such persons by a social work intern will be grounds for termination of the student's placement, failure in the practicum course, and/or dismissal from the Social Work Program.

Although agency staff are not subject to the University's sexual harassment adjudication

procedures, the Program will not tolerate sexual harassment toward any social work student at a practicum site. Any reports of students being sexually harassed during their internships will be investigated by the field liaison. If she/he believes that such harassment has occurred, the situation will be reviewed in a meeting of all social work faculty members, who will issue a recommendation for action. Examples of possible actions include, but are not limited to: holding a problem-resolution conference with the harasser; reporting the incident to the harasser's agency supervisor; changing field instructors; placement termination, temporarily or on a long-term basis; and/or reporting the harassment to the NASW Committee on Inquiry or other appropriate regulatory body.

### **Additional Program Information**

#### **SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM ADVISORY BOARD**

The Social Work Program works with an advisory board composed of students, community social workers, social work faculty members, and practicum instructors. The purposes of the Social Work Program Advisory Board are:

- To facilitate curriculum planning by suggesting ways that the social work curriculum can more effectively educate BSW practitioners for agency and community social work
- To assist the faculty: developing and monitoring standards and procedures for recruitment, admission, and retention of students; field program management; selection of faculty; evaluation of students, faculty, and the program; and other program-related concerns that may arise
- To advocate for the Program within the University and also in the broader community
- To increase community awareness of the presence and usefulness of the Social Work Program

The Advisory Committee meets at least once a year.

#### **O.S.S.W - Organization of Student Social Workers**

The purposes of the Organization of Student Social Workers (O.S.S.W.) are:

- To develop familiarity among students and professionals interested in the field of social work and social problems
- To promote an understanding of professional social work
- To encourage the professional identification of social work majors
- To be informed about and have a better understanding of social service agencies in the St. Joseph area
- To take action on common social concerns
- To undertake projects of various kinds to benefit the organization, university, and community.

Any student enrolled full or part-time at MWSU, majoring or minoring in social work, is eligible for full membership in O.S.S.W. Other students who are interested in the social work field and/or social problems may join as affiliated members.

### **Phi Alpha Honor Society**

The Social Work Program participates in Phi Alpha, the national social work honor society. Delta Epsilon, our local Phi Alpha chapter, serves various purposes:

- To recognize and promote scholastic achievement among social work students and faculty at Missouri Western State University;
- To recognize, improve, and further the goals of social work in the community, state, nation, and world;
- To stimulate interest in a social work career;
- To encourage continued study and research at the undergraduate level, the graduate level, and in professional practice; and
- To recognize those professional social workers whose service, contributions, and leadership are held in high esteem.

Students are eligible to join Delta Epsilon if they:

1. Declared social work as a major
2. Achieved junior status
3. Completed 8 hours in required social work courses
4. Earned an overall grade point average of 3.00, and
5. Earned a 3.25 grade point average in required swk courses.

### **NASW - National Association of Social Workers**

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest organization of professional social workers in the world. With headquarters in the Washington, D.C. area, it has over 140,000 members in 55 chapters. NASW's mission is to:

- Support legal regulation and consumer protection in the practice of social work;
- Carry on the profession's tradition of social action;
- Maintain a deliberate, systematic tie between social work practice and the making of social policy;
- Participate in an annual nationwide public service campaign designed to raise public consciousness about pressing social issues;
- Provide a full range of services and benefits to its members, such as insurance programs, continuing education offerings, opportunities for professional interaction and leadership development, a tax-deferred annuity plan, and the NASW News and Social Work Journal;

NASW members are professional social workers and social work students who work in a wide variety of settings such as hospitals, business and industry, schools, community health and mental health centers, nursing homes, adoption and child protection agencies, and a range of public agencies.

NASW members must meet strict education or experience requirements. Students in accredited social work degree programs may apply for student membership. All members must pledge to abide by NASW's Code of Ethics.

## **Advising Philosophy and Practices**

### **Philosophy**

Advising is an integral part of a student's education. Students should work with their faculty advisors to identify and schedule courses and work toward their professional development. Advisors are available to discuss MWSU's social work curriculum, special education needs, career expectations, career opportunities, student strengths, professional areas in need of improvement, career barriers, academic problems, and/or any other profession- or career-related topic.

### **Advising Practices**

Students will be assigned a social work faculty advisor when they declare social work as a major or premajor. The Program will try to honor requests for a particular advisor, but this will depend on the faculty member's advising load. The Program attempts to assign an equal number of students to each advisor.

Once a student declares social work as his/her major, the student will be given a copy of the BSW Student Handbook. It is the student's responsibility to read and understand the information given in the Student Handbook. We also suggest that students schedule an appointment with their advisor soon after declaring social work as a premajor to devise a graduation plan.

Each semester, all intended majors, premajors, and majors are expected to schedule an appointment with their advisor during preregistration to discuss course selection and develop their class schedules for the next semester, assess their aptitude and motivation for social work as a career, review their progress toward graduation, and discuss educational/professional goals. Afterwards, advisors will give PIN numbers to students to register for courses. No one can give PIN numbers without the advisor's approval.

In addition to preregistration advising, students are encouraged to meet with their advisor throughout the school year as needed to discuss course scheduling, educational and professional goals, academic difficulties, personal issues affecting academic performance, practicum possibilities, discrimination in the classroom, etc.

Students should expect their advisor to listen, to demonstrate respect, to show genuine interest in their development, and to act in a manner that is consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics (see page 23). If you feel that your advisor is failing to meet these standards, you are encouraged to discuss this with him or her.



**Council on Social Work Education**

## **Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards**

### **Preamble**

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Social work practice promotes human well being by strengthening opportunities, resources, and capacities of people in their environments and by creating policies and services to correct conditions that limit human rights and the quality of life. The social work profession works to eliminate poverty, discrimination, and oppression. Guided by a person-in-environment perspective and respect for human diversity, the profession works to effect social and economic justice worldwide.

Social work education combines scientific inquiry with the teaching of professional skills to provide effective and ethical social work services. Social work educators reflect their identification with the profession through their teaching, scholarship, and service. Social work education, from baccalaureate to doctoral levels, employs educational, practice, scholarly, interprofessional, and service delivery models to orient and shape the profession's future in the context of expanding knowledge, changing technologies, and complex human and social concerns.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) promotes academic excellence in baccalaureate and master's social work education. The EPAS specifies the curricular content and educational context to prepare students for professional social work practice. The EPAS sets forth basic requirements for these purposes. Beyond these basic requirements of EPAS, individual programs focus on areas relevant to their institutional and program mission, goals, and objectives.

The EPAS permits programs to use time-tested and new models of program design, implementation, and evaluation. It does so by balancing requirements that promote comparability across programs with a level of flexibility that encourages programs to respond to changing human, professional, and institutional needs.

The EPAS focuses on assessing the results of a program's development and its continuous improvement. While accreditation is ultimately evaluative, in social work education it is based on a consultative and collaborative process that determines whether a program meets the requirements of the EPAS.

### **Functions of Educational Policy and Accreditation**

#### **1. Educational Policy**

The Educational Policy promotes excellence, creativity, and innovation in social work education and practice. It sets forth required content areas that relate to each other and to the purposes, knowledge, and values of the profession. Programs of social work education are offered at the baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral levels. Baccalaureate and master's programs are accredited

by CSWE. This document supersedes all prior statements of curriculum policy for baccalaureate and master's program levels.

## **2. Accreditation**

Accreditation ensures that the quality of professional programs merits public confidence. The Accreditation Standards establish basic requirements for baccalaureate and master's levels. Accreditation Standards pertain to the following program elements:

- Mission, goals, and objectives
- Curriculum
- Governance, structure, and resources
- Faculty
- Student professional development
- Nondiscrimination and human diversity
- Program renewal
- Program assessment and continuous improvement

## **3. Relationship of Educational Policy to Accreditation**

CSWE uses the EPAS for the accreditation of social work programs. The Educational Policy and the Accreditation Standards are conceptually integrated. Programs use Educational Policy, Section 1 as one important basis for developing program mission, goals, and objectives. Programs use Educational Policy, Section 3 to develop program objectives and Educational Policy, Sections 4 and 5 to develop content for demonstrating attainment of the objectives. The accreditation process reviews the program's self-study document, site team report, and program response to determine compliance with the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. Accredited programs meet all standards.

## **Educational Policy**

### **1. Purposes**

#### **1.0 Purposes of the Social Work Profession**

The social work profession receives its sanction from public and private auspices and is the primary profession in the development, provision, and evaluation of social services. Professional social workers are leaders in a variety of organizational settings and service delivery systems within a global context.

The profession of social work is based on the values of service, social and economic justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, and integrity and competence in practice. With these values as defining principles, the purposes of social work are:

- To enhance human well-being and alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice.
- To enhance the social functioning and interactions of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities by involving them in accomplishing goals, developing resources, and preventing and alleviating distress.

- To formulate and implement social policies, services, and programs that meet basic human needs and support the development of human capacities.
- To pursue policies, services, and resources through advocacy and social or political actions that promotes social and economic justice.
- To develop and use research, knowledge, and skills that advance social work practice.
- To develop and apply practice in the context of diverse cultures.

### 1.1 Purposes of Social Work Education

The purposes of social work education are to prepare competent and effective professionals, to develop social work knowledge, and to provide leadership in the development of service delivery systems. Social work education is grounded in the profession's history, purposes, and philosophy and is based on a body of knowledge, values, and skills. Social work education enables students to integrate the knowledge, values, and skills of the social work profession for competent practice.

### 1.2 Achievement of Purposes

Among its programs, which vary in design, structure, and objectives, social work education achieves these purposes through such means as:

- Providing curricula and teaching practices at the forefront of the new and changing knowledge base of social work and related disciplines.
- Providing curricula that build on a liberal arts perspective to promote breadth of knowledge, critical thinking, and communication skills.
- Developing knowledge.
- Developing and applying instructional and practice-relevant technology.
- Maintaining reciprocal relationships with social work practitioners, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Promoting continual professional development of students, faculty, and practitioners.
- Promoting interprofessional and interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Preparing social workers to engage in prevention activities that promote well-being.
- Preparing social workers to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Preparing social workers to evaluate the processes and effectiveness of practice.
- Preparing social workers to practice without discrimination, with respect, and with knowledge and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability,

ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

- Preparing social workers to alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice.
- Preparing social workers to recognize the global context of social work practice.
- Preparing social workers to formulate and influence social policies and social work services in diverse political contexts.

## **National Association of Social Workers**

### **NASW Code of Ethics**

**Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 1999 NASW Delegate Assembly**

#### **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. The term "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 the uniqueness of the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

### **Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics**

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

The *NASW Code of Ethics* serves six purposes:

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

\*For information on NASW adjudication procedures, see *NASW Procedures for the Adjudication of Grievances*.

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

Further, the *NASW Code of Ethics* does not specify which values, principles, and standards are most important and ought to outweigh others in instances when they conflict. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist among social workers with respect to the ways in which

values, ethical principles, and ethical standards should be rank ordered when they conflict. Ethical decision-making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual social worker and should also consider how the issues would be judged in a peer review process where the ethical standards of the profession would be applied.

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

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

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

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

A code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a code of ethics cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes or capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community. Rather, a code of ethics sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which professionals aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Social workers' ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical practice. The *NASW Code of Ethics* reflects the commitment of all social workers to

uphold the profession's values and to act ethically. Principles and standards must be applied by individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments.

### **Ethical Principles**

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

**Value:** *Service*

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

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

**Value:** *Social Justice*

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

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

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

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

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

**Value:** *Importance of Human Relationships*

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

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek

to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the 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 profession, and (6) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

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

## **1. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Clients**

### **1.01 Commitment to Clients**

Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the 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 worker is required by law to report that a client has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

### **1.02 Self-Determination**

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

### **1.03 Informed Consent**

- (a) Social workers should provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship based, when appropriate, on valid informed consent. Social workers should use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purpose of the services, risks related to the services, limits to services because of the requirements of a third-party payer, relevant costs, reasonable alternatives, clients right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent. Social workers should provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions.
- (b) In instances when clients are not literate or have difficulty understanding the primary language used in the practice setting, social workers should take steps to ensure clients' comprehension. This may include providing clients with a detailed verbal explanation or arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator whenever possible.
- (c) In instances when clients lack the capacity to provide informed consent, social workers should protect clients' interests by seeking permission from an appropriate third party, informing clients consistent with the clients' level of understanding. In such instances social workers should seek to ensure that the third party acts in a manner consistent with clients' wishes and interests. Social workers should take reasonable steps to enhance such clients' ability to give informed consent.
- (d) In instances when clients are receiving services involuntarily, social workers should provide information about the nature and extent of services and about the extent of clients' right to refuse service.
- (e) Social workers who provide services via electronic media (such as computer, telephone, radio, and television) should inform recipients of the limitations and risks associated with such services.
- (f) Social workers should obtain clients' informed consent before audiotaping or videotaping clients or permitting observation of services to clients by a third party

### **1.04 Competence**

- (a) Social workers should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, license, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience.
- (b) Social workers should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques.
- (c) When generally recognized standards do not exist with respect to an emerging area

of practice, social workers should exercise careful judgment and take responsible steps (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision) to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients from harm.

### **1.05 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity**

- (a) Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.
- (b) Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.
- (c) Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, 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' interests primary and protects clients' interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting clients' interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client.
- (b) Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.
- (c) Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in whom there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, social workers should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (Dual or multiple relationships occur when social workers relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.)
- (d) When social workers provide services to two or more people who have a relationship with each other (for example, couples, family members), social workers should clarify with all parties which individuals will be considered clients and the nature of social workers' professional obligations to the various individuals who are receiving services. Social workers who anticipate a conflict of interest among the individuals receiving services or who anticipate having to perform in potentially conflicting roles (for example, when a social worker is asked to testify in a child custody dispute or divorce proceedings involving clients) should clarify their role with the parties involved and take appropriate action to minimize any conflict of interest.

### 1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

- (a) Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to providing services or conducting social work evaluation or research. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply.
- (b) Social workers may disclose confidential information when appropriate with valid consent from a client or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a client.
- (c) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that social workers will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or other identifiable person. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.
- (d) Social workers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the disclosure is made. This applies whether social workers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.
- (e) Social workers should discuss with clients and other interested parties the nature of confidentiality and limitations of clients' right to confidentiality. Social workers should review with client's circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. This discussion should occur as soon as possible in the social worker-client relationship and as needed throughout the course of the relationship.
- (f) When social workers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, social workers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual's right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. Social workers should inform participants in family, couples, or group counseling that social workers cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.
- (g) Social workers should inform clients involved in family, couples, marital, or group counseling of the social worker's, employer's, and agency's policy concerning the social worker's disclosure of confidential information among the parties involved in the counseling.
- (h) Social workers should not disclose confidential information to third-party payers unless clients have authorized such disclosure.
- (i) Social workers should not discuss confidential information in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semipublic areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.
- (j) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders social

workers to disclose confidential or privileged information without a client's consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the client, social workers should request that the court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.

- (k) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members of the media.
- (l) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients' written and electronic records and other sensitive information. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients' records are stored in a secure location and that clients' records are not available to others who are not authorized to have access.
- (m) Social workers should take precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information transmitted to other parties through the use of computers, electronic mail, facsimile machines, telephones and telephone answering machines, and other electronic or computer technology. Disclosure of identifying information should be avoided whenever possible.
- (n) Social workers should transfer or dispose of clients' records in a manner that protects clients' confidentiality and is consistent with state statutes governing records and social work licensure.
- (o) Social workers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.
- (p) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients for teaching or training purposes unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information.
- (q) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients with consultants unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information or there is a compelling need for such disclosure.
- (r) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of deceased clients consistent with the preceding standards.

### **1.08 Access to Records**

- (a) Social workers should provide clients with reasonable access to records concerning the clients. Social workers who are concerned that clients' access to their records could cause serious misunderstanding or harm to the client should provide assistance in interpreting the records and consultation with the client regarding the records. Social workers should limit clients' access to their records, or portions of their records, only in exceptional circumstances when there is compelling evidence that such access would cause serious harm to the client. Both clients' requests and the rationale for withholding some or all of the record should be documented in clients' files.
- (b) When providing clients with access to their records, social workers should take steps to protect the confidentiality of other individuals identified or discussed in such records.

### **1.09 Sexual Relationships**

- (a) Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.
- (b) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Sexual activity or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a personal relationship has the potential to be harmful to the client and may make it difficult for the social worker and client to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Social workers--not their clients, their clients' relatives, or other individuals with whom the client maintains a personal relationship--assume the full burden for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.
- (c) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients because of the potential for harm to the client. If social workers engage in conduct contrary to this prohibition or claim that an exception to this prohibition is warranted because of extraordinary circumstances, it is social workers--not their clients--who assume the full burden of demonstrating that the former client has not been exploited, coerced, or manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally.
- (d) Social workers should not provide clinical services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship. Providing clinical services to a former sexual partner has the potential to be harmful to the individual and is likely to make it difficult for the social worker and individual to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

### **1.10 Physical Contact**

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

### **1.11 Sexual Harassment**

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

### **1.12 Derogatory Language**

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

### **1.13 Payment for Services**

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

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

#### **1.14 Clients Who Lack Decision-Making Capacity**

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

#### **1.15 Interruption of Services**

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

#### **1.16 Termination of Services**

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

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

## **2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues**

### **2.01 Respect**

- (a) Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.
- (b) Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, 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 workers' own interests.
- (b) Social workers should not exploit clients in disputes with colleagues or engage clients in any inappropriate discussion of conflicts between social workers and their colleagues.

### **2.05 Consultation**

- (a) Social workers should seek the advice and counsel of colleagues whenever such consultation is in the best interests of clients.
- (b) Social workers should keep themselves informed about colleagues' areas of expertise and competencies. Social workers should seek consultation only from colleagues who have

demonstrated knowledge, expertise, and competence related to the subject of the consultation.

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

### **2.06 Referral for Services**

- (a) Social workers should refer clients to other professionals when the other professionals' specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve clients fully or when social workers believe that they are not being effective or making reasonable progress with clients and that additional service is required.
- (b) Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should take appropriate steps to facilitate an orderly transfer of responsibility. Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should disclose, with clients' consent, all pertinent information to the new service providers.
- (c) Social workers are prohibited from giving or receiving payment for a referral when no professional service is provided by the referring social worker.

### **2.07 Sexual Relationships**

- (a) Social workers who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual activities or contact with supervisees, students, trainees, or other colleagues over whom they exercise professional authority.
- (b) Social workers should avoid engaging in sexual relationships with colleagues when there is potential for a conflict of interest. Social workers who become involved in, or anticipate becoming involved in, a sexual relationship with a colleague have a duty to transfer professional responsibilities, when necessary, to avoid a conflict of interest.

### **2.08 Sexual Harassment**

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

### **2.09 Impairment of Colleagues**

- (a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's impairment that is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties and that interferes with practice effectiveness should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.
- (b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague's impairment interferes with practice effectiveness and that the colleague has not taken adequate steps to address the impairment should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

## **2.10 Incompetence of Colleagues**

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

## **2.11 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues**

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

## **3. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities in Practice Settings**

### **3.01 Supervision and Consultation**

- (a) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation should have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.
- (b) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.
- (c) Social workers should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with supervisees in whom there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisee.
- (d) Social workers who provide supervision should evaluate supervisees' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

### **3.02 Education and Training**

- (a) Social workers who function as educators, field instructors for students, or trainers should provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and competence and should provide instruction based on the most current information and knowledge available in the profession.
- (b) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.
- (c) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.
- (d) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

### **3.03 Performance Evaluation**

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

### **3.04 Client Records**

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

### **3.05 Billing**

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

### **3.06 Client Transfer**

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

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

### **3.07 Administration**

- (a) Social work administrators should advocate within and outside their agencies for adequate resources to meet clients' needs.
- (b) Social workers should advocate for resource allocation procedures that are open and fair. When not all clients' needs can be met, an allocation procedure should be developed that is nondiscriminatory and based on appropriate and consistently applied principles.
- (c) Social workers who are administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate agency or organizational resources are available to provide appropriate staff supervision.
- (d) Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment for which they are responsible is consistent with and encourages compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics. Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in their organizations that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with the Code.

### **3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development**

Social work administrators and supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development for all staff for which they are responsible.

Continuing education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social work practice and ethics.

### **3.09 Commitments to Employers**

- (a) Social workers generally should adhere to commitments made to employers and employing organizations.
- (b) Social workers should work to improve employing agencies' policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their services.
- (c) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that employers are aware of social workers' ethical obligations as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics and of the implications of those obligations for social work practice.
- (d) Social workers should not allow an employing organization's policies, procedures, regulations, or administrative orders to interfere with their ethical practice of social work. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that their employing organizations' practices are consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.
- (e) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the employing organization's work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.
- (f) Social workers should accept employment or arrange student field placements only in organizations that exercise fair personnel practices.

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

### **3.10 Labor-Management Disputes**

- (a) Social workers may engage in organized action, including the formation of and participation in labor unions, to improve services to clients and working conditions.
- (b) The actions of social workers that are involved in labor-management disputes, job actions, or labor strikes should be guided by the profession's values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. Reasonable differences of opinion exist among social workers concerning their primary obligation as professionals during an actual or threatened labor strike or job action. Social workers should carefully examine relevant issues and their possible impact on clients before deciding on a course of action.

## **4. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities as Professionals**

### **4.01 Competence**

- (a) Social workers should accept responsibility or employment only on the basis of existing competence or the intention to acquire the necessary competence.
- (b) Social workers should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions. Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work. Social workers should routinely review the professional literature and participate in continuing education relevant to social work practice and social work ethics.
- (c) Social workers should base practice on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics.

### **4.02 Discrimination**

Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, 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 duration of the participation requested and disclosure of the risks and benefits of participation in the research.
- (f) When evaluation of 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 a 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 of 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' interest primary.
- (p) Social workers should educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices.

## **6. Social Worker's 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 sharing social policies and institutions.

### **6.03 Public Emergencies**

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

### **6.04 Social and Political Action**

- (a) Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.
- (b) Social workers should act to expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups.
- (c) Social workers should promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within the United States and globally. Social workers should promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference, support the expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, advocate for programs and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence, and promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people.
- (d) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability.

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

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